

# Learning To be Male:

Effects of Heterosexual Hierarchies on the Educational  
Development of Working Class Males in Transition.

Phillip A Lofts

Doctor of Education

Division of Education

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# **Learning to be Male:**

## **Effects of Heterosexual Hierarchies on the Educational Development of Working Class Males in Transition.**

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## Abstract

This thesis draws on previous work by Apple (1992; 1993), Mac An Ghail (1996, 1997, 1998), Connell ((1994) and others along with the recorded dialogue of working-class males to argue that there is a link between heterosexual hierarchies and educational attainment. I suggest that link is often obstructive in society, communities, the home and importantly in school. Furthermore, schools too often inadvertently magnify and even promote the adverse effects of the hierarchies by the way they treat students and the relationship between the school and parents. Schools and learning in working-class communities needs to be understood through the lens of heterosexual hierarchies.

The study highlights the issues faced by students within communities in transition from industrial era to modern era and draws particularly on the work of Bernstein (1977,1990) and Bourdieu (1977). These communities face not only development difficulties but often less appreciated, entrenched attitudes to learning and education, from teachers and community members, which work against the use of education to solve the development problems and create a virtuous-cycle of education and development within working-class communities. Phillips (1991, 1993, 1999) is most helpful in framing the public/private debate which is used in the thesis to argue for much more open access and breaking down of barriers to education across the age-range and within communities. Quicke (1994, 1999), Illich (1986), Moran (2004) and Field (2003) enable the findings of the enquiry to be placed within the debate for a more appropriate curriculum which enables working-

class males to access experiences which will enhance their education and change their attitudes to learning. Barnsley and in particular one school, from which many of the young lads were drawn, is used as a case study.

# Chapter 1 – Defining the Context

It is the purpose of this thesis to illuminate the learning process of working-class white males and to explore ways in which that process might be enhanced. Research was carried out amongst working-class males in a community in transition from Industrial to Late Modern eras and therefore places them in a specific historical context. The Industrial era, which started in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century provided these men with an individual identity. It ended sharply at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The males involved in the study and their peers, are placed in a specific education context by the work ethic restrictions of the culture in which they were socialised and the suddenly imposed need to act within an individualised, knowledge-based society.

The theme of this enquiry is working-class white lads' identity and learning. Fathers give an insight to the lads' background and lend an element of historical perspective. That historical perspective affects the schooling of the lads as they attempt to progress through an education system which is affected by the narrative of society, which is slow to change and often exhibits inadequacies in understanding the needs of young males in a changing world.

The subjects would approve of the term 'lads' and some with Willis' (1988) use of the same term and the same logic, '...easily verbalised by those in '...the counter school culture'. (pg 11) The term is common in the area where the lads live and they commonly use that term themselves. Not quite 'men'

yet, they are too mature to be boys, and certainly not 'kids'. It is a term of endearment, with a slight edge of mischief.

The National Union of Mineworkers was truly hegemonic in Barnsley. The working-class movement of which they were part, also '...ran local reading rooms and libraries...' and '...were eager participants in the Workers' Educational Association and equally enthusiastic students at Ruskin College...' (pg 305). Cunningham goes on to describe how many:

'...Labour MPs from the North, if not miners themselves were sponsored by the miners' union. The list of miners who were poets, dramatists, and novelists is a remarkable testament to the deeply rooted and highly developed cultural life of the ...mining communities.'  
(<http://www.britishcouncil.hr/english/bcs/cunptn.pdf>  
pg 306)

The concept of Class as used in this study is not straightforward. Though it might be considered by some that young males from an ex-mining community, which is one of the poorest regions in Europe (Objective 1 area for European funding), automatically qualify for working-class status, the situation is not so simple. Working-class means different things in different countries and contexts and politicians do not make it easier for those within a class to understand their position.

The working-class was easier to categorise when some individuals owned capital and some people worked for it. Now in the age of corporate finance and insurance companies investing billions of pounds of individuals' money, international communications at the touch of a button, and so-called owner-occupiers buying their social housing, classification is more difficult. Apple

(1993) writes that, 'Class is an analytic construct as well as a set of relations that have an existence outside our minds'. (pg. 307) The problem is that class relations are changing.

Eder, K. (1996) is one of a number of authors to find a fresh approach to class, and neatly summarises the necessary transition in thinking, when he writes that: 'The proposition is to go from a hierarchical model to a network model of class relationship.' (pg11) Eder goes on to disagree with those who have voiced the notion that there is no such thing as Class, when he writes that: '...instead of giving up the notion of class, we only give up the notion of hierarchical relations between classes.' (pg 12) and, importantly for this investigation, goes on to postulate that:

'Class is a structure that translates inequality and power into different life-chances for categories of individuals. It is therefore a structural determinant of life-chances...' (pg. 12)

Eder's system of classification...'compares individuals and ...counts the (economic and cultural) capital they own...' which '...results in the highly individualised class structure of modern society.' (pg. 26) Eder offers Beck (1983 and 1992) as reference for individualised classes. Apple, M. (1992) in recognition of the changed aspirations of individuals, referred to Class as '... a trajectory-based concept...' '...rather than a positional one.' Apple (1992 Pg 11) also gives an introduction to how Bernstein sees Class, as an important intellectual resource 'to begin to think through ..... cultural control, codes, modalities, and power.' (Apple, M. 1992 pg11) In the increasingly partnership-based culture of the grant-aided economy left behind when the

mining industry closed, it must be true that older workers continue to feel membership of the working-class but without the structure which supported them, individualised members of a co-operative movement, networking across geography and time. Mac An Ghail and Haywood (1997 Vol. 7 No 1) set out a differentialist position on the definition of Class, along with other 'analytic concepts'. They quote Foucault in suggesting that '...subjectivity is contextually located through institutional exercises of power' and go on to point out that: 'It is through the discursive and material formation of social boundaries with their exclusionary effects that social power becomes articulated'. Willis defines the importance of class to individuals :

'The processes through which labour power comes to be subjectively understood and objectively applied and their interrelationships is of profound significance for the type of society which is produced and the particular nature and formations of its classes. These processes help to construct both the identities of particular subjects and also distinctive class forms at the cultural and symbolic level as well as at the economic and structural level.' (1999 pg.2)

## 1) Social context

Education is often rejected by many if it is not directly relevant to the job-in-hand. Craftsmen and artisans could easily be businessmen by diversifying and managing their affairs differently, as their skills are in great demand, but are often comfortable earning enough to live on each week. In other societies they might be peasant artisans dependent only on their own perceptions for their identity and self-esteem.

Mead pointed out at the beginning of the last century (1934 pg. 135) that the self arises out of '...the process of social experience and activity,...' which '...develops in the individual as a result of his relations to that process as a whole...' It might turn out to be the case that our subjects' relative isolation, as individuals, community and class, has had a self-perpetuating detrimental effect on their identity and learning. Some working-class males in this study are observed and some are interviewed to discover their perception of themselves and others; and their understanding of learning.

When I left school in 1963 the unemployment figures were approx. 604,600 nationally (<http://www.sixties.com/events/events63.htm>). In Barnsley they were at a very low level due to full employment in the mining industry. The wages were also low (average national weekly wage approx. £16) but the security was high, as son followed father into the pit. If employment was not available in the coal-mines, it would be in the steelworks or other local industry but that position changed from 1985.

Between 1911 and 1991 manual work declined from three quarters to a minority of all jobs.

Professional and managerial jobs, on the other hand, increased from 7.5% to 33%. In short, there was a change from an occupational structure heavily dominated by manual work to one where there was a fairly even division of three broad categories: professional/managerial work, intermediary occupations and manual. (Thrupp, M 2001 pg. 300)

The demise of the 'NCB company-town' communities whose economy once depended entirely on coal, was sudden. In 1984 there were approximately 17,612 employees in the primary industries of energy (coal), agriculture, electricity, gas and water: by 1998 there were 456. The wages have remained low but the security is virtually nil and the only wage lower than working-class men's in Barnsley is that of working-class females. (Source of Statistics: Barnsley Development Agency, 2000.)

**Table i**

<b>Socio-economic class - Barnsley</b>		<b>%</b>
<b>Employers &amp; Managers</b>	9690	11.5
<b>Professional workers</b>	2240	2.7
<b>Intermediate non-manual workers</b>	9060	10.8
<b>Junior non-manual workers</b>	14380	17.1
<b>Manual workers (foremen, supervisors, skilled &amp; own account)</b>	22970	27.4
<b>Personal service &amp; semi-skilled manual workers</b>	17040	20.3
<b>Unskilled manual workers</b>	6970	8.3
<b>Farmers &amp; Agricultural workers</b>	810	1.0
<b>Members of armed forces, inadequately described &amp; not stated occupations.</b>	790	0.9

(Source – 1991 Census of population)

82.1% of 16 – 24 year olds are economically active but only 46% are in full-time employment. This figure reflects the low retention rate of education (2.9% of the population are students and 63.8% of 17 year olds are not in

full-time education) and the relatively high proportion of unemployment in this age band (9.0% on government schemes and 19.6% unemployed; constituting 28.6% not in real jobs). It takes a long time for many to return to learning if they do at all.

According to figures issued by Barnsley LEA, only 2.69% of the population of Barnsley return to Adult Education. Of them only 20% are males: 0.54% of the total population of Barnsley. The figures for the Yorkshire and Humber Region are only 3.6% reported take-up of local authority, adult education services across the region.

'Barnsley has a lower proportion of men in full-time employment and a higher proportion of women in part-time employment than either South Yorkshire or Great Britain. Income for men is the lowest in the country. [and] 'Men form just under half of the 19-59 age group; however, male learners make up only 16.5% of the learning population.' (Barnsley Development Agency, 2000 pg 11)

The future clearly holds little for these people who belong to households earning well below the national average income:

Table ii

Barnsley	£11,000 (1997), £14,590 per household (1999);
England	£20,000 per household (1997)

Source: Barnsley Development Agency, 2000.

The average household income on some council-owned peripheral estates is accepted to be as low as that of state-benefits level (at the time of writing approx. £5,000). The Primary employment sector now employs only 0.7% of the population.

As shown above (in Table i) 85.8% of the population can be counted as working-class, with only 6.3% according to the 1991 census in professional occupations. Only 41% of households had a car in 1991, a time when 30.2% of houses were rented from the council. This situation has not improved in the area of study, which is predominantly council-owned housing. 2,831 female-lone-parents (of 3,052 lone-parents households) have no male role model at the head of that household: 28.6% (13,412) of dependent children live in households with no car; 22.7% (10,630) with no earner in the household; and 24.4% (11,460) children in low earning households.

(Source: Barnsley Development Agency, 2000.)

Qualified [Wo/]Manpower (Note: The figures below are estimates as the data is taken from a 10 per cent table)

Table iii

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Persons</b>
<b>All persons 18+</b>	<b>83060</b>	<b>88740</b>	<b>171800</b>
<b>All persons qualified</b>	<b>7050</b>	<b>5810</b>	<b>12860</b>
<b>% (of male/female/persons)</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>7.5</b>
<b>Higher Degree</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>450</b>
<b>% (of male/female/persons)</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.15</b>	<b>0.3</b>
<b>Degree</b>	<b>2710</b>	<b>1430</b>	<b>4140</b>
<b>% (of male/female/persons)</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>2.4</b>
<b>Diploma etc.</b>	<b>4020</b>	<b>4250</b>	<b>8270</b>
<b>% (of male/female/persons)</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>4.8</b>

Source: Barnsley Development Agency, 2000.

Covington (1992) described the way in which young under-achievers settle for second place rather than be seen to fail.

‘There emerges ..... a “winning” formula in the anticipation of failure that is designed to avoid personal humiliation and shame on the one hand and to minimise teacher punishment on the other: try, or at least appear to try, but not too energetically and with excuses handy.’ (pg. 78)

Young males constitute 84% of permanent exclusions, nationally, from school (DfEE June 1999)

The two wards which constitute the old ‘catchment’ area of the schools from which interviewees are drawn have high unemployment levels: ‘8.2% official male unemployment and 9.9% official male unemployment’ (Source- Barnsley Development Agency 2000). The unofficial rate of unemployment taking into consideration early retirement, long-term sickness, part-time working, failure to register due to alternative economy, etc. is far greater.

**Table iv    Wage Rates**

<b>Place</b>	<b>Average gross weekly earnings (full-time employees on adult rates)</b> £	<b>Full-time males on adult rates</b> £	<b>Full-time females on adult rates</b> £
<b>Barnsley</b>	343.40 (a)	376.50 (a)	N/A
<b>Yorkshire and the Humber</b>	375.10 (b)	409.90 (b)	308.80 (b)
<b>Great Britain</b>	419.70 (b)	453.30 (b)	337.60 (b)

**April 2000 (a)**

**Revised December 2001 (b)**

Source: Barnsley Development Agency (2002)

Now (2002) there is no industry to speak of, very few jobs and house prices in Barnsley are approximately half those in the rest of the UK.

**Table v      House Prices: Barnsley - October to December 2001**

	<b><u>Barnsley</u></b> £	<b><u>England and Wales Average</u></b> £
<b>Detached</b>	92,367	180,307
<b>Semi-detached</b>	50,487	102,865
<b>Terraced</b>	31,819	88,898
<b>Flat</b>	Too few sales	120,847
<b>All property types</b>	54,301	118,258

Source: upmystreet.com – supplied by Barnsley Development Agency  
(2002)

Hutton and Giddens (2001) posit that : ‘Work was once a source of identity...now its shifting pattern means that it can no longer serve as a basis for organising ...people’s personal biographies.’ (pg. X) and their description of the economic process at work fits precisely the skills gap in Barnsley, when they write that:

‘...inequality has widened, especially in the Anglo-Saxon economies in the vanguard of globalisation, as the rewards for managerial and technological skills have exploded while those at the bottom have been exposed to an emerging world market in labour.’ (2001pg viii)

Nor does the education system help them overcome their new situation as Quicke, J. (1996) points out: ‘Modernist institutions...,’ ‘can operate in contradictory ways, espousing autonomy at the level of rhetoric, but fostering heteronomy, discipline and oppression in practice.’ Quicke goes on to describe how the National Curriculum with its ‘reification of subjects, strong

boundaries between courses and highly ritualised and hierarchical teacher-learner relationships' (Dec. 1996.) affects:

**'.....self-identity and personal development from studying these subjects. Moreover, since the current National Curriculum is rooted in a social organisation of knowledge which historically has been part of a system designed to bolster an elite and exclude the majority, it is scarcely surprising that a disproportionate number of these non-beneficiaries are likely to come from the lower classes and other marginalised groups' (Quicke, J. Dec 1996 pg. 368)**

Illich outlined some aspects of working-class educational deprivation outside the school environment:

**'..... poor children lack most of the educational opportunities which are casually available to the middle-class child. These advantages range from conversation and books in the home to vacation travel and a different sense of oneself,.....' (1986 pg. 14)**

Though Willis (2000) disavows Illich's philosophy of 'de-schooling society' he accepts that:

**'The state school in advanced capitalism, and the most obvious manifestations of oppositional working-class culture within it, provide us with a central case of mediated class conflict and class reproduction in the capitalist order.' (Pg. 60)**

Sennet (2001) makes clear that: 'An identity takes form through the social interaction of people at the edges of their personae, those boundary negotiations between self and other.' (pg. 186) With the separation of household and social there is no natural arena for young males to socialise except with other males. This socialisation of young males in a public environment will be seen to be crucial later.

In asserting a specifically political sphere, which excludes women, men learn little of the real social skills (economics through budgeting, oracy through social discourse, mathematics through book-keeping, etc.) which are inherent in the household sphere. Connell (1994) points out dramatically that: 'The poor are precisely those with the least resources'. (pg. 136) Phillips (1999) considers the concept of 'simple and complex equalities'. She writes that:

'There is a ...line of argument that discourages us from focusing on money inequalities, most powerfully developed by Michael Walzer in his case for "complex equality". Walzer also claims that money inequalities are inconsequential...'  
(pg 64)

As recently pointed out in a study by Charles Husband for the ESPR Cities Programme in Bradford '... gender and ethnic identity recur as important variables impacting upon young people's hopes and beliefs.' (June 2001) The report goes on to highlight an important factor for the subjects of this study: that it is 'Lifestyle rather than wealth [that] was a critical element...'

The previous generation won the dialectic argument on gender equality with the aid of enlightened men. Perhaps the perception of Phillips (1991) is nearer the thoughts of men at the time of full male employment when she recounts that:

'...anti-suffragists repeatedly asserted, women had no need of a voice of their own, for they had fathers and husbands to speak for their interests and it made no sense to think of women apart.'  
(pg 25)

The relatively high proportion of unemployment in this age band (9.0% on government schemes and 19.6% unemployed; constituting 28.6% not in real jobs) and the low retention rate of education are reflected in the fact that only 46% are in full-time employment (from 82.1% economically active). Yet only 2.9% of the population are students and 63.8% of 17 year olds are not in full-time education.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation for 2000 constructed by Oxford University indicates that 9 wards of the study area (41%) fall within the most deprived 10% and 8 wards fall within the range of 10%-20% of the most deprived wards in England. This is mirrored in the Health Deprivation category where 17 wards (77%) are in the most deprived 10% in England. The situation has worsened in relative terms since 1991. Income deprivation as expressed in child poverty, is very high in most council estates. A quarter of neighbourhoods are within the top 10% in England by deprivation. The percentage of people aged 16-59 not working varies from 23% in the more affluent West of the borough to 44% in the deprived East of the borough.

The primary industries, which include the once dominant industry of mining, in 1998 employed only 0.7%. In the heavy industries of 'manufacturing, construction and transport' 17,716 males and 6,807 females. In the more private world of 'Administration, education and health' females outnumber males by 13,587 to 4217. Both sets of figures are in the approximate ratio of 3:1. Although these 'private' roles are those which are crucial to the future of a knowledge-based economy upon which Barnsley residents will depend,

the female average wage rate is still only approx. 75% of that for males. As seen below:

Table vi

	<b>Males</b>	<b>Persons</b>	<b>Females</b>	
<b>Primary Industries</b>	383	456	73	0.7%
<b>Manufacturing</b>	10743	16043	5300	25.0%
<b>Construction</b>	4113	4871	754	7.6%
<b>Distribution, hotels and catering</b>	5920	13569	7649	21.1%
<b>Transport, communication</b>	2860	3613	653	5.6%
<b>Financial intermediation</b>	940	1845	905	2.9%
<b>Real estate, renting &amp; business activities</b>	2133	4689	2556	7.3%
<b>Public administration, education &amp; health</b>	4217	17804	13587	27.7%
<b>Other services</b>	1133	2604	1471	4.1%
<b>Total</b>	31442	65494	33048	

(Source: Barnsley Development Agency 2002)

Table vii

<b>Place</b>	<b>Average gross weekly earnings (full-time employees on adult rates)</b>	<b>Full-time males on adult rates</b>	<b>Full-time females on adult rates</b>
<b>Barnsley</b>	343.40 (a)	276.50 (a)	N/A
<b>Yorkshire and the Humber</b>	375.10 (b)	409.90 (b)	308.80 (b)
<b>Great Britain</b>	419.70 (b)	453.30 (b)	337.60 (b)

**April 2000 (a) Revised December 2001 (b) Pounds**  
(Source: Barnsley Development Agency 2002)

The Director of Education in Barnsley has often remarked that pupils in Barnsley are not badly behaved or disruptive but docile and malleable, though not imaginative or creative. The only non-working-class members of society they will have contact with, for a few hours each week, will attempt to teach the middle class view of society.

Research by Hallam University for the Coalfield Communities Campaign confirms the low rates of educational achievement throughout working-class communities. Agenda Item 5 of the Executive Committee Meeting of NE Derbyshire DC of CCC for 27 July 2001 includes a synopsis of the findings:

- 'At Key Stage 1 (7years old), coalfield pupils are on a par with pupils from other areas.
- By Key Stage 2 (10-11 years old) coalfield pupils are already 2-3 percentage points behind the national average.
- By Key Stage 3 (14 years old) the gap has widened to 4-5 percentage points.
- By GCSE (16 years old) both boys and girls in coalfields are lagging behind by nearly 10 percentage points in terms of share of pupils getting 5 grade A\_C.
- Participation in Further Education (FE) by 16-18 year olds is nearly 18 percentage points behind the national average.

The research also compared coalfield educational statistics with a sample of other “white working-class” areas. The results revealed that pupils in these areas were performing just as badly as those in coalfield areas. So it would be fair to say that the problem affects children from “white working-class” areas in Britain’s traditional industrial areas,...’  
(Coalfield Communities Campaign July 2001)

It often seems that Apple (1993) might be correct in his angry assertion that:

‘They have set out, aggressively, to drag down the character of a people, while at the same time attacking the poor and the disenfranchised for their supposed lack of values and character’.  
(Apple 1993 pg 306)

Roscigno and Ainsworth-Darnell also point out that:

‘Independent of race, high-SES [socio-economic status] status students receive greater returns ... and achievements for their cultural trips than do low-SES students.’ (Roscigno and Ainsworth-Darnell 1999)

Clearly some form of discriminatory process is happening which disadvantages working-class pupils even when they do have educationally relevant elements of cultural capital. In general Roscigno and Ainsworth-Darnell point out, ‘...findings thus far suggest that differences in cultural capital and household educational resources are largely a function of persistent and contemporary patterns of class inequality’. (pg.167) It is also clear that there is:

‘an association between family background and cultural capital-household resources [and that this is] consistent with the contention that it is at least partially through a family’s investment in these attributes that intergenerational transmission of family advantage occurs’ (ibid. pg167)

## 2) Political Context

In 1984-5 Margaret Thatcher, a woman prime minister, challenged the (entirely male due to legislation banning women from the mines) National Union of Mineworkers resulting in a year long national coal mines strike. She challenged not only the mining industry but also the male hegemony in working-class society. It turned the world upside down, overnight for the working-class, as their standard-bearer took strike-action the consequences of which they would never recover from. Jordan, G. and Weedon, C. (1995) point out that: 'The British miners' strike of 1984-85,' ... was one of the last to demonstrate a popular community and class-based resistance with broad support from the Labour movement.' (pg 113) The experience of the year long strike effected a change in the working of the: '...private and public spheres of society and in the ways in which men cultivate their identity and assert their dominance'. (Clare 2000 pg. 8)

With the demise of heavy industry and the growth of jobs in which females are better equipped to work, along with feminism and equality of rights for women, males are relatively disempowered. They now stand centre stage, with no job to hide behind, on show in the way that women once were. Some men respond by sharing duties and roles (so-called 'new men') and some rebel, becoming misogynistic in their attempts to keep women in the private sphere 'place' previously allocated by society.

The private and public spheres of life took on a different dimension in a globalised, modern economy where communications make knowledge freely

available and privatisation of industry challenges the power-structures of industrialised male-oriented politics. Clare connects the rising suicide rates among men with their discontent at the increasing presence of women in the public sphere and the 'growing demand by women that men take a greater role in the private sphere'.

'At the heart of the crisis in masculinity is a problem with the reconciliation of the private and the public, the intimate and the impersonal, the emotional and the rational.' (Clare 2000 pg 212)

'Liberalism...' as expounded by Hannah Arendt and described by Phillips, A. (1991), '...recast the boundaries between public and private...' (pg 29) that had been in place since Plato and Aristotle had counter-posed ...' '...the public world of politics...to the private world of the household' and noted that in the ancient world the household was both family and economy. With the separation of the two the 'new category of the social emerged "from the shadowy interior of the household into the light of the public sphere". Phillips describes the effect thus:

'This changed the meaning and significance of the public/private divide. The social began to do battle with the political as to which was to reign supreme, and from Arendt's point of view won a depressing victory. Politics became the handmaiden of social interest, while the residual household sphere found itself threatened on every side.' (Phillips, A. 1991 pg 29)

According to Phillips, Walzer asserts that:

'...simple egalitarians are obsessed with...the fact that one group of people has monopolised what should in justice be shared out. Complex egalitarians focus instead on dominance, on the way, that access to one social good has given

people the power to claim another.' (ibid. pgs. 64-65)

Roy Hattersley points out in an article for Socialist Education Association (Nov 2001) that, equality of opportunity in education as other in aspects of society: '...depends on "an equal start as well as an open road". (pg14) It is obvious from the statistics relating to poverty indicators in Barnsley that its pupils get neither.

Young (2000) defines three modes of political communication: 'greeting, rhetoric and narrative'. (pg 53) In Barnsley, 'Greeting or public acknowledgement...' is a gendered activity which is usually without the opportunity to engage with other cultures. Females have not been part of the rhetoric of politics, but they have become increasingly aware of the meta-narrative of gender politics and with the decline of organised labour they have asserted the value of their narrative. As Young points out, women are subject to 'Internal exclusion'. (pg 55) They '...lack effective opportunity to influence the thinking of others even when they have access to formal procedures of decision-making'. (Young 2000 pg 55) In Barnsley many of the officers of the majority political party (chair, vice chair, treasurer) are women. Some women are elected councillors and trade union representatives. However, in the secret huddles where the real decisions are made and strategies decided, they are absent.

That process which starts with internal exclusion of women ultimately excludes men. The '... "greeting" refers to those moments in everyday

communication where people acknowledge one another in their particularity'. (Young 2000 pgs. 57-58) Such terms as Young suggests, ' Hello, How are you?' along with 'mild forms of flattery' 'politeness', etc. have often proved dangerously outside the socially and politically accepted norm between genders in Barnsley. To the working-class in general and those in mining particularly, politics was about conflict with other local males and a well-intentioned male's greeting has often been misinterpreted by a self-appointed protector of the female.

### 3) Cultural Context

Bernstein considered language and the way it is used and understood by different classes of people to be crucial in the way working-class pupils learn. Unfortunately working-class males in Barnsley traditionally use a local dialect and have; '... an inability to match linguistic expressions to the normalised linguistic climate...' outside the area. This leads to '...a lack of linguistic capital to trade for economic, cultural or symbolic capital'. (Moran 2004 pg.4) Bernstein explains that: 'In any pedagogic relationship ..... The acquirer ..... has to learn to be an acquirer and the transmitter has to learn to be a transmitter.' (Bernstein 1990 pg. 65) In explaining the way in which language skills and sequencing rules apply Bernstein goes on to posit that:

'.....if children cannot meet the requirements of the sequencing rules and are caught up in the repair system, then these children, often the children of the lower working-class ..... are constrained by the local, context-dependent, context-tied skills; by a world of facticity.' (Bernstein 1990 pg. 74)

According to Barnsley MBC Education Department:

'Data analysis and monitoring and evaluation of information indicates that significant number of pupils have limited oracy skills and have difficulty in adapting language appropriate to formal situations. The development of writing as a focus for improvement has also been identified, particularly in relation to raising boys' achievement which is a priority in the borough.' (BMBC Education Development Plan 2002, pg 5)

The language of the sample is therefore restricted by code and by culture. South Yorkshire dialect is the language of working-class people who emanated from different parts of the country and therefore used different dialects. They were distinct and undiluted by middle class language until

recently. Added to this is the fact that the South Yorkshire coalfield has always been a rural environment with underground industry. When the workers emerged from their workplace they did so into a rural environment where they carried on a peasant-like existence separated from other communities. There was very little reason or desire by either party to mix with the other. R. Page Arnot writing in 1948 told how John Wesley recorded in his journal that miners were regarded as 'a strange tribe of black and dirty men' and that '...in no other trade had such a cleavage developed between the new wage-earners and their masters'. (pg 27).

Due to its usage in the working environment the dialect has assumed the status of a badge of maleness. In recent years it has declined in usage and as it has done so it has become restricted to those aspects of life where the outside world intrudes least. It has therefore increasingly become a male language.

Clare asks the question:

'What is it that increases your chances of ending up in remedial classes at school, in trouble with the police in adolescence and in jail in your twenties? What is it that makes you much more likely to inject heroin, abuse alcohol, betray your spouse and desert your children? What is it that increases threefold your risk of killing yourself and tenfold your chances of killing someone else? The answer – being male.' (2000 pg. 10)

Young males are increasingly aware of their predicament and they are increasingly uncomfortable with the competition between male and female where that competition is most obvious: in school.

Clare goes on to point out that:

**'The problem is one for those men ..... who have defined their lives, their identities, the very essence of their masculinity in terms of professional and occupational achievement and have prided themselves on the work that only they as men could do.'** (2000 pg.7)

The previous generation won the dialectic argument on gender equality with the aid of enlightened men. As Marx informs us the battle for equality can only be won by the already powerful on behalf of the weak. Avineri wrote that "Marx's sceptical view of the proletariat's ability to conceive its own goals and realise them without outside intellectual help has often been documented" (Francis Wheen on Karl Marx 1999 pg. 276) In 'Education in Barnsley 1903-44' Deighton A.J. (1976), referring to a previous generation of Barnsley pupils wrote that: 'Girls showed a marked superiority in alertness of intellect, clearness and expression in reading and general brightness compared with the boys'.

As Clare (2000) writes, 'Not merely is the role of provider under siege, the role of father is threatened' and goes on to point out:

**'The rise in single mothers suggests not merely that men are inadequate as partners and fathers but that they are simply redundant. Women are asserting that they can conceive and rear children on their own'. (Clare, A. 2000 pg. 7)**

Aggleton (1987) argues that continuity of practice leading to problematised traditions of class and gender relationships emanate from patriarchy within families. (pg 136) He also points out that middle-class families tend to take up employment as 'agents of symbolic control' thereby putting them in a position of hegemonic control and less likely to challenge the establishment.

At the same time because the household is not a part of the Political or Social sphere of the young male it is not an effective Bernsteinian 'second site of acquisition', as it is to young females.

Young working-class males need to '...become activists in running their lives...' as Ulrich Beck quoted by Giddens and Hutton, (2001 pg x) describes it. They go on to point out that: 'In this way globalisation is entering the intimacies of personal lives' and no more so than in the lives of our study group who are at the cutting edge of change and confusion.

#### 4 ) Educational Context

Information contained in the Barnsley Education Development Plan 2002/2007 illustrates the current position at Key Stage four. Overall the percentage of pupils achieving 5A\* - C grades increased from 34.9% in 2000 to 35.5% in 2001, compared with a national figure of 49.2% to 49.7%. In some schools there is a significant difference in attainment between boys and girls that is beyond the national difference of 8.9%. The table clearly demonstrates the difference between boys and girls and how boys' lower achievement scores affect the overall average for the authority.

Table viii

	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>LEA</b>	30.11%	40.90%	35.50%
<b>National</b>			49.70%

Source: Barnsley LEA

The 5A\* to C results remain 14.2% below the national average.

Barnsley Priorities 4 and 5 Community and Training Audit, published in April 1999, tabulated reasons for not continuing in education after Year 11. Interestingly girls' higher score in the 'Want to earn money' category appears to indicate their move to a greater perceived freedom of choice compared to the industrial era when women did not figure in the workplace.

Table viiii

**Reasons for not continuing with education**

	<b>Males %</b>	<b>Females %</b>	<b>All %</b>
<b>Want to earn money</b>	54.0	54.7	54.2
<b>Want to get a job</b>	48.7	43.8	46.9
<b>Do not like school</b>	29.2	18.8	25.4
<b>Do not like studying</b>	16.8	10.9	14.7
<b>I want get the grades I need to continue</b>	6.2	7.8	6.8
<b>All my friends are leaving</b>	4.4	1.6	3.4
<b>My parents don't want me to continue my education</b>	0.9	1.6	1.1
<b>There aren't any courses that I want to do</b>	0.9	7.8	3.4
<b>I can't get to college</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Other</b>	10.6	12.5	11.3

Source: (Report for Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council by Dr Janie Percy-Smith. Policy Research Institute, Leeds Metropolitan University 1999. Pg.80)

Young males appear often to be caught up in the glare of the rhetoric and blissfully unaware of the narrative. Lareau, A. (1987) points out that: 'Although their interpretations vary, most [of these] researchers suggest that lower-class and working-class families do not value education...'. (Halsey,

A.H. et al 1998 pg703) There is certainly a feeling supported by observation that it may not be far from the truth.

As men become more available through less strenuous work and more aware, through publicity, of the need to talk to their sons, they discuss school-work and the general situation of their sons. Sons can thereby draw lessons from these conversations and start to contextualize their lives. The role of teachers and community educators is to implement the metacognitive process by working in both 'sites of acquisition' as described by Bernstein (1990)

There are approximately 22,200 pupils in Barnsley schools. 19,000 in 84 primary schools and nursery schools, 13,100 in 14 secondary schools and 160 in the borough's 1 special school. There is a predicted decline in the primary population from 19,900 in 1999-2000 to 17,100 in 2004-2005. Similarly, this downward trend impacts upon secondary education provision with a decline of approximately 2,000 pupils in secondary schools by 2010. The number of schools categorised as causing concern in 2000 was 23% reduced to 14% in 2001. Inclusion is addressed as an issue in the Education Development Plan 2002-2007.

'In the majority of Barnsley schools, a significant number of pupils suffer the multiple disadvantages of poverty, parental unemployment and family culture of low expectations and educational achievement.'  
(BMBC Ed. Dev. Plan 2002 pg 19)

A study by Whitty, G.

'...showed that those from the private schools were more likely to attend high status universities, read high status subjects and then

enter the labour market in higher paid and more prestigious jobs.' (Education Politics Nov 2001 Issue No 58 pg.4)

than pupils in the state education sector.

Whitty, G. asserts that:

'We need to have schools that meet the aspirations of all children and also provide that social and academic mix that has been shown to be essential for maximising the achievement of all.' (2001 pg 6)

and goes on to quote Maden, M. as indicating that '...it is important for such schools to have a "critical mass" of more engaged, broadly "pro-school" children.' (pg. 7)

The production of 'Learners' is an inter-generational process. It does not take place within one generation but rather as a process of a generation of parents and teachers encouraging, enabling and facilitating learning within the next. It will usually involve three generations; grandparents, parents and children, with distinct parts for each to play. As Freire, P. (1972) points out: 'it takes a whole village to educate a child'. It is possible to use situated learning to facilitate metacognition. Through a process of political and philosophical education a student can be taught to value education.

The process set out by Bernstein (1990) involves primary (school) and secondary (family) sites of acquisition. The pace of learning is important for students who have a low base-line of knowledge and therefore need resources and extra time to learn peripheral and contextual knowledge as they learn core subjects. In Bernstein's words:

**'I shall propose that the schools' academic curriculum, if it is to be effectively acquired, always requires two sites of acquisition, the school and the home. Curricula cannot be acquired wholly by time spent at school. This is because the pacing of the acquisition is such that time at school must be supplemented by official pedagogic time at home, and the home must provide a pedagogic context and control of the pupil to remain in that context. There must be an official pedagogic discipline in the home.'** (1990 pg 77)

Lareau, A. (1987 Vol. 60) described how 'Teachers' methods of presenting, teaching, and assessing subject matter were based on a structure that presumed parents would help children at home.' (pg 77)

According to Anderson et al (1996) there are four claims made for situated learning. They are:

- 1. Action is grounded in the concrete situation in which it occurs**
- 2. Knowledge does not transfer between tasks**
- 3. Training by abstraction is of little use**
- 4. Instruction must be done in complex social environments.**

The major disadvantage to situated learning, it is claimed by Anderson et al (1996, 1997) is that 'Situated learning emphasises the idea that much of what is learned is specific to the situation in which it is learned.' Knowledge is acquired in a single context and remains within that context thus rendering recall difficult for the learner. As recall is difficult without the context the knowledge is less transferable to other jobs, roles, and situations. Due to the limited experience of many working people their number of available contexts for acquiring knowledge are limited. Using situated learning

methods it is vital to use as many contexts as possible in order to enable recall and transfer to other contexts and situations. Whilst arguing against the effectiveness of situated learning Anderson et al (1996) argue that 'A child may not see the point of isolated exercises but will when they are embedded in real-world situations.' Unfortunately for the working-class does not possess the economic capital to support increasing the number or variety of contributions to their social capital.

'Furthermore it was claimed [in focus groups] that many parents find education threatening – they finished school at 16 and see no point in their children staying on'. Speaking of barriers to post 16 learning 29% [of respondents] stated that 'cost' could be a barrier, and 20% that 'time' could be a barrier. (Leeds Met Univ. 1999). OFSTED stated in 1999 that: 'The proportion of 16 year olds remaining in education is much lower than average. In 1998 it was 52.8 per cent, compared with a national figure for 1997 of 69.9 per cent'. (OFSTED Inspection Report, April 1999 pg.10) According to the Leeds Metropolitan University Report in 1999: 'Gender divisions are apparent in post-16 options, with girls more likely than boys to continue in full-time education. ' (pg 89)

Another report for Barnsley Education Department recently said that: 'The impact of deprivation within this authority ... is significant..... particularly for boys where there is under achievement in writing and the Early Years.' (Barnsley Ed. Dev. Plan 2002 Appendix C pg. 1) The report goes on to detail that by the end of Key Stage 1 the attainment of pupils achieving Level 2+ in

reading is below the national expectation by 2.1%. Writing is below by 2.5% and mathematics is slightly below by 1.2%.

**'By the end of Key Stage 2 results for pupils achieving Level 4+ are well below the national expectation in all subjects. In approximately 50% of schools progress remains less than expected in English which is below by 8.6%. In maths it is below by 7.45 and science by 5.8%'**.

By Key Stage 3 'There are significant gender gaps in performance in English and at level 5+ in mathematics.' In 2001 boys achieved 41.4% and girls 63.4% at level 5+ in English; and boys 15.2% compared to girls 27.4% at level 6+: a significant difference.

By Key Stage 4 boys' overall achievement has plummeted to 11 percentage points below that of girls in GCSE 5A\*-C grades: 29.8% compared to 40.8% for girls. A potential remedy for the lower achievement scores is suggested by the Education Development Plan in adoption of General National Vocational Qualifications, when it announces that: 'Performance at GNVQ is better than performance in traditional GCSEs'. The low achievement of Barnsley residents and their disenchantment with education in school is reflected in their reluctance to continue in education after compulsory school age. The take-up of places in further education is 58.3% compared to national figures of 70.6%.

In the words of the Education Development Plan:

**'There are also indications that there is a growing impact of a shortage of teacher supply in both primary and secondary schools. This is beginning to have an increasing detrimental effect on the**

schools' capacity to maintain improvement'.  
(BMBC Ed. Dev. Plan 2002)

Table x

<b><u>Achievement</u></b>	<b><u>Barnsley</u></b> <b><u>(percent)</u></b>	<b><u>UK</u></b> <b><u>(percent)</u></b>
<b>16 year olds gaining 1 or more GCSE A*-G (2001)</b>	95.3	94.4
<b>16 year olds gaining 5 or more GCSEs A*-C (2001)</b>	35.5	49.7
<b>19 year olds gaining Level 2 qualifications (equivalent to 5 GCSEs or Level 2 NVQ) (2000)</b>	66.3	75
<b>Adults with Level 3 qualifications (2000)</b>	28.1	43
<b>Adults with Level 4 qualifications (equivalent to HND or Degree) (2000)</b>	17.2	27.5
<b>Adults with low or very low levels of literacy and numeracy (a technical measure from the local LSC)</b>	29.6	N/A

Source: Barnsley Development Agency 2002

At one school, from which some subjects of this investigation are drawn, boys achieved only 8.93% passes at 5A\*-C for GCSE examinations, the governments key indicator of success in education. The school average was 18% passes at GCSE '5\* - C'. If the boys had done as well as the girls the results would have been very much better.

Table xi

Boys'	5A* - C GCSE for 2000	= 8.93%:
Girls	5A* - C GCSE for 2000	= 25.8%

(Source - Barnsley LEA 2000)

Bernstein (1990) posits that:

'From a cognitive and from a social point of view girls are less likely to be negatively constrained by the invisible pedagogies than visible pedagogies. Conversely, for boys, under an invisible pedagogy practice, girls become successful competitors and a threat.' (Pg. 82)

Working-class boys too often experience an impoverished learning environment within their family and community. They are as intelligent as their middle class counterparts but have different experiences and stimuli. Girls respond better to verbal stimuli and are able better to get their knowledge of the world outside their immediate environment from books and stories. Boys are more in need of the actual experience, sight, sound and feel of event, phenomenon and physical existence to learn from. Thus their learning is drawn much more from what is happening around them: from their peer group, their family; the common experience of life; and they later draw from that experience to confirm their attitudes to learning and life. It is only when they leave that environment, if they do, that they start to question the values and experiences of younger life. Boys, who are more capable in the visual and spatial skills, may be disadvantaged by the fact that they are in a poor visually-stimulating environment; (i.e. council estate). They are thus less likely to obtain rewarding experiences and stimuli from their immediate

environment than middle-class children, from a more varied visual experience.

The neo-liberal New Labour government appears to be discriminating against low-SES students by constantly reinforcing their lack of progress through testing at every stage and castigating students for failing to live up to high SES students' achievement levels. There have been, however some attempts to democratise the educational process and the way it is perceived.

Young, I.M. (2000) declared that,

'Democracy entails political equality, that all members of the polity are included equally in the decision-making process and have an equal opportunity to influence the outcome'. (pg 52)

Greater participation through modernisation of government, especially at local government level has been a key objective of the New Labour government. Part of that process has been the system of Scrutiny Commissions, which play a part in policy formulation and oversee the work of the policy makers.

These commissions meet in public, at regular intervals to discuss policy and practice of education departments, and other educational institutions in the area of their influence. This is a means of 'extending politics', and 'revivifying democratic practice by devising ways of enhancing public discussion, debate, and negotiation. It is inherently based on a vision of democracy that sees it as an educative practice.' (Apple M.W. 1993 ) In theory the public can

influence educational decisions but in practice most decisions on education are made by central government.

Though the system of education in Barnsley is increasingly inclusive and in many ways part of the political system through area forum discussions, partnership arrangements etc. residents continue to feel excluded from the debate and from the educational process outside schools. As Apple points out (1993)

‘...many of our political “leaders” ... have set out, aggressively to drag down the character of a people while at the same time attacking the poor and the disenfranchised for their supposed lack of values and character’. (1993 pg307)

The curriculum as Connell (1994) describes is ‘... derived historically from the educational practices of European upper class men’ and as such is unlikely to contradict the increasingly government-legitimated, capitalist induced hegemonic curriculum. There is no place for what Connell (1994) calls ‘locally produced knowledge’ to offset or threaten this hegemony. Quicke, (1994), refers to this local knowledge as ‘cultural knowledge’ which could be ‘usefully perceived as a version of metacognitive knowledge’. Quicke considers that cultural knowledge should be incorporated into the formal curriculum in order to encourage pupils to articulate this knowledge and thus be enabled to ‘make use of it to improve their learning’. (pg.10)

Amongst the benefits of reflection in a metacognitive way extolled by Quicke (1994) is the facility for pupils to criticise their own culture. In this study it was found that boys do actively criticise their culture but that they did not have

anybody to criticise it to, except themselves: Hence a lack of reflective possibilities and no route to metacognition. Of course as Quicke (1994) points out 'Pupils are often unaware of just how potentially useful their cultural knowledge is from an educational viewpoint' and therefore are unable to even begin the reflective protest process.

Many young males' behaviour is affected by what Poynting et al (1999) called 'protest masculinity' (pg 60). Poynting et al describe '... contradictions experienced by male Lebanese migrant secondary school students' described originally by Connell in 1995. This phenomenon is an attempt to assert their masculinity as an offensive tactic in a defensive situation.

Vincent (1977) spells out the importance of context to experiential learning. 'Any radical movement is heavily dependent on the knowledge of the past in the formulation of its current ideology ...' (pg 6) Vincent goes on to attest that 'The very presence of the working men's autobiographies may be seen as one aspect of the invasion of a pre-industrial oral culture by the written word.' His version chimes with Bernstein's instructional and regulative discourses when he writes that:

'The working-class became increasingly reliant on literature, as both producers and consumers, to discover and transmit a knowledge of their identity in society and in turn the governing class became more and more proficient at using literature as a weapon of social and political control.' (Vincent, D. 1977 pg.6)

The transition of education and knowledge within the capitalist transition is from inner personalised knowledge (Trivium) to outer socialised knowledge

(Quadrivium). Bernstein points out that in the Transitional phase (twentieth century) 'The link between education and production is strengthened by the ideology of mobility through education, and of education offering equal opportunity.' (pg 153) Though he also points out that:

'The linkage between education and production fostered by equality of opportunity and mobility through education is more ideological than real in its effects, especially for minority groups'. (1990 pg. 153)

Thus many poorly educated working-class groups might well be left behind by the education-based transition especially when as Bernstein describes '...dominant agents drawn from the field of production now have crucial management functions.' over the 'agencies of symbolic control, especially education...' (pg 154) Apple (1993) contends that

'... our educational institutions are being reconstructed as a site for the generation of profit. Their daily experience – their common sense – will have been formed around the transformation of knowledge (and themselves) into a site for the production of profit.' (Apple 1993 pg 314)

The findings of the National Education Longitudinal Survey in the USA conducted between 1988 and 1992 suggest that large proportions of the gap between high SES students achievement and that of low SES students within the black culture can be accounted for by 'stratification at family level'. In other words that some family members take precedence over others in the same family, when resources are insufficient to provide for all. This may account for some working-class pupils doing well in spite of poor resource-availability overall.

The education system in the area has traditionally been geared to the requirements of the mining industry. Young males traditionally left school as soon as possible and went down the mine. If they sensed a desire to be an individual it educated them either in the engineering needs of mining (through the local college and universities) or the politics of mining communities (NUM, Northern College, Ruskin).

The area now has a functionally illiterate rate of 18% and a functionally inumerate rate of 41% (Barnsley LEA 1999) Barnsley Education Department's Adult Learning Plan 2002-2003 states that in consultations with communities in Barnsley officers have '...identified a fear of learning that is similar to a fear of crime.' (Barnsley MBC 2002 pg 13) This is supported by the fact that 'one third of unemployed people [in Barnsley] say they would not undertake training.

This is the education system which Corrigan, P. (1979 pg 20) sees as : '...a series of hurdles which are raised against ...' students from working-class households. They start formal learning late because their parents are often semi-literate; and when they converse with their school teacher it is effectively in a different language because of the effects of what Bernstein (1990) calls 'restricted codes' and the effect of dialect. Further to this according to Bernstein (1990)

'The strong pacing rule of the academic curriculum of the school creates ..... a particular form/modality of communication which does not privilege everyday narrative or learning'.(pg 78)

## Chapter 2 – Research Methodology: an Interpretative Approach

It was initially envisaged that this study of the education of males in Barnsley would be carried out using ethnographic methodology grounded in emerging theory. It has a background of Bernstein's (1977, 1990) and Willis' (1999) work, with a strong thread of Marxist ideology. As the work progressed, it became obvious that to remain faithful to ethnographic principles would be impossible in such a small-scale project. The research took on more of an anthropological/sociological approach to the education of young males in the modern era. Marx propounded that workers were mere 'cogs in a machine'. "In the factory" he writes in Capital "there exists a mechanism independent of the workers, which incorporates them as living cogs..." (Weil, S. 1958 pg 40). The work is set against what the working-class perceive as powerlessness to determine their future. It hopes to discover a narrative to develop the route to rediscovery of their culture and identity.

Power points out '...there are considerable difficulties with applying the hypothetico-deductive approach to ethnographic research.' (Walford, G. Ed. 1998 pg. 13) Like Power 'I did not start the fieldwork with tightly framed hypotheses, but I did have theories I wished to address.' This similarity is not surprising when realising that her '...research draws on Bernstein's formulations on the curriculum and pedagogy...' (pg. 12) as this work does in part. The research methodology evolved as an ethnographic approach to a case study.

'Educational Ethnography' according to Goetz & LeCompte (1984) '...represents an investigative process, a way of studying human behaviour'. (Goetz, J.P. and LeCompte, M.D. 1984 pg.13). It is rooted in anthropology and is a more sophisticated means of discovering how people behave. It includes elements of anthropological, sociological and psychological approaches to the investigative process. In the words of Mills, C.W. (1967) 'The life of an individual cannot be adequately understood without references to the institutions within which his biography is enacted.' (pg. 161) Whilst this study is not truly ethnographic it is rooted in the institutions and biographies of its subjects.

I had hoped for a focused and penetrating analysis of a well-defined problem, but did not have the luxury of a well-defined problem. The problem often becomes what to focus on and how to define the problem. There is a need therefore for a progressive focus in which the theory develops in line with discovery. Indeed the theory on under-achievement by young males in school is a fairly recent phenomenon and when allied to working-class status becomes even more contentious than it would otherwise be.

In considering the abiding chicken and egg situation of how to formulate a hypothesis and research plan from unknown evidence Andrew, A. (1985) considers that to 'dive in at the deep end', may be the way to tackle the issue of formulating a research plan at the same time as being adventurous with the data to bring about 'new avenues of thought' and points out that 'Saran refers to a process of "abducting" by which total immersion in the

data enables us to make imaginative leaps". By means of abducting from this immersion in the data, without the opportunity to control the precise process of research design, the study developed into a grounded theory approach in which the theory emerged from the data.

In ethnographic research the total immersion is usually by means of intense observation of a subject group. Willis, P. (1999) in 'Learning to Labour', his seminal ethnographic work on young working-class males, details how he immersed himself in the culture. Willis describes how

'The main group was studied intensively by means of observation and participant observation in class, around the school and during leisure activities; regular recorded group discussions; informal interviews and diaries'.

(Willis, P. 1999 Pg 5)

Corrigan, P. (1979) pursued a similar methodology in his work on working-class boys. In 'Schooling the Bash Street Kids', he describes his experience of classroom observation. Mac An Ghail (1996, 1997, 1998, 1999) has more recently written extensively from the ethnographic perspective on the subject of male identity and self-image within the context of education within a changing economic and social environment, and reflected upon the methodology.

The methodology is designed to capture the ethos of learning for young males in working-class deprived communities, at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It will facilitate a snap-shot in time and place and in this respect it is a recording of an event. Foucault explains 'an event' as a reversal of a relationship of forces. Similar to a change in hegemony as described by

Gramsci whereby 'a class and its representatives exercise power over subordinate classes by means of a combination of coercion and persuasion'. (Simon R 1991 pg 22) That coercion and persuasion has often been facilitated by a manipulation of education and the educational process.

According to Smelser:

'Henry Brougham described English popular education as the worst in Europe and complained that the typical governmental response to proposed educational reform and other reforms was "to promise, pause, prepare, postpone, and end by lettings things alone." (Smelser 1991 pg 7)

Goetz and LeCompte (1984 pg. 23) point out the inability of most researchers to resource the complex research needed to study entire communities and their education systems. By the time of publication researchers were starting to divide aspects of research into smaller projects which studied more detailed aspects of a larger situation. (e.g. 'Microethnographies of small work or leisure groups within classrooms or schools; Studies of single classrooms abstracted as small societies. Pg 23)

This study follows in that tradition of studying a part of the system in the hope that a contribution might be made to understanding the bigger picture. The most outstanding example of such an approach was Willis (1977) 'Learning to Labour', a study of how working-class lads get working-class jobs.

'Educational ethnographers examine the processes of teaching and learning; the intended and unintended consequences of observed interactions patterns; the relationships among such educational actors as parents, teachers, and learners; and the sociocultural contexts

within which nurturing, teaching, and learning occur.' (Goetz, J.P. & LeCompte, M.D. 1984 pg31)

The observation necessary to implement real ethnography was beyond the scope of the project or the researcher to carry out, certainly in the time available. The school involved did not want the presence of a researcher in their classrooms and I could not afford to spend so much time on the project. Added to this was the fact that only one school was willing to co-operate and even in that school not all the teachers were completely sold on the idea. At the time of carrying out the initial research, teachers were in dispute with their employers and certainly did not wish someone to be present in their workplace whilst they were teaching. A fact which in itself was indicative of the power-structure within schools and communities was that teachers were able to exert enough pressure on head-teachers to exclude someone who was carrying out research which might benefit the community which the school served. The project was never easy to sell to teachers or to head-teachers, and governors never got a look-in.

In the debate on the relative merits of quantitative and qualitative research, ethnography stands out as perhaps the most blatantly qualitative methodology: being clearly difficult to analyse quantitatively, ethnographic research stands alone at the qualitative end of the spectrum of research methodology. It depends on direct observation and interpretation, of first hand accounts. It is perhaps for that reason that this investigation feels so ethnographic to this researcher: the sense of where the investigation is

leading, the unwrapping of the various layers of interpretation and the analysis and organising of individual accounts depends absolutely upon qualitative and sometimes even intuitive interpretation.

Timutimu, N. Simon, J. and Matthews, K.M. (1998) in their study of the New Zealand Schools system detail how they took great care to speak to teachers and pupils who participated in experimental (native) education as first hand observers. They also ensured that as many first-hand written accounts, in the form of letters etc. contemporaneous with events were used to corroborate report evidence.

In this research an attempt has been made to corroborate and support evidence by use of biographies of males from the same geographical area. All transcriptions of interviews are verbatim, as near as possible. This was done so that the true flavour of what was said came through in the words of the interviewees. There was also a desire on the part of the author to illustrate the working-classness of the subjects by use of their vernacular, and their degree of detachment from the globalised modern world by their use of Northern English dialect. It is generally recognised that the South-East of England is the financial driving force of the British economy and that the North has been the heavy-industrial region. The difference is important if only because the perception local to Barnsley is that the Northern region suffered disproportionately from the collapse of heavy industry. That collapse remains tangible and has a disadvantageous effect on individuals and the confidence of community members.

The existence of a division in speech and dialect between the two regions is recognised by historians and scholars of linguistics. Rogers, K.H. (1995) quotes: 'Bryson (1990),...' who

'...in his fresh and stimulating book on the English Language makes the point that the Danelaw is "still an important dividing line between northern and southern dialects".

'It seems to me...' Rogers continues '...that some of the seeds of English class-consciousness sprouted early from such a division.' (pg. 41) I agree and consider that this social division continues today. Rogers further maintains that '...speech differences helped to produce both socially and linguistically "two nations" in one country, for class-consciousness feeds on stereotypes of speech.' (ibid. pg.42) It is illustrative of working-class culture in Barnsley that young males continue to use a different language to the modern globalised culture. The hoped-for effect of the transcription is that of a picture of the lives lived by males being educated and socialised within a post-industrial environment overtaken by a modern global economy. Not quite science, but more than story-telling.

At the start of the work on this study I considered I had been immersed in the culture of the area for many years. After deeper thought, I realised that although I had been born and brought-up in the area, I had always stood at the side of it to some extent. I was never in the 'right gang' as a boy. I went to a selective school, very few did from my area; and afterwards I left home at 15yrs old to live in other areas of Britain and Europe. I was really very untypical in many ways, so I had a lot to find out about the people I was

raised with and why I was different. With hindsight I realise my father was also apart from the majority of the community, as he did not work in the deep-mines. He worked in the open-cast mines and that was enough to set him apart from the close-knit community of teams of shift-workers. Though I did not realise it at the time I was always separate to the mainstream of my community and therefore able later to consider that community from an independent informed perspective.

It might be said that ethnography, when used as in this study to consider the lives of a few subjects intensively over a limited time is just taking a snapshot in time. That snapshot is useful however in contributing to the picture over time, which will be studied along with other snapshots to provide a longitudinal perspective to future research. In the event, this snapshot was taken with a time-lapse camera, over a period of a year. The effect was that though the boys were all the same age, some were interviewed at different ages.

The subjects of this study were first interviewed in groups and the interviews were recorded on audio tape. Some of their fathers were then interviewed individually and recorded. The sons of the fathers who responded and were interviewed were then interviewed as individuals. The group interviews acted as a triangulation device, along with the voices of ex-pupils who had left school and started training courses by the time I interviewed them. In the words of Mills, C.W. (1967): 'The life of an individual cannot be adequately understood without references to the institutions within which his biography

is enacted'. (pg. 161) The most important of these institutions to the individual's development, outside the immediate family, is the education system. It is the education system which helps to mould or at least to mitigate and should enable understanding of 'the most internal and "psychological" features of man: in particular, his self image and his conscience and indeed the very growth of his mind' (Mills, C.W. 1967 pg.161)

In the same way as Burnett (1974b) describes the early ethnographers seeking to '...study a society from the perspective of the child, by learning its language and basic behaviour patterns...' (Goetz, J.P. & LeCompte, M.D. 1984 pg15) I hope to shed light on the life of the community in which my subjects live. The study is a classical ethnographic study in terms of what Goetz and LeCompte 1974 describe:

'...characterised by the investigation of a small, relatively homogenous and geographically bounded study site; long-term and repeated residence of researcher at the site ...' (pg.17)

though less so by other criteria such as 'use of participant observation as the preferred data collection strategy,...' The primary data are however

'...supplemented by a variety of ancillary techniques such as the interpretative description and explanation of the culture, life ways, and social structure of the group under investigation' (Goetz and LeCompte 1984 pg17)

This study is also partly historical as any complete picture must be. It seeks to ascertain what effect history has had on the attitudes of actors and how

outside influences have shaped those attitudes. Thus the theory which grows out of the study will contribute to the larger picture of working-class culture and how it is effected by education.

The techniques used in this research have differed and changed throughout the period of the research. It started off as a representative sample of the whole population of the community in which the research is based. The community is almost 0.25 million strong and the young males would be in the region of 35,000. A representative sample would not be anywhere near that number, of course, but it would need to have been certain of containing representatives from each, as yet undefined, section of the category. The idea was turning into an indefinable problem. It gradually dawned on me that I would need to do the do-able rather than aspire to perfection. I eventually built on my meagre initial success to interview a cross-section of the male population in the community. It progressed by degrees to researching the issues of the group of interviewees, 23 individuals, in all 12 hours of audio recording and a similar period of formal observation in school. Plus observations including a full-day with the whole final year of a school, as part of a discussion on careers and futures. Add to that unrecorded interviews with teachers, and particularly 3 hours with the headteacher of the sample school; reading of auto/biographies of former Barnsley pupils; and many examples of documentary evidence from Barnsley Local Authority and Education Authority (in Bibliography) and it is evident that a bigger sample would have been very difficult for a lone researcher working part-time to analyse any more: it might even have been counter-productive to try.

I had hoped to formally observe and interview lads in their final year of secondary school in various locations and to then interview their fathers and to comparatively analyse their responses. Though I was successful in gaining access to only one school it was a representative sample as the lads were from a community representative of the whole (because Barnsley is such a homogenous community) and their fathers were obviously representative of the fathers of the whole, hoped-for, sample. It is a truism that only those who are willing to help will be available. It was certainly true in this case. I would be very interested to observe and interview more of the unmotivated and disruptive elements of the potential sample and their parents, as this might potentially yield some of the starkest insights to the learning patterns of the dispossessed; but that was not possible on this occasion.

Generalisability is an issue outside the immediate methodology. It would often have been helpful to the flow of the interviews if the researcher had been less involved in the dialogue with subjects, as they were being interviewed. This was the fault of the over-enthusiasm of the researcher and the fact that much needed to be squeezed into little time. The fact is that the subjects were interesting.

I found it unexpectedly difficult to arrange interviews through schools. During a visit to a comprehensive with poor achievement levels, adjacent to a large working-class estate, I requested from the head-teacher that I be enabled to

interview some pupils. He acceded readily to my request. My attempts to follow up this facility were met with a failure to respond.

My letters to a further 4 schools were also ignored with the exception of one from a head-teacher, who is also the secretary of the secondary heads association which gave the excuse that there was so much going on in school at the current time I could not be facilitated. This is at a time when school-teachers are in dispute with national government on the number of hours teachers need to work. Wallace, G. et al (1998) mention in their account of 'Using Ethnographic Methods' ... '...schools were somewhat circumspect about getting involved in research.' (Walford, G. ed. 1998 pg. 81)

I included in my letter to head-teachers, a full ethical framework for the research. It was therefore clear that I was acting as a researcher and not as a politician. I was forced to consider whether this was a response to me as a researcher or me as a politician. If it was as a politician then teachers appeared not to take the ethics of academic research seriously. This brings into serious question in whose interests teachers are acting. Were they acting in their own and their profession's interests or the interests of their pupils? If they were acting politically should they have included pupils as participants rather than unknowing victims. I was later contacted by the original head-teacher who invited me into school, after about two months. I interviewed 14 year 10 boys in the school in groups of 2 to 4 boys at a time. I recorded the interviews on audio-tape.

It became obvious over the period of study that it was not an ethnographic study but was related in some ways to ethnography. In that it studied people's lives and how they were lived, it was ethnographic. It failed to be truly ethnographic because it did not study all their life by means of observation. There simply was not enough time or other resource available to do so. As detailed above there were also logistical reasons on behalf of the schools and political reasons for them.

I resorted in the end to what works, which is what real life researchers do in these situations. I followed the plan as closely as possible to the point where it was no longer practicable and then I extemporised. I gathered together self-selected volunteers and talked at as great a length as they would tolerate via interviews. The interviews were necessarily at least semi-structured or there would have been long periods of silence, which on £10 per hour (for interviewees) would have been very expensive for my meagre budget.

I also relied on personal knowledge and anecdotes. I was educated in the same schools as these subjects and lived in the same communities for much of my life. I also have other opportunities to study the subject cohorts as I mix frequently with fathers and pupils in communities and schools, during my professional and political duties. I therefore have frequent opportunity to observe the subject cohorts. Historical and auto/biographical data has also helped to form ideas.

One great problem for me was the fact that those in charge rarely write down their story. Their story after all is history. It is a matter of fact and does not need recording: or so they think; but what were the processes involved. In order to get a real idea of the struggle involved from a male perspective it is necessary to go back to a time when males were in real struggle. In Britain the last time when males were differentiated was the industrial revolution and the forming of Trades Unions. During this time the struggle was for rights for working men: women's would come later. At that time men were politicised and aware of the need for education as a tool of the struggle. For many decades since then, men have been comfortable to be in a position of hegemony. Against this background it does not occur to them to rationalise and formalise their experiences. Other situations in struggle can supply valuable experiences to draw upon. The struggle of Black men in South Africa amidst their political struggle sheds some light on the ways in which education facilitates the struggle for equality of opportunity within the globalised economic climate. Nelson Mandela's experience of drawing inspiration and motivation from Black and particularly Xhosa culture are well-documented in his biographies. Without the mirror of White opportunity it is probable that Black men would not have been aware of their lack of opportunity. Males in working-class mining communities in which they were reasonably comfortable had no mirror, therefore no reason to aspire to greater things. Their world was a collective world of shared resources where nobody had more than anybody else.

Only by asking them to recall their experience in the light of modern circumstances can that insight be unlocked. That need for the interviewee to intellectualise their thoughts and to recall their experiences in the context of recent experience led to difficulties in methodology and did not always facilitate succinct responses from subjects. The interviewees were unsure at first that they could trust the researcher. They felt vulnerable and were unwilling to share their experience for fear of being judged. Though time was short, I considered it useful to develop what rapport I could. I attempted to share their vulnerability. This I did by use of flash-cards to share my life-story in five minutes of introduction. This made me vulnerable and set up a relationship of equality, or at least mutual risk, which appeared to work and initiated a good start to a working relationship. Its worth was evident later when interviewees were willing to be very open about their life-experiences. Elements of this introduction were later quoted, by interviewees, in conversation. My agenda was set out and expectations clarified. Subjects' expectations and questions were invited and met at the beginning of the process. This openness and transparency of process was continued throughout the research.

The first four tapes, were of 15 year old lads in groups. The interviews were conducted in school and although we conducted a round of introductions at the beginning of the session, this acted more as an ice-breaker and practice for speaking than a real means of identification. Questions and prompts were not directed at particular individuals and answers and responses came from any or all at the time. These sessions served to inform the background

of the work and to set the agenda for sessions with individuals. The main data was obtained from semi-structured interviews with some of the lads from the original sessions and three out of four fathers of interviewees.

Boys very ready to say where they lived, and were very open with me about their neighbourhood and environment and details of their lives. This made them potentially vulnerable but did not distract from their keenness to participate. The ethical framework was read to subjects at the beginning of each interview and given to them in writing, in order to assure them of protection. There was some initial suspicion about the requirement to write their home address on the invitation to be interviewed. Some subjects obviously preferred not to be contacted outside school. Most subjects were open about their home situations and relationships with their fathers. Some had step-fathers and some had no fathers or significant male adults in their life. Though they did not know me I was trusted with extremely sensitive and personal knowledge and I felt a great sense of responsibility to be honoured with their trust.

Each section of the transcription was analysed using criteria detailed in the corresponding section of the theoretical framework. The text of interviews were interrogated and analysed from various key perspectives, as set out by various authors and which emerged as relevant to the issues. These themes are:

1. Culture, Learning and Acquisition
2. Class, Public and Private spheres
3. Politics and Education
4. Maleness

Much of the enquiry carried out in this study is by means of interviews with subjects. Whether they are group or individual interviews the intention is to make them in Robson's (1999) words '...a conversation with a purpose.' (pg.228). The interviews, observations and subsequent interpretations must of course be credible. In order to ensure credibility it is necessary to use information from a variety of sources, which will be mutually confirming. In this case the prime information of the individual young males will be supported by information from their peers, in groups. The information from the young males will be compared with that from their fathers and supported by information from various other sources; e.g. teachers, local statistical information. This use of evidence from different sources, referred to as triangulation, is key to enhancing credibility of the study.

Other elements of good research design such as transferability, generalisability, dependability, etc are difficult to demonstrate in ethnographic research as it does tend to apply to the specific situation, time and place. Any attempt to duplicate the research would be false as at least attitudes will have changed over time. The research will of course be confirmable as the transcripts and indeed the actual audio tapes will be available. These will constitute the audit trail for the enquiry.

The most important institution to the individual's development, outside the immediate family, is the education system. It is the education system which, helps to mould or at least to mitigate and should enable understanding of 'the most internal and "psychological" features of man: in particular, his self-image and his conscience and indeed the very growth of his mind'. (Mills, C.W. 1967 pg.161)

The subjects of the study were young males in the final year of their secondary education, their fathers, and some ex-pupils who were in post-16 training when interviewed. Observation mixed with retrospective experience of the author, and others via biographies, added colour and validity to semi-structured interview accounts; of pupils, students and fathers.

The workers, in terms of producers for the capitalist system, in this study are fathers of the prime subjects and are of crucial importance to the education of those subjects. The education of the workers and their attitudes to education, were formed within the framework of subjugation to the system and that inevitably affects their attitude to the education of their sons. Their views will therefore be incorporated into the study. Some of the subjects were also starting out on their career ladder. In all 21 individuals were interviewed. All the under 16 year olds were interviewed in groups. Those from the group interviews who were willing went on to be interviewed individually. Those fathers who agreed, when approached to participate, were interviewed individually.

Ex-Barnsley schools' pupils who were students at a training centre, were interviewed individually. These students acted as a means of verification and triangulation of the results from the pupils. All the interviewees in the second round of individual interviews were remunerated for their individual time. This remuneration has become a norm in Barnsley during investigations and exploration of citizens' needs and attitudes, by the local authority and non-governmental organisations. The 'going-rate' was £10 per session at the time of my research. This is probably an indication of the reluctance of local people to speak to outsiders and a measure of the inducement necessary to overcome their lethargy and initial suspicion.

As Robson, (1999) points out in *Real World Research*:

'...one of the challenges about carrying out investigations in the "real world" is in seeking to say something sensible about a complex, relatively poorly controlled and generally "messy" situation.' (pg. 3)

Our subjects are taken to be representatives of their gender, class, geographical position and place in history. They actually represent only a snapshot in time and place: mere samples of their population at a particular time. They are however examples, chosen quite randomly, of the working-class male population of a working-class town at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

As Goetz and LeCompte (1984) describe many ethnographers have '...examined enculturation and socialisation within industrialised and industrialising societies...' and have clarified '...distinctions between

schooling and education'. (Goetz and LeCompte1984 pg21) This study picks up the theme at the end of the process of industrialisation, where the unfortunate subjects are struggling with communal poverty and the challenge of globalised communications and economies. In that sense the study is of the cultural change which challenges people and systems of government, throughout the world. It also makes the study an investigation of politics and how they affect education.

In Barnsley as in the rest of Europe there is a large disparity between the achievements of boys and girls. Willis (1999) in his seminal study of working-class boys, *Learning to Labour*, chose his study subjects after a period of immersion in the school. I have been immersed in the culture of Barnsley for many years and so have a start. The subjects were first interviewed in groups and the interviews recorded. Some of their fathers were then interviewed individually and recorded. The sons of the fathers who responded and were interviewed were then interviewed as individuals. Some members of one group were suspicious of being recorded, initially. They were all curious about the work I was carrying out and they had a curiosity about things outside their experience. They were keen to tell me about their experiences, without knowing who I was, in an innocent and naïve way. I was immediately accepted as part of the group when first inviting the lads to be interviewed.

The fathers' occupations as perceived by boys were – mechanical engineer, yard manager, steelworker, hospital technician - often reflected sons'

perceptions rather than mundane reality. These boys were the eventual returnees to interview after their fathers had been interviewed. They were all in the same upper set of pupils and no other fathers responded.

Individual characters emerged as interview targets due to their complementarity in peer groups as well as their individuality. These individuals were targeted for more in-depth observation in the hope that their behaviour was representative of their type and were able to shed light on the issues affecting others. Interviews were used to further explore emerging issues and to clarify points.

The main issues to emerge were that:

- Young males lacked direction and purpose for their lives.
- Young males needed experienced-others with whom they could check out the course of their lives.
- Older males recognised their lack of reflection facilitators.
- Older males were ill-equipped to facilitate young males in reflection as they did not possess the skills or the knowledge of necessity.
- The lads suffered and were disadvantaged by being unable to use the full range of their sensitivities, knowledge and skills to develop their aspirations.
- Interviewees' lack of cultural capital particularly, the lack of opportunity to network with peers outside their own context, was a significant disadvantage to learning.

- Language was not a direct impediment to knowledge acquisition but dialect acted as a codified filter to communication with the outside world. The lads were thereby alienated by their own lack of language skills.
- There is little effective communication between fathers and sons even though fathers would like to communicate with their sons, and sons try to establish communication with their fathers.
- None of the males communicated effectively with other males in their family.
- Virtually none of the males read any thing at all outside school. Most outside information was gained from television.

I am informed by friends in Germany, that much of the mistaken impression in the German Democratic Republic of the Western world, was gained from television transmitted from West Germany. Germans from the East were shocked to find the West was not like the ideal shown on Television: a salutary lesson to those gaining contextual information from the media.

An explanation of the problems associated with globalisation, after a history of isolation in an introverted social sphere, and the associated difficulties for identity, contextual knowledge and learning, is outlined in Part 2. The attitudes to various elements of the situation are explained in the words of the people involved and set within a theoretical framework.

## **Part Two**

### **1. Explaining the Situation**

### **2. Attitudes to Opportunity**

- 1. Contribution to Capitalism**
- 2. Democracy in Education**
- 3. Identifying with Democracy**
- 4. Education for Transition**
- 5. World of Facticity**

### **3. Attitudes to Learning**

- 1. Cognitive Learning**
- 2. Situated learning**
- 3. Reflexivity**
- 4. Expectation of Education**
- 5. Curriculum**

### **4. Attitudes to Acquisition**

- 1. Embodied State**
- 2. Objectified State**
- 3. Institutionalised**
- 4. Sites of Acquisition**
- 5. Primary Sites**
- 6. Secondary Sites**

### **5. Attitudes to Maleness**

- 1. Working-Class Identity**
- 2. Household**
- 3. Public and Private Spheres**
- 4. Masculinities and Education**
  - i Interpersonal Dominance**
  - ii Knowledge and Reflection**
  - iii Narrative and Dialogue**

# 1. Explaining the Situation

It is the contention of this enquiry that working-class white males are disadvantaged by the education system, which discriminates in favour of individuals who are able to work within the authoritarian system set up by symbolic controllers, to favour private-sphere individuals; and those who have developed communications skills and contextual knowledge sufficient to enable them to take advantage of the particular curriculum. Young white males by virtue of their public sphere socialisation through their fathers and in their community and their lack of cultural capital are ill-equipped to compete at school and maintain the pace of the curriculum.

This enquiry is framed and shaped by authors on the subject of education and relationships in working-class males, as well as by the evidence from interviews and observations of working class males. Apple's work (1992; 1993) provides a class-based analysis of the political context.

This provides a theoretical context for later contributions by working-class males, to speak of their experiences. The section moves via the various contexts of working-class experience from culture and acquisition of learning, through the political and social factors affecting their lives, to the educational system and how it affects the very maleness of individuals and how they affect it.

Household educational resources similarly are more beneficial to high-SES students,...' (Roscigno V.J. and Ainsworth-Darnell J.W. 1999 pg 170). Anderson et al, quoting Ericson, Krampel and Tesche-Romer, (1993) , emphasise that :

'The kind of sustained practice required to develop excellence in an advanced domain is not inherently motivating to most individuals and requires substantial family and cultural support'.  
(1996)

The subjects of the study are pupils in their final year of secondary education and their fathers, plus some post 16 students. In all 27 interviews were carried out, with 20 individuals. (Refer to Appendix 1 for interview schedule) All are from the same community and who share the experience of learning and education in that environment. In addition to these, a day was spent listening to and exchanging views with an entire year 11 at a separate school. The initial interviews were carried-out in groups of 2 to 4 people. For the purpose of anonymity these individuals are numbered in the text. The individual interviewees are identifiable by names, which have been changed to provide anonymity. The interviewees were reluctant to be interviewed individually, as became evident when they were invited to do so later and only a few were willing to participate. They were more willing to participate however, in groups. The group interviews were carried out in groups of 4 (x3) and a group of two.

In the interviews recorded here, the personalities and identities of the subjects shine through. It is evident in some cases that subjects attempted to conceal their real character by acting braver or more intellectual than they were. Ultimately, subjects were able to be identified as themselves, individual, vulnerable in the big world scheme, often wiser than they realised. They were a mix of personalities and emotions: some masculine, some more feminine; some private, some public: modern males. Do they have the mix of knowledge skills and attitudes to optimise their opportunities in a modern world? Is school able to supply them, or is it just a form of social control? Does their environment facilitate and support education and learning? Do they have the required resources and are they able to access new ideas?

Some comments on the factors considered, in the past, to be affecting the class from which these subjects came; may be enlightening:

**'The very concreteness, denseness, buried radicalism, and relevance of informal cultural processes, and the very substance of their claim on individuals is their greatest weakness in the larger social context.'** (Willis1978 pg166)

**'These young men have not entered this world (where reading opens up new ideas), and are only likely to if there is a major politicisation of the [Australian] working class and a massive adult education initiative. Since the mass communication system which they are plugged into, commercial television, is totally opposed to such a change, the strong likelihood is that they will never reach political literacy'. (Connell, R. in Angus, L. (Ed) 1993 pg 99)**

Donald Macleod described OFSTED and the Audit Commission report, which concluded:

‘There was no proven relationship between the quality of an LEA and overall standards of educational attainment in schools. Other factors, such as the effect of soio-economic disadvantage, were found to be stronger’.(16 September 2002)

thereby indicating that any improvement or achievement of quality by the LEA are likely to be outweighed by social circumstances. Those circumstances are explored under various headings: Culture Learning and Acquisition; Class, Public and Private Spheres; Politics and Education; and Maleness; are the main headings into which the context of the interviewees lives are divided for description.

## 2. Attitudes to Opportunity

What encourages so many young working-class pupils to reject education when it is clear to many that education is their only way out of social poverty? The perceived conflict of aspirations between school and working-class is clearly not inevitable, as proved in socialist societies such as Cuba, which has one of the best-educated populations in the world. Is it simply the conflict between the co-operative values and practices of the community and the competitive culture of the school, or does it run deeper? Is it part of the culture of education in a class-divided society? How much of their learning is situated within their inadequate understanding of their environment and politics? How much is their learning restricted by lack of cultural capital? Are males more affected by these factors?

From within walls built by itself the educational establishment determines, by teaching others, its own hegemony. 'Apple (1986)...' appears to support this analysis of an education system blind to its own short-comings when he '...has suggested that, ' ...we see specific classed, raced, gendered subjects,...' rather than 'abstract "learners"...' (Mac An Ghail 1996 pg 308)

Politics, at micro and macro levels, affects all that we do. Whether it is pavements not repaired due to lack of funding or education done in a particular way because the philosophy of government dictates it so: everyone is affected by the daily discourse of individuals and groups that we call politics.

### *i) Contribution to Capitalism*

It is inconceivable that Giddens's and Hutton's conversational notion of a 'quantum leap' of change in the 'capitalist game' is not the change in capitalism envisaged by Bernstein for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, if not in quite the way he imagined. (2001 pg24) 'It is [now] the idea that sells' in the new economic climate, and '...control of the idea rather than production is what counts'. (pg 24) Thus we see the ushering in of the knowledge or the 'weightless economy' as Giddens (2001) has termed it. How easily will young working-class males fit into that economy? Sadonvik, A.R. and Semel, S.F. point out that: 'In *Suicide* (1897a/t. 1951a) he demonstrated empirically how the breakdown in traditional community resulted in the decline of collective conscience and the rise of individualism.' (1998, Walford, G. and Pickering W.S.F. pg. 144)

The transmission and acquisition of knowledge and ideas through language is the very stuff of politics. Language is culturally controlled and socially specific. The level of expertise in language, facilitates or restricts participation in the political process. 'Young people's experience is precisely the experience of the State's attempt ... to secure their contribution to the reproduction of capitalism'. (Aggleton, P. 1987 pg 120) Corrigan and Frith (1975) make the point that: Young males have been at the heart of the state's efforts to expand the economy. Educationalists are effective gatekeepers for the state and arbiters of opportunity for those with little knowledge of the system.

Working-class male students appear to learn late, that the world does not owe them a living and, more recently that the rest of the world which previously relied on them to provide the labour element of other people's profits now uses cheaper female labour, cheaper labour in emerging economies, and computers, instead. Superseded in the labour market, displaced from their hegemonic control of society, and increasingly marginalised in politics, what is left for the working-class male? What does his situation teach him?

Privatisation and centralisation are an essential element of the philosophies of both new-liberal modernisers and the new-conservative stabilisers. Vocationalisation is a means of providing labour to serve the capitalist machine and differentiation ensures individuals are most capable of carrying out the system maintenance tasks. It is illustrative of the closeness of this alliance of two ideologies that many of the same strategies are deployed by the neo-liberal New Labour government as were by the former Conservative government.

As Quicke points out 'Modernist institutions...' headed by international capitalists such as those encountered by Sennett, R. (1999), '...can operate in contradictory ways, espousing autonomy at the level of rhetoric; but fostering heteronomy, discipline and oppression in practice.' (Dec. 1996) This duplicity was predicted by Bernstein in 1990 when he posited that in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century '...increases in the level of abstraction of the principles of

production [would] produce a simplification in the social division of labour of production'. (pg 159) *The Us and Them of Capitalism*.

It is increasingly clear that the current New Labour government is more Capitalist than Socialist and that its policies include elements of free-market philosophy. To quote Will Hutton:

'...Blair's social liberalism is essentially rooted in utilitarianism. This tradition believes that society has to live with unfairness, unaddressed inequality and injustice, but as long as they are compensated by sufficient others having wellbeing, that is the best we can hope for, especially if we believe that unconstrained individual liberty is a fundamental value' (01 Dec 2002 pg30)

Towards the end of being better able to compete as individuals within a globalised economy citizens are encouraged to '*educate, educate, educate*' themselves.

Those affected most by this message are the young males expecting to be heads of families and to earn effectively in this new economy. The necessity to learn is not always clear to those working people who are divorced from the market and the wider economic context of life. The context of their lives is the past (immediate and historical) as related to them by the stories told in their communities and by their fathers; of co-operative effort, militant trades unionism, strikes and industrial strife. The experience of their forebears is difficult to ignore in communities where the events of previous strife (1926, 1984/5 etc.) are still talked about. As Sennet, R. points out perhaps it is even dangerous to do so:

**'The capacity to let go of one's past, the confidence to accept fragmentation: these are two traits of character, which appear [at Davos] among people truly at home in the new capitalism. They are traits which encourage spontaneity.....These same traits of character begetting spontaneity become more self-destructive for those who live lower down the flexible regime.'** (pg 63 1998)

**Learning for those lower down, takes place within the public sphere of communities. This is largely situated learning, relevant to the immediate situation. Cognitive learning necessary to contextualize the situated within a global context should take place in school but for many of the lads in this study the private domain of school is a threatening place. They react to it as they do to other threats: by jesting or rebelling, or sometimes by blatant rejection and non-attendance. This rejection is often reinforced by the negative experience of parents and their alienation from the school.**

**The school is a private place, which is enclosed; controlled by agents of symbolic control; perceived by some as repressive; and a place where members of their public world are often not welcome. To those from the private domain the school is a more comfortable place which offers security and a place to find cognitive learning to contextualise their situated learning. Those boys who are able to take advantage of their multiple masculinities to harness their more feminine (private) character and personality traits feel more comfortable. Those who have been taught to suppress their feminine side, may experience dissonance; and those who have experienced only macho socialisation are likely to feel less comfortable. This discomfort might**

be mitigated by engagement in male/public activities, such as sport; and might gain enough status to feel comfortable in an environment made more public by the kudos. The majority of males will not perform to their optimum ability in this suppressed public environment. It was obvious from the lads' comments that they considered the product of their education would be a job. If that light at the end of the tunnel is not available they have nothing to work towards.

When asked what makes lads mess about instead of learning Len quoted the experience of being on the dole on a low income, obviously gained from his father. He thought the object of education was: *'To get people employed. To work to help other people. People are educated to know about life, know about stuff, about why stuff happen, how stuff happen. So that we don't have an unemployed country.'*

He had obviously given some consideration to the subject and perhaps even worried about being unemployed. This tends to put his confused ambition, which amounted to get as well paid a job as possible, into context. This was a young man programmed to achieve but with no real information about the direction: A powerful motor but no map.

When asked the simple question - What do you think of school? – a variety of replies indicated the lads considered it: *'... something to get through because it's there to do me good. It's goin ta gi me a start in life.'* 1] Neither did it prepare them very well to consider what they might do afterwards.

What will you do after you leave this school? *'An apprenticeship or summat. Dunt know, Navy ...(?)'* 2] Though they could not say what they would be doing in ten years time. *'Can't se'*. 3] Would you go to school if you didn't have to? *'It's in my best interest to go. Cos you see people on't dole and ya don't want to be like that.'* 4] Although others older and wiser advocate other jobs: *'Me dad keeps elling me, dun't ger a dead end job, a job what's same and boring all t'time'*, 5] no specific advice about which career path to follow is available. The clear implication that work comes first is always uppermost: *'Wait til you retire, then when you know what your life's like then you can travel't world and see what other people's life's like'*. 6] And that there is a direct link between money and happiness, rather than experience and happiness. *'You ent got that experience of life, you don't know how hard it is to get money. It's hard to get money. Money's nor easy to ger hold on'* 6] Working-class individuals are conditioned to work before enjoying life. *'The work ethic, as we commonly understand it, asserts self-disciplined use of one's time and the value of delayed gratification'*. (Sennett, R. 1999 pg.98)

After generations of exhortation for the workers to work hard and keep out of trouble they are afraid to do anything else. Harry exhibits his fear of the unknown. *'College looks awreight. Ahv been to Sheffield University,... Hallam.*

*'It looks awreight bur ah dunt like university life if yer know wor ah mean.'* I almost did. He meant that he was afraid of what he did not know and had an aversion to joining a group disliked by his hierarchy. He then considers how

how he will access the party game parcel, wrapped in several layers of bureaucracy, to get to the education inside. On top of that he ponders how to pay for this neatly wrapped but inaccessible commodity, called education. *'Well ah would like the university life bur ah wouldn't like to live at university; because when yer live at university it starts costing yer money, yer can't ger a part-time job. Well yer can but its just travellin. Yer end up in debt, an ah wouldn't like to end up in debt at an early age'*. Working-class people have been conditioned to work and pay rather than use money as a commodity to make gains. This actually acts now against the work ethic in a perverse way as it prevents them realistically defferring their gratification and instead promotes 'live-now pay-later' hire-purchase culture when they eventually realise there is no other way to maintain a modern lifestyle on a low income.

The system feels all-pervasive and difficult to beat. After a short discussion about the merits of various universities and their proximity to home Len said:

*'Ah dunt know ar far away other universities like, Cambridge and Oxford and Dewsbury. I'm definitiely staying at home; if like Oxford's a train-ride away and its like a couple of hours and if I've got good enough grades .....*

*then petered out in obvious difficulty of how to continue. Gary Bowen, from a previous generation, learned from his lorry driver father that: 'For me like you're not just stuck in one thing you have got options for others. Ya hev'n't got to goo into one job and just say this is't job am sticking to. Ther is other jobs and opporituities art theer ta gu fo'. 'Ah'm won o' them, ah like to climb't ladder o'success and whatever it needs to, whatever it teks ta get theer ah'l do it.'*

Gary had been exploited by a previous employer, after he worked '*a hundred and ten per cent...*' for the employer and then was denied a promotion because he allegedly did not have '*...a proper telephone manner*'. As if a working class man from Barnsley might have been able to acquire one. He was eventually dismissed from that employment for reasons he chose not to discuss and after a period of six months unemployment he took a job as a manual labourer with his present employer. He rose within twelve months to supervisor and then two years after that, to yard manager. He now aspired to '*...hopefully...*' the Branch manager's position. Gary said he would not '*...gu fo...*' a job he did not like. Gary obviously wanted the best for his son and considered that if he followed his dad he would be in a manual job. He therefore tried to motivate his son to do well at school and gain employment at a profession above that which he was in. The danger is that by demeaning his employment status within a macho world the father himself becomes demeaned and ineffective as a role model or mentor to his son.

Adam's motivation to learn was to: 'Get a job, have a good life and get some cash.' Gary (junior) '*... just wanted to get a job using computers*'. He was '*... not quite sure*' what sort of job and he clearly had little knowledge of the field. How he would get that wider knowledge of the world of commerce and information technology was difficult to imagine. In a formula-funded, individuated education system: '*If the kids dunt come the dunt get paid, the dunt get no money for us. Ther see kids waggin it the dunt get money. The've told us. If a kid stays out of school the dunt get paid fo that kid*'. (Jed

and Callum in interview) The fox was being asked to help the hounds to get enough funding for the general benefit.

*ii) Democracy in Education*

As a result of the movement in Britain to commodify knowledge and education, those without education have been left behind in the race to be part of the system. In Apple's words citizens have become "human capital for the private sector'. (1993 pg 302). A market in knowledge is being created, by the dislocation between 'knowers' and 'knowledge' accentuated by the development of Information Technology and later by the Internet and the World-Wide Web. This dislocation is facilitated by the storage of masses of information and knowledge, only retrievable by those who have the skills to do so.

A crucial component of this knowledge is the knowledge of its existence and of its use by modern institutions. If as Quicke recommends, pupils are given the opportunity '...to establish a form of social order characterised by mutual respect and the absence of power relations,...' (Quicke, J. 1994 pg 101) a more conducive regime than that which has dominated will be possible. Maguire, M. (1999 Vol.3) points out the relationship between the agents of symbolic control and the recipients of that control. She exemplifies the establishment's dynamic for control when she writes that:

'Historically teacher training colleges were places that stressed gentrification, partly to exert social control and partly to legitimate dominant

ideological formations within society'. (Maguire 1999 pg 14)

And goes on to point out that 'Teaching is a professional...middle-class occupation'.

Democracy in the education process has been relegated to a very low or often non-existent priority in schools. Even in these times of New Labour modernisation:

'...many of the schools it [OFSTED] has inspected have failed to grasp the full implications of citizenship lessons, with others not doing enough to incorporate the topic in policy and planning'. (First 5 July 2003 pg 3)

Jed and Callum were two 'Jack-the-Lad' characters who were confined most of their time in school to the pupils' common room, when they were not in special classes at the local college. They were obviously too 'outspoken' for teachers to deal with and almost certainly detracted from the teachers' duties to other pupils. They were also dismissive of the school council as a means of asserting any opinion. They were rebels, of a sort. Against what, in favour of what, they were not sure, but they were probably the most democratically engaged pupils in the school, in their own rebellious way.

Their fathers' occupations were given as 'building worker' and 'residential care worker'. Jed and Callum were currently doing NVQ level 1 and were also engaged in NVQ's at 6<sup>th</sup> form college (carpentry and car maintenance) for which they reckoned: '*all ya need is maths and English*'. After probing their intentions after school it became obvious they had rejected education

as a means of improvement. Jed said that he: *'might be a boxer'* because *'ya get paid a reight load a money for doin that'*. But *'If ya just tum up though ya get money dun't ya'*, seemed to display rather less knowledge than ambition.

Callum slept around at a flat of disputed ownership (his cousin's?), out on the street, and various places. It became obvious later that the flat was available in return for various nefarious deeds, the nature of which I did not enquire too closely because they already appeared to be on the wrong side of the legal divide. This lad had clearly fallen into bad company and was on a criminal trajectory. He appeared to have been adopted, Fagin-style, by various characters who used his talents for their needs. The incredible story unfolded to me, under conditions of confidentiality and anonymity, described a life-style, which rejected the need for education and the clear and evident belief that money was all-important and available for the taking. An impression perhaps gained by a sort of osmosis, having soaked-up Thatcherite laissez-faire principles, combined with attitudes from criminal contacts.

Other lads simply rejected school completely and did not give much thought to what might happen next. *'Well most kids stay out [of school] fo weeks on end, dunt the? [rhetorical question] Look at Malcolm Baldock he ent been here since year eight.'* 12]Malcolm's lifestyle was obviously chaotic but perhaps not far from that of many of his peers. *'He used to like .. stay*

*awake through't night and gu to sleep through't day. Hi tried brekking into mi house, so a roughed him up a bit'. 12]*

Much of the blame for rejection of school was laid at the feet of teachers and some evidence was presented, by lads, for their case. They appeared to feel in the modern vernacular, 'dissed' by the teachers: i.e. disempowered, disrespected, etc. It appeared that at the same time as accepting teachers as role models, the lads were disappointed at their fallibility and, sometimes outright failure. When asked, What else do you learn from teachers besides curriculum subjects? The answer was '*Ar to shart*'. 13] They accepted teachers as symbolic controllers, though they did not necessarily accept the control. When asked why they got into that shouting game? Their reply was '*Fo bein bad uns*'. 14] What consitutes being a bad un? '*Owt, owt't teachers want*'. 13] Would you class it as being bad? [No] '*Just't teachers*.' 14]

Clear example of the exercise of symbolic control was recounted when asked what kind of behaviour is classed as bad? '*Running art a lessons. ... Se you came in wi them shoes on, an the wor a bit a white on. Ya'd get sharted at*'. 13] '*Then you get told to paint [them] black*.' 13] Is that literally true? It was! '*When ya pay seventy quid for a pair a trainers ya dunt wanna colour em du ya?*' 13] '*Yer, he came in wi some white trainers on, then he got sent home so he had to go and buy some new uns that day*.' 14] Is that reasonable, do you think? '*No, cos not all parents can afford to buy trainers like that?*' 14] An understatement for parents on low incomes.

There was now emerging an impression of a conflict between school and home. It was apparent that teachers did not understand the financial constraints on parents. Many parents buy fashionable clothing for their children, under pressure from children to respond to media images. In doing so they offend school dress-codes but find it difficult to overcome powerful pleas from children. They were torn between public children and private school spheres.

Pupils who inhabit the public sphere consider it essential to gain acceptance in that sphere by wearing fashion footwear. Teachers, who consider school as a private sphere, disagree. *'Se ya've gor a pair o' whites like these ya've got ta like pur a pen on them in black'*. 13] What do your parents think? *'The disgusted'*. 13] Though not apparently disgusted enough to brave the institutionalised power of the agents of symbolic control within the very private sphere of school. And how do they react? *'The crack-up'*. 13] The students consider they should have some flexibility in dress and: *'Should be able to wear uniform and whatever trainers we want.'* 14] But they are powerless to influence the organisation which seeks to control their lives in detail. How would you go about altering that? *'Couldn't, we could gu to't school council'*. 12] Would that work? 12] *'No...'* : nothing, even the organisations set up by the school, appears to work against the school's controlling influence. [simultaneously] *'No. Wi'v asked em loads a stuff. The se the going to do everythin but dunt, if yer know whar a mean. Ther all mouth and no action. The se thuv done stuff, yer can never see it.'*

[11,12,13,14] There is no evidence of the school being democratic in spite of the best intentions of the headteacher and governors.

One of the fathers (Ned) is a governor at the school. He is committed to community government of schools and has expressed an interest in becoming a governor at another school as well. He is thereby engaged with education of his son and is in contact with education in general. Ned has done a number of courses on the role of a governor. When asked about how able he thought working class kids were to access education he said: *'Well, ah can only speak for people ramd here. There's a lot lower than working class ant the. The's that general apathy weer the dunt care abaht education, the dunt care abaht the livin standards. Its that apathy barrier that needs brekkin darn. That , "the's nowt art theer fo me" attitude, ah'm happy as ah am!'*

Ned seemingly recognised the problem of motivating pupils to learn and thought he was helping by being part of the government of the school. In fact he was placing himself in a position, according to pupils' perceptions, of aiding and abetting the agents of symbolic control. That role-confusion is not surprising when considering Gary Bowen's opinion of a teacher's role. *'To check em, to gi em't information the want, an basically to put em on't reight track. Ah class them as like a parent.'* Clearly an onerous task, and one which is more like the role of a second-site-of-acquisition-tutor than of school-teacher. The parent clearly expects the teacher to take on responsibility for the whole education of his son, rather than sharing it with

parents. Even more onerous when parents such as Gary, consider that teachers are so incapable of fulfilling the task. As he said: *'Some teachers just ave it in for certain people. Yer du summat wrong once an that's it. Yer marked fo life. An some can easily gi up'*. Though he said he did not approve of corporal punishment Gary thought there might be some benefits for an area such as the one in which he lived. Gary thought teachers: *'do as much as the can'*.

The lads each had their own opinions about who the good teachers were, but one lad *'got kicked art a school'* --- because of one teacher *'because hi said I it im'*. *'Hi grabbed od a mi so ah just went like that and moved is and away'*. 12] After this incident the lad's parents *'med an arrangement for a meeting'* 12] but have yet to attend. The parents clearly find it difficult to deal within a private-type public institution, with agents of social control who are charged with educating their child. A dilemma made worse by them not having had a positive experience at school as pupils. What have been the barriers to your learning, Ned? *Well ah thin it wo me that just ad't wrong attitude. It wo like "ahm not gerrin on wi no work, ah want attraction from everybody in this classroom"*. Ned Craddock had obviously been a very 'public' person in his early life and was not equipped to deal with the private world of school.

### *iii) Identifying with Modernity*

Schools are among those places where *'...the new sort of work...'* of educating workers for the new economy gets done. This process at one level

can be seen as little more than training in the skills necessary to carry out available jobs in the new economy. At the same time they are charged with educating for creativity in order to equip the entrepreneurs of the future to create jobs for others. Governing bodies have responsibility for ensuring pupils receive the education suited to their individual needs and that the school is managed according to government guidelines. The two functions of the school as an agent of social control and an enabler of future individual creativity, compete in disadvantaged communities against schools whose government-induced values they do not share. Sennet writes that:

‘The willingness to risk, however, is no longer meant to be the province only of venture capitalists or extraordinary adventurous individuals. Risk is to become a daily necessity shouldered by the masses.’ (1998 pg80)

The working-class are not risk-takers, for they have learned through experience that risk too often brings defeat and loss of all they have, especially when over the years they have learned that some risks fall the wrong side of the law. With a greater emphasis on education they might be better able to identify legal risks worth taking.

Ned had ambitions for the younger generation and said that: *Education .... Is ta gi yer a certain level o'r education i'nt it? To help ya achieve and get't best art a ya. Fulfill your potential. If pupils from't working class are bright enough let em go up. Why should it be for their classes that used to hev it: who could afford it?* But he did not appear to be a risk-taker. Ned was proud of his community: its history, and its heritage; which he had studied.

His identity was bound up in the area and its traditions, of co-operative effort, hard work and deferred gratification.

Sennet, R. writes *'The new capitalism has also disturbed identities based on place.'* And goes on to posit the disturbance to people's identity *'... occurs particularly in places where the new sort of work gets done...'* . (2001 pg176,) Perhaps without that disturbance through ideas and practices being implemented, new identities will not be forged.

The conflict of the school in this community shows itself in the frustration of teachers unable to teach lessons, which pupils reject as irrelevant; and in the reluctance of community members to become governors. In an effort to ensure pupils at least jump through the government and establishment-imposed hurdles, schools impose disciplinary codes. These often serve only to give the screw of alienation one more turn. One lad spoke of an incident in which he felt victimised by a teacher: *'Ah know, bur I only ed me at on reight and ah come to registration' 11] '...he [the teacher] says tek yer at off, so ah took it off, walked halfway damt corridor an so ah put it back on, ah dint think he wo lookin... and he sharted Mr //// to stop me. Hi grabbed me theer, so ah just went like that ... an ah walked art a school. Then he went: "that's assault and if ya dunt come back in am gerrin yer dun". 11] Other lads had been excluded for alleged assault on other pupils. One lad "just dint ger on wi.." teachers. 12] Modernity is often identified with individuality, difference and dynamism: yet when the lads exhibit dissent from teachers' opinions they are sanctioned.*

Teachers are traditionally perceived as being the fount of all knowledge and lads are surprised when they turn out to be quite normal. The lads spoke of: *'People that work ... like teachers.* 9] And speaking of staying away from school they: *'... bet they've [the teachers] done it a few times.'* 9] *'Yeh Miss Jaeger, ... ah saw er in't tam on Satdey an Mr Jaeger wo carrying bags, she said she's gor a bad back'*. 10] The inference is that teachers might pretend to be better than them but are really only human and would be more respected if they did not pretend. Donal described teachers who know about real life because they had worked in *'the pits'* and other industry and had *'known hardship'* and *'cared'*. This was an obvious point of identification with teachers, as their experiences of class-ness resonated through the generations: passed on from father to son.

Carl was an exception. He didn't learn much from his dad or step-dad because his dad died early and mum didn't marry step-dad until late. *'I left school in 1979 when there were plenty of jobs'* in industry. *'I had a job straightaway'*, after leaving school. The steelworks was on strike when he left school and as he was not old enough to go on strike, he worked for three months for the local council until the strike was over. He now talked to his son and tried *'... to get it across how important it [education] is. You can't just leave school for a job these days.'* ..... *'You just hope they get stuck in.'* As for his own education he said that *'...the only education you've got is the education you need to do the job.'* Carl exemplified the gap between his own education and that he hoped his son would have. His was situated

within industry: he hoped his son's would be more individuated and responsive to the needs of the market. He hoped that his son went '*all the way*' to university so that '*he gets the job he wants.*' Carl, however, articulated no knowledge of what the new era means for himself or his son. There was no mention of need for creativity or opportunity to contribute. He illustrated the gulf between himself and teachers when he said, that teachers had a hard job but are: '*well-paid*' and '*They do get plenty of holidays.*' Which he obviously considered he did not.

Gary welcomed the opportunities to learn and that '*they're* [his employers] *always trying to make ya better*'. Though his comments that: '*Sometimes it becomes a pain because ya think, ... well ahm here to work an a can't get to work because ahm on't trainin course*': indicated a rejection of real cultural change. When asked about whether he might seek a managerial position Gary replied: '*Ahm an artside man still. Ah think well maybe another eight year or summat, Ah might start feelin't cold a bit and want to goo inside. At't moment ahm appy as I am. Ah don't mind beein alfway, if ya know wor ah mean.*'

The satisfaction with '*half*' is an odd sentiment, for a supposedly ambitious person. It might be speculated that Gary is perhaps ambitious but not confident enough to jump the perceived cultural gap. The reason for that supposed satisfaction might also be that Gary is too tired to do any more, physically or intellectually. Gary was busy most of the time as he worked Saturday and he said he '*...dunt feel ah relax on a Sunday*'. And perhaps his

remarks that: *'There's aluss enough ta do but there's not enough time ta do it.'* Was intended to identify him as a working man as many of the lads aspired to.

Donal *'...wanted to become a steelworker but he ...'* [his dad], did not want him to. As Gary said about his son: *'Ah just let him ger on wi some things or tell him. Ahr dunt feel as if ah've got to shout at him... or punish him... to ger him to ger ont' reight track. Ah just tell him what might happen if he dunt. Ah just tell him ah dunt want him being summat like me. He's got brains an he likes science an he wo thinkin abaht gooin't forensic way, but nar he's on abaht gooin to be a vet. Which ahr dunt mind, if that's wor he wants. Ahr dunt want him to lower hissself when he's got brains an he's gor it theer to be up theer.'*

A lesson learned in the university of life by working men who perceive they might have done better. Carl was *'never pushed'* at school. *'It was quite laid back'* and there was *'no urgency'* and no incentive to try harder, because *'you knew there were plenty of jobs.'* ..... *'You could leave school and get a job. There was no problem about getting work. I never showed that inclination for further education. .... You knew you could get a job so why bother to carry on to school.'*

In modern times the lads know they must constantly upgrade their qualifications by usage. Gary Bowen said of his son – *'Ar Len'* that *'instead o releasing all his energy when he's come art o school, he comes home from*

*school, he's on a computer and its all building up inside'. Considering the paucity of local facilities and in the words of the lads: '... thers nowt to do ramd ar end'. 3] There was little choice but to stay indoors after school because 'There's always been them people from ramd Kendray wanting to cause trouble.....' 3] .... and ..... 'then't ice cream van artside Priory. He selled things like drugs and cigarettes and things like that and this time an entire side of Littleworth's windows got smashed, while ah wo theer, at // (primary school). 3]*

#### *iv) Education for Transition*

Barnsley and similar areas have jumped from industrialism to late-modernism without a transitional stage of experience, during which those individuals who were part of the old system could be educated to make the leap. Without that education, those most affected are unable to ground the need for change in relevant experience. Bernstein explains that: 'In any pedagogic relationship ..... The acquirer ..... has to learn to be an acquirer and the transmitter has to learn to be a transmitter.' (Bernstein 1990 pg. 65)

Liberals and socialists have often hoped that with the election of a Labour government the cavalry would arrive to free them of the capitalist insistence on market values in education and other areas of society. However as New Labour is more Neo-Liberal than traditional Labour the policy continued almost unchanged. Local authorities are now ready to accept private

partners for almost every aspect of local authority services. These private partners bring with them private ideas from their neo-liberal and neo-conservative intellectual drivers. As Apple spells out:

‘In essence, then, four trends have characterised the conservative restoration both in the USA and in Britain – privatisation, centralisation, vocationalisation, and differentiation. These are actually largely the results of differences within the most powerful wings of this tense alliance – neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism.’  
(Apple 1993 pg. 304)

In communities such as Barnsley, working-class citizens lived from day to day and often from hand to mouth. There had never been any economic capital for future generations of labour to inherit and when the down-turn in economic fortunes happened, the unemployed working-class did not consider that now the economic capital had gone they must intensify their use of education. They accepted it as just another aspect of their lives. They were ill-equipped to deal with a situation which destroyed all their belief systems, support structures and identities. Whilst they had been working to support their families and the economy, their national leaders had apparently decided that they were expendable. A point made by Sennett, R. (1999) when he explains that in his experience of meeting world leaders he has found them to be ‘...ethically neutral...’ on matters which affect the lives of those not ‘...truly at home in the new capitalism’. (pg63)

These different agents affect each other in oppositional ways. The concern of the ruling class is with the output of the education system in that it should

produce 'a disciplined, appropriately trained work force.' (Bernstein 1990 pg 142)

According to Bernstein only "selected members" of the working class are concerned to gain certificates, examinations, and training helpful to positions within the economic field'. Bernstein identifies four historical periods of 'Education and the division of labour'. (1990 pg145) They are:

1. Pre-capitalism, the medieval period.
  2. Competitive capitalism, essentially the nineteenth century.
  3. Transitional capitalism: twentieth century re-organising capitalism.
  4. Reorganised capitalism. A hypothetical projection into the twenty-first century.
- (1990 pg146)

It seems that the realisation of needing to obtain an education dawns on young males late in their school experience. Then dawns what Sennet refers to as '*...the heroism of risk...*' (pg 81 1998) which can '*...eat away at your sense of character*'. (pg 84): the move from gentle rebellion within the comfort of their own community to the real challenge to their identity from the outside world. '*Nar, it's just hit me like, we've only got a year left, to get us qualifications*'. 1] It was thought by one subject that girls started preparing '*... for their grades, 'straightaway*' 2] when they started school: though no reason was given for this thought he obviously considered girls to be different in school. The lad now wanted to catch up and as he put it: 2] '*I want to learn how to get up there like,*' and even though he had started late he now had the hope of becoming a lawyer: A major step for a late starter.

Donald (interviewed after he left school) thought the purpose of education was to: *'get learning, move on, more qualifications , move on.'* Education to Donald was about acquiring vocational qualifications rather than developing the capacity to think for oneself. Wilson, B. and Wyn, J. (1993) claim that:

*'The contemporary demands of young people are not simply for a decent income but for work, the opportunity to demonstrate competence and make a contribution, not simply for an employment or training opportunity but to have a say....'* (Angus, L. 1993 pg. 6)

in the structure of their *'livelihood'*.

Gary was completely focused on practical type jobs rather than academic or theatrical careers, though he was especially keen on acting and had been successful in leading roles in several productions at school and in amateur dramatics. He was torn between instant reward and deferred gratification. Given the choice between a place at RADA and a computer job with a BMW Gary said he would: *'..have to go fo't BMW'. A'd ev to think abaht that job in't long run.'* Gary apparently considered university was a risky strategy. *'If it's gooin to be safe then fair enough am gooin to ev a career. But otherwise Uni[versity]. But at't end at't day when ya gu to Uni ya still need experience. Ya still need experience to get't job that ya want.'* As the interview proceeded it was clear that Gary was a talented and confident performer who would do well at university (nine GCSE) or in the theatre: but he insisted: *'As soon as I've got my NVQ I'm goin to start looking fo jobs. Once a've got mi NVQ am still gooin to carry on wi mi training bur aam gooin to start lookin fo jobs. Like am gooin to apply for dozens.....'* He obviously was

not aware that 'dozens' of jobs do not exist in Barnsley. Gary appeared to be a wasted talent in a system in transition from the industrial to modern era. Bright, intelligent, ambitious; but without guidance on what to do in the new era.

The problem often is that after a disadvantaged start many do not know which direction to take when they focus on GCSE subjects and beyond. Without this focus their efforts are dissipated and, even worse, when GCSE grades are not good enough to provide much choice they think: [quoting 'Princey'] *"Sod this I can't be bothered"*. 2] *"We said well its not too late, we can help you, we help each other out now and we were goin to help Princey but he's not bothered. Plus he hangs about with this kid called Bellis. He just wants to hang about with him he's not bothered about doin owt else. Plus things that have hit 'im."*

One of which was the reality spelled out by a tutor of an NVQ course he was taking, at a college open evening, that: *'lots of lads are going through training in car mechanics'*. His brother is a car mechanic and he wanted to follow him into the trade. Now he realises that car mechanics are plentiful and employers are not. It also has implications for his view of his brother. 2] *'I don't think he's too sure about what he wants to do.'* That was the norm for the young people I met and interviewed. In a careers' panel at a comprehensive school in the area, I met the whole of year 11. Very few had any real idea of what career path they wished to follow, or even of what a career-track was. It was evident that not many had any experience of what careers were available or possible.

Some lads who have been defeated by the system earlier give up sooner. When asked: Do any of you stay away from school, unauthorised? *'UN authorised?'* *'A've done it a few times'* 11] How much do you learn at school that is useful to you? *'About 20%. 'Cos thes all baddies int class an that...keep running art an in.'* 7] Another lad interjected that *'Ahm not saying owt wrong like but that's what people want int it. Say they want a few days off school the just goo an du summat bad, so the get excluded for it'*. 8]

One subject was keen to know whether the study would help to improve education for boys in Barnsley. When told that it probably would and asked if they thought it was important that it should, they asked further if it would change the way in which teachers taught.

The English National Curriculum as applied to state schools is based on the Greek Quadrivium. It was designed to meet the needs of more privileged and culturally fortunate pupils' learning needs, rather than those of working-class pupils. As referred to earlier, Connell, R.W. posits that:

*'What we are dealing with, rather, is a dominant, or hegemonic, curriculum, derived historically from the educational practices of European upper-class men'. (1994 pg.137)*

The national curriculum does not meet the learning needs of the working class. Middle-class pupils are more aware of the choices available to them; they have more choices and they are more likely to be directed into rewarding employment by their family. When young working-class lads were asked: 'What sort of things do young men need to know about?' the

incongruency became evident. Rather than subjects relevant to the Quadrivium (Arithmetic, Music, Geometry, Astronomy), they replied: *'People skills, definitely. They need to know what they want. They've got to hev an idea.'* 1] which fits better within the Trivium (Grammar, Logic, Rhetoric): all the things more advantaged children get at home.

At what age? *'It's hard to se because ah wo sixteen and ah dint know wor ah want. It would be good if they did because it makes it a lot easier for em. .... If you knew what you want at five, it would be brilliant. At school you're always doing these action plans. What do you want. Half o't lasses knew what they wanted. Half o't lads dint'*. [Gary] (The term 'half of' is a local colloquialism to illustrate 'most of' in the same sense as 'half life' of nuclear material.)

It is interesting to note that at least one school (Sunnyside Primary, Alloa) teaches Philosophy at Primary school, which enables self-discovery, expression and cognitive abilities to be developed through use of language skills in the practice of dialectic and argument. Cleghorn, P. *'...argues that life chances are just as affected by emotional intelligence (developing empathy, controlling emotions and being self-aware) as by I.Q.'* (Jeffries, S. 12-03-02)

There was evidence that the lads recognised they were not ready for what was being taught. *'They [girls] know what they want and get on with it. They're a lot more mature than us. They think what's point ... might as well*

*just do it. .... But how do you know what you want to do. You're still at school. Ah ent got a clue wor ah want to do.'* [Gary] Here is evidence of the lack of contextual knowledge and the effect of the pacing rule as referred to by Bernstein. Working class lads have no idea what is available for them to be interested in, but they do know they ought to be interested in something. They have no menu and therefore find it difficult to choose. When they do gain an idea of what they want to do it might be too late to get enough knowledge in time to obtain information and qualifications within the normal timetable of schooling. Within the expected transition from primary to tertiary levels a pupil is expected to learn language skills, then logical argument of a case and thirdly self-discovery and expression using cognitive abilities. Working-class lives do not necessarily proceed in that neat sequence.

Donal said, what young males need to know is: *'what can they do with the GCSE's that they have'. 'It's like ... They wanna do summat. They've just learned that they wanna do this thing yeh? But can they do it any more? Have they wasted their life here or should they start telling em at't end or should they have told em at't beginnin. Most of em they just think well sod school; Ah'll just live on't dole. They're not reight interested but they will be when they leave. People need constant guidance. I know people ... They're all thinking well what am I gooin'a do ere nah?'*

Donal described a confusing world of choices for young people who do not know what to do when they leave school and have little or no guidance about choices. Locked in a world ruled by GCSE grades they worry about

how to improve them and what can they do without them. *' Still some people are still not bothered ' because of't attitude they've got from their parents'.*

Mark 'just failed' his 11 plus and went into a comprehensive in Bradford. He went to a secondary modern when the family moved to Pontefract. His family was dissatisfied with his progress there but the private school he was sent to instead was clearly not suitable to his learning needs. *'It was just like goin back in time. Facilities ... there just wasn't any.'* He was clearly uncomfortable at private school and would have preferred to have remained in comprehensive school. He failed all his GCEs, partly as a consequence of working in his father's shop when he should have been engaged in homework. The education of various other lad's is disrupted by *'Other pupils. Boys prattin about.'* and other influences beyond their control in the very heirarchical world within the private school environment but always controlled by the public community in which they live.

Some lads manage to thrive against the odds in this confusion of public/private heirarchies and almost against the odds gain the knowledge and skills needed to progress through the secondary graduation exams. Their comments are perhaps most illustrative of what is wrong with the system. At a time when they are learning subjects in the national curriculum which might help them to debate or articulate, some would like to be learning skills which would serve both them and the economy better at a time of economic modal shift from industrial to modern. The subject some lads expressed a desire to learn more about was: *'Technology, I suppose.'*

(Donal)

Technology is a route to cultural change and an opportunity for creativity. The Grammar curriculum is not progressive and therefore of reduced benefit to cultural change. Some lads were already learning and carrying out technical processes like Donal who described using internet software and special programmes to develop personalised web pages and games. *'Its not as technical as you think'*, he said.

The plethora of late-modern communications tools and resources makes learning a different and more dynamic experience than in the past. But it is relevant that he carried out much of the work at home rather than at school. At this stage Donal really was teaching me. He knew much more than I did on the subject and was confident in his knowledge. Now he was on his own ground in the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning zone. Exciting and completely new every time. The End of History seemed real in this conversation where anything could be re-invented instantly at the touch of a button, within a virtual reality and transported instantly across space to anyone and everyone who wanted to share the experience. Donal, a working class lad from an under-resourced family in one of the poorest regions of Europe was Master of his universe: in isolation but in touch with anyone who wanted to listen. He was confident and articulate.

The dilemma for working-class young males is two-fold. They have problems making the transition from working-class to the hegemonic class, which is dominant outside their environment and milieu, but not within it. The fact that

working-class values are dominant within their milieu acts as a pull factor inhibiting their transition. One aspect of that pull is the set of working-class values around gender-based issues and the strength of the family hierarchy. What are young people to make of a society which educates them to be workers in industry that does not exist and fails to give them proper guidance on what society is really like. Donal then described some lads who: *'just seem to mek their own ideas up not consult anybody else. Their ideas are not really good ideas.'*

On the other hand, how are fathers who received no guidance, to be aware of the need for guidance in a modern world. When asked: 'What have been the barriers to learning, Ned?' he replied on behalf of the younger generation; as if he could consider barriers at one remove, but not his own. He perceived no barriers to his education; just no opportunity for anything other than what he got: or perhaps he had become so used to speaking for the younger generation. *'In this day and age, just theselves, [are the barriers] if the not willing to ger on an do it. If you want to ger on an do it, its theer fo ya. After school'*

Ned, as a school governor and as a politically-aware member of the community, defended the school whilst implicitly recognising the inequity of the system which rewards individual effort and disadvantages those who cannot afford to pay for educational opportunities. He said: *'Wi should all pay for it. It should be free.'* i.e. paid out of general taxation.

The curriculum has a content, which is based upon the assumption that the pupil already has certain knowledge and skills and will acquire others from family and community, as they are required. The curriculum content must be learned and pupils are tested at particular stages of progression through the curriculum. Differentiation of ability to absorb knowledge is facilitated by streaming pupils. This does not help them to absorb or understand any better: it just moves them out of the way so that others can. Neither does the pacing of the curriculum cater for the fact that pupils often need to learn self-expression before they have acquired language skills, logic before they know how to write, and much knowledge before they can read effectively.

Together with the fact that boys find it difficult within fiercely competitive hierarchies of macho-ness; the struggle to acquire the social and life skills required to position oneself at the appropriate stage of development to learn academic and intellectual subjects effectively is often too great. It is often the case that boys compete in either maleness or academe; not both, unless they are very well supported or very gifted.

#### *v) World of Facticity*

The world of facticity, described by Illich (1986) draws boundaries around affected children's understanding of the world. It is produced by the factors, which prompted Illich some years earlier to argue for a de-schooling of society in an attempt to achieve a curriculum relevant to the working class.

He also outlined some aspects of working-class educational deprivation outside the school environment.

'..... poor children lack most of the educational opportunities which are casually available to the middle-class child. These advantages range from conversation and books in the home to vacation travel and a different sense of oneself,.....' (1986 pg. 14)

Lacking these opportunities to expand the horizon of understanding organically, it becomes necessary for teachers to provide this contextual knowledge by pedagogic means. This adversely affects pacing of education, as pupils are required to learn more in a shorter time. The effect is made worse by educational low-achievers being grouped closely together on peripheral housing estates. Power, A. & Tunstall, R. (1997), Wilkinson, C. (1995) described these estates.

They are often the areas in which old attitudes are hardest to overcome due to circumstances such as re-enforcement of values by peers, use of mind-altering substances aimed at blocking out poverty, even traumatised ex-servicemen, and just simple poverty. They also serve as open-air communities in which the guiding principles of the public-sphere hegemonic male can dominate unquestioned.

Residents of peripheral housing estates as described in *Dangerous Disorder* (Power, A. & Tunstall, R. 1997) exemplify these open-air communities. They lack resources and cultural capital. They live in the most culturally poor environments and are often the lowest educational achievers. They have

little cultural capital to facilitate experiential learning, and minimal chance of turning a poor living environment into a site of acquisition for cognitive learning. Their learning is situated in their environment and is correspondingly inadequate.

The state of dependency upon what they know, and lack of motivation to enquire, means that '*.....often the children of the lower-working-class ..... are constrained by the local, context-dependent, context-tied skills; by a world of facticity.*' (Bernstein 1990 pg. 74) As Sennett, R. points out '*...you are always "always starting over"*' (1998 pg.84)

There was a nonchalant acceptance of misfortune and even death amongst the lads; one of whom announced part-way through the interview that he had to be at a funeral within the hour. A 23 year old cousin had died after becoming paralysed one morning when he apparently stretched too much. It is hard to imagine that in this kind of disturbed environment the lads could have enough peace and security in their lives to leave time for learning, but the everyday seemed somehow comforting to them.

All the lads knew what their fathers did for a living. Jed said '*He owns a cyber-café*'; though perhaps he just worked there. What do you want to do after school? 'Travel, rarnd't world.' (Jed) No mention was made of what benefit might be derived from travelling or of any purpose to their travelling, was made by the lads. This apparent inability to see beyond the immediate situation was also obvious in fathers. Carl was almost entirely non-reflexive:

though when challenged, Adrian was capable of being so. Carl considered that an important aspect of his son's learning was the ability to be '*street wise*' and when this concept was probed the reason, so that he would not be '*taken advantage of*', was given. Looking after oneself and reducing risk took up a major proportion of the lads' energy.

Gary was confident he knew the answer to why Barnsley has one of the lowest university-degree attainment rates in Britain. He summed it up in a phrase: '*Yeh they're all laid back that's why.*' Indeed it often seemed that young males in Barnsley are too relaxed about the real world, as if they are so sure of their future without having given it any thought, that they need not worry about it, whilst they remain in control that is. I know from talking to the lads, however that they were not at all relaxed about their current life or prospects.

Whilst I was conducting a careers session with a group at a local school I spelled out to them the unemployment situation in Barnsley and how few choices they would have when leaving school without an adequate education. Many of the boys were shocked and surprised. Indeed one said, '*I'm depressed now*', after hearing what I had to say. Perhaps it would be useful if more lads were told the brutal truth earlier. It seems their teachers and their parents do not relate real life experiences to them.

Gary was an obviously talented lad I interviewed in a session at the local authority's training centre. He was bright and keen to participate. He proved

to be multi-talented and had nine GCSEs. As Gary's interview progressed it was apparent that he knew 'the spiel' trotted out by the training agencies and government (at least in the 1990's), to work hard and get re/trained and rewards would come. Gary had little idea about the world of work. He simply took it for granted that what his careers' teachers told him about manual jobs applied to all careers.

When asked what he wanted to do after his course, Adam did not know. He said he was '*thinking now*' about what he wanted to do and that he wanted to work '*in an office*'. He hoped in five years time to '*be a manager*' and '*run an office*'. In spite of the fact that '*offices*' as Adam knows them, might be obsolete in 5 years time, he is training to work in one. Adam said he took up training to get an NVQ level 2 and '*go up in't world*'. This theme was repeated several times by Adam, as if either he had been taught to say it at interviews, or he believed that by saying it he would convince himself and others of its effectiveness. He probably did not really know what he wanted: perhaps he did not care.

Previous generations have not needed to find work. They have simply gone from school to [albeit badly paid and dangerous] guaranteed jobs with their fathers, according to the tradition for many generations. The fathers were able only to give advice on a narrow band of jobs. Donal's father is a steelworker. He encouraged Donal to learn about electrical work as a career. '*He told me about what he wanted to do and what he wish he had done. I suppose I learned from his mistakes*'. In a working-class, low-skilled

industrial area, father's mistakes are likely not to be an adequate basis on which to make decisions for the modernist globalised era. Fathers' mistakes also appear to include non-recognition of the importance of private sphere activities in the individuated risk-taking environment that is Modernity.

Working class young people have little or no experience of thinking about the world in which they live and the systems which dictate how they live. They live in a world of facticity, in which things are, because they are but education is their only chance of a passage out of this environment, having not yet reached the stage of knowledge of ignorance, they do not know.

The interviewees lived in a very public environment. Though the fathers were family men, they lived more with their male 'mates' within a social milieu: workplace, pubs, working men's clubs, football ground, etc. Mothers are clearly most influential in the home. One father's account, whilst aiming to support mother, actually undermines her by overriding her authority. *'His mother always does all't shoutin at him... and she'll be like gerring on at him abart, yer ent dun yer omework, an when she's gone ah'll just tum ramd and se "look Len yer've got to du yer omework, it's important". ...It's yer last chance to better yerself. Yer've got find yer own way after that, sort o' thing.'* If father was to support her version whilst she was present it would empower her rather than reinforcing the public persona as more important. According to his own account, Gary had not much room for preaching at his son about how to behave in class. *'Well ah thin it wo me that just ad't wrong*

*attitude. It wo like "ahm not gerrin on wi no work ah want attraction from everybody in this classroom". (Gary)*

### 3. Attitudes to Learning

As pointed out by Anderson, (1996) the choice is between learning in isolation or with the help of reflection-facilitators to recognise the logic being taught, or to learn within a social setting to interpret one's circumstances. Cognitive and Situated perspectives are two divisions psychologists (Michelson, E. 1996; Anderson, J.R. et al 1996 & 1997) use for education. Cognitive perspectives rely upon abstract intellectual situations and Situated learning on the 'interpretation of circumstances specific to the situation in which it is learned'. (Anderson, J.R. et al 1996)

It might be readily assumed that because young males in deprived social circumstances can draw upon the accumulated knowledge of their teacher, they would learn better using cognitive methods. However, it can easily be appreciated that with the lack of a reflection-facilitator cognitive learning from life will not be easy. Anderson et al go on to say that 'Numerous experiments show combining abstract instruction with specific concrete examples is better than either alone.' A sort of experience swap is needed which will allow teachers to put the learners experience into context. As supported out by Freire P (1972) when he wrote that: 'Dialogue is the encounter between men, mediated by the world...' (pg 61)

In 1990 Bernstein referred to the home or community as a second 'site of acquisition' (pg 76) for learning, in which these encounters take place.

However, without the ability to facilitate the reflexivity necessary for experiential learning many working-class homes are unable to provide the culturally situated-learning necessary to provide a background for cognitive learning at school. Mac An Ghail's (1996 Vol. 9 No 3) recollection of a story in which one of his students concludes, that: "...teacher[s] bussed [themselves] into black areas each day," areas in which they chose not to live.' serves as a reminder that most teachers are not grounded in the same situation as their students. Does this make their perspective obstructive to facilitating learning?

Working-class male learners might be considered to be doubly disadvantaged as Bernstein posits: '... in a school...'

'...the talk, the values, the rituals, the codes of conduct are biased in favour of the dominant group. But there is another distortion at the same time; the culture, the practice, and the consciousness of the dominated group are misrepresented, distorted. They are recontextualized as having less value. Thus there is a double distortion' (Bernstein 1990 pg.171)

These inequalities are most evident in the relationship between disempowered students/pupils and, teachers as agents of symbolic control. Thus the division of labour inherent in British society is seen to act against the interests of those who most need the attention of middle class agents to improve their social and academic status.

It is impossible to discuss the lives of working-class males without considering the educational context of those lives. They are working-class because they are born into and have matured and been socialised into a working community which depends largely on non-academic and non-intellectual skills to earn a living. This tradition and the fact that members of that community have believed that education is not for the likes of them, is what makes them working class. Now they are being exhorted to be intellectual and to internalise new philosophies within one generation. That is a difficult job for the individuals concerned, but are the attitudes, skills and ideas of others in place to facilitate that change?

#### i) Cognitive Learning

Cognitive learning is generally described as learning through abstract intellectual situations. Without contextual experience or a reflection-facilitator cognitive learning is likely to be very slow. Learning must be valued before reflexivity starts a spiral of learning. Without this motivation there is a culture of indifference which makes the task in school more difficult.

In the middle-classes individuals would gain their motivation from parents and peers. Working-class pupils miss out on various benefits that middle-class pupils have as Thrupp, M. (2001) points out: 'These include the social capital of peers, extra material resources, contextual ..... effects on student achievement.' (pg 303)

It is worthy of recognition that many working-class lads have learned quickly and well after they have left school and gained contextual experience. The motivation to learn and to learn how to learn is referred to as metacognition. Hacker D.J. 1998 considers that ‘...the term metacognitive...’ should be reserved for ‘...conscious and deliberate thoughts that have other thoughts as their object.’ (pg 8) Flavell (1981) considered the part reflexivity plays in the metacognitive process when he wrote that:

‘Metacognitive thoughts do not spring from a person’s immediate external reality; rather their source is tied to the person’s own internal mental representations of that reality, how it works, and how one feels about it. Therefore, metacognition sometimes has been defined simply as thinking about thinking,...’ (Hacker, D.J. 1998 pg 2)

The question which must be asked in this section therefore is, do the lads experience abstract intellectual situations from which they can learn? It seems that few do. Those few are often the individuals who escape their community or who, anyway, found it difficult to be fully part of it.

Charlie Williams, is a well-known local character and nationally appreciated comedian who is Black. It is obvious that Charlie’s father was enormously important to Charlie’s education, though he was himself illiterate. *‘In his daily tutorials about life, he [Charlie’s father] would often tell Charlie that his colour had never been a problem,.....’* (Smith, S. D. 1998)

In Barnsley the ethnic minority population is a mere 0.6% and at the time Charlie was a boy the proportion would have been less. Charlie would therefore have experienced difference from his peers at school and in his

community and though he does not speak of it he almost certainly had the difference pointed out to him by others. It would therefore have caused Charlie to consider his position in society, amongst the many other things his father taught him. Onghena, P. & De Fraine, B. et al, make it clear that: 'With whom one is taught has a larger impact than how one is taught.' (Dec. 2003 pg 841) He also had the advantage of playing professional football for a local town, when he was a young man, which gave him entry to the macho public sphere.

In similar vein to the experience of Charlie Williams, Frank Smith in his book 'Diary of a Coalminer's Son' (2000) tells of '*...an old retired man...*' taken in as a lodger, who told him '*...stories of the sea...*' (pgs. 7-8) '*I was always pestering him to tell me more as no one had ever told me stories before...*' (pg 8) The stories were different to his own experience and therefore not situated to him. They were also probably exciting and caused Frank to speculate on what it must be like to sail the seas. Thus whilst the situation of being told a story was not abstract in itself Frank would have needed to use his imagination to picture the images in the stories.

Clearly some of the lads in one of the group interviews felt they had missed out on even being told stories of experiences outside their own situation. When asked: What would you teach your son? '*What t'world looks like.*' 1) '*Things I've missed out on.*' 4) And that they were: '*Proud of them whatever they choose*' [to do]. 3) Some of the lads asked me questions at the end of their interview, which indicated they were interested in knowing

more of the world. Typical was the question: *'What do you feel is important?'* 5) which felt as though they were at a loss to know what made them curious. In an attempt to ascertain what they considered important for young males to learn I asked what they would like to teach their sons. The reply was: *'what we don't know'*. 7) A tacit admission of not knowing what was on the menu. Nobody had ever discussed with them what they wanted to do or what they wanted to learn about. They had never been consulted on what options were available to them. There is little wonder then that they search avidly through magazines and other media for ideas of how they should act, react, dress, behave, style their bodies, speak, etc.

The lads were unsure, even at the end of their secondary school life, what they thought had been useful about schooling. They seemed unsure what they had learned but they knew implicitly from where they could not learn it. *'It's like stuff what yer can't learn at school.'* 9) Whether they wanted to leave *'That's what's scary about leavin school. Wellah'm not really scared about leavin school'* [Harry] and what they would do after *'but it's like wor am ah goin to do when ah leave school,...?'* [Harry] until they get back to the unsure but at least familiar. *'Once ah get into college all be reight cos ahl be going to college n straight to uni.'* [Harry]

TV, red top newspapers, and other forms of media exposure form not only part of the structure of capitalism but an integral part of the culture, which individuals constantly reproduce. The failure of these lads is not that they contribute to the perpetuation of the system, which disadvantages them; but

that they reproduce in themselves cultural forms, which do not contribute to improvement of the system. They are in effect part of an under-class, which learns only through situations, what it is like to be in those situations.

Their learning does not generate pathways to other options; only how to cope with the current situation. Through recognition of this they become imbued with fatalism, which traps them within their own cultural milieu reproduced for generation after generation. Strict discipline by agents of symbolic control reinforces negative attitudes to the system and promotes alienation from it. Self-defence becomes high on their agenda. When asked what he considered young males need to learn most Len replied: *'How to look after yourself.'* A normal reaction to the sexualised, gendered agenda of schooling or a plea for help from someone who has been traumatised by the school system or the community? The younger lads considered skills of *'basically survival'* 10) and everyday maintenance *'Goo aaht an buy food, everyday things'* 11) as important. It would be difficult to ignore the lads' feelings of insecurity as individuals.

Some fathers such as Harry's, said that he tried to make his son think by not telling him the answer to questions straight away, but instead tried to make him work it out. Harry however recalled a different sort of conversation with his father. *'Ships, ya can't get away from him once ya ask him a question'*. Though this subject is outside Harry's experience, it was clearly not related, by the teller, to Harry's situation or sympathy. It did not therefore cause him

to consider the abstract situation and simply reinforced continued acceptance of traditions.

Donal proved himself to be multi-talented. He was expert in use of computers, designed web sites and developed games for various uses. At the same time he said he did not wish to waste his life reading books but wanted to get on with his life. *'Ah want to learn how to drive, go out wi mi mates round pubs and things, but still do college: and'* even in his own process of learning creatively, Donal wanted to: *'not waste me life away just readin.'* Though he did confess to writing his own story *'in me own time when ah'm not wi mi mates'*.

In this respect Donal is more reflexive than many lads of his age but is reluctant to confessing to abstract thinking. Perhaps as he matures his thoughts will turn away from 'laddish' experiences and more towards abstract learning. As Mark recalled, he only appreciated cognitive learning as he matured and learned more of the world. He was quite rapturous as he recalled his earlier life, filled with opportunities to learn. *'... I think it was from my thirties onwards that I started learning about life and the running of things and the unfairness of things. And especially the unfairness of this country.'*

Ned is a technician with the hospital and has undertaken vocational study for his role there. He is clearly an intelligent and diligent father who works hard to understand. Since leaving school Ned has enjoyed doing GCSE in Sociology at Barnsley College during which he completed a study of the

area in which he lived. Though Ned completed the sociology course it was essentially in a situated subject and only at GCSE. He thought 'A level' was '*Ta much fo me*'

Though he was aware of his own political situation he had not thought deeply about the global political situation. Gary [father] though, perceived a clear difference between vocational courses for the job's benefit and educational courses for his own benefit. 'An NVQ's just learning abaht mi job. ...other courses are learning ya abaht life an arh to get on.'

## ii) Situated Learning

It is recognised (Corrigan, P. 1977, Willis, P. 1999) that working-class pupils often reject the knowledge of their teacher as 'establishment knowledge': outside their experience and therefore not relevant. It is also known that working-class pupils obtain better results from vocational courses (NVQs), which use situated learning methods. These situated learning courses incorporate the weakness that dogs all working-class students: the limitations of understanding of the larger context, due to restricted social milieu. '...knowledge is more context-bound when it is just taught in a single context.' (Anderson, J. R. et al May 1996) A mix of methods must be used.

Freire's (1972) 'Dialogics', in effect a situated learning system; posits that it is important for learning to be facilitated by the community within which the student lives in order that the pedagogy is grounded within the collective experience of the community. For Freire there is a tension between learning about the context of one's life and allowing teachers from other classes to teach their concepts of that context.

'... dialogue cannot occur between those who want to name the world and those who do not want this naming – between those who deny other men their right to speak their word and those whose right to speak has been denied them.'

(Freire, P. 1972 pg 61)

The choice is between learning in isolation or with the help of reflection-facilitators, or to learn within a social setting, to interpret one's circumstances.

As a school leaver not old enough to join older workers during a strike in the steelworks, Carl took a course at the local F.E. College in steel rolling techniques. He then did no learning until recently when he has been engaged in an NVQ course in hot steel rolling. *'It came as shock to me, and everybody else that we had to do this NVQ. Plus we've had to go and do assessment for maths and things. We all found it difficult'* to describe things in writing: probably because it was such an alien concept to them. Much of the so-called education which working-class pupils receive would be more accurately termed 'training' as it is instruction in particular skills and has a small reflexive element. The training and education which Carl undertook as part of an improvement programme in worker skills at the steelworks fitted

with the mixed style of technical training within its social context, advocated by Weil in 1933. *'We didn't want to do them at home, so it took some time. .... I always thought it was okay for you to do a job and to be shown how to do it.... but to learn the theory of it, to work things out, as to why you do 'em,... you're never told. You're just told to do it like this. ...*

and

*'shown what't old rollers [and melters] have shown him'*. Carl considered there might have been something missing from his instruction and *'...always thought it would be better to gi ya a bit o' theory wi it.'* As there would be in an apprenticeship and had been at the time I worked in the steelworks as a school-leaver 'trainee technical operative' in 1964.

As an apprentice I had the company of mature males to guide me, and lads from diverse situations; as well as theoretical instruction to support my situated experience. Lord Mason of Barnsley wrote in his biography of camping trips with Scouts. Mason's opportunity to acquire some contextual experience for his life came when he *'...managed to get access to a tent and learned how to camp in the open air'* as a Boy Scout. *'On Friday evenings I'd head off into the countryside ... and not returning home until Sunday night...'* he gained *'...a break from routine...'* (pg 27) and the opportunity to engage in discourse with peers and mature mentors.

All the lads were reasonably intelligent, though they were not expert at use of language, and used restricted codes for communication. They were articulate when they knew what they wanted to say. I increasingly gained the

feeling that working-class lads start from a long way back in comparison to the pace of the school curriculum. They had clearly not yet experienced the awakening that Mark and Carl had at an older age. Though all this group had been out of England (France, Wales and Florida), life according to a telling comment from one member of the group, appears to be '*all't same rides*' 5) in different places to them. There was an emphasis on enjoying themselves '*before O levels and things*'. 3) Though it was conceded that it is possible to '*learn and enjoy learning*'. 3) Again the question, What things do you want to learn more about in the next three years? Illicited the predictable response. '*How to protect yourself,*' (from robberies, etc.) 7) Living in a public sphere means this protection is more necessary than in a private sphere and particularly for young males who are in the most vulnerable category for street crime.

Fathers attempting to help children learn by relating information from their experience, of being in public places and of the general circumstances and strategies for safety, often find that understanding is limited by factors such as the advance of technology. Technology has provided many more desirable means of communication, used by young males as status symbols. These become targets for acquisitive crime. The maturity required to reflect on experience and to build cognitive learning, might also be supplied by fathers, but as the two generations of males tend not to engage in inter-generational discourse this effect is lessened. Whilst there is some evidence of this happening in mother to daughter relationships there appears to be little or none in father to son relationships. When asked what sort of thing

they learned from their fathers, typical replies indicated tales of adventure and mischief. *What he did when he was their age.* *'What it was like for him at school.'* 4) *'What he did wrong.'* 6)

As a result of this foray into facticity the lads wanted to know more about, job-related knowledge. Work experience during year 11 only provides more of the same situated learning. Len *'... learnt a lot there'* on work placement with his dad's firm: principally *'Ah learnt how to work as a big team'*.

Some lads do learn cognitively from the process, but it seems school has little to do with it. When asked where he learned most from, Harry replied: *'Meself'*, before going on to describe how he built his own computer and designed his own web site by carrying out research and trial and error. He learned, at least partly, from reflection on his mistakes, but even that is situated learning.

### iii) Reflexivity

Perhaps the most important element of working-class education is reflection or reflexivity. As detailed earlier Freire contended that *'...education...must be ...existential ...reflecting the aspirations of the people.'* (Freire,P. 1972 Pg 68) Without that reflexive element built into and practiced within education it will be a sterile process of rote learning outside the experience of students and therefore irrelevant to them. Donal described lads who were not reflexive when he suggested they should find out about their ideas via

*'computer programmes, internet, ask their parents what they thought about it, and teachers as well'.*

Ned Craddock, aged 46, did not like school as a pupil, but has since seen the value of it. With hindsight he thought the teachers were 'Very Good' but he came out of school with no qualifications at 16yrs of age in 1970. *'Ah think ah should o knuckled dam moor and learned iverythin ah wo bein lemt when ah wo theer, tha knows but what shall ah seh?'* Ned indicated he should have learned other things because *'... the quicker ya learn them things the better ya are once ya leave school.'* Ned, from the older generation, when asked who he had learned most from, replied: *'Ah don't think it's any one person. Ah used to work with't old Pole, in't early seventies. He actually leamed me a lot about life more than owt else.'* His dad and himself *'never set dam on an academic basis'* He related experience of learning from other work colleagues which indicated the randomness of reflexive experiences for working men. They appear not to be structured, but rather occur as and when the person has opportunity and cause to be reflexive. *'Summat might have cropped up after 'n ave thowt, naw ah can see what that person's like, ahm gooin a stay clear of em. Ahm gooin a stand back from em an ahll not ask em that question. Ah'll not offer my view to em.'*

*'Ah aluss remember won instance. An ah asked this bloke from Donny (Doncaster) about summat an he went off on this rant an rave'. When Ned objected 'Hi said, well dunt ask thi question if tha dunt want mi to gu off*

*like that. He says tha asked thi question. ... An ah thought ah well ah suppose hi's reight. So. An just little things like that. Ar! ... Ah thowt ah learnt quite a bit off him as a person. More from him than ah did mi dad.'*

Ned was conscious he had learned from him 'Only after. Only after.'

Reflexivity as I found recently is often not available to those working people who are worn out by their work. Whether it is a scientific fact or just that I was particularly tired I cannot tell but it was observable in me. When asked by my step-son to reflect on the theoretical and scientific reasons for various phenomena in plumbing and heating engineering all I could think of was the immediate situation and how I so wanted to finish the job I had started (perhaps unwisely) on his house. It was only afterwards when I had finished the job and was relaxing that I had time and energy to contemplate the relationships of tools, materials, and techniques. I was lucky that I did not have to do that physically demanding job for more than the 5 weeks it took to do the job. Working men are often tired all the time.

Len was constantly finding things he wanted to learn about, e.g. French.

*'If I want to do summat and it's not available and ah know that ah can do it if ah do it meself then ah'll do it. Like if ah want to learn summat, ah know that nobdy'll tell mi or nubdy can teach mi wi'aht heving ta pay money then ah do it meself. Ah just try things; trial 'n error'.* No doubt it was no more than coincidence that his father expressed similar sentiments when he was interviewed.

#### iv) Expectation of Education

Bernstein (1977) expresses involvement by the pupil in his/her role in terms of degrees of commitment and alienation. He scores the five stages: 'Commitment, Detachment, Deferment, Estrangement, and Alienation' (pg 44) according to the pupil's acceptance of the means and ends of the two 'Orders'. Pupils' attitudes to school and learning, differ according to their acceptance of these 'means' and 'ends'.

An important further variable introduced by Bernstein is the involvement by the pupil in the beliefs and aspirations of his/her family and whether these conflict with those of the school. This is exacerbated by middle-class teachers with few community connections due to the '...relationships between teachers in one role position teaching pupils in another' according to Bernstein. (1977 pg 47). This model appears to predict the all-too-frequent clash between teacher and parent.

The expectations of education from working-class males appear to amount to it giving them the ability to get a job. Little or no mention was made of the enjoyment of learning for its mind-expanding potential.

Covington in 1992 described the way in which young under-achievers settle for second place in the education system, rather than be seen to fail.

'There emerges ..... a "winning" formula in the anticipation of failure that is designed to avoid personal humiliation and shame on the one hand and to minimise teacher punishment on the other: try, or at least appear to try, but not too energetically and with excuses handy.' (pg. 78)

Willis argued in 1978 that the working-class are trapped by their own lack of self confidence' and that it is:

'..... this specific combination of cultural 'insight' and partiality which gives the mediated strength of personal validation and identity to individual behaviour which leads in the end to entrapment. '  
(Willis, P. 2000 pg. 120)

The messages given out by the agents of symbolic control are still those of the early to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century when 'keeping your nose to the grindstone' at school would earn a place in industry. At the same time, workers in areas, which have maintained availability of work, have experienced the transition from Competitive Capitalism through Transitional Capitalism to Re-organised Capitalism. These stages equate to industrialism, post industrialism and modernism.

There has been no critical mass of employment in Barnsley for the past decade and a half and pupils are realising that the agents of symbolic control are 'off-message' in their exhortations to 'do better and hope.' The emperors are seen to have no clothes by those they seek to influence.

Some interviewees could remember school life, and their experiences there. *'Ah can remember bein at ///// ////////////// secondary school. Ah wor a bit of a rogue at school. Well I really threw everything away. It didn't look bright on paper. Ah can do a lot moore nar and ah think, well if ah wo like this at school and just gor on wi stuff, ad've been even better than wor I am nar'.* Dads, as well as lads, regretted not starting sooner and recognised that they

did not have the knowledge or experience that would have informed their decision.

Gary, somewhat younger, had not yet mellowed in his attitude to teachers. He was clearly frustrated by the teacher-to-pupil relationship and teaching style. *'They patronise ya. Some patronise ya. Ah think if the just approach ya at your level and treated ya as a friend rather than as a student... ah think more people ad want to learn.'* But Gary was a very articulate lad who would expect some respect from teachers and anybody else he was in a relationship with. Indeed he had been to college and perceived little difference in style between that and school. He had rejected all forms of academic study after a couple of years out of school and taken up NVQs where he had a more employer to employee relationship with tutors.

How important is learning to you, Gary? *'A lot!' Since ah left school, been to college, ah feel thick. Because ahm not leamin. Ahm not ... promoting mi intelligence..... an ah want to. Ah keep sayin to mi girlfriend ahm goin to get some books just to read. Abaht past history and things like that, social events'*

Mark Short (52 yrs old) had his own opinion about Barnsley people. *'I think people in general in Barnsley ... We are living in a time-warp In Barnsley and you can see that in the attitude of the children. These kids think, If you're a girl well I know what's goin' to happen. Why should I bother? I'm just goin to get married and have some kids and stay at home. They're not*

*interested and I think it shows. They're not interested in education, in getting a job, in a career. Their life is to leave school, get married have kids stay at home. The bloke goes out and does his whatever job and that's their life.'*

In his life of unemployed, enforced leisure he obviously finds time to contemplate his surrounding and he might be correct in part of his assumption at least: that too many citizens reject education. As did the advisers of Roy Mason (Lord Mason of Barnsley) in his younger life. As related in his biography, Roy Mason (1999):

**'Somehow [I] just sensed that a whole world of opportunity was out there, just waiting for me to grasp.' But '... my dad's friends kept telling me: "There's nowt for thee, lad. Only t'pit" [2] 'even before I set foot in the senior school ... my future was decided. In three years time I would become a miner, like my dad and his dad before him' (pg 25)**

**'For the first time I was being taught exclusively by male teachers but it made no difference to my rather indifferent standards of academic attainment. Though I enjoyed school, I can't pretend that I worked especially hard. After all, there wasn't much point. I knew what the future held.' (pg 27)**

Gary, what do you think has changed since being at school? *'I'm more settled'*. Because of the unsettled nature of his childhood, including his parents arguing, Paul: *'just got that attitude that, Ahm doin whar ah want. Ahm a loner.'* At the end of his time in school Gary tried but managed only meagre CSE grades. *'Ah don't like writing, that's one thing ah don't like.'* Education is clearly perceived as a chore, something which others make one do, rather than an opportunity to develop oneself.

#### v) Curriculum

The English education system was not designed, with the interests of the workers in mind. 'Mass schooling systems were created in the nineteenth century as a state intervention into working class life, to regulate and take over the rearing of children.' (Connell 1994) It was designed almost a quarter of a millennium ago, on principles handed down by ancient Greek and Roman civilisations; by and for the ruling-class. As Bernstein (1990 pg 150) points out the Trivium (Grammar, Logic and Rhetoric) and Quadrivium (Arithmetic, Music, Geometry and Astronomy) formed the basis of education in the ancient world and have been the basis of the Grammar school system and much else that has followed in British education. The Trivium forms the elementary element of the curriculum, which is a pre-requisite for progression to the secondary stage in which the subjects of the Quadrivium are taught using the pedagogic progression from rote learning to argument and cognition.

Connell, R.W. posits that: 'What we are dealing with, ...is a dominant, or hegemonic, curriculum, derived historically from the educational practices of European upper class men'. (1994 pg.137) That curriculum has a content, which is based upon the assumption that the pupil already has certain knowledge and skills and will acquire others from family and community as they are required. The curriculum content must be learned and pupils are tested at particular stages of progression through the curriculum. Differentiation of ability to absorb knowledge is not facilitated, except by streaming pupils. This does not help them to absorb or understand any better: it just moves them out of the way so that others can. In explaining the way in which sequencing rules apply, Bernstein posits that:

'.....if children cannot meet the requirements of the sequencing rules and are caught up in the repair system, then these children, often the children of the lower-working-class ..... are constrained by the local, context-dependent, context-tied skills; by a world of facticity.'  
(Bernstein 1990 pg. 74)

It is an elitist system, which enables those with the best preparation to achieve most. Working-class pupils are often inadequately prepared due to lack of experiential learning and contextual knowledge, so they are left behind as the pace of the curriculum calls for increasing amounts of cultural-capital-based knowledge.

Mao Tse-Tung (as quoted by Freire 1972 pg 66) said that '... we must teach the masses clearly what we have received from them confusedly.' in order to '...construct the programme content of education, .....

... according to what the student thinks best. Freire went on to add his own '...starting point for

organising the programme of content of education ... must be the present, existential, concrete situation, reflecting the aspirations of the people.' (Freire, P. 1972 pg 68)

This enabling and facilitation of the dialogue, and control of the educational agenda referred to by Freire, would serve the needs of modern public-sphere pupils, but it is not what we currently have in state schools: indeed we have just the opposite in many cases. Quicke describes the National Curriculum in terms of its 'reification of subjects, strong boundaries between courses and highly ritualised and hierarchical teacher-learner relationships' (Dec. 1996)

As a result of this structure minorities suffer: '... in terms of self-identity and personal development from studying these subjects. Moreover, since the current National Curriculum is rooted in a social organisation of knowledge which historically has been part of a system designed to bolster an elite and exclude the majority, it is scarcely surprising that a disproportionate number of these non-beneficiaries are likely to come from the lower classes and other marginalised groups' (Quicke, J. Dec 1996 pg. 368) The working-class thus suffer, according to Quicke, as a result of the national curriculum being restricted to those elements of knowledge which a minority elite use to define the context of society, and therefore of little use to the working-class.

If the school is to be influential within this environment it must devise interventionist tactics which are sympathetic to private sphere values within

a public sphere. One of those tactics is the teaching of self-reflection, or philosophy. Lipman, M. writes that “philosophy for children is actually seen as being about critical, creative and caring thinking,...” (The Guardian March 12 2002) A crucial set of skills for a globalised modernist economy where Prime Minister Tony Blair recently told the Royal Society that: ‘Britain could lose its lead in world science...’ (The Guardian May 24 2002) Paul Cleghorn has developed a “philosophy for children” course for primary schools for Clackmananshire education authority, which involves 30 classes and 800 pupils.’ (The Guardian March 12 2002). According to the same report, ‘...psychologists from Dundee University are currently monitoring classes to find out how philosophy classes contribute to cognitive development.’ That process of metacognition through reflection is a tactical route to addressing the issues.

When asked what was valuable for young men like them to know, the lads’ immediate answer was: *‘Thiv got to learn their English and maths. That’s straight up. Thi dunt hev to do French and art: just lessons that they want to do. Cos you can’t boss em abaht, saying yer doin subjects such as art.’* 9), which indicates they have at least a start to their process of curriculum building: knowledge of what they like and dislike. This is preferable to being advised by a careers’ adviser, who starts from the needs of industry rather than pupils as individuals. *‘The careers adviser tells ya ...try an find art what career ya’ll like an tries an advise ya towards certain careers.’* 10)

Ned had respect for education professionals and considered they should set the curriculum. His remarks supported the need for a core of subjects within the curriculum when he spoke of Maths, English and Science as the most important subjects. He also opined that local history was more important than national and international history, because, in line with Mao: '*... they might have more respect fo wheer the live*'. [if they know more about it].

He was clearly confident of his ground as he lapsed into local dialect. When feeling his way and thinking deeply, he did so in Received Pronunciation. He had respect for teachers and thought they did a very difficult job under pressure, but that: '*The should stick to't basics, gi em a good basic education.*'

And he was ready to criticise when necessary, a service which he saw as vital. As he put it '*if education int workin well; mek it work!*' Perhaps one way to make it work well would be to start from where pupils are and help them to improve: rather than attempting to improve on where they ought to be when compared to a middle-class pupil of the same age.

Gary, who worked at a local building supplies firm as a yard manager, perceived a clear difference between vocational and educational courses. '*An NVQ's just learning abaht mi job. ...other courses are learning ya abaht life an arh to get on.*' His job involved some writing and he was doing '*quite a few courses*' at that time to enhance his career. All his courses have been work-related, vocational courses. The NVQ in customer care was done,

*'...basically cos we had to do it', and he was not naturally keen on the: 'Management for Success course. That's been goin on for abahnt three and half years'. This would include him in the managerialist culture, which he instinctively rejected.*

When asked what they considered necessary to learn, the lads consistently chose Maths and English, and life-skills subjects. These will at least stand them in good stead to reach the Formal Thought stage of Piaget's developmental phases, instead of being stuck at the Concrete Operations phase.

Roy Mason (1999) tells how he was influenced in his early life by Tom Stevenson: *'...a quiet man, a bachelor and a loner, with no friends or family. He was a non-drinker, a non-smoker and never seemed to spend a penny on clothes...'* Tom was a lodger with Roy's parents and he did adventurous things, like building a crystal radio set and made an impact on the house by playing dance band music from London, and planted the idea that there were things for Roy to learn. Roy goes on to convey the isolation of a pit village at that time by referring to passing the minor scholarship and going to *'...the big school in Barnsley ...where it was possible to dream of becoming...someone who wore a collar and tie to work.'* (pgs. 24 –25)

In common with most of the working-class at that time, the isolation experienced by Roy Mason was not only geographical; it was contextual. It is illuminating to read the thoughts of a man who later went on to become

perhaps the most contentious Northern Ireland Minister of recent times and now sits in the House Of Lords as Lord Mason of Barnsley. The ultimate in escapology from the working-class to the gentry. In order to make that transition, that escape from the ordinary to the possible, it is important that individuals learn how to learn.

#### vi) Metacognition

Metacognition might be summed up as learning how to learn. Some of the interviewees showed traces of metacognition, of understanding why they should learn or how that learning would be most effective. The problem was that they only realised after they had ceased school or formal learning or when it was too close to exams. It is clear that these lads and dads needed time to experience various deprivations and missed chances before they recognised that education would help and that it might even be enjoyable to learn.

Metacognition is key to pacing as the lads enter school not only with less education than middle-class lads and the majority of girls, but also with less recognition of the need to learn. Thus they are not only behind in subject based education, they also lack motivation. Working-class lads therefore require a different kind of education to make them learning-ready, as well as more effort in subjects to get them upto the standard of others. It is clear the pacing of school curriculums will not be changed to facilitate real differentiation between social classes; except by making learning experiences available longer, and opportunities for return to learning easier.

*'...The traditional aim of liberal policy, with education in the forefront as one of its principal means...' has been "...the open society..." (Rubinstein, D. (ed) 1979) Even in Neo-Liberal thinking the aspiration to enable as many individuals as possible to achieve their potential must be paramount. It might therefore be surprising that the state does not work harder to ensure that all individuals start from a firm base of knowledge about their society. Initiatives such as Sure Start have a beneficial effect on pre-school and parent education but are not widespread enough. Being part of the dialogue about education is important to young people as it should be to parents. Gary remarked that what makes you learn is: *'...people around ya, your attitude, resources that you use. I think one a't key things is people around ya. Especially if they're leamin ... and you're not.'* This was an apt description of metacognition springing from cultural capital.*

*'Since leaving school ah just knocked miself on't ed. Everybody wo leamin'. Ah wo feelin ah wo thick. When ah wo talkin ah felt thick. Ah din't understand what the wo talkin abaht. I felt ..... embarrassed.'* Gary was mixing with people who *'got into college'* [university]. *'Mi girlfriend. She patronises mi every day ... an ah dunt like it. An that's why ahm leamin nar. Ah want to learn. Ah want to know what books to read.'*

In the same way Len was part of a dialogue about working class life when he was on work-experience placement, especially as it was at the same place as his father worked. *'Ah felt as though ahd left school an ah wo gerrin*

*like.... life experience and wor it wo like to work, knew what happened wor happenin, knew what happened in't daily routine.'* Unlike Gary (junior) who was clearly not part of any dialogue about education or work. When asked what he would need to do to fulfill his ambition of becoming a manager, he replied: *'Ah suppose ah'll e to pass exams. Progress ... see ar it guz.'* What will you have to study? Have you talked to anybody about it? *'no'* said Gary. Learning Blocks? *'I enjoyed it all, got on with it. Quite good relationship with teachers. Nice school'*.

## 4. Attitudes to Acquisition

Roscigno V.J. and Ainsworth-Darnell J.W. (1999) inform that Lamont and Lareau defined cultural capital as “widely shared, high status cultural signals (attitudes, preferences, formal knowledge, behaviours, goods, and credentials) used for social and cultural exclusion”. (pg 159)

Bourdieu and Passeron as long ago as 1977 accused the education system of ‘functional duplicity’ by seeking in effect to serve two masters: the establishment and the individual learner. The establishment requires the class system to remain intact and the education system as a servant of the establishment ensures that within its hallowed portals the system is conserved.

‘It is precisely its relative autonomy that enables the traditional educational system to make a specific contribution towards reproducing the structure of class relations, since it need only obey its own rules in order to obey, additionally, the external imperatives defining its function of legitimising the established order, that is, to fulfil simultaneously the hereditary transmission of cultural capital, and its ideology of absolute autonomy.’ (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977 pg 199)

Bourdieu, P and Passeron, JC (1977) go on to use the concept of Cultural Capital which they describe as ‘...identifiable by the father’s occupation’ to define (1977) one mechanism through which intergenerational class (dis)advantage is transmitted.

Schools have become the fount of all knowledge to working-class people as they struggle to make sense of an increasingly globalised and individualised world and lexicon of knowledge. Schools however cannot hope to carry out the task of educating each individual child according to their individual needs and strengths. Teachers need a foundation to build upon. That foundation is intended to be the language skills which middle-class pupils will have acquired by the time they enter education. Working-class children will usually not acquire those skills because they do not have parents able or adequately resourced to teach them. This is the education system which Corrigan, P. (1979 pg 20) sees as : ‘...a series of hurdles which are raised against’ the type of student in this study.

It is difficult not to notice that lads raised in working-class environments have a culture and even a language of their own. They use codes developed over generations and derived from old languages and combinations of imported language from where they emigrated to industrial areas. These elements combined with social mores and attitudes to speaking and asserting their identity, form the language and speech patterns of their culture.

Cultural Capital is described by Bourdieu, P. in Education (Halsey, A.H. et al 1998) as existing in three states: the embodied state, objectified state, and the institutionalised state. (pg 47) Bourdieu refers to the ‘...domestic transmission of cultural capital...’ as ‘...the best hidden and socially most determinant educational investment...’ (ibid. pg 48) It is that domestic transmission of objectified capital in the form of ‘pictures, books, dictionaries,

instruments, machines, etc'. as Bourdieu defines it which often comes to mind first as conferring advantage to pupils: Perhaps more importantly in a modern world than in a pre-computerised era. The very language which describes cultural capital is reminiscent of that used to describe computers.

'...most definitions focus on membership in networks and the norms that guide their interactions. These in turn generate secondary features such as knowledge and trust, which then facilitate reciprocity and co-operation.'

(Kilpatrick, S. et al 2003 pg419)

It does have an effect for pupils to have use of a computer or other educational equipment, but equally important are the effects of the '...embodied state, i.e. in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body...', and the institutionalised state which 'impose[s] recognition...' on the bearer. (Kilpatrick, S. et al pg 50)

Crucial, in a place such as Barnsley, which has a history of low academic achievement, is the '...break with the presupposition inherent ... in the commonsense view, which sees academic success or failure as an effect of natural aptitudes...' (ibid pg 47) It can therefore be assumed that there is no barrier of natural aptitude to individual educational achievement, but unfortunately in the circumstances in which the lads live there is little opportunity to achieve individually. Hence the need to develop effective learning networks which the whole community buys into. Kilpatrick, et al point out that:

'...regions that are restructuring...from an outdated industrial base, do so more effectively if they engage in productive learning and adaptation processes through networking': (2003 pg 424)

Networking is an element of cultural capital. Bourdieu's description of the action of cultural capital contends that '...scholastic yield from educational action depends on the cultural capital previously invested by the family.' (pg 48) If the family has little or no cultural capital or does not know how to apply it, they will be unable to assist the next generation and they will start at a disadvantage to others who have social capital.

There are other means, however of acquiring and applying social capital on behalf of those in most need. Bourdieu goes on to describe Social Capital as:

'...the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group – which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively-owned capital, a credential which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word.' (Bourdieu, P. 1998 pg 51)

The World Bank was even clearer in 1998 of the advantages of social capital being developed and shared by a community and when the World Bank advocates a seemingly Socialist approach it would appear a good bet for success.

'...it has been shown that community development approaches which start from an assessment of the networked resources of a community,...and use a participatory approach to project design and implementation have been found to have a more positive impact ...' (Kilpatrick, S. et al 2003 pg 419)

The lads' social capital was scarce in terms of finance and individual resources. Their social capital derived from the group pooling their resources: Perhaps that is where the desire of many of the lads to learn how to *'look-after'* themselves sprang from.

The pooling of resources and allocation according to hierarchical position amounted to control of the public sphere within their community. Their credit and credibility was built upon control of their hierarchy. Lads brought up in this fiercely hierarchical public sphere spend more time maintaining their position and defending themselves within the group, than gaining external advantage from cultural capital. Their experience and cultural capital is therefore derived from and subordinated to the group. Only those strong enough to survive outside the group, in the private sphere, are able to learn as individuals and meet their individual learning needs. Kilpatrick et al (2003) identify three broad categories of benefit from cultural capital. The first of these is that : '*...social capital functions to reduce transaction costs, ...and balance the rigidities of hierarchy...*' (pg 421)

It is not difficult to see why an interviewee would not recognise their cultural poverty and consider instead that the real barrier is money. Money can be the starting point for not being able to engage in external networks but often it is not. Rather it is the lack of cultural capital which, binds them into strict internal hierarchies and isolates them from external networks.

All interviewees considered they had experienced no barrier to their learning except: '*money*' 7) and their own attitude and rejection of the process. i.e. '*can't be bothered*'. 8) Both of which are material components of cultural capital. Money is straightforward economic capital, which enables the individual to acquire time and resources to learn if they wish to apply those resources to learning. The embodied state of rejection of the process is just as important as is the institutionalised state, exemplified by Mark's confidence that if he had not been interrupted in his schooling when he moved from Bradford; he would have '*gone on and got loads of O levels and maybe some A levels without any problem at all*'.

#### *i) Embodied State*

Individuals' and communities' reality is their situation and experience described by use of language. Their language or dialect is therefore often work-related and even job-specific (e.g. '*gob*' - place where rubbish is thrown in the mine) or derived from ancient language of the particular community (e.g. '*seiling*' – coming down hard, from Scandinavian).

The working-class communicate in codes, restricted for their use; where much is '*understood*' rather than verbalised. The dominant class communicate in elaborated codes which are explicit. The implicit nature of restricted codes is barely adequate for effective communication between members of the dominated class and are totally inadequate for inter-class communications. This is detrimental to restricted-code users who need to

communicate with teachers who (by definition) are members of the dominant class and therefore use elaborated codes. This does not help the effective communication of information and discriminates against effective pedagogy with its content of facilitative relationships.

It appears that working-class pupils suffer, and boys suffer more than girls, from cultural poverty. Roscigno V.J. and Ainsworth-Darnell J.W. (1999 Vol. 72), suggest that '.....parents invest in their children's education differentially and that daughters are somewhat more likely than sons to be the recipients of parental cultural capital.....'. (pg 166)

Drawing on data available from the USA National Education Longitudinal Survey, they found that 59% of the gap in cultural trips and classes are explained by stratification at family level. Furthermore, Roscigno V.J. and Ainsworth-Darnell J.W. (1999) assert that high socio-economic status students 'receive greater returns ...for cultural trips than do low-SES students.

The lives of many of the interviewees were clearly unsettled and they had no real home-life. Thus they had a paucity of personal resources and lack of cultural capital. This did not necessarily obviate learning from a very difficult situation but there was little obvious opportunity for reflection in very stressful circumstances. Fathers did not help much. Ned said that he was proud of his son: *'I'm actually proud of ar Alan. He's been made a prefect'* though he had never had *'aspirations for'* his kids. *'They do what they want to do.'* Whilst this might seem libertarian to Ned, it is actually *laissez faire*.

The effect on his son might be a feeling of lack of support from a presumed mentor, and therefore a greater difficulty in gaining the skills to enter wider networks.

Gary (junior), who was older than the other young interviewees, was confident he would do well, though he was unclear of his direction. He was learning about Information Technology at the local authority's training centre. He had gained cultural capital in the form of GCSEs, and leading roles in drama productions. He was determined to continue with his education but was unclear how he would afford the time. He was confident and he was mixing with students who would motivate him. *'Yeh I know a'll do well... because... I've got ambitions, goals, as long as I've got my qualifications, yeh. I'm doing level 2 [NVQ] at t' moment [in] ICT. I'm going to do my Level 3 as well. And really I want to do as many [NVQ's] as I can.'*

Home life for our subjects can be unconventional. Jed and Callum were, *'Never in't house. I'm only in't house when I come home from school then I go out till 9 o'clock. Then a goo in and get somat to eat and gu to bed.'* Having hardly seen their parents and family, never mind engaged in dialogue with them. When asked about how he related to his father Callum replied quite matter-of-factly that: *'he's in a coma'*. When Jed and Callum were out, they went: *'Up to Farm Road, everywhere. Up the street? Messing about, walking around.'* in the public sphere which was their home from home.

Jed and Callum did have a form of objectified cultural capital in the form of knowledge of diversity of religions and cultures other than their own. They talked at the end of the interview about the Turkish boy on the street who had to leave Turkey because of his Muslim and Christian parent's mixed religious beliefs. And another: *'...me brother... ah just dun't ger on wi im at all, we argue every day'*. Another respondent contributed that: *'A just dun't ger on wi me mam'*. 12) Adam does not talk to his father who was an *'order-picker at Morrison's'* supermarket about his life or work. His father *'just say's it's hard work. ... He works nights:'* permanently. Alienation from the private sphere was emerging as a theme.

Interviewing these lads was hard work. They were reluctant to talk in a group, as if they just did not know how to describe their lives and what they did each day. Many did not live conventional lives. The boys did not use roads but went across fields, because: *'...it's quicker to get to places.'*

The older generation of interviewees did appear to have learned from their fathers. Ned Craddock's father was a miner and is 76 yrs old now. He worked temporarily on the railway but went back into the pit. He was in the Army during the war. Ned never went down the pit to work. Ned learned, *'Discipline, respect for his elders and cricket...'* from his dad. These are not the values which lads growing up in a modern world which is supposedly renewed every day and in which one is taught to compete to gain individual advantage, are likely to value. Whereas, Routledge recounts that::

'He [Scargill] told Jed Mortimer in January 1982 in an interview for the Sunday Times that his

father was the greatest influence on him. "Not directly – he never told me anything directly – but read about eight books a week." ( pg 19)

Some fathers are the exception. Gary was keen to point out that he had included his kids in conversation. *'Ah'll tell thi worr ave allus done. If wiv bin set ramd at diner or owt an thus been an item on't television; ah've allus asked fo their opinion. Ah've allus said well what would you do abart it? Let em think abart it.'* He welcomed questions from his kids and accepted his responsibility for trying to answer them. If answers were beyond him he said he would direct them to the computer to find out on the Internet. The lads learned about *life*' 13) mainly *'at school'* 13) rather than at home, as might be expected.

## *ii) Objectified*

Objectified cultural capital is more difficult for working-class pupils as finance is usually a pre-requisite. Teachers actually disadvantage working-class pupils by not accessing and using resources to full effect. This relegating effect is achieved during tracking in a systematic way and by attaching low values to working class pupils' work. Apple (1993) points out that: 'There is a complex relationship between the accumulation of economic and cultural capital.' (pg309) It is evident that conversation between those who have this 'knowledge available for use' as Apple describes it (1993 pg 309) and those who need to use it, is essential for the education of working-class deprived communities.

Apple (1993) posits that according to Bourdieu, students from dominant groups get ahead because of their possession of cultural capital but believes himself that Cultural Capital is not inherent within particular classes. It is, rather, embodied within knowledge and thereby available to all 'as a form of capital'. This capital can be realised by application of what Apple refers to as '*technical/administrative knowledge*' (original italics), which is conferred upon students by educational institutions. That feels like a statement of the obvious but unfortunately this type of knowledge is spurned by many young working-class males who would rather have 'a real job' in the tradition of their fathers than learn the technical /administrative skills necessary to acquire higher level skills. Girls do rather better than boys in acquiring this type of knowledge as they are inherently better at right-brain activities and are taught organisational skills by their mothers in the home. They are also more closely involved with the political narrative of the need for education from a traditionally more detached perspective of work.

The only trip to theatre and art galleries any of the lads had was with school. Reading material, from books to serious newspapers, was not widely available, and only one lad confessed to reading newspapers: he had a paper-round. Competitive games like football and cricket and other team games were more frequent.

Ned bought a computer for his own, but mainly for his children's use for study work. He did a computer course, but soon became bored with it. '*Only reason ah bowt it wo to help mi kids at school.*' Alan, his son, has had a

computer all his education life. When asked whether it had helped Alan to have a computer available to him, Ned replied that it had certainly helped his daughter but he considered *that 'If we let him, Alan would just play games on it all't time'*. An instance perhaps of well-meaning intervention which might be misplaced, in the modern context.

The most important resource might be considered to be the availability of time which individuals can devote to learning. Time in the form of an early start to learning, dependent on the knowledge and cultural capital of their family, and time in the form of availability of capital to finance freedom from other duties. The later the individual starts the greater must be the availability of resources for freedom to learn later in life.

The school in working-class areas has an extra burden upon it, in that it needs to fabricate cultural capital for individuals in addition to and at the same time as teaching knowledge, skills and attitudes. It also needs to synthesise social capital by engendering a learning ethos in the community. The school is often the only form of objective social capital available to working-class pupils, though not to parents. It must inculcate the desire to learn in its pupils and their parents in order that they form the critical mass of learners, required to become a self-supporting group. Thus the requirements to teach acceptance and willingness to learn, and to inculcate metacognition at the same time as teaching courses, often compete for available time. In order to short-circuit the lack of time-resources, teachers sometimes turn to authoritarian strategies. This clashes with cultural norms and is swiftly

rejected by individuals and families, resulting in a clash of cultures and down-grading the effect of the school as social capital.

Even when finance is available it is often not used as social capital. Callum became very interested when Germany was mentioned in the conversation. It transpired that he had family in Hungary, with whom he spent each summer, driving through Germany to get there. Enquiries about how he afforded to travel so much revealed that he had tens of thousands of pounds from what he referred to as legacies, and money owed from grandparents: *'and I babysit'* he said. It struck me that he must be one hell of a baby-sitter to warrant that rate of pay, and why did his mother: *'work[s] in a café'* if he had so much money available? Especially when he claimed that: *'all't money ah get a gee her it...an ah du some other stuff.'*

Even though he had more than enough money to do whatever he wanted to do, this youth remained in his neighbourhood: sleeping around in unsettled circumstances. He was clearly senior in the hierarchy of the local underworld and felt confident enough to boast of his exploits; albeit in a confidential arena. He insisted that himself and his mate speak to me without others there and referred to other members of their *'crew'* which was *'about 300'* strong when all its members from a wide area were counted. Some of whom were from cultures outside of Barnsley and of non-British origin: e.g. African, Asian, Other European, etc. This lad was an up-and-coming professional villain and leader of the pack, yet when asked what he learned from contact with other cultures and from trips abroad the reply was *'its*

*warmer*'. Reflexive, he was not. There was a clear knowledge and some respect for some other cultures, but little or no evident learning from them. e.g. There was no evidence of ability to speak the various languages of cultures they encountered.

The irony may be that some of these lads, who had rejected school and achieved least, are best placed to take advantage of the capitalist system as they have acquired (by foul means) most objectified cultural capital in the form of money and travel. It was not of immediate use to them however, as they did not have the learning or institutionalised acceptance to take advantage of it. Nor had their parents transmitted it to them and in doing so engaged in the process of education with them.

They showed an obvious pride in the rather tatty common-room which, they had helped to organise and decorate, though I suspect more as a symbol of their status in the school hierarchy than any sense of achievement. I was not clear why they had been given the task of decorating the common room, except that it might have been a diversionary tactic to allow pupils to get on with education whilst they were out of the way. It might have co-incidentally facilitated situated learning about decorating and other skills, would probably have also taught about ways of avoiding official sanction for anti-social behaviour, and may even have represented a perceived reward for unacceptable behaviour.

An apparent feature of the objectified cultural capital of these lads is that it is not connected with the family or used to reinforce embodied capital or institutionalised capital. It is gained from independent sources. What effect does this have on attitudes to learning? Perhaps it reinforces the attitude that has been clear from many interviewees that they learn best *'from themselves'*.

### iii) Institutionalised

Perhaps the least likely form of cultural capital for working-class lads to possess is institutionalised capital. Possession of institutionalised capital involves knowledge and involvement in institutions from which individuals derive benefit.

The paucity of educational experience outside the school is disadvantageous to working-class pupils throughout their lives. If those workers, who were so surprised by the sudden demise of their industry and their culture had been aware of the context of their lives and been able to reflect upon it rather than blindly following their leaders into conflict in the hope of winning back the past, they would have been able to use the structures they had to support each other and use the experience to the advantage of their communities. They would have been aware of the changes in world economies and how the fuel industry was about to be affected. At least then they could have been better prepared. Instead, like the IBM workers described by Sennet (1999 pg 124) they were bemused and frightened, instead of being able to use the situation as a growth point.

The balance is described by Weil (1933) when she wrote of giving workers a full ‘...understanding of technical processes instead of a mere mechanical training; and to provide the understanding with its proper object, by placing it in contact with the world...’(pg. 18). Cobb, P. and Bowers, J. (1999) confirm this view when they write that it can be: ‘... argued that the contrast between the two perspectives cannot be reduced to choosing between the individual and the social collective’ perspective. Thus a combination of knowledge situated within the world of work, combined with cognitive methodology to facilitate learning of its place within the wider context of economy, politics and philosophy; has proven to be positive in pilot projects within schools.

Mark (adult) had access to resources when he was younger, but only really learned about life as he reflected later. He regretted the interruption to his schooling and was confident that if he had not moved out of Bradford he would have ‘...gone on and got loads and loads of ‘O’ levels and maybe some A levels without any problem at all’. It later became evident that Mark considered it clearly advantageous to his education to have access to resources. Resources by themselves are not the key to learning, unless they are used to access learning experiences. ‘..... *managing supermarkets in my twenties. It was easy because I’d grown up with it. I was on money in my twenties that people a damn site older than me, who had been working years and doing apprentices and that, weren’t. It was easy for me because we had the shop at home and also my grandad had a shop and I used to work*

*for him on a Sunday.*' a good example of cultural capital not translated into education due to lack of social capital.

Mark earned a living by playing the stock market and gambling as far as he would tell me. He had evidently not been very successful and perhaps failed to recognise that the real benefit accrues from being part of the inside knowledge and involvement with the institution, rather than throwing money at it in a gamble on winning. He had no hobbies or pastimes as such and was concerned about the effect his lack of employment would have on his son. He considered that teachers were: *'teaching children and they tend to be like children themselves.'* Mark used the purported fact that *'...it's a dangerous place out there...'* to justify his children having mobile 'phones in school *'...for my benefit rather than anybody else's'* —against school policy. He appeared to be an anti-institutionalist and therefore less likely than most to gain from institutionised social capital. Perhaps he was even forming his own institution for the benefit of his family.

Harry recognised the fallibility of teachers when he commented: *'They're not as on't ball as thi se. Thi se thi know ivrithing abaht school, they know evrythin that gus on in it, they don't.'* They know 'about 20%' of what goes on in school.' Harry had more reason than most to dislike and mistrust the institution of school. He suffered from bullies at school to the point where he attempted suicide. He said teachers: *'...din't listen. They just left it. Ah told em, but this other lad that wo gerrin bullied... they just compared me to that other lad. It's like he dun't get as mad as you, ... but perhaps he wont gerrin*

[bullied] *as bad as me. Because ah moved into't school , ... ah din't know anyone.*' Institutions can work against vulnerable members and prevent them taking advantage of the cultural-capital otherwise available. Teachers ought to remember they are 'in loco parentis' to pupils.

Len was obviously not happy with jumping into the academic pool without a lifebelt. Nor did he even know where the pool was or which bus to catch to get there. *'I'm not sure I want to tek a university, cos it's all gooin to be experimental till end o' college.'* Now he wanted to study Law. *'A'm gooin to tek French and Law then av always got chance if a want ta study law. Then am gooin to tek maths and biology, then if a dint like that law course then a can always tek mi maths and law.'* Len really did not have a clear idea of what the institution of university was about, and struggled to fit life in general into institutional pigeon-holes.

There was a lack of clarity, but no lack of ambition in Len's thinking about his future. Clearly the people best able to help him clarify his thinking; teachers, had not been successful in doing so. *'...like courses I ent been on at school, ah dunt know what ther all abaht. Ah want ta tek French cos ah've only just realised ah'm good at French, and ah think it's interesting.'* What if you got a place at Oxford but you couldn't live at home? [Len] *'Ah would gu for a place in Sheffield'*. Len had clearly picked up that higher education was preferable to other means of pursuing a career and he wanted to go on to university but he did not know why, where or how. The government's exhortations to attend H.E. had probably been successful, but it was an isolated aspiration

with little contextual knowledge. It seemed a kind of cruelty, which set pupils up to fail.

When talking about his academic qualification requirements for his careers' options, Len said: *'Ahm gooin a be using three on em. GCSEs, A levels and probably a degree or an HND'* From a lad who stated a preference for a career as a Forensic Surgeon in an earlier interview, this indicated a lack of knowledge of what was the exact academic path to a professional career.

Len, a reasonably bright lad who might be expected to attain some GCSE's at A\*-C and progress to A level study; nevertheless was confused about his career path and clearly did not know what his options were. I could not help but wonder if Len was being pushed into a more macho profession to compensate for what some perceived as a more effeminate hobby (i.e. marching band).

#### *iv) Sites of Acquisition*

Bernstein, B. (1990) referred to the 'invisible pedagogy' which is that learned within the family by absorption of values and folk knowledge. Bernstein (1990) posits that:

*'From a cognitive and from a social point of view girls are less likely to be negatively constrained by the invisible pedagogies than visible pedagogies. Conversely, for boys, under an invisible pedagogy practice, girls become successful competitors and a threat.'* (Pg. 82)

That threat is the result of girls' greater opportunities through sympathetic dialogue with their mothers and female determination to control their own

lives, as a result of rejection of male hegemony. Boys are therefore more likely to gain if they adopt aspects of a feminine agenda.

That support is often not available in working-class families due partly to the lack of cultural capital and resources to facilitate experiential learning and the inadequacy of the environment for situated learning. It is also due partly to the lack of metacognition or the recognition of the need to learn and the possession of tools to facilitate learning. Cleghorn, P. (March 12 2002) asserts that it is important for children to have Socratic reasoning skills because "It's becoming more recognised how important it is to learn about learning".

Bernstein described two types of sites of acquisition: Primary and Secondary. The Primary site is taken to be school. The Secondary site is taken to be the family home. Though it might be readily recognised that these locations could change, the relationship between them would remain. The primary site is the prime provider of information and the secondary the source of contextual or support service. The role of the secondary site is to provide context and reflexivity for the first site.

Many of our subjects, for a multitude of reasons either reject school or fail to thrive in the school environment. The primary site of acquisition then shifts from school to whichever site of acquisition is most available. (e.g. the family, the community, or even themselves). In this case there is no real secondary site of acquisition available and except in a few cases where the

person is particularly perceptive there is no availability of reflexivity. The opportunities to learn from the mistakes of others in the community are plentiful but negative teaching is not effective, and often results in the pupil learning the wrong knowledge, skills and attitudes. Such a negative situation can often be made positive by the addition of a reflexive agent, such as a parent or even a cathartic experience. That experience is often not available until the individual leaves his community (e.g. to work). If individuals do not leave they do not get the necessary experience and merely perpetuate the cycle of inexperience, deprivation and ignorance within the community.

v) *Primary sites*

Stuart Jeffries describing philosophy classes for primary pupils writes: 'What particularly strikes me, having attended one class, is that philosophy helps children to develop oral articulacy,...' (The Guardian March 12 2002) needed to develop reflexivity and confidence.

Not until they leave school and start to obtain a means of reflection through context gained at work do pupils realise the value of the lessons they should have learned at school. When asked if college would be same after a couple of years absence, Gary, who had left school, considered: '*No. Because ah wunt do what av done. Ah went not really knowin what ah wanted to do. Ah wo still a school leaver. At school ah wor a prat. [but] when it cem to doin mi work, ah just gor it done in lessons. Ah've always just done enough to get by.*'

Gary considered that he had now *'matured an a think that if ah wo to gu to college now ah'd know't crack, ah know wor ahm gooin fo. Ah know ah to speak to each tutor. An at the end of the day if ah wo ta gu back to college ya gu to college for a reason. Ah went to college thinkin ah've got to gu to college.'* In that way it was a continuation of school.

When asked where they learned most from, Jed's and Callum's considered reply of one part of the double act, was by way of an enquiry to his mate, *'most a't places wheer am learning from is—— schooil in' it?' 'Mooist a't places wheer a learn all mi stuff frum.'* There is an obvious lack of reflection on the possibility of learning from other sources and an obvious lack of learning from school. These lads were struggling with NVQ 1 at college on the days they were released from school, partly because they did not attend school anyway.

[Interjection from mate] *'when we gu'*

Donal explained that: *'When ah wor a kid abart 10 to 11 all me mates started to move away. All't drugs gor abart. Everybody started saggin it. Iverybody just turned on mi. All they would ever talk abart wo drugs. So ah just left'*. On leaving school there are opportunities to obtain a second first site of acquisition. One in which they had as Gary thought: *'... more of a say in a place like this [training centre'*. He said of college staff that : *'...if they just approach ya at your level and treated ya as a friend rather than as a student more people would want to learn'*. This was in apparent conflict with his

previous acceptance of stricter discipline and clearly said something about his attitude to changing situations and how he reacted to and interacted with agents of symbolic control; and how the role and power of those agents were changed by circumstances.

The difference between the environment in which Gary was currently learning and that in which he had previously been placed was that he was able to argue points within a mutually agreed framework. He was thus empowered within a learning relationship. *'Ah think ya've got more of a say in places like this. He conceded that 'some tutors at Barnsley College were sound ...' but that '...their approach on it all, on a different level to what they should'.*

Arthur Scargill, who is at the time of writing, the General Secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers and has played a significant part in the politics and economics of Britain over the past three decades, considered his prospects from the other end of the telescope. Paul Routledge writes in Scargill, that Arthur Scargill told Joan Bakewell

"I went to a board-school and refused to take the eleven-plus. If I'd got a scholarship I'd have to go to the grammar school in Barnsley, and I didn't want to go out of my village. In retrospect I can see that I was wrong". (pg 18)

Adam had enjoyed his time at High School and considered it a nice place, but did not achieve much in the way of academic qualifications. He enjoyed school though and chose to study '*business admin*' at a training centre after

leaving, rather than college because he could start at NVQ 2 rather than NVQ1.

The first site of acquisition, school, was regarded as important by many pupils for their future but mates were more important for the present. Asked about *////////// School*; Donal replied that *'ah've got a few good mates there'*. It is a long way to travel but he chose to go to that school anyway. *Work experience is more enjoyable than school. Ya dunt realise how much ya do learn at school; when ya nor at school.'* By which he meant that you only realise how much you learn at school when you have left it. Clearly for most pupils school is an important site of acquisition but without the contextual experience to enable effective reflection the experience will inevitably be diminished. *'Like ah got experience of an interview; but that cant be learnt through school.'*

Donal said approvingly of college that *'you don't have to have tons of subjects bombarding ya. Ya've just got these four that ya tend to pick cos yer good at em. Ya like it so it keeps ya gooin.'* College attracted him because he could *'get more qualifications so that I can get a better job than I would be doin'*. He professed to enjoy learning, but not boring subjects like maths and serious elements of science. Instead he enjoyed the *'scientific mysteries that we don't know about'*. This statement clearly acknowledged his need of a primary site. Donal was keen to know about new ideas and especially scientific elements of the curriculum, and futuristic science in particular. *'Ah've always wanted to learn, ave had me mind set on bein a*

*lawyer from when ah ah wo abaht seven. Really it wo films thar a saw. Things thar a already knew for some money, bur ah thought that's not goin to motivate me all that way is it, so ah started lookin into it and when ah wor abart seven ah used to ask people and ah wo like junior school and nubdy really knew much abart it and I only really started leamin abart ar to get theer and wor it wo like around senior school.'* Donal then related the process he needed to get through via school college and university, part of which he had learned from the Early Outreach programme of a local university. He and his mates had then used computer software to clarify his knowledge further. In this context the later primary site is reaching back to access the learners who are not facilitated by the earlier primary site.

It is clear from this exposition of his transition from child to adolescent learner that Donal was aware of his local context and environment. It is equally clear that he was rather unsure, though trying hard to understand, the wider context of his life. There is of course a great deal more to becoming a lawyer than gaining degrees. He asked for guidance very early but was unsuccessful as presumably nobody in his circle knew anything about becoming a lawyer. He had the idea originally based on two factors: available knowledge from TV and the fact that he needed to get money. Though he quickly dismissed the concept of money giving ongoing satisfaction. A clear lifestyle and livelihood choice at an early age.

Learning at work was somehow different to learning at school. *'It's a different learning style. Ah think ya do learn a lot but ah wouln't want to work*

*theer as a career, cos thes only so far ya can gu. Thes only so far yer can go wi learnin especially if yer stay in that business'. (Len) What did you learn at school, Adam? 'Abart education.'* Compared to school, Adam preferred the training centre *'because it was easier to learn just one subject'*. There was also *'less pressure'* in the training situation. Adam had previously mentioned that he felt pressured in his part-time job with BFC by *'customers'*. Adam was clearly not well-prepared for the new service sector in which he found himself exposed to output-related pressure.

Is there a difference between school, college and somewhere like the training centre. *'Yeh. Ah think school is similar to college, it's still't same principle. When ya come to a place like this ... it's... ya look up at 'em. It's their job. You've actually been offered this position.'* Gary accepted the much stricter disciplinary code of the workplace within the training centre whereby if he argued unnecessarily with tutors and refused to carry out *'orders'* he would be *'sacked'*. He considered that to be professional conduct and that it added to his experience.

Gary preferred the *'more flexible'* learning environment where *'you can just get up'* and move about if you want to. It might be the case that boys prefer the more relaxed environment consistent with their public sphere and the freedom to roam. This might be borne out by the success of water-coolers in schools and the apparent improvement in boys' attainment by having access to water, or perhaps access to freedom to get water.

Len (and his colleagues previously) obviously enjoyed the undivided attention of the teacher, away from the girls. Len spoke with an upbeat tone to his voice when enthusing about the way in which boys and girls were separated for science. *'Boys need different teachin becoss boys need to be moor occupied the can't, if the sit theer and bored, the start causin trouble. .... Ya wunt learn owt if ya dint hev a laugh'*. This is an isolated reference to girls in the interviews and it clearly indicates the perception that boys need the public sphere in which to learn.

All of them preferred the work-place style learning. The reason for this might have been the ease of escape from the rigour of cognitive learning as opposed to situated learning, or they might have preferred the open, public atmosphere of the environment, which gave them more freedom to associate freely with friends and colleagues. Gary who obtained *'seven A to Cs [in GCSE] and two D's., didn't revise. Ah wont pleased wi't Ds actually cos ah wo dam fo As an Bs. If ad a revised ad a done better than wot a did.'* *'A've been to college an ah dint think it wo fo me. Ah know why, it wo't environment an that's why ah come on't placement here'. It's a workin environment, 9 to 5, which ah wanted. Plus ahm learning as well doin mi NVQs.'*

What do you think about teachers? Len tended to like the teachers of his favourite subjects. Which was cause and which effect was hard to determine. Some were male and some were female. He appeared to be attracted to the French teacher who he believed liked him because he *'tried*

*in French lessons'. The male science teacher 'is very strict' with his 'Set1 Boys'. The public and private spheres are not immediately clear in some circumstances, sometimes overlap and in some cases are even both at the same time. A school might be thought of as being firmly within the public sphere. It is after all a public building. Not all pupils see it as public, though. Carl, whose wife is a school governor, never went to his son's school except sometimes on parent's evening, claiming, 'I ent really got't time'. Gary went to his son's school when it was legitimate for him to do so, or when specifically invited. 'Only when it's parents' evening? Or when he's been a bad un. And that's abaht it'.*

Even for pupils the school appeared to be a place, which required courage to enter. *'Se if am too tired to gu to schooil, ah just sit on't wall' 14)* The wall is that around the school perimeter, which forms a public meeting place for pupils and ex-pupils of the school. Many pupils gather there at different times. *'Every person has done it in schooil' 14)* Nor is it just the school building, which forms a private place. The teachers acting as control agents are not always easy for pupils to communicate with. *'Some of em are alrieght the'll stand an talk, like Miss Arran she dun't..she's not stuck up, if yer know wor a mean yer know she's on ar wave-length.'* 12) A list of names was immediately produced in response to requests for those teachers who don't understand?

The individuals were: *'Older'. Male or Female? 'Female'. 'Yeh female'. 'A dunt know cos some females can understand yer, some males can*

*understand yer'*. Though the teachers use received-pronunciation and the lads use local dialect (as depicted here) the lads claimed there was no real language barrier between the teachers and themselves. That perception might be more to do with them understanding the teachers rather than teachers understanding them. The effect of simple and elaborated codes is not explored here.

Clearly the complex collection of factors contributing to whether pupils like or dislike school includes parental attitudes. Mark said he has *'...been up to that school [that his son attends]. What I have seen about that school I'm not happy with at all. I'm not really impressed. I think they have some funny ideas up there. I'll go if there's a parents' ...if you know ...they have their meetings and see how the goin' on. I've been two or three times.'*

Though Mark did not speak to teachers or the head about the school, he had been to complain on one occasion about the toilets having no locks on them. It transpired that he had taken up his daughter's complaint with the head and informed him that she would not be attending school until the toilets had locks on them. When asked if he felt comfortable at speaking to the head teacher on this matter Mark replied that he was *'...frightened of nobody. There's nobody better than me and it doesn't matter how much they've got.'* Though Mark was experienced in business and not quite working-class in his views he was clearly cognisant of the status of a headteacher in his own environment: even though this particular head is very approachable and makes every effort to reach-out to the community.

The negative and destructive attitudes of some pupils also affect the status of the learning environment. Len reckoned that *'When ya first goo into high school, ah think ya just test all't teachers ... see ah far ya can tek em. Then when ya ger a few years on ya know har far ya can gu wi't teachers.'* Clearly a process which is likely to be seen and perceived differently by teachers on the receiving end of this testing-out, than by the testers. Len described some of the bad behaviour he referred to and distinguished between the silly behaviour that even he indulged in and the kind of threatening behaviour some others carried out. *'Ah'm just beein silly. ... People are gooin ramd not ... never gooin in lessons just swearin at teachers , just causin havoc.. throughart school smashin winders, all that stuff.'* *It's a distraction but ya dunt know it's a distraction till ya come to a test an't teacher ses well ah told ya thar on such and such a day bur ah couldn't explain it reight cos ah ed to goo aht an see to so and so'.*

#### *vi) Secondary Sites*

Secondary sites are situated usually in the home or where mentors are able to provide support and complimentary guidance and knowledge. This might be a youth centre or other facility but most often is through contact with parents. In the absence of these being available it is often left to the larger public sphere of community, to form the secondary site through sense of place and peer mentors.

Cultural Capital is composed partly of Linguistic Capital, and:

'...language is not simply an instrument of communication; it also provides, together with a richer or poorer vocabulary, a more or less complex system of categories, so that the capacity to decipher and manipulate complex structures, whether logical or aesthetic, depends partly on the complexity of the language transmitted by the family'.

(Bourdieu and Passeron: 1977 pg 73)

The secondary site of acquisition is often not available due to the attitudes of those who might facilitate it, rather than their knowledge. Carl clearly did not appreciate that pupils might learn from others and when asked who he learned most from replied: '*.....er. ah'd se misself. Ah'm nor a reight keen reader. Ah dunt seem ta ev't concentration span ta sit darn an read a book*'.

Some fathers have limited ability to advise because of their personal restrictions. Unemployed fathers will be less likely to criticise low skills jobs and dead-end careers, as they are at least employed and better than what they currently have. Ned considered that not all kids hanging around on the street were bad but that: '*there's just nowhere for em to go an nowt for em to do.*' '*They need to learn about responsibility. They need to learn to ...perhaps self-respect with some of em, actually. Cos some of em ave low opinions of thessen.*' As well as '*Self respect and respect for other people*'.

Adam did not understand what I meant by the question: Which community do you live in? '*How do you mean?*' and it was rephrased for him. Where do you live? Before he could tell me: '*//////////*' [Place name] He appeared not to be able to draw on any sense of place to form his identity. There was evidence throughout the interviews that a second site for acquisition of

learning, in order for experiences to be contextualised, was not effectively available to students. The second site might be used to contextualise the experience for reflection or be a site where other players (e.g. parents) might facilitate the reflection process. Young students did not have a home environment which was conducive, and older subjects did not have a social or other environment which was conducive. It was only when the older subject (i.e. father) or a 'significant other' person was reflexive, that any reflection was effective. Life skills were learned from school and family and according to one subject: *'It all depends on the way you've been brought up'* 8)

In a group interview, a subject had obviously talked to his father about his future when he professed he was: *'... interested in't same job he's [his father] doing' he said he had a hard time gerring to it; he did a lot a things before he started'* 6)

Jed and Callum emerged as two lads who had money and resources (from criminal activities), who were free to roam the streets at night and did so, who had independent lives of their own in most respects. Yet they were restricted in the scope of possibilities they considered. When asked what stopped them doing things, one lad replied that it was his *'mam and dad'* *'...thi shart at me'*, because they thought it was dangerous. They appeared to take little notice of parents though.

The communities these interviewees lived in were recognised as largely unproductive in terms of opportunities for learning socially useful knowledge.

What do you do after school?' *Just goo art* 'Hobbies, Like outside school I do things like Taekwondo with me mate Jamie. Apart from that I just come ino town with me mates. I don't hang about Monk Bretton (home) because they all think they're rock hard and they all think they're gorgeous. I don't like people like that'. Donal

Adam's hobby was: 'Watching football' and he earned some extra cash from 'Working in (Barnsley FC) superstore' on match days. An impression was emerging of lads who sometimes had academic qualifications and sometimes did not, but all of whom had little idea of what to do with their life. They perhaps hoped to get guidance from school and when that failed they looked to parents (especially father as principal employed parent), then to work situations and to college or work placements. This system of searching without a map is frustrating and totally inadequate.

Some fathers were aware of difficulties. Carl found it necessary to find his son (Donal) a more suitable placement in a solicitor's office when, after he expressed a wish to be a solicitor, he was placed in a children's nursery to get work experience.

The second site of acquisition which supplies contextual knowledge and guidance for career choices and lifestyle to middle-class pupils is often missing from working class experiences as fathers were often alienated from school and therefore not inclined to recommend involvement with it to their sons.

Mark shed light on the possible reasons for the lack of results at school when he mentioned that he: *'... learned more since I left school in every way.'* It appears that only after leaving school did he gain the contextual knowledge to make the school based learning relevant. The first interviewees agreed that *'You need to be ready for what you are going to do'*. 3) And that whilst: *'Life experience'* 3) was a pre-requisite, they thought it was available as part of a college course and between college courses. *'... you can get your life experience when you go to college, because you're not at college 24 hours a day, are you?'* 2) This was not so much deferred gratification as deferred learning.

In describing the experience of one of the lads in his circle Donal talked about him researching career choices. It was obvious from the description, that Donal considered his mate to not have adequate life-experience; though he later considered himself to have learned all he needed to know. An indication of the recognition of the need for wider experience in his peer group, if a certain reluctance to confess to paucity in his own life. *'He went to't police force and got loads of papers. He needed life experience. He's thought well Ah'm not goin to get that from public services [course at the college]. So then this woman's told him well why don't ya join't Navy, cos like they teach you a lor a things there. So he's gooin a join't Navy for a bit and then come back an join't police force'*. The feeling of pre-16 schooling being discounted by intelligent lads is a constant theme of these interviews.

Most of the lads had a restricted cultural life. *'We are only 14 so we haven't done much'* (travelling). 7) Another comment pointed to disadvantage consequent to Bernstein's pacing rule when he claimed that: *'at 14 you're not allowed to do much'* . *'We ent seen much o't world'* 7) In which case when he entered the real world in competition against those who have been enabled to gain other experiences he will find himself at a disadvantage. They were waiting apparently for their opportunity to enter what they perceived as the adult world of opportunity. *'...at 18 you're allowed to get a car and do a lot more, you can travel a lot more, you can see a lot more things'* 7)

Len was clearly confused about where he wanted to go after school. In an earlier interview he appeared clear about his wish to be a forensic scientist. Now he was not sure that he even wanted to go to university, what course he wanted to follow if he did and perhaps he would be able to get some of those qualifications at college. Harry wanted to go into the Navy at some stage after leaving school and read action books recreationally. Apart from them he did not tend to read much.

Speaking of relationships within his family, Donal said that his younger brother *'knows what he wants to do but he doesn't know how to get there yet, nobody's actually sat him down and said look ....he doesn't really..... Like me ah talk to me mam and me dad about things ... he never ... he knows what he wants to do but Ah dont think he knows ahr to get there yet'*. In a reference to his brother's mates Donal said they tended to think at a late

stage about their transition to adulthood and livelihood, *'somewhere in year eleven ... some of them [think] oh well if ya wan a du that ahm gunna have to gu ta college am ah? An ah ent got brains fo that cos ah've been wasting mi school time, yeh?!*

What sort of work do you think you will go into? *'I have thought abaht it an what ah really wanted to do is acting. Ave been in lots of productions at school. Before ah went to Callum Balk ah wor at't Civic [theatre]. Bur ah think ya've got to be in't reight place at't reight time. You've got to know a lot of people. But mi second interest is computers.'* He seemed almost to have too much to give. He was screaming out for guidance and just kept running up blind alleys, in an attempt to find an acceptable route to progress.

Gary had attended college after leaving school in an attempt to get A levels. He left college because he considered the environment not right for him. He said he found that *'tutors patronize ya'* and that *'ah didn't like it'*. He wanted to: *'...argue't toss. It wo like...noww ya ent gor a say in it. An ar wo thinkin. ...'*

Gary put his powerlessness down to the fact that the tutors were older than their students and *'... knew the crack. They don't think we know owt ...'* Gary insisted on putting his point across, though he recognised he could sometimes be wrong or lacking in knowledge and he was ready to concede debating points.

Many of the interviewees mentioned being affected in their attitudes or knowledge by the media, to the extent that it might be considered another secondary site of acquisition. This site gains in importance when it is considered that most of the lads have only a poor understanding of the social and political context of their lives and are open therefore to undue influence from the media. 'Telly' 4) was a source of learning about other cultures: as was charity work for 'Nigeria' 11) Visual stimulants such as 'Posters' 12) and advertising hoardings were important. [Media influence including TV and visual images obviously play a major part in the groups' learning] 'From what I've seen on telly London seems like it's a different country.' 6) 'A gu to't pictures at Meadowhall, UGC' 10) Donal read the Red Top newspapers such as The Sun as well as the local scandal sheet and hardly visited libraries but he knew where to access information from other sources. He preferred to read fiction about things that '*don't exist but could exist*' and '*it makes you think.*'

Some went outside on holiday and even travelled to USA (Disneyland). Disneyland is attractive for its familiar figures as presented on television. It constitutes a sort of comfort zone of familiar situated experience in the same way that traditional British food and drink does in many Costa Spanish resorts.

A subject who expressed an ambition to become a forensic pathologist got the idea from watching '*a lot of detective programmes*'. 3) Though he knew

about the job in some detail and clearly thought about the prospect; '*...once you've done one person....you can't get the same person again can you?*' 3) he later changed his ambition in individual interview to becoming a lawyer (which he had obviously researched just as rigorously).

## 5. Attitudes to Maleness

The middle classes with their tradition of verbalisation through developed language and articulation-skills, pass on and develop what becomes 'world knowledge' in their leisure time. The working class just 'get-on-with earning a living'. ((Hacker, D.J. 1998 pg 2) The process of differential effectiveness of family support described by Roscigno V.J. and Ainsworth-Darnell J.W. (1999 Vol. 72), according to status and gender appears to be reinforced by the attitudes and actions of teachers discriminating against lower socio-economic status students, by lowering expectations of them.

'Disparate....class returns for cultural and educational resources appear to be partly explained by micropolitical processes that are tied specifically to teachers' evaluation of students' efforts and more systematic relegation associated with tracking.' ( Pg 171)

Maleness appears as a crucial concept in learning about working-class male culture. Working-class males are not just incidentally male, their whole identity hinges upon their maleness and even on the extent to which they are male. Their maleness determines their place in the hierarchy of communities and even of families; and certainly of school. That position in the hierarchy of school determines how easy it will be to get on with learning, free from being bullied or compromised in other ways by those above in the hierarchy.

It is also crucial at a time of the introduction of new dynamics to a society that all members participate equally. Young males are ill-equipped to participate as they consider that they are anyway the hosts of this party, at the same time as wondering why they are not able to converse with the

other guests in the same language. Some are learning the language of egalitarianism, some knew it already but were too shy to speak it and some are determined never to learn it, but rather would bluff and bully their way through.

*i) Working-class identity*

Bernstein describes three class agents:

1. 'Ruling class: those agents who have decisive power over decisions with respect to the means, contexts, and possibilities of physical resources and so ultimately over production codes.
2. Symbolic control: those agents who control the means, contexts, and possibilities of discursive resources (discursive codes) in agencies in the field of symbolic control.
3. Working class: those agents who are initially, but not necessarily passively, dominated by production and discursive codes'.  
(1990 pg. 141)

It has recently become fashionable within the neo-liberal political environment of government to question the whole notion of class, as if wishing the symptoms away will solve the associated problems. Most notably Blair on the steps of 10 Downing Street in 1997 and before that Prime Minister Thatcher when she asserted there was no such thing as society, only individuals and families. Yet, the subjects of this investigation readily accept that they are working-class. As will become obvious below, interviewees regard themselves as '*pupils from't working class*'. Who is correct in their interpretation of social relations?

In a reference to the difference in classes and the roles cast for them by society, Weil, S. (1958) wrote of the 'specialisation which cripples us all' before the second world-war. That specialisation has been more apparent in education, where Willis (1999) based on work carried out in 1972 pointed out that: working-class children are educated for working class jobs.

Bernstein agrees when he wrote that '...knowledge is not just like money: it is money.' (1990 pg 155) That is the real difference in middle and working-classes: individual knowledge in which to ground interpretation of events.

"Class relations" writes Bernstein:

'...will be taken to refer to inequalities in the distribution of power, and in the principles of control between social groups, which are realised in the creation, distribution, reproduction, and legitimisation of physical and symbolic values that have their source in the social division of labour.' (1990 pg 13)

The middle class learn from an early age, within the home, that they are individually powerful if they learn their lessons well at school and do as they are told at home. Working-class kids learn of collective responsibility and community hierarchies, on the street and of gender hierarchies within the home: more of the rhetoric than the narrative, of power.

Students from working-class households learn little of academic use to them in the home where resources are rare. They start formal learning late because their parents are often semi-literate; and when they converse with their school teacher it is effectively in a different language because of the

effects of what Bernstein (1990) calls 'restricted codes' and the effect of dialect. Further to this, according to Bernstein (1990): 'The strong pacing rule of the academic curriculum of the school creates ..... a particular form/modality of communication which does not privilege everyday narrative.'(pg 78)

Willis, P. (1977) graphically describes the cultural reproduction of the working-class by acceptance of their situation; and the formation and re-enforcement of middle-class hegemony through the workers' absence of situated knowledge. Thrupp, M. (2001) writing in Journal of Education Policy 2001 Vol. 16 No 4; quotes Bourdieu and Boltanski (1978:198):

The combined transformation of the system of the means of reproduction (and in particular of the system of inheritance) and of the method of appropriation of economic profit is the source of the intensified use made of the education system by those sections of the ruling and middle classes who previously assured the perpetration of their positions by the direct transmission of economic capital. (pg 300)

According to Hacker's interpretation of Flavell's (1979) model of metacognition 'Metacognitive knowledge refers to one's stored world knowledge.....' (pg 5). Some years later Hacker (1998) considered the concept of metamemory as a component of metacognition. He suggests that '...metamemory involves intelligent structuring and storage, intelligent search and retrieval, and intelligent monitoring ...'

According to Connell R.W. '...the link between the family-households and the workplace, rather than the workplace itself, is the axis on which working-

class masculinity is formed. '(1998 pg 616) This concept is key to the education of working class males as they are perceived within the household to be in the Alpha position (i.e. dominant within the hierarchy) and are expected to maintain that position and fulfill the duties thereof.

Connell goes on later in the same article to assert that:

'Young men respond to this situation [of long-term unemployment] in different ways. They may attempt to promote themselves out of the working-class, via education and training. They may accept their poor chances of promotion and develop a slack, complicit masculinity. Or they may fight against the powers that be, rejecting school, skirmishing with the police, getting into crime.' (1998 pg. 616)

In many ways our interviewees exemplify this analysis: a reality which depends upon the individual's ability to compete in an individualised world but restricted by the household code of responsibility.

Working-class lads experience the transition from private sphere of influence in the home and school, to public sphere of influence at work. It has traditionally been their rite of passage to adulthood and an aspirational stage. Unemployment or individual jobs away from their community prolong their domination by private sphere influences as they either continue to be dominated by mother etc. within community hierarchies or perceive their new individual position along with other individuals in other hierarchies.

Mark earned a living by playing the stock market and gambling as far as he would tell me. He was concerned about the effect this apparent lack of

employment would have on his son. He had no hobbies or pastimes as such. It emerged that Mark had been a househusband in the past and that his wife had worked at a full-time and a part-time job. He *'...had to more or less stay at home and sort the house and the kids out while she was earning the money'*.

In this individuated world, advancement depends on availability of resources and knowledge. The best advice available to a working-class lad is usually that from his father who is the closest to the work situation and the home. Thereby acting as a go-between, a referee and someone who has knowledge of both spheres. Fathers are able to contextualise private sphere and public sphere. The limitation, implicit in this, is that fathers have different levels of knowledge according to their experience and their limitations of knowledge and motivation are passed on to their sons.

#### *ii) Household*

The household as the usual second site of acquisition has a special place in education. The ambience and environment is as important as that in school. The boys willingly talked about their home-lives during group interviews and did not perceive any problems at home. There was a feeling of isolation in family of female siblings. All boys claimed a close relationship with their fathers in group interviews. In order to ascertain who they were more influenced by interviewees were asked: *Would you learn more from the male or the female side of the family?* Callum said: *'Me mum, female side, because I can talk to them, ah can't talk to me dad or me granddad. They*

*just talk to each other. Ah talk to me nannan and me mother.* Clearly indicating that they felt left out of conversations between significant males in their households, and thereby driven to participate in less socially significant exchanges.

Referring to his mate, Callum disclosed: *'Its easier for him to talk to me and me to talk to him.'* In order to get male-oriented exchanges, Jed found it easier to talk to the male side of his family *'...abaht stuff a've dun that ah regret.'* These were lads desperate for someone to talk to about emotions and life-experience. The females they spoke to offered feedback but the lads saw it as less valid than that which they hoped for from the males in the family.

This trend was continued with Gary (32) when asked for one example of something he learned from his dad: *'Not really. I mean mi dad wo just one o' them, he kept hissself to hissself, and I mean ah basically do that. Shi-ish type bloke. I'm not one that likes trouble. Mi dad wor allus like that. I suppose ya could se ah learnt that from him'*. Paradoxically he learned not to learn from his father. He clearly had his inclination to dismiss learning re-inforced, at least by his 62 year old father, (first a lorry driver, then a miner and later club and pub steward, now a pigeon lover). Gary as mentioned above is desperately seeking guidance but does not see much of his dad now as he has his *'...own little family to look after'*.

Ned said he: *'... never took O levels just CSEs. I got about seven [CSE's] then I went fo me job.'* If he had taken O levels instead of CSE's he would

*'probably have gone to college.'* But his *'mother never pushed'* him. It is interesting to note it was to his mother that he looked to for inspiration to learn rather than his more dominant, but less sympathetic father. He was *'just left to'* his *'own devices.'* He considered that his wife was *'obsessed with learning'* whereas he *'learned what he needed to learn.'*

The seeking of advice from mothers on education was consistent across the generations. Donal talks to his father about experience, knowledge and attitudes but he talks to his mother about education, because she is a curriculum support assistant at school and a school governor. Harry talked to his father *'about most things'*; but not about the severe trauma of his attempted suicide. He said he felt *'ashamed on it'* and therefore did not disclose it to anyone previously. He referred to his dad as *'old fashioned'* and said that he had *'...never been able to talk to him, or owt like that'.*

Harry obviously had trouble with his relationship with his dad. He said that he did not *'get on with him'*. *'He never did much with us. Me mum did, but it's not't same* And he *'gets on at ...'* him. Though Harry continued to wish for closer relations with his father because: *' It gets a bit boring with ya mam'..* Harry rated his father's relationship with his elder brother better than his but not as good as that with his younger sister. There is an obvious hierarchy of badgering from the father within the family. The older you are the less bother you will get from the father and if you are female you will at least be perceived as better-treated than any male. This tends to support

Aggleton's (1987) views of gender-divided behaviour within family hierarchies.

The family hierarchical tradition dictates that young males have preferential treatment in order to be able to earn a living and keep a family in future. This acts to persuade the lad of two things: one that he is most important in the family as a future breadwinner and is therefore superior to female siblings and by extension to other females. The other is that he needs to get a job as soon as possible and start a family, perhaps indicating the wish to invest as little as possible in the son as he will be moving away from the family.

The effect of this train of thought is that the lad concentrates on short-term vocational subjects even when he would really like to let his imagination and creativity loose. The other is that he comes into conflicting relations with girls. Either he dominates them, if he is in a position to do so (this in itself brings moral and ethical problems to thoughtful males): or he displays his feminine side in according them respect and egalitarian status. The other alternative is that he can be charming and predatory so gaining respect from the girls and status from the boys but how many teenage lads are capable of that degree of subtlety?

Any one of these courses of action will bring the lad into conflict with someone. His peers, his parents, his teachers and careers advisers, and even the girls in his life will have a view about his life. Now the politicians are

getting in on the act because they also view him as the engine of the economy.

When asked What sort of thing do you talk about, to your son? Fathers replied: *'We tell him it's important to get grades nar rather than waste time after school tryin to get them grades then.'* Which is obviously a beneficial sentiment. When considered more intensively though it is apparent that the mother fulfills the role of 'bad cop' and father concedes the dominance whilst they are a trio. *'His mother always does all't shoutin at him... and she'll be like gerring on at him abart, yer ent dun yer omework,...'* when she is gone though, father undermines her authority by asserting his influence: *'...an when she's gone ah'll just tum ramd and se "look Len yer've got to du yer omework, it's important". ...It's yer last chance to better yerself. Yer've got to find yer own way after that sort o' thing.'* Again the familys short-termism is a significant factor.

Fathers do however have concerns to advise their sons of life's dangers. Does this then lead to more respect for his father than for his mam? *Deep dam ad se noow, but like on face value ahd se he as that way: becos like he'll come up to me an he knows ahll se noow. If they ask me fo most things my answers generally noow. The've got to like fo me, to earn it to ger it. But he does find nar that he can come more to me an ah'll ... ahm gerrin a bit soft like: ahh goo on but dunt tell ya mum. Cos it like ... me being a lad at his age befoor an ahve known wor have missed art on. Well ... have a go, a teach im this is nor ar life guz, it guz like this.'* (Gary)

Clearly, whatever is intended to be taught the message given is that mother is authoritative; father is a mate. In some cases he was not even that: *"My dad never said nowt to me? It wo mi mum. Like my dad punished me and that, an my dad just stood back an said nowt. Then the wo once when ah actually threatened mi dad and mi dad actually punched mi. An after that ah felt well ah deserved it but why ent he put me in't reight place in't first place?"* Here was a clear example of Gary having wished that his father had provided more guidance at a critical time about the way of the world. The exchange of masculine challenges acted to bring them closer together within a public sphere understanding but did nothing to increase Gary's understanding of the private sphere or the interface between the two. Perhaps that lack of understanding across spheres is at the heart of the problem for working-class males. The lack of private/public channel prevents effective communication.

There are clearly means and instances where communication is possible. If he wanted anything from his parents Gary, *'allus used to send [his] sister in...'* as if to enforce the view that he did not communicate across the sphere boundary. Gary talked to his son about life, *'I have done. He's not my son. I'm not his actual father, but ah took him on. He knows am not his father 'cos ave sat im down and explained that, and he respects me more for that, like.'* His son gave the impression in interview that he identified very closely with his adoptive father and I gained the impression that his father's strong personality was being exhibited through his son.

One father maintained an image in his mind of his wife's home-life before they were married. *'My wife then got tret as though she, ...well her mother med her cook, med her tidy up [do housework], med her du't dinner fo when her dad cum in. It wo like, dad cum, tea wo dun an she wor art.'* In this scenario, the daughter after having catered for her father, was effectively excluded from the introduction of a public sphere person into the private sphere. She learned some social skills from her work and no doubt from reflection, perhaps with her mother, on the need for her to be out of the way when her father appeared. Thus the girl is more able to articulate and communicate more effectively across spheres. The father gained nothing of note as he did not communicate.

The lads identified closely with the neighbourhood they lived in. They painted various pictures of their community according to their involvement in it. They started by saying that it was: *'...all gerrin knocked dam ramd here.'* 11) A lad interjected *'Bur its gerring better though in't it.'* 9) Another replies straight-faced, like a line delivered in a comedy sketch, but in earnest: *'It's gerrin better bur its gerrin knocked dam.'* 14) *'All't druggies, smack heeads an all that are movin art'*. 14) This lad pursued his hatred of drug users vigorously. *'All ar think abart smack heeads is that they want purring on an island and dropping a nuclear bomb in't middle'*. 14) It later transpired that one of his cousins had been a drug abuser who was now *'locked up for ten years'* for robbing his family. The public/private sphere interactions are complex with two spheres each having its own heirarchy. They obviously

knew their community intimately, as many of them live most of their lives on the streets.

### *iii) Public and Private Spheres*

In *The Making of Men*, Mac An Ghaill refers to private schools developing '...psychic hardening, loneliness and the suppression of emotion...' (1998 pg 42) It is worth noting that private schools are unlike state schools in that they develop a male ethos by use of games, and military style discipline. Thus they fit their pupils better for the male 'Public' sphere of commerce and government, based on unequal treatment according to gender, race, etc.

State schools, being within the Private Sphere, are influenced by the female sphere of influence. In most cases the mother rather than the father will be the conduit of communication, except in the case of conflict between home and school. That becomes a public/male issue and the father typically visits school 'to sort it out' with the teacher. It seems inevitable that while there is a division of education between public (non-state) 'male' education which fosters individualism for the ruling class; and a private (state) female education which fosters egalitarianism for the working class; many young males will continue to be disadvantaged. They are bound to feel out of place in a private/female environment and forced to contend with the dissonance between being encouraged to excel in a competitive world whilst being

restrained from doing so by an egalitarian regime. There is currently a socially-constructed dissonance of gender and class values.

Connell's (1994) and Mac An Ghail's (1996;1997;1998) focus on young males' experience in a changing society supplies a theoretical basis for exploring masculinity; and Phillips ( 1991 ) articulates the importance of public and private spheres.

Though males dominate the political sphere and are accepted as role models for sons, the private-sphere of the household is dominated by the Alpha female (usually the mother). This presents our young males with a problem in the newly equality-conscious individuated economy. Their social skills are traditionally learned at home and their motivation is gained there but within a position of dominance. Now they are not able to assert that dominance, their identity is threatened: as it is at school from girls who are equal to them and more socially confident. They are both hegemonic males and educationally subordinated.

Do you find it easier when you are working as boys away from the girls?  
*'Yes, we don't get distracted by it.....It's not t'girls though, it's t'teachers when't girls are handing all their work in because there's more girls they seem to think that't class's doin' aureight but boys... they don't notice that boys are like....behind'* 2) That may be the case in school but at home it is obviously the Private Sphere mother who encourages the lads. e.g. *'mam's*

*moor interested in caring stuff, how's yer homework gooin on, how's yer school... any problems...'* 3)

Many examples of the Public Sphere versus Private Sphere (as written of by Phillips (1991) were in evidence during conversations with lads. *'Me mam wants me to have an eye on me future, me dad just say's whatever aa choose, it's up to me'* 4) This indicates the closeness of mothers to the lads and the importance and relevance of information owned by females within the community. In turn lads will perceive women as influential, if not empowered, and seek their advice rather than that of males: and reinforcing their self-perception as subordinate to women in private situations such as advice giving and empathetic listening.

Some fathers, who have current or recent experience of employment are able, at least, to share knowledge of the workplace and boys will gain some measure of identity and motivation from that. Father is a fabricator *'welding all metal work and stuff like that. He's good at his job but he hates it. That's why he's always boosting me saying goo on wi you, stuff like that'*. 7) It was obvious from comments by the subjects on relative abilities of genders that they instinctively knew quite a lot about the differences in male and female strengths. *'Boys need somat what can get the mind gooin'* 2) *'Girls think more abart the' future than boys do'*. 3)

The lads were predictable. When asked what they wanted to learn about one lad said *'summat a've alus wanted to do, bungee jumping'* 13) another said, turning to his mate, *'earn a lot of money'*. 14) When his mate went on to

expand his ambitions into '*para-gliding, and parachuting*' 13) based on his previous experience of '*abseiling*' 13) his mate agreed that's what he wanted to do. These were two absolutely public sphere characters. They apparently had no private sphere life at all and apparently had no private sphere influence upon them. They obviously enjoyed displaying their knowledge of these daring things, though they had never actually done them. They were asked what stops them doing these things. After all, on their previous account they had money. The one who had money said he was not allowed to touch it until he was 16. His mate said that the only place he could get money from was to sell cigarettes at school. An illegal venture but one which held no fear for these two public-sphere characters.

They estimated their job choice prospects at 3% of availability. They were very macho in their future job interests and focused mainly on boxing. Most of their knowledge was home-spun and focused on sexual relationships and family relationships. One said that he had learned to plaster from his dad and problems of life were discussed with his mother. Their conversation gravitated always to family relationships. Their limited sphere of influence and experience was very public and very male. Thus their lack of effective cultural capital was inevitable when considering the collective nature of their understanding of society. Though they supposedly had access to finance they did not engage in networks which facilitated mutual benefit or collective action. (Putnam 1993; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000) They seemed to deliberately cut themselves off from their community at times, as if trying to build their own private-sphere within the community.

As well as hanging around on the streets Jed and Callum went on what they described as 'missions' which consisted of *'just walking for miles and miles' 'reight way through to't tam' 'gu to't pictures an'all. – during't day'*. This activity appears innocent enough but it had a feeling of menace about it, as if they were patrolling their patch, or guarding their territory in a substitute-for-private–sphere manner.

I often gained the opinion during these interviews that they were a therapeutic experience for the men. One man told me that he had enjoyed talking about issues relating to education and I gained the feeling the chats were cathartic not only for me but also for the interviewees. In line with Phillips', A. (1991) views of Public and Private spheres, these men were very confident in their public sphere; but within the private sphere, in a one-to-one interview they confessed to being very unsure of themselves and how to progress in given situations. The down-side of being a public personality is that personal issues are private. If all one's ideal mentors are public characters nobody is available to advise on private matters. Thus men and boys will turn to their mothers for advice, until teenage years when mothers are no longer able to advise because adolescent boys are discovering the public world of manhood and masculinity. Then, who do they turn to? The indication is that they consider fathers to be the final arbiter of good and bad advice. *'aa luv me mam moor than me dad, bur its cos me dad's moor of a mate' 'aa feel a can talk to him moor abaht things' 11)*

As Connell (1998) points out

'...when the historical conditions for a strategy's success have altered, the hegemonic form of masculinity is vulnerable to displacement by other forms.' (pg 608 Halsey, A.H. et al)

Those historical conditions appear to be rapidly changing. The form might be in the process of changing from macho to sympathetic (to feminine). It is hardly surprising that in a managerialist based economic system, working-class lads are not well-placed to succeed. Their understanding of the role of education is that it is for the purpose of gaining skills, not influence. Domination comes in a different form for a working-class male. The challenge to feminism through '... the indirect mechanisms of financial administration ...' (Connell in Halsey A.H. 1998 pg 612) is not available to working class males.

Connell writes that

'Young men respond to this situation [of deconstruction] in different ways. They attempt to promote themselves out of the working-class, via education and training. They accept their poor chances of promotion and develop slack, complicit masculinity. Or they may fight against the powers that be, rejecting school...' (Halsey, A.H. 1998 pg 616)

Both fathers and boys agreed they should teach their son to be: '*Proud of them whatever they chose.*' [to do]. 8) Thus accepting the complicit masculinity and change from what they knew and understood, displayed in interactions with mothers. Gary's remark at the end of the interview was illuminating and unexpected. It reflects the male culture and the fact that there is little opportunity to step outside the self-perpetuating norms, when he said: '*its nice ta oppen up nar an then*', indicating his pleasure in

speaking honestly and openly to someone about his life. A rare admission indeed for a working-class man. I felt privileged to be a small part of the catharsis so rarely available to these men. Without that reflexivity he would be less able to engage constructively in conversation with his son on the issues that matter to him. Gary's generation is the first to witness the change from industrial to modern. It is not an easy transition to make but even harder to help someone else through, especially when you have to teach someone how to be in a future which is not predictable, and you are also in transition.

One lad considered that as a parent he would teach his son '*how to behave an be nice to people, an that.*' 9) He did not know how this would be done or what would be taught but was obviously genuine in his desire for them to be taught '*any way*'. While Harry considered: '*Dads understand moor ar boys learn*'. They would if the communications channels were open, more often. Fathers and sons need to participate more together in activities which facilitate conversation, or the learning and the rites of passage will not be learned.

Gary was part of the support for his son's hobby. '*Well mi sons both gu to what the call a marchin band: Not majorettes.* [He stressed] *He's a bit embarrassed, although it's his choice to be in it. He's a drummer. The band was doing well in competitions but '... it dun't really interest...*' Gary, to whom it was '*... just bang, bang, bang and blow on't thing and that's it. There's nowt...It dunt interest me as such on the music the play.*' Gary was

involved along with his friend in taxi service for their children to and from practice. Consequently *'... whenever come ome from work and its like 7 o'clock when the gooin, wife wants to gu shoppin', you dunt get time. Ah mean tha dunt get thi tea sometimes wharl nine a clock.'* Gary was involved with the activity but not with his son's actions.

This was the first time Gary or any other fathers had slipped into local dialect proper. Mostly they had attempted to use 'proper' English versions of local speech: probably for my sake as a stranger and; on this occasion perhaps in an attempt to gain sympathy and solidarity from another male for the subjugated position he found himself in. This instance was a welcome indication of the interviewee dropping his guard and responding instinctively rather than thoughtfully. An indication perhaps of his confusion at complex roles and multiple attitudes, many of which were new to his culture.

Young Gary was more assertive, having perhaps not yet learned to be subservient, he *'...like[ed] to get mi point across if ah think ahm right'*. He thought this was the case generally with lads in his peer group. *'Lads tend to be a bit ...big-headed. .... Lasses have got more discipline than lads. That's why they bite back. That's why ya get more lads that are bad behaved than girls.'* What these lads meet at school is what Connell described as *'...an authority structure' ...defined in relation to institutional power'*. Connell writes:

**'They are compelled to be at school, and once there – in their own view – they are ordered**

about arbitrarily by the teachers. The school is a relatively soft part of the state, but behind it stands the "hard" machinery of police, courts and prisons.' ... 'Fights with other boys, arguments with teachers, theft, poor learning, conflicts with parents, are all essentially the same'.  
(Connell 1993 pg 94)

Whereas Connell considers the institution shapes the pupil, there was a general acceptance amongst our interviewees that individuals made the institution. Ned accepted this environment and considered that boys fitted into it naturally: that boys were born with a different attitude, *'I'm not sure whether it in't natural for lads ta just bi like they are, "al follow in mi dad's footsteps. Ah'l do this an that"... an its going to come natural. In't end thus only hard work does it, in't the.'* The problem might be that they are working hard on the wrong thing. What might be needed is 'hard work' on culture-change from masculine to sympathetic.

#### *iv) Masculinities and Education*

Young working-class males find themselves in a changing world of newly globalised systems and individualised attitudes, with few sources of information and few mentors. As males tend less to discuss personal and emotional issues, fathers tend not to disclose their feelings to their sons in the way that mothers do to their daughters. Little dialogue about difficulties at work, or school, or life in general is developed between working-class father and son, partly due to communication through restricted code. Sons learn little about the difficulty of maintaining status within a working-class environment, which itself is changing from communal to networked. In order

to supposedly make up for these shortcomings in their lives they are urged to do better at school where the cognitive learning style is out of line with their situated aspirations.

According to MacDonald, A., Saunders, L., Benefield, P. (1999): 'The literature reviewed... has mostly indicated that gender differences in performance are not a biological given:.....' (pg. 16) They must then be social. Pickering (1997) observed that, 'It is well documented that boys' attitudes are clearly anti-school by the end of primary school.' (pg 12) Perhaps one reason for that hostility is summed up best by Pickering: '...that for boys school represented a "hostile authority combined with meaningless work demands' (pg.12) An emotion which resonates clearly with much of Willis's observations in Learning to Labour and brought up to date by Eder (1996) when the sons' concept of an individualised, non-heirarchical network of class can be compared with the perceptions of fathers who lived and worked in a collective consciousness.

Not all males are uniformly male, masculine or macho. Connell R.W. (1993) wrote of 'The concept of 'Multiple Masculinities' (A.H. Halsey et al 1998). Connell contends that: 'It was, first, the advent of Women's Liberation at the end of the 1960's and the growth of feminist research on gender and 'sex roles' since' which has 'cued discovery' of masculinity as problematic. (pg 605) Connell continues: 'Second ... it was the advent of Gay Liberation and the developing critique of heterosexuality, of lesbians and gay men'.

Young working-class males are once again the victims of their own lack of knowledge. They are not included in discourse about their future or even their sexuality. It is not easy to come out as Gay in a working-class housing estate, any more than it is to be different in any other way to the hegemonic macho White male. In a world where Lilly Savage is completely respectable educationalists too often think all young males aspire to be Rambo.

Males previously had much of their own way in society and as Connell suggests: '.....hegemonic masculinity in patriarchy can be understood as embodying a successful strategy... for the subordination of women' (Connell 1990b). Connell goes on to '.....add to that formula that when historical conditions for a strategy's success have altered, the hegemonic form of masculinity is vulnerable to displacement by other forms'.

Many working-class males realise it is legitimate to embrace another form of masculinity but their collectivist fathers do not understand. In a statement particularly poignant in a study of an ex-coal-mining area, Anthony Clare asks: 'What price that brute strength, might and energy now, when more people are employed making Indian curries than mining coal.....' (2000 pg 7)

The collective memory of working class communities does not easily allow the struggles against capitalism; endured throughout the generations of their families to be forgotten. Mac An Ghail's (1998) 'Macho Lads held on to a Valorised world of "masculine" manual labour that informed the group's social practices...' and their 'out of date mode of masculinity continued to

centre around traditional manual waged labour, at a time when their traditional manual work destiny had disappeared'. (pg 71) The Macho Lads 'were deeply rooted in collective investments in wider working-class cultural forms and more concretely linked to their fathers' and older brothers' "common-sense" gendered world views.' Working class males might believe in knowledge for the common good, a sort of demarcation of knowledge, where teachers teach and miners mine. That generalised world is now fast disappearing to be replaced by a world in which each owes it to themselves to become aware of their education needs for the future.

The culture in which young working class males grow up is shifting under their feet and they do not know why or how. This confusion can be turned to their advantage by using it as a rallying point for articulation of their situation; and for the start of a discussion on what it means to be a working-class male in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; thus developing a metacognitive narrative through reflection.

#### *a) Interpersonal Dominance*

It is dangerous to assume, as Marx did, that only those in power are able to influence the power structure. It is worth noting that Mao considered 'power' to come from 'the barrel of a gun' and young males appear to be increasingly turning to alternative strategies for taking that individual power. The shared power of the working-class has rarely been effectively exercised. Many ex-miners continue to have vivid memories of the 1984 mineworkers

strike and the solidarity they enjoyed. After a year of extreme hardship, however, that solidarity was broken and seen even to have failed their cause. As they went back to work it could be seen that women were the real winners as the macho methods had been defeated and women gained from their experiences of behind the scenes organisation and support.

It was obvious throughout the interviews that all the subjects were different in character, and in maleness. All the boys were at varying stages of development and maturation but also at different points on the male-female spectrum. Adolescent boys are developing into adult males and challenging their fathers for dominance. There was evidence that fathers found it difficult to accept the changing role of women.

Gary considered that young males need to know about, *'Appiness, treat people equally, respect'...* *'He is lackin' a bit in that, for his mum not so much fo me' 'Arh just pur it dam to him like bein as he is. Like a teenager mouthin' off. Ah want wor ah want an ahm doin wor ahm doin.'* There are also indications that some lads are ahead of their fathers on equality transition issues and that communications suffers as a result.

During adolescence the private sphere of influence is being replaced by the public sphere. At the current time in history the political culture is changing in the same way. Sons are therefore changing in sympathy with their environment and culture whilst fathers, unless they embrace the modernisation, are trying to resist the cultural change. The challenge

therefore to fathers is two-fold: directly from sons who are better-educated and from their environment which says they should also be better-educated.

This is the time when fathers should be influential upon them. In a period of constant employment, where the son would expect to inherit his father's place in society as breadwinner and alpha male he would readily accept his father as role model. Now, in a society where the father may be unemployed, or at least his employment status is precarious, the son does not readily accept him as a role model; and in many cases the father does not feel confident or competent in advising him about a world, which is changing so fast. *'Yea I've talked to him abart schools. Ah dunt raise mi voice, cos as soon as you raise yer voice ther tum off anyway: especially at his age'*.

Fathers might therefore turn to asserting strength as an end-virtue in itself rather than as a means to an end. Another father talked to his son about things: *'Only in general. He's always asking questions'*. His son also engaged in checking with his father, that his opinions were right or wrong. Mark Short (age 52) when asked - what did he learn from his father? replied: *'Top of the list, Don't let anyone put you down.'* A typical reply from an individual, who had been taught to dominate relationships. Mark is the father of Harry ( Age 15 ) and used to be a shop manager according to Harry; though in fact, he was employed by his own father in the family business. Harry said he had learned assertiveness from his father. His mates were mainly local but some were still in Rotherham where he had lived previously.

When he started at /////////////// school Harry, for the: *'First couple of years [ah] used to get bullied ,...'* as an easy target for aggressive males to assert their dominance and even girls to try. *'...because ah'm bigger than everyone else. Probably because the think it will mek a good fight or summat.'* But the effect it had on Harry was that he: *'... used ta refuse ta gu to school and that. And when cries for help did not work he: '... tried killin meself once ... in year seven'*.

Pills and alcohol were the weapon of choice *'enough to do it'* in Harry's words. *'I was sick a lot'* and his mum caught him before it was too late. He has never talked it out with anybody because he *'din't like to'* for at least three years. I was *'the first person he really told'* . When asked if he would like to talk to someone about it he replied that he was *'ashamed on it'* ..... probably indicating it felt like a cowardly or non-male action. *'The way thi [the teachers] andled it wo crap'*. A hard lesson to learn from teachers. Even if you use the biggest weapon in your cry for help you will be ignored, because *'big boys don't cry! Nar looking back on it. .. Nar lookin back on it ... the used ta ger on at mi for waggin it an never ask why, or ought'... ... 'still get ta ya.'* It appears that teachers were more concerned with dominating the situation than finding the reasons for Harry's absence and discomfort. *'It wer't women, girls, it wer more female than male... tekkin't mick , sometimes punchin' mi;...'* He was open to ridicule from all quarters. The gloves were off in this assertion of the old order of interpersonal dominance,

once the symbolic controllers (i.e. teachers) had decided to take no part in the case.

Harry was obviously puzzled by the fact that girls were bullying him. Perhaps the girls were taking advantage of his vulnerability to assert their dominance at a time when Harry's defence was down; or perhaps they were slipping into the public sphere through a hole in the males' defence. A chink in their armour of solidarity: a vulnerable male. This might have been the first time they had experienced a male different enough to provide a conduit to the male world of group domination.

Harry could not fight back because, in his words: '*... ah couldn't it them. Because ah wer big.*' Now he had hardened somewhat and decided to rely more on his physical prowess. When it was suggested he talk to a counsellor about his experience he declined and said that he had: '*... a multi-gym, and ah goo on that nar*': displaying private tendencies rather than infiltrating a group to normalise his situation.

This was obviously a lad with little self-esteem at his lowest point when he attempted suicide. Since that event he has learned male ways of survival, but drawn on his feminine side to understand processes. Having that understanding has helped him. He understood that his size and the fact that he came from outside made him a target for bullying. He regretted that nobody heeded his cry for help after the suicide attempt and worse still that those who could have most been expected to help, by displaying feminine

traits, were the most culpable. As Connell points out "*Trouble*" is both *sexualised and gendered*'. (Angus L (Ed) 1993 pg94)

If working-class men are to succeed they need to act, not as hegemonic males within a restricted milieu, but as a class of workers, which includes women. This was possible before the factory-isation of communities. There is currently a lack of information and impetus for the working-class to consider this agenda though they instinctively feel the need to know more about their situation.

When, after the interview I asked Harry if there was anything he wanted to tell me or ask me further to the interview, he said without any prompt and against the run of the conversation, '*I wouldn't mind being a comedian on stage.... I could if I want to ... I think. ....Me mum wants me to go to ... she used to do a lot of actin'*. He had apparently been restrained in his activities so far by the need to conform to stereotypes of working males. It seems that Harry had been '*...much more sensitive to negative than to positive stimuli...*' (1998 pg 82) as Sennett points out Tversky concluded in his analysis of human risk-taking. That Harry should see a career choice as a risk at 15 years of age indicates the narrowness of choice perceived as available by working-class males.

Harry appeared a lad torn between life-style choices from different family influences. When asked which he thought he would do he said he thought he could do both a spell in the Navy and a comedian on stage: as if by doing

both he would satisfy both elements. He could be a macho sailor and a comedian: torn between the male public world and the pressures inherent in keeping up with his male peers' perception of his place in the hierarchy and his desire to develop his creativity. Encouraged to make a choice he said he would choose the stage. Harry had to choose between two public sphere functions: macho working-class option of military service and modern male option of creating a job by use of his own intellect, he epitomised the modern working-class male dilemma. Harry was displaying the desire for change but perhaps not quite confident enough to counter the working-class narrative. The modern risk-taking society beckoned at the same time as the work-ethic demanding the self-disciplined use of his time.

Harry had been involved in amateur dramatics but was reluctant to do drama at school '*...because people have to have their own way and I don't like it when people say its got to be done that way when you know its not going to get good marks. They drag me down wi' em. That's why I don't like it.*' Harry became, suddenly a different young man. He was free from the inhibitions of the career ladder and parental expectations and railing against the establishment interfering in his artistic creativity. In his new persona he found the space to be individualistic and the courage to speak out against the reactionary force of the collective culture.

Freed from false restrictions he blossomed into a confident creative young man. He could not put up with the obvious '*drama-type*' people and wanted to say to them: "*Stop acting and be yourselves*" to the "*drama queens*" he

encountered at college drama sessions. He knew somehow that school was not real: somehow it was just going through the motions rather than actually doing the job. This was a young man without baggage, being himself instead of failing to live upto his father's non-specific expectations.

Gary had been in a band at school, for which he wrote songs, played guitar and sang. He played squash and other sports, and acted. He regretted not being involved with drama and theatre now. One of the reasons for Gary not being involved currently in theatre was that local groups were operatic societies with whom the leading roles were singing parts. Gary's statement '*That's what ah want at't end of the day, leading role*' seemed to sum him up. If he could not get the leading role he would try somewhere else. At school he played leading roles in productions of *Kes* and *Midsummer Night's Dream*. In the latter he earned newspaper reviews saying "*Bottom steals show with his comic arrogance*". He was proud of his achievement but also apparently of his arrogance and the fact that he loved to dominate. Unlike Harry he found it difficult to escape the narrative, of the male working-class role. He still thought it was not good enough to participate in the process of life: he had to get a result. Work ethic and macho-male combined to compel him away from his instinctive path in an uncertain world.

That narrative, passed from father to son, rules much of male life. The un-experienced experience of working-class life and male hegemony restricts ambitions to a narrow band of options. Those options restrict thinking within the confines of the sagas of collective action and public bravery for the

enhancement of male domination. Jed and Callum constituted a sort of metaphor for working-class males who hang onto hegemony, as a philosophy. They dominated the common room, which they had been given the task of decorating; probably as a reparation or a means of getting them out of the way, whilst other pupils studied. It was obviously a place they regarded as safe, and under their control, but was actually a cul-de-sac which nobody else wanted. Asked what they would like to do out of school as an alternative to hanging around on the streets both subjects said '*boxing*' emphatically. They were so clear in their ambitions that when really pushed to think of another they needed to search their heads for options. It was an extreme aspect of the trend amongst the lads but it was a trend which others supported. Some considered it important to teach their offspring to '*stick up for themselves*'. 13) If the school bully picked on them a lad said he the advice he would offer his future son was to '*mek em feight em. Ahm not gooin to tell im to pick feights, ahm just gooin to tell im to stick up for issen*'. 12)

#### *b) Knowledge and Reflection*

Self-perception is determined by the influences on young men's consciousness: Television, Popular Music and Video images, Advertising Campaigns aimed at young consumers, etc. Collins, J. (1992) confirms that 'young people watch a lot of television. Of those surveyed, 92% had watched television on the previous day'. (Pg 223) Furthermore, Jude (1992) confirms that television does not promote discussion or reflection, but that 'soap operas' are used by 'young people as a way of examining issues that

affect their own lives'. (Pg 132) Art represented as life is not the ideal way to navigate the twists and turns of a complex modern society, though it might be used as a valuable prompt for a discussion and is often the only stimulus available for initiation of a difficult area of conversation.

Some interviewees, such as Mark (father), were open to knowledge and confessed to being a *'news freak'* and that he *'always had the teletext on'* ... *'love to read newspapers'* ... and loved reading in the past. *'I want to know what's going on, all the time.'* *'My interest always goes on to anything to do with money. ... If I can make a buck I want to know how it's done'*. He appeared not to learn much from the knowledge except that, which was of use to the immediate situation and to making money. He did not reflect too much on his actions or on what he had learned.

Adam's father is a *'.....manager of a butchery department in a....'* chain superstore. What sort of things do you think young males need to know? *'About life an that.'* What about life? Long pause... no answer. Again, although his instinctive answer was probably correct he was not aware why. Adam was *'... interested in computers'*. When asked where he got guidance about what to do, his immediate comeback was: *'Telly'*: the only source of reflexivity-facilitation for these lads.

Len, even though he is a big lad, was clearly uncomfortable with macho behaviour in school and looked forward to college where he would be able to assert his individuality. *'Another thing about college is no uniform ta wear:*

*ya dunt get...ya dunt get people, idiots messin abaht that pull ya dam becos if the do the just get, ... the just kick em aht*'. He appeared vulnerable to this loudish behaviour and clearly uncomfortable to have it disturb a life he was struggling to keep on track. This was apparent in his comment that at college *'...ya get plenty of time to yourself*'. Most of the lads got precious little of that to reflect on the knowledge gained.

It was obvious from the lads' comments that talking to their dads was important to them, as a source of information and reflection, on public-sphere subjects. The process was not productive though as the philosophical restrictions of fathers meant that the reflection did not translate into cultural-capital. The situation might be likened to that in Northern Ireland quoted by Kilpatrick, S. et al:

*'Restrictions to recruitment to small firms, ..... can be seen as an example of social ties as a "blight" from the viewpoint of the employer, in that employment based on personal ties can restrict adaptability...'* (2003 pg.21)

*'You know he's your dad but he is more like a mate'.....'Because like you're interested in't same fings'* 5) *'aa can talk to me dad abaht things he's interested in, football, cars cos it's is job.....'* 6) *talk to yer dad about man things and yer mam just seems to talk to yer about things abaht life and futures...* 8) Though the exceptions were welcome. *'It's different fo me, me dad talks abaht future'* 2) The lads' answers when asked who they learned most from indicated that although they talked to their fathers, they did not learn much from them. *'Teacher'* 1) *'Teacher'* 4) *'Myself, because if I am not willing to learn I would not learn anything'*. 7) The last response, being

consistent with some fathers. Mark, 52. '*...Myself. ... If I need to know I will find out. Other than that it will not matter*' The combination of culturally-reinforced self-reliance and lack of role-models leaves the lads without direction in a fast-developing world.

### *c) Narrative and dialogue*

Who does the individual working-class male learn from: his mother who has been oppressed by hegemonic masculinity all her life, or his father who learned about life, society and work from his own deprived perspective in a collectivist working class? Too often from nobody. The traits which society once used to define men are now seen 'as the stigmata of deviance' according to Clare. (2000 pg 67)

Mac An Ghail (1998):

'found that the institutional categorisation of "academic" and "non-academic" routes through school and the accompanying teacher-student social relations were crucial elements in the cultural production of different masculinities'. (pg 52)

Thus inferring that relations between teachers and male pupils were predicated upon teachers' often false, perceptions of a pupil's career path.

The OECD report on the Programme for International Student Assessment implies that the difference in male and female performance is social rather than genetic when, it points out that: 'The advantage of females in reading literacy performance is large, but in some countries much larger than others, suggesting that gender differences are not inevitable'. The report makes

clear the connection between performance and degree of positive self-perception when it states that:

**'More confident students tend to do better, and the self-confidence of males and females in reading and mathematics corresponds to their performance,...'  
([www.pisa.oecd.org/knowledge/chap5/intro.htm](http://www.pisa.oecd.org/knowledge/chap5/intro.htm))**

Mac An Ghail (1998) asserts that the English National Curriculum is considered by many writers to have been influenced by the 'Neo Conservatives' hostile response to equal opportunities' (pg 6). In an era of modernism characterised by individuality, globalisation, and managerialism, many working-class males are less confident when they find they do not know the narrative governing their own lives.

In order to overcome the historical view and to modernise the context of the debate the narrative of that culture must be changed. In order to facilitate this process of dialogue and development, members of the community (or their teachers) must know the wider context of society and be able to fit that into the narrative of the community. 'Networks are most effective...when they are diverse, inclusive, flexible, horizontal...and vertical...' (Kilpatrick, S. et al pg421)

Those networks within working-class communities include schools and other community educators, but too often they do not include those for whom the change would be most effective; the hegemonic males. The working-class community narrative does not acknowledge as Connell R.W. (1998) points out, that masculinities do not remain constant over time or from culture to

culture. The debate centres on how changes can be made to communities by use of social capital and is related to Bourdieu's Neo-Marxist model of social capital which represents a: "capital of connections" that is part of a wider set of mechanisms that underpin and reproduce social and economic inequalities.' (pg. 420)

The result of macho hegemony within communities is to impoverish the younger generation by starving them of ideas, relevant to the new reality. The macho males feel insecure with new ideas which challenge them and so stifle debate and challenge to old thinking. Bullying is most effective against males in communities, whilst females are able to avoid its worst effects.

Len challenged perceptions within the community. He was a member of a marching band and travelled with them to various venues and events. Neither was he shy to admit it in the company of his mates and they did not consider it out of the ordinary, though I later formed the opinion his father (Gary) would have liked him to have a more macho hobby. A hobby, which he as a member of a masculine hierarchy, could understand. If Gary had understood why the marching band was valued by his son the community would have been one step closer to developing a modern dialogue.

Schools, teachers and community educators must be part of that change process, but can only do so if they are educated and trained to deal with it. At present their training steers them in an opposite direction, by teaching them to be middle-class and hope the working-class aspire to join them. The

working-class is a separate culture with their own history, narrative and rhetoric. That must be recognised as part of the meta-narrative before a dialogue can be developed to help working-class males to challenge their own hegemony which locks them into society's narrowly-defined perception of masculinity.

## Part Three

### **Conclusion – Recreating the Public Sphere**

If real change is to be effected, in the way society works and in the way education helps it to work, the public sphere (as described by Phillips, A. 1999) in Britain must be recreated. Recreation of the public sphere is important because it is the sphere in which males, the hegemonic half of British society, live. It is the sphere in which politics, philosophy, ideas, ideals and education exist. It affects not only those who are included but also those who are excluded from the sphere. Feminine sympathisers, whether they are females or males, are part of the private sphere, excluded by largely male policy-makers and often by physical force.

As this work has progressed it has become clear that as the old certainties of full-employment and well-defined class boundaries, which help to form the perimeters of the public sphere, are blurred and an equalisation process is in train. Males are less hegemonic because modern women, more strongly since the feminist movement of the 1970s, assert their rights. Men increasingly accept this as fact and deal with it in a range of ways.

*'Young men respond to this situation [of deconstruction] in different ways. They attempt to promote themselves out of the working-class, via education and training. They accept their poor chances of promotion and develop slack, complicit masculinity. Or they may fight against the powers that be, rejecting school...'* (Halsey, A.H. 1998 pg 616)

Within the working-class which is the subject of this study, all these effects are present but there is reduced awareness of the opportunities which the changes bring. Globalisation is not a topic of conversation as it might be in a

section of society, which has interests in finance or politics at an international level. It is difficult therefore to perceive changes and contexts to your life when the limits are not visible.

The key difference in the two spheres is in how interactions are facilitated between members. In the private sphere, interactions tend towards a formative group process. Private-sphere actors must have good organisational skills, good communication and the ability to respond flexibly to instructions in order to do what the group requires them to do. These elements are not only those learned in the home, they are also those most needed in the classroom. Females, who have traditionally played a part in supporting males in their public-sphere role, have been better prepared to acquire these skills through practice.

The role of the public sphere is to decide policy and to ensure resources are available to implement it. Males who make up that sphere have been accustomed to giving rather than taking instructions, debating issues within formal groups and working to earn the finance to improve the conditions of their family. They tend to communicate as individuals within a federation, within a less flexible formalised structure. The federal structure allows them to make alliances as necessary to the task. That federal structure leads to individuals developing their own ideas and then to check with other *sympathetic individuals*. Thus public sphere males do not easily fit into pre-formed groups. They need the freedom to form groups for each task.

The pertinent aspects of the public-private sphere concept are that educationally public-males' rigid and formalised patterns of communication do not lend themselves to discussing new concepts or co-operating with teachers and peers in considering them within the rigid patterns dictated by schools and teachers. The worst hang-over from the nineteenth century compulsory schooling is that pupils continue to be required to report to a classroom, where they are confined with others for a set period of time, within which they must accept concepts and carry out tasks designated by an authority figure, individually. Nothing could be designed better to alienate most public-sphere males. It is an environment within which most will rebel in one way or another, and they do.

Those males who are less oriented towards the public sphere may do quite well. They may even become the group or opinion leaders as they will have picked up organisation skills from the home and private sphere. In which case, though they are better equipped to learn in the classroom, they are more likely to be loners within the community and may even be bullied in school, by those outside their group.

The rigidity of the formalised, authoritarian regime of schools and the lack of cultural capital available to working-class pupils make it surprising that the results of young males are not worse in exams than they currently are.

'What they meet in school is an authority structure: quite specifically, the state and its powers of coercion. They are compelled to be at school, and once there – in their own view – they are ordered about arbitrarily by the teachers. The school is a relatively soft part of the state, but

behind it stands the "hard" machinery of police, courts and prisons.' ... 'Fights with other boys, arguments with teachers, theft, poor learning, conflicts with parents, are all essentially the same'.

(Connell 1993 pg94)

If males are to learn better, schools must change their environment. Indeed they must change their ethos completely. No longer can they be authoritarian establishments, which hand over knowledge in the way that Freire (1972) described as the Banking Concept of education. As Freire pointed out, these lads are not empty vessels into which knowledge can be poured, but human beings with many other facets to their character.

Teachers must be more prepared to engage in a dialogue with young people, in order to achieve three outcomes. Contextual or cultural knowledge, Quicke argues that: 'Cultural knowledge could ... be usefully perceived as a version of metacognitive knowledge. Metacognition as described by Quicke (1994): '...a form of knowledge about learning processes and in particular cognitive or intellectual strategies'. Social capital as described by Field: 'The concept of social capital is generally used to refer to the resources that people derive from their relationships with others.' (Field, J. 2003). Then they will be more willing and better equipped to learn.

Contextual knowledge is important for supplying a reason for young males to learn, other than 'to get a job' at the end of it. It is also important as a means of facilitating reflection and promoting reflexivity. Metacognition, that elusive factor so important to learning, is vital as it ensures that students know why they are learning and that they want to learn. It is what makes them want to

bridge the gap between knowledge of their ignorance and knowledge of other things.

It is important to develop a dialogue with males who are less open to learning new concepts in order that they are able to work with rather than against the teacher. It is important that young fathers learn about modern attitudes, in order that they do not impede the progress of their sons and are able to supply vital parts of the cultural capital necessary for education. The belief of one of our interviewees testifies to the difficulty of that task. Ned considered that boys were born with a different attitude, *'I'm not sure whether it in't natural for lads ta just bi like they are, "al follow in mi dad's footsteps. Ah'l do this an that"... an its going to come natural'* It will be difficult to change attitudes and teach lads new concepts against the influence of older and more powerful members of the male hierarchy, and only by helping fathers to learn will that change be hastened. As Schuller and Bamford (2000) report there is consensus of opinion that:

'It is no longer enough to increase the proportions of young people staying on to the end of secondary schooling or entering higher education. The whole population should have access to opportunities to learn throughout their lifetime.' (Vol. 26 No1 Pg. 1)

Many young males will continue to be uncomfortable in the limbo of masculine Vs feminine consciousness, and conflict will spill over into rebellion. Some lads will experience conflict due to being differently masculine. They will be essentially private-sphere-males more sympathetic to feminine values and beliefs and more able to learn in a private sphere

environment. With the raising of awareness and consciousness these lads will be comfortable and less likely to be treated as outsiders by other males.

The ongoing story of working-class life and the narrative, which governs it, should not be allowed to waste the lives of the young males who made it. The narrative must be made dynamic again. A dialogue needs to be produced and promoted which legitimises the development of the narrative. Stories must be told of how Donal made a breakthrough in computer technology, how Harry became an actor and interpreted the most difficult parts, and how Jack (and Jill) became a prominent parliamentarian. The narrative must record that these males were working-class and that they remain true to working-class principles. The working-class narrative must include egalitarianism. A political element relevant to the rhetoric of working-class public life must be developed and taught, to convey the context of pupils' lives.

Clearly the British working-class male has lost the battle for equality. He has been educated to be a working man, used as cheap labour, and now dumped when cheaper labour has become available in other countries. He should no longer be asked to supply that labour for industrialised capital, but should play his part in creating and controlling an egalitarian society. Social history, politics and philosophy should play a much greater role in the school curriculum, and Further Education should be available to make parents aware of the issues involved.

That will be difficult when the temptations of capitalism reward individuals, not groups, and when national politics lauds individual achievement. If, as referred to by the Archbishop of Canterbury in his Dimbleby Lecture (19-12-02 BBC) Britain is now a 'Market State' then working-class males are least well equipped to purchase benefits. The working-class male must be encouraged to be proud of his *history* and to know that it legitimates his place at the heart of a new narrative. The narrative of working-class control of the means of production, commerce and finance must be revitalised and itself modernised, without being destroyed. At least one political party should give a clear signal that *working-class* males are valuable and that they can make a difference to society by changing their attitudes and practices.

Our subjects learn more effectively when they learn from situations relevant to them. Apprenticeships should be more available to enable them to mix practical (situated) and theoretical (cognitive) learning. The trades they learn will be of value to the community directly, will continue the learning of the individual and may lead to higher education, will be part-financed by the employer and will provide a source of pride and identity for the worker. The apprenticeship will provide the worker and the society with transferable and marketable skills.

Dialogue is about the way forward: simply people talking about their history from an informed base. The lads were even unsure at the end of their schooling of what they would like to do next. Nobody had discussed it with them and one lad had tried to kill himself after finding no sympathetic ear for

his problems. Young working-class males must be made to feel empowered by their role in the change process. They should be engaged by politicians and teachers regularly in dialogue about the way to develop their society and what they can do as empowered individuals to change their collective and individual lives.

Working-class males are unaware of any dialogue on the subject of education and are ignorant of the importance of their position in the education market. Young males do not know or are not sure about what sort of work or what profession they are aiming to enter after graduation from school. Most are unsure whether to continue in education or which type of institution to attend. Most are negative about their life-chances: not at all the self-starters that the modern economy likes to see.

Their attitude to school was largely negative. They perceived it more as a social or community institution, which they were forced to attend and where they were disciplined for failing against other people's standards. They saw teachers as opponents in a game of hide and seek the knowledge: as founts of knowledge who used it to control behaviour. Fathers as senior members of the community and most powerful members of their family unit are often treated as junior partners in the task of educating their sons. In the home they are head of household; public guardians of the private retreat. In school they are wary public intruders, bringing the light of real life to academe and a threat to the hegemony of the teacher.

The teacher is a public servant, almost an institution in him/herself, and certainly not to be questioned by a mere father about matters of whether particular clothing is appropriate for their quasi-private sphere. S/he is also at the coal-face of politics in their contact with young people. In a world where results are all-important teachers are more inclined to prevent students doing too much thinking in case their thoughts do not coincide with the correct answers. What they do not realise is that the answers may be right but the questions are not.

In enforcing rules upon students, teachers are effectively enforcing decisions on fathers who are bound to resent the imposition albeit indirectly of societal rules on their household by agents of symbolic control. By not working to include fathers in decisions, conflict is set up between family and community values, and values of the State. This conflict inevitably manifests itself in dissonance for the student in choosing between pre-modern and modern concepts. To embrace modern concepts would mean rejection of family, community and most of all male values embodied in public sphere fathers. In close-knit ex-industrial communities this rejection means isolation and often victimisation. The real pain for lads comes when they realise that their efforts at embracing public community values have led them into a blind alley, as they leave school with little ammunition to face the modern world.

Teachers pretend that school is in the public sphere but their control of the rhetoric separates teaching and learning from those who have no experience

of that rhetoric. As if that was not enough to disadvantage a section of society they are further divided by perceiving different narratives. The teacher narrative is based on continuation of the learning started within the private sphere of the household and continued within the private sphere of school. The male's narrative starts in the public sphere of community and workplace as they attempt to emulate their fathers and other heroes. Unfortunately for them acceptance of school involves a narrative-transition involving choices between perceived family and community values and those espoused by agents of *symbolic control*.

The narrative might be balanced and mitigated by democratic checks, e.g. an effective school council or democratic accountability to the community. There is a lack of political awareness and connectivity, due to a number of factors:

- No dynamic political dialogue;
- separation of the school from the community's political institutions by agents of symbolic control (e.g. by head teachers who control governing bodies);
- disconnection from a cohesive geographical and demographic community by open enrolment;
- disconnection from the Local Education Authority.

These factors mean that the school is isolated from the public sphere it serves.

The isolation leads to a failure by families to embrace education and an inability by fathers to find a role in the process. Whilst their Black and female peers have their own political rhetoric which enables them to plug into a collective narrative, young white males can only envy the strength gained from struggle. In order to be a credible role-model for the lads, adult males need to be working-class and they need to be educated: a combination rarely found as teachers are taught to be middle-class before they reach their pupils, (Maguire 1999). Education is thus often perceived as the preserve of the middle-class. Teachers should be identifiable as working-class and educated, wherever possible having originated from the community they serve, and must connect directly with the community through pupil and politician forums.

Teacher training has a large part to play in developing new possibilities in communities. Whilst it might not be practicable to follow Freire's (1972) philosophy of sending out trainees from communities to learn and return to teach communities through dialogics, it certainly is possible to educate them to work, through student-centred learning within communities, to enable citizens to become reflexive and to be proud of being working-class.

Greater use of a curriculum based on the Trivium as described above in Chapter 2 (pgs. 96 and 127) (Bernstein 1990), might benefit the learner by providing opportunities for dialectic and argument leading to self-discovery and development of cognitive abilities. It might also bring advantages for the pedagogic environment by setting the boundaries of behaviour less

young male pupils come into conflict with teachers who try to impose discipline without having had the opportunity through dialogue to gain the trust of the group. The modern pedagogy would reflect the need for young males to work within a public environment and to develop through dialogue a group-view, which is defensible as male but has been reached through appeal to the feminine elements of their multiple-masculinities (Mac-an-Ghail 1998)

One way of achieving this would be for schools to implement an International Baccalaureate-style curriculum, which would ensure a wider choice of subjects. The curriculum is more closely related to the community in which pupils live through use of a 'Creativity, Action, Service' element in which students learn about the context of their community and how it works through project-based work. This would enable young males to work in the loose co-operative groups, which they prefer.

By 18 yrs of age, the hierarchies have started to break down with many lads getting employment and moving away from those following academic paths. In recent years that trend has lessened dramatically as many more lads have been forced into further education due to lack of employment opportunities for less-qualified teenage lads. Now the hierarchy of the school follows the pupils into sixth form and often beyond that into training. It seems that in order to be a good scholar in a working class environment a lad must learn many skills that girls take for granted. Relationship skills were high on the agenda of lads when asked and are obviously in great need. A father

brought up in the same community, said that lads need to be street-wise and time after time the lads stressed the importance of being able to 'look after' oneself, and tackle bullies. If lads are to achieve greater standards of education in school they will need community facilities which are regulated and which afford safe haven from bullies in order that an intellectual agenda has chance to emerge within their group. Youth service can provide that safe haven but it must change its practice from work with the most disenfranchised and disenchanting to more work with those at the margins.

## Leaping the Chasm

Commerce needs to change its mind-set and accept that immediate training requirements are not all-important. It is equally important to have access to a deeper pool of educated potential employees. This would have the effect of changing the emphasis from training to education: from NVQ type accreditation for work completed (but often not appreciated by the student) to a solid base of holistic education which calls for the student to reflect upon their experience.

It will also be increasingly practical to create learning communities without school buildings, where all members of the community can learn on-line or via technology such as inter-active white boards in the home, in community buildings, or in the work-place. Much of this technology is in place already for use with Ufi (previously known as University of Industry) and various school-based and open learning provision. Thus the learning sphere will become public and teachers by a slight adjustment to their pedagogic style will be able to teach their subject rather than be agents of social control. I have never read of discipline problems within the Australian radio-school system to the outback or within the Open University: I guess those would be analogous to the proposed system. The more-likely model will be the family-learning centre replacing the school. Within this system, where parents are able to learn alongside children, or at least from the same source, fathers will be more free to reflect on their experiences with their sons.

Many questions remain about the preparedness of young working-class males for learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The most important of these are:

- Is the government committed to equality of opportunity for all?
- What level, of cultural capital, i.e. as described by Moran (pg.2, 2004) '...familiarity with the norms of dominant culture...'; do working class lads have access to. Moran points out that:

'.....Bourdieu has reliably shown ..... that uneven distribution of cultural, linguistic and symbolic capital is as important a determinant of social and economic well-being and power as straightforward material wealth'. (pg. 2 Moran, M. 2004)

Future Research might include:

- Further exploration of the male hierarchies within working class communities and how they affect development of learning communities
- How well do young males achieve in cultures which are separated by gender (e.g. Muslim culture) in order to determine the effect of male cultural capital without the complication of the feminine/private agenda?
- How can access to cultural and social capital be improved for the working class.
- Are young males educationally disadvantaged when compared to their fathers?
- What barriers exist in working-class communities, to young males gaining cultural and social capital?

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## **Appendix 1**

This letter was sent to all head teachers of secondary schools in Barnsley. Included is the ethical framework for the research and a synopsis of the intended enquiry. The reply slip was for information of head teachers about the recruitment method.

**Phillip A. Lofts**  
**Westfield House, Barugh Lane,**  
**Barugh. Barnsley. S75 1LJ**

Tel. - Home: 01226 – 388.308

Mobile: 09766 – 500.900

e-mail - phillofts@yahoo.com

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Mr [Name]

Address

Address

BARNSLEY

Post-code

09 Mar 01

**Ref: Doctoral Research Project**

Dear Mr [Name]

I am currently engaged in research towards a Doctor of Education degree at The University of Sheffield. The subject of my research thesis is anthropological and social elements of the education of working class males. I shall be carrying out the research using qualitative methodology via interviews with young males and their fathers, triangulated by interviews with senior teachers.

In order to facilitate this research I only require brief access to your students during school time. It is my intention to recruit male students who will be interviewed separately from each other outside the classroom. In order to do this without the need for lengthy written explanatory material I need to talk to 5<sup>th</sup> form male pupils.

The research will be carried out using interviews with volunteer pupils and their fathers. I would be very grateful therefore for the opportunity to speak to your 5<sup>th</sup> form male students with a view to recruiting volunteers to be part of my research. I hope to speak for only a few minutes to explain the project and what I aim to achieve. After that I shall hand out explanation sheets including an ethical framework and a reply slip for those who wish to participate in the research. I include examples of these for your information.

Please contact me for further information if you are unclear or wish to be reassured on any aspect of my request. I would be pleased if you could inform me of when it will be convenient to speak to your 5<sup>th</sup> form boys within this term in order to facilitate my research. It is vital that I have the opportunity to speak to your pupils or the research will be delayed beyond the deadline by the need to recruit through printed material. I hope I might look forward to your co-operation in this matter. I include an ethical framework for my research.

Sincerely  
P A Lofts

## **Ethical Framework for Research**

The purpose of the research is to enable me to consider the ethnographic and social experience of working males' educational experience and to write a dissertation on the subject for a Doctor of Education Degree at the University of Sheffield. During the course of the research:-

- Respondents need not answer any questions they do not wish to answer
- The data obtained will be confidential to the investigation
- No data will be kept on respondents which will identify them by name unless by their explicit permission
- No person taking part in the research will be identified at any stage to any third person
- Respondents will have control of what happens to the information they divulge
- Participants will not be deceived over any aspect of the investigation
- Information obtained about a participant is confidential and subject to the Data Protection Act. This fact will be brought to the attention of any outside party requesting information on individual responses or participants
- Participants will be given the opportunity to add ethical considerations which they consider relevant.

## Synopsis

The research will concentrate on the educational and social experiences of young males in Barnsley. The method of the research will be to carry out interviews with young males in 5<sup>th</sup> form at various schools in Barnsley and to record their experiences of education, both inside and outside school. In order to obtain a perspective of the continuity of experience over time for males in Barnsley and to record changes, it is hoped to record interviews also with the fathers of these young males.

The interview data will be processed by myself and analysed to show ethnographic, social and educational trends in experience. This data will be used to write a dissertation for a Doctoral Degree at the University of Sheffield. I would be grateful for your help in this work. I include a framework of ethics, which I hope will assure you of confidentiality for yourself and your experiences. I hope you will feel able to help me with this research project.

Please indicate (with a tick in the box below) if you are willing to talk to me for about one hour about your experience of education.

Yes

No

Name .....

Address.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Telephone No.....

I thank you for your co-operation in this project and hope we will have the opportunity to talk again.

Sincerely

# P A Lofts

Phillip A Lofts

**Appendix 2**

This letter was sent to the head teacher of the main school in the research in reply to his positive response (included) to my request.

**Phillip A. Lofts**  
**Westfield House, Barugh Lane,**  
**Barugh. Barnsley. S75 1LJ**  
**Tel. - Home: 01226 – 388.308**  
**Mobile: 09766 – 500.900**  
**e-mail - phillofts@yahoo.com**

---

Mr [Name]  
Headteacher  
School  
Address  
Address  
Barnsley  
Post Code  
19 May 01

Name

Thank you for your recent letter in reply to my request ref. Research Proposal. Perhaps it is a mark of how busy we all are that I did not consider it to be an unduly long time to wait for a reply.

I will be very pleased to take up your offer of contact with Elmhirst new Y11. I am sure they will fit the bill just as well as the other group, especially as my timetable continues to slip and the exact direction of my research seems to change weekly. Ideas come and go: I am sure you will appreciate.

In order for there to be no further delay I will call in to school as soon as possible to set up an appointment. We can then diary dates for me to speak to the boys in Y11.

Sincerely

Phil Lofts

Our ref: EWN/LW

11 May 2001

Mr P Lofts  
Westfield House  
Barugh Lane  
Barugh  
Barnsley  
S70 1LJ

Dear Phillip

It is now over 2 months since you wrote to me about your research project and your wish to conduct such research at the Elmhirst school.

I suspect that we may have been at cross-purposes about who would make the next contact. We would be willing to co-operate in your research but as our Y11 (5th form) start study leave in just four days it will be impossible for you to conduct the research in school with our current Y11. However, our new Y11 (present Y10) will still be available.

Yours sincerely

*ms E Wadsworth*

*EW*  
E W Needham  
Headteacher

### **Appendix 3**

This is the list of first and second interviewees from the 15+ lads and their fathers. It includes information relevant to follow-up of individuals.

**This appendix withdrawn for reasons of ethics – anonymity.**

#### **Appendix 4**

This list of questions formed the basis of semi-structured interviews with lads at school.

## Ed D Interviews – Elmhirst School – 12 July 2001

Welcome to this session of conversations about your life and the way you learn.

Are you comfortable? Is there anything you would like to change?

For the record would you tell me your name, age and which community you live in.

What does your father do for a living?

How many live at your home?

How many brothers do you have? Are any older than you?  
5 mins.

Tell me about your home life.

Tell me about your neighbourhood and what you and your mates do.

Tell me about what part school plays in your life.

What do you want to learn more about?

Where do you learn most useful things?

Who do you learn most from?

What do you learn from your father?

What makes you want to know more about things?

What will you teach you sons?

Is there anything else you would like to ask or to tell me?

How do I contact you father to arrange a chat?

Thankyou for participating in this talk. I hope we will meet again. Thankyou and good luck.

---

## **Second Interviews - Individuals.**

Who do you talk to?

What do you talk about?

## **Appendix 5**

This is a list of questions which formed the basis of semi-structured interviews with fathers.

## Questions for Fathers – Elmhirst school July 2001

Welcome to this session of conversations about your life and your learning.

For the record would you tell me your name, age and which community you live in. This will be kept completely confidential.

What did your father do for a living?

What did you learn from him?

Tell me about your school life.

Which school did you attend? When did you leave?

What qualifications did you gain? Have you gained any qualification or followed any course of study since you left school?

Do you ever go to your son's school?

If so why? If not, why not?

What do you think about teachers?

What is education for?

What have been the barriers to your learning?

Do you have any hobbies or pastimes?

Do you still learn useful things?

Is there anything you would like to learn more about?

Who have you learned most from?

Where/Who do you learn from now?

Do you read books? Newspapers? Do you visit the library?

What sort of thing do you think young males need to know about now?

What sort of things do you talk to teach your son about?

Is there anything else you would like to ask or to tell me?

Thankyou very much for participating in this talk. I hope we will meet again. Thankyou and good luck.

## **Appendix 6**

This list of questions formed the basis of semi-structured interviews with 16+ lads at a training establishment.

## **Ed D Interviews –BMBC Training – Sept 2002**

Welcome to this session of conversations about your life and the way you learn.

Are you comfortable? Is there anything you would like to change?

For the record would you tell me your name, age and which community you live in.

What does your father do for a living?

Which school did you attend?

What qualifications did you gain?

What have been the barriers to your learning?

Do you have any hobbies or pastimes?

How important is learning to you?

What sort of things do young males need to know more about?

What did you learn at school?

Which sort of learning environment do you prefer (School or here) and

Why?

What makes you want to learn?

Is there anything else you would like to ask or to tell me?

Thankyou for participating in this talk. I hope we will meet again. Thankyou and good luck.

**Appendix 7**

This letter was sent to all lads who participated in first interviews and promised to attend second round interviews

Phillip A Lofts – Cert. C&Y; Cert. Ed.; M.Ed.; Memb. BERA  
Educational Researcher  
PO Box 349  
Barnsley  
S75 1XU

e-mail [\\_sheffunivres@yahoo.com](mailto:_sheffunivres@yahoo.com)

Name  
Address  
Address  
Barnsley  
South Yorkshire

5 Dec 01

Name

Thankyou for accepting my invitation to take part in a research interview, as outlined in my recent letter. For the next round of interviews I propose to use a room at Barnsley Town Hall, in the early evening. The dark early nights make it more convenient for you to access a venue in town, rather than resource centres on estates. I trust you will agree this option will be better.

Please tick the box below to indicate when you choose to attend the interview. I will meet you in the Town Hall reception area at that time. The interview will last about 45 minutes. You will receive expenses at the interview.

Tear off the slip along the dotted line and return in the pre-paid envelope.

Thankyou for your continued co-operation.

Phil Lofts

-----T E A R - - A L O N G - - - D O T T E D - - - L I N E -----  
-----

Please indicate your preferred interview time by Ticking the appropriate box.

Tuesday 18 Dec 01	Wednesday 19 Dec 01	Thursday 20 Dec 01	Friday 21 Dec 01	Saturday 22 Dec 01
4p.m.	4p.m.	4p.m.	4p.m.	10a.m.
5p.m.	5p.m.	5p.m.	5p.m.	11a.m.
6p.m.	6p.m.	6p.m.	6p.m.	

British Educational Research Association No. 3526

**Appendix 8**

This letter was used to thank the participants and to send the agreed expenses.

Phillip A Lofts – Cert. C&Y; Cert. Ed.; M.Ed.; Memb. BERA  
Educational Researcher  
PO Box 349  
Barnsley  
S75 1XU

e-mail [\\_sheffunivres@yahoo.com](mailto:_sheffunivres@yahoo.com)

---

Name  
Address  
Address  
Address  
Barnsley  
Post code

26 Sept 02

Dear Adam

Thankyou for your recent kind involvement in interviews I carried out at Barnsley Met Training. This will be very useful in my research towards forming a picture of how males in Barnsley learn. I am sure it will also help us to improve education for males in the future.

Thank you for your participation. Unless you object I will retain your name on my files for the duration of the research project, then the file will be destroyed.

Sincerely

Phillip A lofts

**Encl. £10**

## **Appendix 9**

This flyer was used in poster size in public buildings e.g. library, cafes, etc. It was hoped to attract fathers and through them their sons for interview. It was totally unsuccessful in attracting any responses. The strategy then changed to the more successful one of contacting sons first.

**Are you a father?  
Or a young male at school in Barnsley?  
A researcher needs to talk to fathers and sons  
with experience of education in Barnsley.**

Nominal expenses paid.

If you can spare a couple of hours to talk  
in strict confidence about your educational experience,  
please reply to:-

P.O. Box 349  
Barnsley  
S75 1XU

Or Email – [sheffunivres@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sheffunivres@yahoo.co.uk)