

MGTOW and Online Misogyny: A Foucauldian Discourse Analysis of Men Going Their Own Way (MGTOW) and Systemic Psychotherapists' accounts of what they could learn from MGTOW

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Abstract

Women are increasingly victims of domestic violence and hate perpetrated by men. This study analyses the discourse on various forms of violence that are commonly expressed in the online group, MGTOW, (men going their own way) to help systemic psychotherapists understand and better treat those who display misogyny.

There is a need for systemic psychotherapists to know what discourses have informed men, leading them to feel it is okay to participate in hate speech.

Therapists need an understanding of how MGTOW feel about sensitive issues and how they rationalise their abusive language and attitudes towards women. This knowledge will help therapists to support MGTOW men towards more integrated and healthy relationships with women.

Discourse was explored using Foucauldian Discourse Analysis to address the following research questions (RQs):

RQ 1: What can systemic psychotherapists learn from MGTOW to help with therapy and to be more sensitive to contemporary male gender identity?

RQ 2: What are the discourses that therapists hold concerning MGTOW?

RQ 3: What discourses are constructed between MGTOW?

RQ 4: How can MGTOW contribute to healthy attitudes and behaviours towards themselves, women, and men?

I examined these questions by observing the online discourse of MGTOW on the MGTOW website. Following reflection on the discourses, I interviewed eight systemic psychotherapists about them.

The study highlighted the construction of masculinity: boys and men do not become misogynistic independently but within the context of relationships, communities, and societies. As they grow up, certain experiences make them believe that they should be different from their authentic expression of self.

MGTOW are vulnerable and their anger demonstrates fear of loss and a deficiency. MGTOW in this study perceived strength in being apart and having the ability to overpower others, as reflected in the culturally dominant discourse amongst MGTOW.

Dedication

To Pappa... I wanted to put you first this time.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to all the MGTOW men who contributed to this study. I hope you can somehow see my good intention of doing a study on MGTOW.

I also want to thank all eight systemic psychotherapists, who helped me to make sense of the information. Without your willingness to take risks talking about very sensitive topics, this research could not have taken place.

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David, you were my rock, once again. The passion of my life...

Content Warning

This study discusses data of a sensitive nature.

Glossary

AFT	The Association of Family Therapy.
Alt-Right	The Alt-Right is a far-right extremist group that has a presence both online and offline. Although its visibility has diminished in the past few years, its ideas, and mindset are still influential.
Blue Pill Man	A man who is considered to be weak in MGTOW because he fell for the sexual desires of women, which MGTOW sees as a trap. He has relationships with women, may get married, and feels like he is being trapped. However, he is too scared to leave his girlfriend or wife.
Chad	A derogatory name that was given to attractive men who are in many sexual relationships with women.
Hypergamy	The alleged act by women of marrying men who are of a higher social class.
Involuntary Celibate (INCEL)	Involuntary Celibate (INCEL): In response to the mass shootings by INCELS, the community has grown on Reddit. The platform has become a primary source of discussion for people about violence and

sexual assault. In 2017, the original R/INCEL and other similar communities were shut down due to the number of discussions about these topics. The members of INCEL believe in a type of hierarchy or sexual class system. At the top, there are the White alpha males, while the women are referred to as "Stacy's."

Mamma	An Afrikaans or Dutch word for mother.
Manosphere	The rise of social media profiles and websites that cater to diverse male communities has led to a loose clustering of these sites and communities, which are often anti-feminist, and misogynist and known as the manosphere.
MGTOW	Men Going Their Own Way is a community that advocates a male separatist lifestyle and male supremacy.
Ouma	An Afrikaans word for grandmother.
Pappa	An Afrikaans word for father.
Red Pill Man	A MGTOW man who has chosen to go his own way, not to be in a relationship with a woman, not to get married or have children, and who chooses not to have sex with any woman.

Sandman	A prominent MGTOW YouTube content creator.
Stacy	Used by INCELS to denote a woman who has sex with a lot of men. She is viewed to be stereotypically superficial and un-intelligent, beautiful, and promiscuous.
Systemic Psychotherapist	Systemic psychotherapy is a type of psychological therapy that focuses on helping people manage their relationships and interactions with others. It also helps individuals develop a deeper understanding of themselves.

Abbreviations

CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
FDA	Foucauldian Discourse Analysis
GIDS	Gender Identity Disorder Service
MGTOW man	A man who is a member of MGTOW
MRM	Men's Rights Movement
NHS	National Health Service
PUA	Pick Up Artists
UKCP	United Kingdom for Counselling and Psychotherapy

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1 Introduction

The rise of online misogyny has been discussed in various ways on social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter. (Ouellette and Banet-Weiser, 2018; Ging 2019). In addition, right-wing populism has been gaining ground in various parts of the world, including Europe and the US. For instance, the rise of popularity for Donald Trump in the US and the UK's exit from the European Union have led to the establishment of right-wing political parties that have been known to make anti-refugee and anti-women's rights statements. These are example forms of misogyny that have been discussed online (Keskinen, 2018; Ouellette and Banet-Weiser, 2018; Walton, 2012; Wilz, 2016).

Following the rise of right-wing populists and the increasing number of anti-women's rights statements posted online, various communities have started to circulate discriminatory and hateful content about women (Bratich and Banet-Weiser, 2019; Gotell and Dutton, 2016; Koulouris, 2018; Ouellette and Banet-Weiser, 2018; van Valkenburgh, 2021). Members of these communities claim that the increasing number of women and people of colour in the world has undermined traditional heterosexual masculinity. They also believe that there is a need for a new type of masculinity, such as being free from the obligations and responsibilities of marriage, and being a man who decides his own way of living, without the constraints society puts on him for having to be a certain man.

Studies of the manosphere, of which MGTOW is part; refer to how these communities are known to be making rape threats and death threats to

women. (Murray, 2017; Myketiak, 2016; Vito, Admire, and Hughes, 2018; Wilson *et al.*, 2009). In addition, they have been linked to multiple mass shootings in the past couple of years. Further to these authors, the views of White male mass shooters have been known to be racist and misogynist. These men have also been able to gain a following through the manosphere and social media, which have amplified their views. *Online misogyny* is a threat that can lead to actual violence against women (MacSweeney, 2020). In a time when women are increasingly victims of domestic violence and hate from men, this study aims to describe the discourse on various forms of violence that are commonly expressed in the online group, MGTOW. This group is a part of the manosphere and there is concern that these forms of violence may be brought into couple's relationships (MacSweeney, 2020). This study aims to help systemic psychotherapists understand these men and better treat those who display misogyny.

I am a systemic psychotherapist and reflexivity is a major area of systemic psychotherapists' training. I query how as systemic psychotherapists we can reflect with a sense of togetherness, if we are deeply offended or concerned by what we hear in therapy. Fredman (2004), in her book, *Transforming Emotion*, identifies how we can move together in a collaborative manner to bridge differences, transform talk, and achieve harmony. My study, however, fills the gap in coming closer to deconstructing therapists' discourses around misogyny, so that systemic therapists can support men who display misogyny.

According to Fredman, (2004, p.2), one of the most common issues practitioners bring to supervision relates to feelings and emotions of self and

others, with questions for example like: “How do I talk with this person about his feelings? How do I manage my own feelings about this? How should I respond?” This study addressed the discourses systemic therapists may have about misogyny. I have observed on the MGTOW website that MGTOW felt therapists' discourses about men like MGTOW constrained couple therapy.

By analysing discourses from therapists, I hoped to help systemic therapists to connect with their feelings and develop new ways of thinking about how to work with misogynistic men.

I studied discourses from MGTOW men and therapists. Studying discourse from MGTOW men aimed to provide therapists with information about these men. This allowed a joint discovery between therapists and me to learn more knowledge about how to address MGTOW men's issues. According to Fredman, (2004), the discourses available to us mould us into having certain experiences. Discourses enable or constrain what we feel, think, and do. According to Fredman, (2004), emotion discourses can include our ideas about emotions and where they come from. This study explored emotions and where they come from in MGTOW men and systemic psychotherapists on a macro level, such as related to culture, history, and family stories. I was curious to understand beliefs about gender on a macro level, such as whether gender beliefs followed animalistic instincts, feminine weaknesses, physiological impulses, or diseases of the mind. I wanted to understand how discourses inform behaviours and feelings, especially among systemic psychotherapists, as these discourses could affect how men are being treated in therapy.

Through the use of Fredman's (2004) ideas about emotion, I was curious about how emotion around misogyny and violence influenced therapists and I when we listened to and spoke about misogyny. I was curious how the emotion we felt about misogyny could influence us in how we listened to emotion within MGTOW. This could help us as therapists to be more aware of how we listened to misogyny and violence when we work with violence and misogyny.

I was therefore curious about what practices informed the objects of our speech and this connected me to the term, discourses, as described by (Foucault 1979). According to Foucault (cited in Ryder, 2013, p.49), discourses highlight the meanings, metaphors, representations, stories, and statements that we produce about an object. What MGTOW men produced between themselves and what therapists produced regarding MGTOW men are examples.

Furthermore, these men find something useful within the MGTOW platform and I am curious over whether there is something missing in the way therapists help men navigate through issues they experience about their identity and women. I hypothesise, given that there are almost 40 000 men on the MGTOW platform, that some of the men we see in therapy and who are our clients hold the same beliefs as MGTOW, and I therefore want to bring what is happening for MGTOW men closer to our male clients in therapy. This study explored the discourses that help men to stay within MGTOW and how systemic psychotherapists can assist clients.

1.1 Background to the Study

1.1.1 Self-reflections: What Informed Me to Research MGTOW?

I have been trying to figure out what it meant to be a boy, and then a man, since I was told in primary school that boys play rugby, boys like girls, boys play rough, and boys should stand up for themselves. For some reason, I liked whatever I believed I should like, but I also liked more and sometimes less of that which was prescribed by my White South African culture. For many years, I have been trying to please those who told me how to be a boy, and being included in the category of maleness made me feel warm and safe inside. When I became a man, my attempts to please those whom I believed knew “how the perfect man looked like” intensified.

I was rough in sport, and I liked it. I renounced my skills to make clothes for my sister’s Barbie dolls completely to avoid the consequences of being cast out of the “lad group.” I dated many pretty girls in secondary school and was called “Casanova,” and that made me feel good, albeit I liked the girls, but I also liked the boys, and my greedy appetite for both genders was kept to myself. The skin I was walking in could only be used for what was expected from its anatomical appearance; having a penis meant acting like a man with a penis. However, deep down I felt castrated from my true identity, whatever that somebody was.

Having conversations and banter with my friends about girls, cars, and sport, were “male like.” I knew how it felt and what it looked like if someone was not “male like” as that person would be frowned upon. In fact, he would be cast

out of the category of “men” and be put into a category of “weak,” “shamed,” “laughed at.” I remember how I felt drawn to some of these queer boys, boys who were outcast because they behaved differently from what was expected of a White South African boy, i.e., they sometimes laughed like a girl, hugged other boys, seemed more in touch with the girl inside of them. However, some boys behaved way too gay for me and that “put me off” as well.

One day my girlfriend saw me hanging out with these different boys and she told me, like a mother hen, to stick with the friends I currently had. She said that the ones I spoke to over break time were not a good influence on me. It was as if my girlfriend noticed my fluidity of being-ness and wanted to protect what “we had,” the category in which we were both positioned. I did not dare to punctuate my “both” / “and” position and preference, as I would have experienced the same treatment as the queer boys. That rejection would have left me exposed to the social wolves in school. Although my innocent young soul found it impossible to be limited within a category of queer or straight acting, I had an invested interest in feeling safe and being liked, which led to me being very popular in school. When I reflect on this now, this yearning for safety and popularity began its configuration process very early in my life.

When I was born, I put on a space suit to live on this plane. My space suit was my body. My body had a steering mechanism. It was called the prefrontal lobes and it also had all the coordinating grey matter in my brain to control my movements. My space suit was just like those space suits people wear to go to the moon and they learn how to grab things, walk in space, and hold things with the suit. I learned all of that and got rewarded when I did well

through kisses and hugs and compliments. As I grew older, I got really good at using my space suit and started to find it hard to distinguish between what was my space suit and what was the “I” that was wearing the suit. Everybody came up to me and told me “what a nice suit,” which led me to constantly look into other people’s eyes to know if I was wearing a nice suit or not. On reflection, I am calling this “somebody training.” When you are born, you go into “somebody training.” Your parents, family, friends, religion, and culture appear to know who they are, and they make you somebody too.

The problem I had, though, was that the suit I was wearing never felt like it fit properly. It never felt right for me. I felt like the arms were too long and the trousers were too big and sometimes it felt too tight. However, although the suit felt uncomfortable, everybody kept saying: “beautiful suit, very impressive: you must be really happy,” but I did not feel happy in the suit as it was not fitting the real me. To others, though, I had a perfect suit. Whenever I looked into others’ eyes, they confirmed that I was wearing a beautiful suit, so I concluded that I must be “sick” for not feeling comfortable in this suit, so I became a therapist. My training taught me to wear the suits of other therapists and scholars, instead of my own suit, and when I did, more people told me, “beautiful suit.” I was still not happy in that suit either, but when I walked down the street, I was somebody. It looked like I knew who I was. I dressed like somebody. Everything is somebody-ness and everybody is reinforcing their structure of the universe as they need two concepts to meet all the time: “this is who I am and this is who you are.” We all then go into these conspiracies of “I make you believe who you are, who you think you are.” You can see this in everybody as everybody is busy being somebody.

This made me wonder whether we need to become nobody, if somebody is someone else's body.

When I started showing an interest in MGTOW, the suit I thought I was wearing and that I was told looked good, was the wrong suit, because suddenly these MGTOW men felt that I should not be in the group, and I became curious about the suits they were wearing. They wore suits that made them acceptable to one another. Furthermore, these men encouraged one another to wear suits to become free men. I needed a different suit and, in many ways, I was convinced into trying one of the suits that were offered to me in the group. However, this suit could not even get across my legs and I chose to wear the suit of a therapist in the group. The anger MGTOW showed me, because I appeared to be wearing a suit that everyone else wore who supported feminism, was unbearable. I was cast out. Not popular anymore. However, the power of the hate towards me made me feel like I wanted more of that abuse, as if I deserved to bow down to this ideology of a supreme superman suit. There was power in the ones who spoke to me. I stopped feeling like a man. I stopped liking myself, but as someone wearing a suit of a clinical therapist, I became very curious about the effects they had on me and especially what was really going on for these angry men when they talked to each other about being separate. I joined MGTOW as a result of wanting to do this doctorate study and then became addicted to their abuse and this is where the journey with MGTOW started...

1.1.2 Background of MGTOW

The members of MGTOW are men who have already left women behind and are either thinking about or have already started to think about their next move. They are known for their masculinised lifestyle and social media posts. According to the Southern Poverty Law Centre, MGTOW is located on the fringes of the INCEL community (Johanssen, 2022).

Although the exact origins of MGTOW are not clear, it has been around since the 2000s. There is evidence suggesting that the group emerged from The Red Pill community (a MGTOW man who has chosen to go his own way, not to be in a relationship with a woman, not to get married or have children, and who chooses not to have sex with any woman) in 2015 (MacSweeney, 2020). The members of MGTOW often share the same ideologies and beliefs as the Alt-Right (the Alt-Right is a far-right extremist group that has a presence both online and offline).

The members of MGTOW believe that women have been taught to believe that the world is unfair to women. This does not mean that the MGTOW worldview is the truth.

On the MGTOW website, there are numerous photos posted by users that show their life experiences. They describe their lifestyle in terms of what it would look like if they were in a cave. They also post photos of themselves travelling alone. The community is full of narratives about male independence and solitude.

MGTOW members post photos of their freedom and freely express their choice to reject having relationships with women. While the group's anti-feminism is strong, it also features discussions about cooking and other hobbies. This is a more positive and benign environment compared to other communities in the manosphere. However, it does not mean that this community is free from deep misogyny and hatred towards women. The only way to join MGTOW is if you are a man, which made it easy for me to join the group.

There are two types of MGTOW posts according to Johanssen(2022). The first is a celebration of male independence and strength, while the second is focussed on the oppression and exploitation of women. Most of the time, these posts are about how men have been abused, threatened, and even tricked by women. They also talk about how they are not able to understand the concept of female empowerment as they believe the structures in society are biased towards empowering women and not men. These men also question if women are honest when they give sexual consent as they can turn on the man and accuse the man of rape.

Several studies have been conducted on MGTOW since I received my ethical approval in 2018. These include:

- 'Sluts and soyboys and the production of misogynistic online harassment' (Jones, Trott, and Wright, 2020), which analysed the forms of violence and misogyny that MGTOW members posted about. The results revealed that members are able to rationalise their

behaviour and that the manosphere is a complex and heterogeneous ecosystem.

- 'The pussy ain't worth it, bro' (Wright, Trott, and Jones 2020) focussed on analysing the structure and content of discussions on the MGTOW website. The results indicate that the discussions on the forum were heavily influenced by the multiple communicative elements used in them, which suggests a contradiction in their ideologies about individualism and separation. They also found that the topics of discussion mainly revolved around women, with the majority of them being misogynistic.
- 'Fantasy, online misogyny and the manosphere: Male bodies and dis/inhibition' (Johansson, 2022) reports on the analysis of discourses on the MGTOW website. Johansson (2022) notes that men on the site have conflicting thoughts about women, with some fantasies about women extending beyond misogyny. Johansson also references the work of other prominent psychoanalytic authors such as Theweleit, Reich, Benjamin, and UpingBruehl.
- 'The men and women, guys and girls of the "manosphere": A corpus-assisted discourse approach' (Krendel, 2020). This study focussed on analysing the various forms of discourse featured on the site. It revealed how the lemmas of men and women are used to construct gender identities in the anti-feminist forum on Reddit.
- 'Kick the XX out of your life. An analysis of the manosphere discursive constructions of gender on Twitter' (Hopton and Langer, 2022). This study analysed content on Twitter to understand how the platform

constructs femininity. It identified three strategies that were used to address the issue of oppression and naming power.

However, the studies I have referenced above do not focus on the MGTOW platform or on reflective diaries about such platforms, such as the reflective diary I created during my observations. There is therefore still a significant gap in the literature.

The following studies have been conducted on systemic psychotherapist interventions with male gender issues:

- ‘Dancing on a razor’s edge: Systemic group work with batterers,’ (Rivett and Rees, 2004): this paper aims to introduce a systemic approach to addressing domestic violence that does not involve couples’ therapy. Instead, it focuses on the community response model.
- *Legalising misandry: From public shame to systemic discrimination*, (Nathanson and Young, 2006): this book explores the various psychological and social issues that boys had to face when it came to being socialised. It focuses on the idea that society made them perform gender roles in a certain way.
- *Not all dead White men: Classics and misogyny in the digital age* (MacSweeney 2020): this book is about how the men of the Red Pill use the literature and history of ancient Greece and Rome to promote a patriarchal and White supremacist ideology.
- ‘Let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred schools of thought contend: Towards a variety in programmes for perpetrators of

domestic violence' (Rees and Rivett 2005): as the USA rolls out its new domestic abuse programmes, this article argues that we should retain various approaches to addressing perpetrators of domestic abuse.

- 'Therapeutic responses to domestic violence' (Brown and James 2014): this paper aims to review the various controversies around domestic violence in heterosexual relationships that have been discussed in Australia and New Zealand over the past three decades.
- 'Racial battle fatigue: The long-term effects of racial microaggressions on African American boys and men' (Smith, David, and Stanton 2020): This study focuses on racial microaggressions and gendered racism.
- *Down girl: The logic of misogyny* (Manne 2017): this book emphasises how patriarchy still controls the world and highlights the dangers of misogyny.
- 'From pick up artists to INCeLs: Con(fidence) games, networked misogyny and the failure of neoliberalism' (Bratich and Banet-Weiser 2019): this article argues that this decade has seen a decline in neoliberalism's ability to secure subjects within the political rationality of the INCeL's ideas. It also states that the movement cannot cope with its failures, such as its promises regarding self-confidence and self-regard.
- 'Cut the crap: Language – risks and relationships in systemic therapy and supervision' (Smith 2011): this article aims to discuss the use of language in both supervision and therapy, and how it can contribute to the development of risk-taking in both settings.

None of the above systemic studies focussed on the observation of MGTOW, the discourses which systemic psychotherapists have around misogyny, or on how therapists could learn from and treat contemporary masculinity when misogyny is practiced.

I was interested in the ontological stance of MGTOW when I started reading about MGTOW on the MGTOW platform, as it seemed true to my own paradigm, i.e., I am already the result because I am the universe and do not need anyone, no woman, no man, and no child, or anything to complete me. My ontological stance is informed by scientific scholars in physics, biology, and spirituality, such as Dispenza (2017), Kyeyune (2020), Tolle (2004), and Walsch (2005). I am also of the opinion that because we are the universe, we are all one, and not separate. This paradigm closely links with what Walsch (2005), in his conversations with the God trilogy, emphasises very clearly and scientifically: that we are all one, we are not separate, and we only perceive to be needing something because we want a particular result. However, the universe does not require a particular result. The universe is the result, a fact that quantum physics now supports (see also Kyeyune, 2020). My ontological stance also has close links with the rich and innovative ideas of quantum physicist and feminist theorist, Karen Barad (Barad, 2020; Brown, Siegel, and Blom, 2020): based on Barad's theory of agential realism, we can think about connectedness as an inherent part of the world rather than something we need to create. This perspective helps us understand the difference between being separate and being interconnected. Through this method, we can also develop a more robust understanding of how to communicate and collaborate with others.

However, when I visited the platform to explore this enlightened position of completeness, I experienced something completely different from what I was hoping to share.

These men are saying the opposite of what the introduction to MGTOW's platform made me believe they were all about. Here below are a few quotes from the MGTOW site, (<https://www.goingyourownway.com/>) that initially aroused my interest to know more about MGTOW (MGTOW, year).

I do not think you can name many great inventions that married men have made. Be alone; that is the secret of invention. Be alone; that is when ideas are born Nikola Tesla (1856-1943).

Survival and mating are the success model for animals in the wild. That's the best they will ever do. But marriage and children are not the highest pinnacles of success for men. Some 60% of men who lived on Earth never had children, so what did they dedicate their lives to?

The men on the platform seem angry. They are mad at women. As a clinician trained in forensic assessments, red flags started coming up when I indulged myself in this group to learn more about them. I was concerned! I was also compassionately curious about the experiences of these men. To understand this process of gender configuration and categorisation, I had to reflect on my experiences and return to my roots.

1.1.3 Healthy Intimate Relationships Within Male Identity Formation

Systemic Psychotherapy has been brave for many years, fighting for social equality, but unfortunately, there seems to be a growing sense of intolerance for the values of anything that poses a risk to discourses of history, patriarchy, politics, and religious ideologies.

As a systemic psychotherapist, I was left concerned about the lack of tolerance for women, effeminate men, or any concept that steered away from what men on the manosphere considered "normal masculine behaviour." I also felt strong compassion for how boys and men were made to believe that there was only one way of being a real man. I had sympathy for how these boys and men were restricted in their expression of their bodies, minds, and intellects, which made them believe certain truths about themselves, women, and other men.

I am carrying within me some unfinished historical issues about my loss of a father, who himself was uncertain about his sexuality and suffered the consequences of a patriarchal system that made him feel morally obliged to perform gender in a certain way. He was also emotionally and physically abused by his mother when he was a boy and experienced a strong sense of rejection and worthlessness, possibly because of his childhood. I want to take you into my father's world for a moment by speaking words directly as my father spoke.

1.1.4 An Autobiography of My Father

I have never held you in my arms, Ouboet, at least in a way that made you feel good or safe. Mamma always tried to protect you from me and that undermined my authority over you and your sisters. It also undermined my relationship with your mum. There were times when I felt safe to be just who and what I am; when I could hold a dog close to me, for example. Ouboet, other times the memories of how Ouma hated me were too much and the little things in life could make me be like an anxious dog that wanted to bite everything around him, even those I love the most. I even hurt you, my son; I have hurt you so much. When I bite like a dog, I feel anxious like I did when I was a boy, ashamed, worthless, and lonely, humiliated and shamed by my mother. Dogs trust me more than you trust me, Ouboet. I cannot look the world in the eyes because I am ashamed. I cannot trust anyone,

because everyone has always put me last and everyone has always shown me that I cannot be safe with them. I still feel unsafe and broken. The only time I feel strong is when I drink. It makes me forget the pain. When I feel I can be myself because of the drink, I want to step more into that freedom of just being who I am, I want more of that happiness and then I drink more than I should. Drinking makes me feel depressed after a while and then I become something I hate about myself. I become like Ouma. I hurt everyone I love around me and this pushes me further away from you, Ouboet. I have hit you and Mamma so many times. I wish I loved my mother as much as you love Mamma. I think I love Ouma but feel so confused about love. I feel so confused about my love for Mamma. I knew all you wanted to do when Mamma and I were fighting was to protect her. I am sorry I was putting you in that position, Ouboet. My behaviour made you so sad my son. I have seen the bruises on you. The physical bruises but also the emotional scars, and they were caused by me. I am sorry I have embarrassed you in front of your friends. I am sorry ... I cannot be there to say this to you in this world... and I am sorry I left without saying goodbye... (A dream about my father when my sister passed away, 2020).

I forgive you, Pappa... I wish I could forgive myself for not being there for you when you ended your own life. You must have been so alone that night...

1.1.5 The Present-day...

As someone unwittingly still attached to thoughts and feelings, anger and confusion about memories of my parents' unsafe relationship, the idea of happy relationships is far removed from me. My evolutionary journey is to detach from relationships, convention, body, sex, gender, and form. My experiences and firm beliefs suggest that within attachment and desire lies suffering. However, something beautiful happens when I work with people. My story helps me to help others. I see myself not as a body, not as a mind, but as a soul, connected with everyone around me. My story helps me not to attach to emotional drama in this world. The pain I have felt in my human

mind and body helps me to connect with those who have also experienced pain.

I see victims and offenders differently from how most see them. I see that I have chosen everything that happened in my life so that I can know myself for who I really am. I am everything, as I said before, but how can I know that I am if I don't experience, especially that which I am not? The things I feel in this human mind and body that I am not were the opportunities for my growth. For example, one can know about love, but experiencing love is something different from knowing. My trauma does not cripple me. It empowers me. It positions me to step into wisdom. It positions me to make connections with people in profound ways, because, after all, we are all one. The one-ness does not mean I do not see those who hurt me as separate, I see those who hurt me as my grandest opportunity to become the best version of who I am, and I thank them for this opportunity for growth. In short. I know there are no victims and there are no offenders, and this knowing can only be achieved on a spiritual level, not in the human mind or body. This realisation is a journey that is being explored differently by everyone; some have different higher truths than me, and that is fine. We go on a joint journey together in the therapy room. A journey that allows us to make a connection.

Maybe the reader will see me as a misogynistic man in wolves' clothing for doing a study where I consider the position of heterosexual White males, because why else would I be interested in bringing their needs to the foreground, when men have caused women so much suffering in the past, and we know from feminist scholars that women are still being constructed to

perform femininity or being "a good woman" a certain way by men (Butler 1990).

Maybe I am trying to give my father a voice, or I am trying to tell him that I forgive him, as I want him to have peace. I hope, however, the reader will see that I show curiosity about "what now."

1.2 Research Problem

There seems to be an agreement amongst many researchers in the areas of gender and identity that men are in crisis with their own identity. There is an increased confusion amongst men about their social role and identity, sexuality, as well as work and personal relationships. These uncertainties of "who am I" and "whom am I supposed to be" can show up in violent and abusive behaviours towards self and others (Frosh, 2009). Different, yet similar to the crisis in identity are the long waiting lists at the Gender Dysphoria Clinic at the Tavistock, showing the increased level of confusion young people experience with their identities and how this impacts on their lives through depression and anxiety (Khadr *et al.* 2014).

The disposable male: It ends here (Unknown, 2016), is an MGTOW book with an anonymised author from the manosphere, who states: "Society is waging a war of attrition on men and boys alike, introducing sexist laws driven by feminist demands, and reducing men and boys to second class citizens" (Unknown, 2016, p.142). Frosh, Phoenix, and Pattman (2019, p.153) appear to agree that "The concerns about masculinities hinge around control of men's masculinities in the interest of maintaining social order," with

particular reference to criminal attitudes towards women (Frosh, Phoenix, and Pattman, 2019). According to Frosh, Phoenix, and Pattman (2019), male identity is in crisis, because of the collapse of traditional men's work, a technological culture of employment where a trade cannot be passed onto another generation, the rise of feminist consciousness amongst women, and challenges of the different forms of masculinity in the West.

Ging (2019), states that MGTOW is a subgroup of the manosphere, which in the online world is the godfather of the Men's Liberation Movement. The manosphere has been described as an online network of deviant subculture groups that posts hateful speech about women. The manosphere is a network of groups such as the Men's Right Movement (MRM), Pick Up Artists (PUA), Traditional Conservatives (TradCon), MGTOW, Gamergate, The Red Pill, and INCEL (Ging, 2019 Lin, 2017). It has been reported that INCEL members have perpetrated acts of violence and terrorism, such as a van attack in Toronto that killed 10 people (BBC News, 10 November 2020, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-54895219>). Another subculture of the manosphere, PUAs, are known to seduce and manipulate women into sleeping with them (Ging, 2017; Lin, 2017; Mamié, Horta Ribeiro, and West 2021).

There has been an outcry from feminist groups following the overt violent intention of INCELS and PUAs. However, MGTOW manages to stay under the radar of critiques, possibly because the separateness lifestyle appears to be less dangerous than the direct violence portrayed by INCELS and PUAs. However, a recent study by Wright, Trott, and Jones (2020), raised concerns that MGTOW propagate passive and undirected harassment and misogyny

on Twitter on a large scale that can normalise sexist attitudes. It was found that at least 7% of harassing tweets were of a violent nature in some way (Wright, Trott and Jones, 2020).

Further to exploring internet ethnographic studies of MGTOW by Lawson (2019a), Lawson and Marquis-Manicom (2019), and Wright, Trott, and Jones (2020), MGTOW men are bound together by a belief in the “gynocentric order” and The Red Pill ideology. The idea around The Red Pill was informed by the film, *The Matrix*. In this film, the character Neo (Keanu Reeves) has to choose between taking The Red Pill, which will heighten his awakening to enlightenment, or the Blue Pill, which will keep him stuck and controlled by social systems of power. MGTOW’s beliefs are that when you are a member of the manosphere, you have the potential to be an enlightened Red Pill man, because once you are, you are able to see that the world is dominated by privileged women.

Several studies have examined the various aspects of MGTOW, including its structure, and discourses. There is also a large volume of literature on the psychodynamic processes of men, as well as questions about sexuality and vulnerability. Most of these studies emphasise negative and judgemental views of MGTOW, which raises the question of how these judgements might affect working with men like MGTOW members.

Regarding recent studies around systemic practice and gender issues as mentioned earlier, no researchers have observed MGTOW or subsequently interviewed systemic psychotherapists to ascertain their discourses to help with therapy and to be more sensitive to contemporary male gender identity.

I have tried to engage with the men on MGTOW to learn more about their views and the rhetoric construction of aggressive attitudes seriously concerned me. I am especially interested in the study of Lawson (2019b) who, following a digital ethnographic study on MGTOW, argues that Robert King Merton's Strain theory combined with Edwin Sutherlands' Differential Association theory explain why the manosphere is used by some men: because of the adaptations to anomie, and how the deviant subcultures form through learned behaviour and radicalisation (Merton, cited in Lukes and Scull, 2013, p.19 and p. 232). Durkheim refers to the term "anomie," stating that it arises from a mismatch between personal or group standards and the wider social standards, or from the lack of a social ethic, which produces moral deregulation and an absence of legitimate aspirations. This condition, according to Durkheim, is nurtured within a culture (Durkheim, cited in Lukes and Scull, 2013, p.54-61).

Merton in his Strain theory touched upon ideas of competition (conflict theory) and explained symbolic interaction as seen on MGTOW, where men share defiant meanings about women through the use of symbols that show up in languages such as words like 'Red Pill Man' and 'manosphere' (Merton, cited in Lukes and Scull 2013, p.19 and p.232). In their book, *Durkheim and the Law*, Lukes and Scull argue that Sutherland views sociological issues through the symbolic interactionist lens and role theory. They argued that Merton focussed on observing sociocultural influences and Sutherland identified socio-structural influences. I was curious to learn whether MGTOW was using language to relieve their anomic frustration about women and if the way of talking was radicalising members of the group to violence. I have

no evidence of this, but recent studies by Ging (2017), Lin (2017), Wright, Trott, and Jones (2020), Jones, Trott, and Wright (2020), Lawson (2019b), and Marquis-Manicom (2019) confirm that there are grave concerns that these men are looking for and finding support for their toxic masculinity through the manosphere, where they share their anti-feminist beliefs and anger towards women. These studies concluded that MGTOW men assume victim positions regarding how social structures affect their hegemony. I was curious to explore these discourses of possible violent attitudes towards women. Analysing the rhetorical communication between these men, might lead to new knowledge to help therapists become more aware of the structures that cause, maintain, and contribute to violent attitudes and behaviours towards women. However, if therapists' attitudes towards such men are judgemental and negative, fewer may seek help, meaning that more women may be at risk.

The Home Office (2019) report the following figures about violence against women in 2019:

- 1) In the UK, one in four women will experience domestic abuse and one in five sexual assaults during their lifetimes. Globally, this statistic rises to one in three.
- The Crime Survey of England and Wales estimates that 20% of women and 4% of men have experienced some type of sexual assault since the age of 16, equivalent to an estimated 3.4 million female victims and 631,000 male victims. Five out of six victims (83%) did not report their experiences to the police.

- An estimated 3.1% of women (510,000) and 0.8% of men (138,000) aged 16 to 59 had experienced sexual assault in the last year.
- Approximately two million adults experienced domestic abuse in 2019, with 695,000 of these being male, which indicates that there is an untold or even untellable systemic story about possible trauma for men who have also experienced domestic violence.

This study looked at the discourses of therapists towards men who negotiate agency, responsibility, and blame on the MGTOW group, bearing in mind that the discourses of therapists may impact on how contemporary male gender identity is being understood and worked with.

I was concerned that some of these MGTOW men were vulnerable and were possibly radicalised through the power of discourse on this platform. It is therefore especially important for therapists, who work with men who have been violent, to be more self-reflective of their own attitudes towards these men, as this could hinder the treatment of men or couples. This study highlighted discourse in systemic practice for therapists to understand how power relations are exercised and negotiated through discourse in language.

1.3 Research Questions

RQ 1: What can systemic psychotherapists learn from MGTOW to help with therapy and to be more sensitive to contemporary male gender identity?

RQ 2: What are the discourses that therapists hold concerning MGTOW?

RQ 3: What discourses are constructed between MGTOW?

RQ 4: How can MGTOW contribute to healthy attitudes and behaviours towards themselves, women, and men?

1.4 Research Aims

Given the lack of research regarding how to move on systemically and help MGTOW men therapeutically, this study aimed to identify and evaluate discourses of MGTOW and systemic psychotherapists to help with therapy and help therapists to be more sensitive to contemporary male gender identity. The study aims to build on the contribution of feminist theorists to understand power relations because it significantly contributes to defining a form of therapy that attends to individual relationships and the broader social context, and uncovers unhelpful discourses (McGoldrick, Anderson, and Walsh, 1989; McGoldrick and Hardy, 2019).

1.5 Research Objectives

The following research objectives were formulated to achieve the aims of the research:

Objective 1 To observe the MGTOW website as well as YouTube videos of Sandman (a prominent MGTOW YouTube content creator).

Objective 2 To develop semi-structured questions from these discourses to interview systemic psychotherapists.

Objective 3 To interview systemic psychotherapists to establish the discourses from listening to misogynistic men, and to identify and evaluate

how systemic psychotherapists could learn from MGTOW to help with therapy and to be more sensitive to contemporary male gender identity.

1.6 Thesis Structure

The first chapter of this study introduces the context of the research, background to why I chose MGTOW, the research problem, questions, aims, and objectives.

In Chapter 2, I discuss social power, and how power is applicable to this study. I also look at how systemic psychotherapists work with power, and consider feminist theorists. This study also required a thorough and in-depth exploration of hegemonic masculinity, which is also covered in Chapter 2.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodology explaining step by step how I addressed answering the research questions.

Chapter 4 reports in depth the analysis of the data and presents the findings of the study. The findings are discussed and linked to my literature review, but I also make some interesting discoveries that can be applied in systemic practice.

I conclude this study in Chapter 5 by summarising the key findings and discoveries related to the research aims and questions, and the value and contribution thereof. I further recommend how the findings in this study can contribute to systemic practice.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter introduced MGTOW and gave an overall background to the research. I explained the reasons why I became interested in doing research on misogyny that is found within MGTOW and informed the reader about what was found by other scholars about MGTOW and how this research will add to the already rich existing data. I explained how this research is different from other research because I was doing an observation of MGTOW and interviewed eight systemic psychotherapists about my observations and findings. This chapter also explained other studies that were conducted on MGTOW as well as systemic research on masculinity.

I introduced the reader to my own life and relationship with my father through an autobiography and also explained how I am positioned in terms of intimate relationships and gender. This chapter also explained what the research problem was and why more research was necessary on masculinity. I introduced the reader to my research questions; research aims and research objectives.

This research explores a sensitive topic. It questions how power plays out through organised structures within society that can trap people's lives through lack of agency and experience.

The next chapter will give an outline of the theory that supports this research to analyse the discourse on various forms of violence that are commonly expressed in the online group, MGTOW to help systemic psychotherapists understand and better treat those who display misogyny.

2 Theoretical Perspectives

2.1 Introduction

Men who have abused their power and who have battered women in intimate relationships have been the focus of research in various disciplines within the social sciences for almost four decades. Despite the attention, there is little consensus among theorists and clinicians about what is sufficient, ethical, and appropriate theory and practice to address this (Anderson and Gehart, 2006). This theoretical chapter endeavours to encapsulate a very comprehensive topic, which is more relevant than ever in a world where boys and girls grow up to become the experiences of others, and not themselves.

I start this chapter with a discussion of understanding power and explain the background to what this research is all about: social power, and the structures that hold this power in place. Foucault's work is discussed, because his contribution explains the life thread that connects everything in this thesis. I also critique Foucault to prevent readers from being influenced by my Foucauldian, postmodern position. The relationship between discourse, knowledge, and power is next introduced, as this relationship is particularly relevant to the data analysis chapter. As the function and relational construction of power play such an important role throughout this study, I then explain relevant descriptions of power applicable to this study and how power within systemic psychotherapy is understood and worked with. Culture is then explored regarding topics such as masculinity,

hegemonic masculinity, essentialist masculinity, and misogynistic male groups.

2.2 Understanding Power

2.2.1 Background

According to Stark *et al.* (1970), power can be described as follows:

The probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests (Stark *et al.*, 1970, p. 53).

The concept of power has been a hotly debated concept all over the world for many centuries and it continues to be, as seen on the news and social media. These hot debates are influencing scholars to become curious about its effects on the decisions people make about their own lives and the effect these power discussions have on people's mental health and well-being (Peterson, 2017).

Power has had a significant influence on the academic interests of various fields, including psychology, anthropology, and sociology. It has also influenced the development of theories related to social action (Westwood, 2002).

It is impossible to represent the wide body of work that has been written about the nature of power in this thesis. However, I will attempt to emphasise the multiple debates about its influence on various aspects of social interaction and language. To illustrate the depth of these debates, I will introduce some of Foucault's ideas. Michel Foucault was a significant figure

in the development of the concept of power relations. His emphasis on power within institutions also serves as a basis for the research.

2.2.2 Michel Foucault

To reduce the work of Michel Foucault to its fundamental insight: human knowledge is locked in an intimate relationship with power. As Foucault himself wrote in the opening chapter of his book, *Discipline and Punish*, (Foucault, 1979):

There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations (Foucault, 1979).

In short, though we often like to think of knowledge, particularly scientific knowledge, as operating outside the more valued driven realm of political, social, and economic power relations, Foucault argues that the two are inextricably linked (Foucault, 1979; Ryder, 2013). Ryder (2013) argues that the knowledge that exists at any given time, the fact that is deemed to be incontrovertible, and the discoveries that it is possible to make, are, in fact, heavily influenced by that same era's power relations. Foucault is especially interested in the power relations of particular eras, and how they affect scientific knowledge. Foucault's conception of power rarely focussed on representative politics, the state, or the economy. Instead, power for Foucault was related to the possibilities of self-empowerment. His approach considers whether the received wisdom of the era in which we live allows us to have agency to honestly know for ourselves and to construct our identities to our design, or whether it subtly coerces us into appealing to some "normality." What is interesting in Foucault's work is that he is engaged in

intricate studies of real work examples. Most of Foucault's books were histories, such as *History of madness, first published in 1961* (Foucault, 2009), *The order of things, first published in 1970* (Foucault, 2001), *The birth of the clinic, first published in 1963* (Foucault, 2003), *Discipline and Punish, first published in 1975* (Foucault, 1979), and *The history of sexuality* (Foucault, 1976). Foucault is therefore interested in how dominant structures of thought or ways of thinking in Western Europe have changed over time. In particular, he is interested in how the shift from one structure of thought to another might have enabled new scientific discoveries, medical practices, punishment systems, and sexual identities to emerge, which were previously unthinkable, while at the same time stopping other ideas from emerging (Foucault, 1979; Ryder, 2013).

2.2.3 Foucault Critiqued

I want to provide critique on Foucault's theories to also think of this research from a different paradigm. This research is supported by the foundations of Foucault's theories as it analyses the discourse on various forms of violence that are commonly expressed in the online group, MGTOW to help systemic psychotherapists understand and better treat those who display misogyny.

I, therefore, looked at the work of Peterson, (2017) who critiqued Foucault and Derrida. Peterson, (2017) argues that Foucault and Derrida were the two architects of the postmodernist movement. As an example of Peterson's (2017) concerns about Foucault and Derrida, was that he believes Foucault and Derrida were committed Marxists in the early 1960s and 1970s, when most postmodernists abandoned the movement because of its devastating

impact on society, after the second world war. It is important to understand that even though this research was conducted with enthusiasm being led by the ideas of Foucault, there will be scholars with strong disagreements with Foucault.

As an example of Peterson's (2017) concerns about Foucault, he argues that Foucault never fitted in anywhere in life and was a bitter and suicidal man who did everything possible to undermine the societal structures that would not accept him and all of his peculiarity. Jordan (2017) argues that it was impossible to create a structure that could function if it was composed of people who were as peculiar, bitter, and resentful as Foucault. However, according to Jordan (2017), Foucault argued for Marxism to be resurrected and wanted to justify that it was not his problem that he was an outsider, but that it was everyone else's problem. Peterson (2017) argues that Foucault did a good job of laying the groundwork for the rise of the marginalised against the centre.

Derrida's thinking was very much the same, although Foucault and Derrida did not get along and regarded each other as intellectual charlatans. Derrida (1982) claims that a political system has a centre around which the majority congregate and that there are people outside the category system. This is obviously true because it is how people are categorised. There are certain people inside the category and certain people outside the category.

According to Jordan (2017), this was one of the main critiques of Foucault and Derrida, because to categorise, one must include and exclude; this is in the very nature of categorisation and one cannot just get rid of categorisation, because without simplification and categorisation, one cannot

function in the world. For example, people with schizophrenia experience a breakdown of their category systems and are completely incapable of functioning in the world as a consequence (Boland, Verdium, and Ruiz 2021).

Derrida and Foucault went a step further by excluding all categories within the system, such as political systems, economical systems, and any hierarchy of value was excluded, because according to them, if there was a hierarchy of value, then some things would be more valuable than others.

Foucault (1979) argues that the reason why these hierarchies of value are constructed is not to produce whatever that is a value, but to exclude and maintain the structure of power that is intrinsic to the hierarchy of value.

Peterson (2017) critiques Foucault by arguing that this manner of reasoning is an unbelievably crooked claim, because there are multiple reasons why a hierarchy of value might be in place; there are hierarchies of duty, hierarchies of confidence, hierarchies of intelligence, attractiveness, athletic ability, and musical talent. To find musical geniuses, we need to exclude all the people who can hardly play a note from this category; otherwise, there would be no music. There would be no up and no direction, and Jordan (2017) argues that if this was the way we functioned, there would be catastrophic effects.

Hobbes, (2002) for example, believed that life was nasty and short and that people would be at each other's throats at the state of nature (Fleming, 2021). He was of the opinion that this was the natural chaos of individuals, and society needed a government and authorities that could use force and discipline to keep people under control. This was the opposite of Rousseau's

theory that human beings were intrinsically good and the government was intrinsically bad and all that made people evil was driven by the state (Fleming, 2021; Peterson 2017). Jordan (2017) argues that if one puts the concepts of Hobbes and Rousseau together, one might be closer to the truth, although they come from opposite perspectives, because he believes there is good and bad in everything and everyone.

However, Foucault and Derrida added a collective element to this concept, because for them, the world was not an individual struggle, but was made up of groups of individuals struggling against each other for power. In the postmodern and New-Marxist universe, according to Peterson (2017), there is nothing but power. Jordan (2017) is strong in his opinion that there are a variety of reasons for this natural power dynamic because postmodernists do not admit that there are any standards outside the arbitrary opinion. They do not believe in the real world (Peterson, 2017).

The postmodernist and New-Marxist worldview is that nobody is an individual, because individualism is fiction; everyone is a member of whatever their identity group happens to be and there is no real possibility for communication between identity groups. Hence phenomena like cultural appropriation emerge, and a war of all groups against all groups therefore exists and nothing but a struggle for power (Peterson, 2017). According to Jordan (2017), for the postmodern scholar there is no such thing as a higher order ethic, there is no united narrative, and one could argue that if one thing was not better than another, there would be no motivation for people to wake up in the morning and better themselves from the day before. Jordan (2017)

argues that Foucault and Derrida had a self-defeating philosophy and a mask for the continuation of Marxism.

2.2.4 Discourse, Knowledge, and Power

If what we know is regulated by discourses and discourses inform our behaviour, this suggests “an intimate relationship between discourse, knowledge and power” (Burr, 1995, p. 67).

It is generally accepted that the more knowledge one has, the more power one has. However, Foucault's conception of the relationship between knowledge and power is different. This research adopted the foundations of what Foucault suggests: that events, people, and social phenomena “are subject to a variety of possible constructions or representations” (Burr, 1995, p. 67). Most people, for example, would put more trust in knowledge provided by science and medicine than knowledge offered through religion, magic, or superstition (da Rocha Gomes, 2021; Kmak and Björklund, 2022).

Therefore, knowledge regarded as trustworthy receives the stamp of truth from most people in a culture at a specific time (Krause, 2018). Foucault emphasises the power relation of knowledge in a culture at any time.

According to Foucault, people act in one way rather than another because of what is considered to be true (Foucault, 1970; Hall *et al.*, 2001).

Foucault argues that therein lies power because it sets the rules of what is possible for one person to do to another and under what rights and obligations. Therefore, when one has the power to act in a particular way, one also has the right to claim resources to control or be controlled.

(Foucault, 1970, 1995). The concepts of discourse, knowledge and power therefore fits well for this research because this research analyses the discourse on various forms of violence that are commonly expressed in the online group, MGTOW to help systemic psychotherapists understand and better treat those who display misogyny.

2.2.5 Relevant Descriptions of Power Chosen for This Study

2.2.5.1 Disciplinary Power

If the aim of this research is to analyse discourses on power, it is also important to include theoretical concepts of what might have brought MGTOW to this power struggle to feel it is okay to participate in a hate speech group against women. According to Foucault, power is beneficial when it produces knowledge. He attributes the rise of various cultural and institutional practices to their positive effects on society. However, changes in the nature of society such as increases in population, and the change from an agricultural to an industrial economy brought with them social practices, which allowed certain discourses or knowledge of the person to rise to prominence.

These discourses have produced the individual of contemporary Western industrial society; the person we feel to be inhabited by drives and motivations; possessed by traits and characteristics, and whose freely chosen actions are monitored by conscience. And these knowledges are all very powerful, in that they manage the control of society and its members efficiently and without force, through what he (Foucault) calls disciplinary power (Burr, 1995, p.69).

The MGTOW group may produce knowledge of freedom to men who feel they want to perform masculinity in a certain way to live their own lives.

Some MGTOW men may feel they are being punished through control by societies social system for wanting to live these free lives.

I used Turner's (2005) framework to distinguish between the different forms of power for the purpose of this study. Social psychologist, John Turner was concerned with the structures of human groups (Turner, 2005) and gives three possibilities through which power can become operational: coercion, persuasion, and authority.

1. Power through Coercion

"Coercion is an inherently conflictual attempt at control, given that one cannot influence the other person in any other way" (Turner, 2005, p.12).

2. Power through Persuasion

Persuasion is described as "an attempt to get others to think or act in line with one's desires by providing reasons why the desired judgment, decision, belief or action is correct, right, moral, and appropriate" (Turner, 2005, p.6).

3. Power through Authority

According to Turner (2005), the presence of persuasion or coercion implies that there is a lack of authority. When there is a lack of authority then there is an assumption that "someone accepts another person's right to prescribe his beliefs, attitudes, or actions. Because of such voluntary deference to authority, it is not experienced as an oppression" (Stevanovic 2013, p.16). Authority is described in this way as 'legitimised power' (Stevanovic, 2013)

and is jointly created between participants. This joint action fits with the roots of a relational systemic approach and plays an important part in this study.

2.2.5.2 Invisibility of Disciplinary Power

Foucault argued that if people understood that they were being controlled, they would not stand for it and that power and control happens in invisible ways (Foucault, 1979).

Power is tolerable only on the condition that it masks a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms (Foucault, 1976, p.86 cited in Burr, 1995).

Discourses, therefore, offer a framework to people against which they may understand their own experiences and behaviours and that of others.

Moreover, these discourses are tied to social structures and practices in ways that mask the power relations operating in society, such as the discourse of romantic love that we are all surrounded by in film and television.

2.2.5.3 Discourse, Social Structure, and Social Practices

This research focuses on the gender-specific messages we receive within society about what we can and should do as well as the implications for what we can and should do. The communication of these power and punishment messages in society is thought of as discourses. (Burr, 1995; Foucault, 1995; Kmak and Björklund, 2022). As an example, healthy traits that one could admire of all people can be placed on women to construct femininity, by describing women as nurturing, close to nature and emotional. These gender-specific traits support assumptions that women are more able to care

for young children and also place a moral obligation on women to do so (Burr, 2003, 1995; Hoffman, 1993; Miller and McClelland, 2006). On the other hand, they may prompt assumptions that women are unsuited to careers in top management or positions of responsibility, or that they should avoid dangerous activities such as walking home alone at night or hitchhiking as these discourses belong to strong men (Dallos, 2017). Messages of how women and men should or could be, such as how separate they are from each other in terms of motivation, intelligence and determination are shared within society through images, language and known as discourses. (Burr, 2003; Hall *et al.*, 2001).

2.2.5.4 Subject Positions and Speaking Rights

This research was interested in how individuals and groups of people are being spoken to and how we listen as a particular type of person when we are spoken to in a specific manner. The philosopher Althusser postulated on how we adopt ideologies. His opinion was that ideology “hails” individuals as subjects. Therefore, if someone shouts ‘Hey, you there!’ and makes us listen as a particular type of person, and this results in us recognising ourselves as that person in the ideology, we have already become that person (Althusser, 1971; Ryder, 2013). Discourses, therefore, address us as particular people and construct subject positions that we cannot avoid, leading to the representations of ourselves and others that these discourses invite.

As indicated in chapter one, MGTOW men felt that the manner in which they spoke and felt about women was legitimised because of their nature as men

and their sexual instincts towards women. (Frosh, Phoenix, and Pattman, 2019). These discourses constrain individuals and entail possibilities and limitations (Billig and Parker, 1993; Willig, 1999). According to Hollway, there were several heterosexual discourses which contained different positions for women and men (Woodward, 2016). She identified three discourses: the male sexual drive discourse, the permissive discourse, and the have/hold discourse. Hollway argues that the male sexual drive discourse constructs the belief that a biological drive directly produces male sexuality and this drive exists because the species need to be propagated. This position implicitly positions women as objects that precipitate men's natural sexual urges. Women, therefore, may be seen as trapping a man by the power of her sexual attraction and the discourse of the male sexual drive is often used in our culture to legitimise men's behaviour. (Hollway, 1984).

2.2.5.5 Positions, Positioning, and Subjectivity

This research did not focus on the individual experiences of MGTOW men as the focus was on broader discourses within society. This lack of analysing individual experiences of both MGTOW men and systemic psychotherapists can also inform the reader of the importance of someone's personhood when thinking of misogyny. It is fair to criticise the Foucauldian Discourse Analysis approach as lacking detailed descriptions of discourses, for example, the stories of why some people would present with mental health difficulties or why some people are more emotional than others. Davies and Harré (1990) explain positioning more helpfully by saying that positions in discourse provide us with the content of our subjectivity. When someone takes up a

position within a discourse such as an occupation, gender, or fatherhood, we inevitably experience the world and ourselves from that perspective. This subject positioning therefore presents a limited set of concepts, images, metaphors, ways of speaking, and self-narratives within a Foucauldian understanding of someone's discourses (Burr, 1995).

2.2.5.6 Agency and Change

This research was interested in how individuals are able to have a sense of agency in their own lives and raised curiosity about how we are being controlled by what others want for us. How MGTOW can experience their own lives without the visible or invisible control of social discourses thus becomes questionable. Althusser believed that humans lived out the requirements of the prevailing ideologies, were under the illusion of free will, but not in a position to make their own decisions (Althusser, 1971; Burr, 1995; Ryder, 2013). He argues that we are simply the bearers of social structures but experience ourselves as agents. Foucault also argues that discourses about humans are described in text and practice and that discourses live themselves out through people (Ard, 1995; Burr, 1995; Ryder, 2013). This means that human beings amount to little more than puppets who are operated by social structures they cannot see. This act of control has been referred to as the “death of the subject” (Burr, 1995, p.121). Iphofen and Craib (1985) explain this well:

It is assumed instead that people are the puppets of their ideas and their actions are determined not by choice and decision but are the outcome of the underlying structure of ideas and the logic of these ideas. If, for example, I am a Christian, I do not speak about Christianity rather Christianity speaks through me. Some structuralists reach the extreme of saying that people do not speak but rather they

are spoken (by the underlying structure of the language), that they do not read books but are “read” by books. They do not create societies but are created by societies (Lphofen and Craib, 1985, p.109).

2.3 Power Within Systemic Psychotherapy

One of the ideas that interested me in doing research on MGTOW as discussed in chapter one was that MGTOW men felt therapists were siding with women and that is why I was interested in the power dynamics around systemic psychotherapists discourses of MGTOW. The concept of power can be seen as an integral part of the development of systemic psychotherapy (Cecchin, 1987; Dallos, 2017; Flaskas, 1997). There has been a momentous shift from the idea of an expert position working with families (Cecchin, 1987; Russell and Minuchin, 1986) to focussing away from positivist thinking and towards a more constructivist approach (therapists joining with families in making meaning of what is being said in the therapy room and not separate from families) when working with families, as described in the introduction chapter by Dallos (2017). Instead of a linear progression, the development of systemic psychotherapy has been characterised by a complex development (Dallos 2017) of competing ideas, and the work of Bateson’s (1972) cybernetic theory has shifted the way we think about power in therapeutic sessions dramatically (Bateson, 1972; Mcnamee, 2004). A first-order cybernetic means that the therapist was the expert because the therapist looked at the family as separate from him/herself and studied the family as an objective truth. The therapist’s own reflections and experiences whilst observing the family were not taken into account. A second-order cybernetic is when the therapist make use of

material of the self whilst being in the room, and joins the family in constructing what there was to know, as part of the system, and not separate. The therapist still keeps a safe objectivity, but shows curiosity about his/her own reflections whilst working with the family. The therapist's own lived experiences and prejudice received an opportunity to be reflected upon in a safe controlled manner, without burdening the family with his/her own unresolved issues. A third order cybernetic, and this is where this research study comes in the strongest, is the social orders, culture, histories and institutional influences that inform the meaning families make of what is going on. These meanings were usually informed by discourses in society and were maintained by power and consequences if one should move away from these so-called truths. These discourses can construct moral obligations for family members to act within a certain cultural, religious, gender or historical script, without questioning how applicable it was to their unique situation (Simon and Chard, 2014). Systemic Psychotherapists, therefore, are very well trained to notice these aspects of power imbalance and it will be useful for MGTOW men to know that systemic psychotherapists will keep this in their foreground when working with couples systemically. This research will contribute significantly to knowledge production as it will help systemic psychotherapists understand and better treat those who display misogyny.

Systemic psychotherapists are always curious to understand their own reflections and possible prejudice that influence their work and that is why understanding therapists' discourses were important information that may help MGTOW men to accept the help of a systemic psychotherapist.

2.3.1 Power Shift Within Families and the Therapeutic Relationship

Systemic therapy's development evolved from an emphasis on pattern and process (first-order cybernetic or structural family therapy) to an emphasis on beliefs and personal meanings (Boszormenyi-Nagy, 2014; Dallos, 2017; Framo, 2013). This movement towards a second order encouraged therapists to take note of their prejudices and beliefs when working with families, as this was considered essential for the meaning-making process within families. In the third phase of development in systemic therapy, there was a growing awareness of the social and cultural contexts that shaped both families' and therapists' beliefs. The increasing interest in context and the complexity of hierarchical power structures in families have prompted a vital contribution from authors emphasising hierarchical power differences in families and other systems and was crucial for this research. The above is also important to consider for this research because hierarchical power differences are created by differences across the social spectrum such as gender (Burck and Daniel, 1995; Walters *et al.*, 1988), race (Boyd-Franklin, 1993; Siegel, 2016), and culture (Krause, 2010).

This cybernetic movement was supported by the works of therapists who were inspired by feminist perspectives and those working in the social constructionism field, whose work also inspired me to conduct this power relational study (Foucault, -1976; Gergen, 1988; Hoffman, 1985).

It was important to focus on how these power differences were constructed through language in this research. Feminist theorists in the US (Hoffman, 1985; McGoldrick, Anderson, and Walsh, 1989) inspired the field of systemic

psychotherapy to focus on the meaning of language, as it carries within it a heritage of ideas and assumptions about any culture. For instance, the use of terms such as chairman, housewife, and neurotic carry unhealthy ideas and assumptions (Burr, 2003; Dallos, 2017; Foucault, 1979; Williams and Watson cited in Miller and McClelland, 2006). Chapter one refers to the concerns researchers have about the hate speech MGTOW and the manosphere showed towards women and considering how language was constructed was paramount for this study.

Being aware of patterns of actions of MGTOW about women and when therapists spoke about misogyny was important for this research as I was interested in the demands and power of society which might inform these patterns and actions. According to social constructionism, the patterns of actions that families perform are not just influenced by the unique dynamics of each family member but also by the demands of the society they are living in (Burr 2003; Foucault 1979). These feminist theorists argue that the frequently observed patterns, such as that of the over-involved mother and disengaged father, need to be understood more broadly as being determined by the wider societal structures and ideologies which shape family life, especially the relations between men and women (Hoffman, 1985; McGoldrick, Anderson, and Walsh, 1989; Williams and Watson cited in Miller and McClelland, 2006).

Despite the various changes in society, women still tend to carry the burden of looking after their children and being more focussed on the home. This is not a choice that is simply made but one that is dictated by the necessities of the society they live in. Women are often associated with a web of ideologies

and discourses that suggests that they are naturally maternal. This is because they are perceived to be more nurturing and emotionally responsive. Therefore, in this way, a set of roles and beliefs about family life are reproduced across the generations.

However, it has been suggested, in contrast, that second-order cybernetics can be used to take such factors into account and this is explained by McKinnon and Miller (1987, cited in Dallos, 2017, p.63) as the following:

The second-order cybernetic view argues, in a manner similar to that of the feminist critics, that it is the observer (or therapist) who draws distinctions that 'create the reality'... By including the observer as part of the system observed, second-order cybernetics acknowledges that the system considered relevant is a construction of the observer drawing the distinctions... Drawing distinctions is thus not only an epistemological act, it is a political act (McKinnon and Miller, 1987, p.148 quoted in Dallos, 2017, p. 63).

I was especially interested in how the cultures of therapists that I interviewed for this research shaped their perceptions. Dallos, (2017) argues that everything therapists observed in therapy sessions was a construction, and if they become aware of this construction, they will also become aware that their cultures shaped their perceptions (Dallos, 2017). Although it seemed obvious, the concept of cultural awareness was not an inevitable step. Instead, therapists became distracted by the idea that their reflections in therapy sessions were somehow related to their own emotional and personal stories that could indicate that the therapist was too subjective. However, feminist and social constructionist theorists explain that moreover, such subjectivity can only be partial since even the words we employ in our private internal conversations are soaked in the legacy of meanings of our cultural contexts (Dallos, 2017; Hoffman, 1985; Krause, 2010).

A variety of societal influences can affect people's experiences in families (hooks, 2004; McGoldrick, Anderson, and Walsh, 1989; McGoldrick and Hardy, 2019); for example, they can affect the type of housing or educational opportunities they receive and the degree to which they can maintain their social and economic status. Beliefs and ideologies that are dominant in the family environment can also influence the expectations of individuals about their roles and rights. These beliefs reflect how people view their personal lives and are manifested in the various expressions of joy and sorrow they have in their private moments. Even in our solitude, our inner reflections can reveal the images and verbal dialogues that are commonly shown in our culture. This research showed curiosity about the words and phrases that were used in our joint conversations as they connected us all to the historical and cultural heritage of our ideas and meanings around gender, power and misogyny.

This research was informed by feminist scholars as these scholars highlighted how language can perpetuate various gender assumptions and how it can affect thinking. For instance, if a person has a dominant belief in the importance of being a good mother, then her ideas about being a good mother can support inequality (Burr, 2003; Dallos, 2017; Foucault, 1979; Hoffman, 1985; hooks, 2004; McGoldrick and Hardy, 2019; McGoldrick, Anderson, and Walsh, 1989).

2.3.2 Power in Therapeutic Interventions

It was important to think about how to move on in therapy once we have identified the discourses around violence to help systemic psychotherapists understand and better treat those who display misogyny.

According to Davie (1998), clients benefit from recognising the discourses and positions shaping their difficulties. When problems are relocated away from an intrapsychic domain towards a societal one, it has the potential to relieve people of feeling conflict-ridden and guilty. In their Foucauldian analysis of how gendered power is produced and reproduced, Sutherland and colleagues (2016) found it helpful to highlight the complexity and intersectionality of gendered subjectivities as it provided a relocation of the problem from the person to a societal one (Sutherland *et al.* 2016).

This finding is helpful for this research as it indicates that it can become less personally damaging when women and men are supported to examine the discourses and positions available to them. It also means that MGTOW men can feel confident when a therapist helped the couple to understand these discourses in couple therapy. Sutherland, LaMarre, and Rice (2017) highlight the importance of helping clients to find ways to resist being positioned in personally damaging discourses. It is therefore essential to support clients to claim their positions in these discourses. This is not an easy task, however, because it challenges certain social practices, structures, and power relations. In their follow-up study, Sutherland and colleagues (2017) claim that it is also a challenging task for the therapist to locate the dynamics of power in concrete actions and interactions with

families; they argue, however, that discourse analysis can help family therapy scholars and practitioners clarify the link between language and power (Sutherland, LaMarre, and Rice, 2017).

2.3.2.1 Feminist Therapies

To understand power relations, this thesis drew on the support of feminist theorists who have contributed to defining a form of therapy addressing individual relationships and the broader social context to help uncover unhelpful discourses (McGoldrick, Anderson, and Walsh, 1989; McGoldrick and Hardy, 2019). Williams and Watson (1988 cited in Dallos, 2017) identify three central principles in the growth and development of feminist practice:

1. Commitment to equality within therapy – therapy characterised by:
 - A demystified and explicit therapy process
 - A demystified therapist
 - Strengthening of clients' rights in therapy
 - The client as an expert in his or her life
 - The therapist's use of power being minimised
 - Client and therapist having equal worth
 - Temporary power inequalities
2. Commitment to bringing the social context into therapy, to working explicitly with women's experiences of sexual and other social inequalities.
3. Commitment to power redistribution within society and to political, economic, and social equality between the sexes.

A social constructionist perspective that influenced systemic psychotherapy was conducted in 1991: this was the analysis of power and gender relations in families by Goldner (1985) and Hare-Mustin (1987). These authors identified how culturally shared discourses shaped power imbalances and violence in couples' relationships. Discourses revealed that men seem to be called in at times to establish a culturally sanctioned view of themselves as dominant, in control, and invulnerable, and women as nurturing, sensitive, responsive to and needing others (hooks, 2004). The feminist systemic perspective does not excuse or encourage a denial of responsibility for the violent partners (Gebel, 2022). However, the processes of unconscious internalisation by men and women of these dominant discourses of gender and how these shape personal beliefs and narratives are emphasised. This results in perceptions of self and others being filtered and shaped by what kind of relationship we expect to create (hooks, 2004). Feminist scholars have found that when there is a rift between the different expectations of different family members, there will be frustrating attempts to coerce others to fit into prescribed roles. These frustrations may lead to threats and violence (mainly by men) (Gebel, 2022; hooks, 2004; McGoldrick, Anderson, and Walsh 1989; McGoldrick and Hardy, 2019).

Feminist scholars have found that women may sometimes stay in touch with their violent male partners (hooks, 2004; Gebel, 2022; McGoldrick, Anderson, and Walsh, 1989; McGoldrick and Hardy, 2019). Evidence suggests that this is caused by socialisation and induction into ideas for example that men are naturally more aggressive, women more nurturing, and that violence is an indication of a women's failure to manage the

relationship (Ball, 2021; Gebel, 2022; Grosser and Meagan, 2022; hooks, 2004).

2.3.2.2 Culturally Available Stories

Foucault (1970) argues that society contains a repertoire of dominant narratives which shape our thinking and experience, how we think about ourselves, our inner conversations, and how we interact with each other (Foucault 1970, 1978, 1995; Hall *et al.*, 2001). Foucault (1970) claims that not all stories have equal status; in fact, some stories are made peripheral or subjugated. These culturally available stories as explained by Foucault was especially of interest for this research as it highlighted how interaction took place. He is of the opinion that society contains a hierarchy of narratives, with some relegated to the periphery as explained by White and Epston (1990):

There exists a stock of available discourses that are considered appropriate and relevant to the expression or representation of particular aspects of our lived experience (White and Epston, 1990, p.27).

This suggests that families have limited narratives made available through their socialisation or their cultures. This may limit our thinking and constrain our available options or avenues of action because if men and women for example are limited by the narratives of patriarchy, they would be limited in their thinking and felt constrained to think differently about power relations and gender roles. Foucault's (1970, 1979, 1995, 2013) view of a hierarchy of narratives suggests that people may attempt to employ dominant narratives to fit their experiences, as I observed on the MGTOW site. However, family members will select a dominant narrative to position themselves in a

favourable manner (Burr, 2003; Foucault, 1970, 1979, 1995, 2013; Hall, *et al.*, 2001).

2.3.2.3 Feminist Orientations

Systemic psychotherapy benefited immensely from feminist theorists because they highlighted essential observations regarding the nature of power and abuse in families (McGoldrick and Hardy, 2019). Feminist theories emphasise that neutrality (meaning that the therapist was not allowed to have an opinion or emotional reaction to that which was discussed in therapy) is not always necessary, especially in cases of abuse, because this could condone such behaviours.

Feminist approaches not only focus on the patterns of interactions and families but also on the wider social context. It is argued that prevalent ideas shape families in society regarding family life. When working with families, it is essential to understand that family life is more than simply or predominantly patterns of interactions between family members. Feminist scholars emphasise how patriarchal notions give a woman a lower societal status and that there are many assumptions within the family, for example that traditionally, men should be the breadwinners and women should be responsible for nurturing the children and completing domestic duties (Butler, 1990; hooks, 2004; McGoldrick, Anderson, and Walsh, 1989; McGoldrick and Hardy, 2019). According to feminist theories, these discourses have dual effects; on the one hand, women may be emotionally nurturing. The notion of emotionally nurturing, however, has constructed women to be less important in a scientific, rational, competitive workforce. On the other hand, feminist

scholars argue that these discourses burden men with responsibility to take care of the financial needs of the family and deprive them of the nurturing and emotionally responsive experiences.

Family therapy had not traditionally addressed these issues, and feminist scholars saw that family therapy was potentially colluding or reinforcing this patriarchal discourse (Butler, 1990; McGoldrick, Anderson, and Walsh, 1989; McGoldrick and Hardy, 2019; Urry, 1990 cited in Dallos, 2017).

This critique of family therapy by feminist theories supported this research to consider the cultural complexities. This critical stance of feminist theories has also helped systemic psychotherapists consider the cultural complexities of different families and how gendered power was performed and maintained (Krause, 2010).

2.4.6 Therapists' role

hooks, (2004) delivers a crucial message I want all MGTOW men to hear and it is best summarised by the following:

Our work of love should be to reclaim masculinity and not allow it to be held hostage by patriarchal domination... those of us committed to ending patriarchy can touch the hearts of real men where they live, not by demanding that they give up manhood or maleness, but by asking that they allow its meaning to be transformed, that they become disloyal to patriarchal masculinity in order to find a place for the masculine that does not make it synonymous with dominance or the will to do violence (hooks, 2004, p.115).

Many other authors also refer to healthy masculinity, such as Davies, Ford-Gilboe, and Hammerton (2009), who speak of masculinity that can be healthy, responsible, tolerant, civil, and nurturing. Kiselica and Englar-Carlson (2010) speak of positive masculinity, social attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours. Elliott (2016) refers to masculinity as being caring and a rejection

of domination, as well as an integration of values of care. Healthy masculinity has also been referred to as masculinity that was liberated for men to live full lives, where they can commit to others (hooks, 2004, p. 115).

According to White and Epston (1990), people have problems because of the internalisation of oppressive problem-saturated ways of seeing themselves and others. Pathology can be seen to reside as an internalised essentialist idea within families when problems are internalised and this quote from Epston is very useful in my thinking about how to move on as a therapist when working with misogyny.

Externalising is an approach to therapy that encourages persons to objectify and, at times to personify the problems they experience as oppressive. In this process, the problem becomes a separate entity because it is now separate from the person or relationship (White and Epston, 1990, p.38).

I think there is a need for a systemic process of becoming more relational with boys and men to help them dismantle hegemonic ideas about what real men are. This is possible since hegemonic masculinity is learned and maintained relationally (Rogers, 1998). This shift from one idea of masculinity to another will be a challenging task for therapists because of the fear men have of ridicule or rejection when acting out of the “man box” (Alsawalqa, Alrawashdeh, and Hasan, 2021). The task for therapists is to foster boys' resistance to hegemonic patriarchal norms, (which encourage boys not to express their feelings but to engage in violence instead), and to encourage boys to have healthy relationships (hooks, 2004). The focus is therefore on constructing healthy authentic relationships, with freedom to express oneself, maturity in engagement, and empathy to be sensitive to and moved by one another, to be empowered, and connect with other people as

a source of strength and agency. This emphasises the value of living one's own true sense of self and values, as well as allowing the space to process diversity. (Alsawalqa, Alrawashdeh, and Hasan, 2021; Lin, 2017; Peterson, 2017; Pleck, Sonenstein, and Ku, 1994). However, we are all encultured so that working with ideas around identities that have been strongly ingrained and programmed is not an easy task for therapists. Coordinating and managing gendered cultures with strong moral and obligatory processes is necessary when working with hegemonic patriarchal constructions of masculinity.

2.4 Culture

When I observed MGTOW, I started to realise that not all men share the same ideas and values. I also know from my encounters with other therapists, that therapists do not always share the same ideas and values. However, there seems to be a collective agreement on meanings when in conversations. One could say that MGTOW is a culture and so is the collective of systemic psychotherapists registered with AFT and UKCP. Anderson and Goolishian (1992, p.378) write that "meaning and understanding do not exist before the utterances in language." Not everyone who considers themselves part of the same culture shares all of its meanings. Some individuals participate at different levels of cultural importance, of which they are not aware (Krause, 2018).

The concept that meaning is generated through conversations or dialogue in a therapy room is only half of the story. Meaning is also shaped by the

therapist's and client's cultural influences that already existed in the room (Brockington, 2006).

Our cultures inform our knowledge of the world. This knowledge is influenced and changed by the experiences and communications with others as we continue with our lives. We very rarely live only our own lives; messages of others are being brought into the therapy room. Malik and Krause (2018) point out that there is much knowledge before and behind the meanings that therapists and clients may or may not always be aware of (Malik and Krause 2018).

2.4.1 The Culture of Masculinity

Finding the meaning in the complexities of sex (gender), sexuality, male gender identity, and relationships is only possible with reflexivity. hooks (2004) indicates that men appear cut off from emotion due to a patriarchal system that does not care about men's emotional pain. When females are hurt emotionally, there is a culture to say that emotion can matter to women, allowing them to share their feelings with friends and therapists. However, the patriarchal mores construct a form of emotional stoicism prompting men to claim they are more manly if they do not feel; if they do feel and the feelings hurt, they must suppress those feelings, forget about them, and hope they go away. I believe all children are born perfect. All children initially feel free to express themselves in body, mind, and intellect. However, somewhere in their lives, as they grow up, something makes them believe that they should be different from their authentic expression of self.

Notably regarding a culture of masculinity, in a study by Keren and Tamar (2022), male victims of intimate partner violence were less likely than women to seek formal or informal help (Gueta and Shlichove, 2022). Further studies have identified that feelings such as shame and unhelpful beliefs informed by hegemonic masculinity norms and ideals contributed to this (Bates and Douglas, 2020; Brooks *et al.*, 2020; Corbally, 2015; Dixon *et al.*, 2022; Huntley *et al.*, 2019; Machado *et al.*, 2017).

According to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) hegemonic masculinity refers to socially constructed perceptions of manliness, including stereotypical characteristics of strength, aggression, power, and dominance in relationships. Following the guidance of this definition, MGTOW falls within hegemonic masculinity.

The findings of Allen-Collinson (2009) and Tsui, Cheung, and Leung (2010) explains why MGTOW feel reluctant to engage with therapists as these authors indicate that the belief in adhering to hegemonic masculinity norms such as self-reliance and stoicism prevents men from seeking help. They are also unable to trust that therapists will be able to tolerate their abusive pasts. Nor do they want to be seen as victims because being victimised is interpreted as a feminine trait and could threaten their masculinity, which constructs more shame and self-blame and prevents men from seeking help from therapists (Machado *et al.*, 2017).

A study conducted by Douglas and Hines (2011) indicated that hegemonic masculinity norms can affect therapists' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours when providing formal support (Douglas and Hines, 2011). Further studies have shown that therapists' focus on women and ineffectiveness in

addressing men's needs for support have contributed to men not seeking help from therapists (Brooks *et al.*, 2020; Corbally, 2015; Lysova *et al.*, 2022; Machado *et al.*, 2017; Walker *et al.*, 2020).

Falicov (1995) advocates consideration of cultural context, migration-culturation, family life cycles, and family organisations. He therefore suggests that whatever therapists bring to sessions is informed by cultural patterns (Falaicov, 1995). This study also contributed to systemic practice in highlighting that whatever meaning therapists gave to MGTOW was brought forth against the background of something that was there before. The work of Jenkins (2008) points out that therapists need to be careful not to assign misogynist men with constructs that they are not able or ready to accept.

The cultural construction of gender means that society dictates the roles and positions of men and women and how men and women should act out gender, as well as the consequences on men's mental health if they do not act out their gender in a certain way. According to French, Tilghman, and Malebranche (2015) and Struckman-Johnson, Struckman-Johnson, and Anderson (2003), 'doing' or the fear of not 'doing' gender appropriately can push men into having unwanted sex with women. In studies with men on unwanted sexual experiences, men have reported that they engage in sex with women not because they want to, but because they want others to see them as real men, and to avoid ridicule from others if they fail to portray a masculine image (Ford, 2018; Muehlenhard *et al.*, 2016).

I reflected on the physical and emotional consequences of hegemonic masculinities, such as the MGTOW group, and on my own experiences in becoming a man, and when young men, in general, congregate with their

male friends. In addition, I was curious about the expectation of enacting hegemonic ideals. Ford and Maggio (2020) suggest that men are often constrained by the responses imposed on them by a masculine role and that many men are deeply hurt by unwanted sex but struggle to express this. Ford and Maggio's (2020) study was only one of several suggesting that how men spoke about these unwanted experiences constructed them as "excellent or inconsequential" (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Messerschmidt, 2019; Schwalbe and Whitehead, 2003). When men employ cultural hegemonic constructs of identity, the discourse over "acting strong" may thus minimise any psychological effects from unwanted experiences. There is also a cultural belief amongst clinicians and researchers that men are not impacted by unwanted sex with women in the same way as women are by such encounters. Struckman-Johnson (1988) reports that in a study of men who claim they were forced to have sex with women, fewer felt "bad" or "very bad" (27%) about their experiences compared to the female victims (88%) (Struckman-Johnson, 1988). Krahe and his colleagues (2003) found that men, mostly rated their unwanted sexual experiences with women as "moderately upsetting" (Krahe, Scheinberger-Olwig, and Bieneck, 2003). Banyard et al. (2007) similarly found that female victims reported more negative effects than their male counterparts. It is concerning that therapists may also be encultured not to criticise social constructions or false narratives that men give, when they experience abuse from women (Banyard *et al.*, 2007).

However, in-depth interviews were conducted by Ford and Maggio between 2015 and 2016 with 39 college men at a large university in the US to

ascertain how college men accounted for unwanted sex with women; three central themes emerged (Ford and Maggio, 2020). The first theme involved men's use of minimisation; they spoke about these experiences as uneventful or humorous. The second theme revealed that men were negatively affected by these events, just like women. The third theme involved heterogeneity and contradiction; college men described these events in a contradictory way. Ford and Maggio (2020) argue that the reported contradictions are evidence of the broader cognitive and emotional masking by men to convince themselves that unwanted sex does not matter to men.

This research wants to emphasise that MGTOW don't speak as an individual, but as a culture of patriarchy and that most MGTOW were vulnerable as a result of hegemonic patriarchy. MGTOW fear the stigma of being perceived as weak men. Most masculinity scholars argue that men find it difficult to view themselves as victims of unwanted sex, especially concerning women (Davies, Ford-Gilboe, and Hammerton, 2009; Peterson *et al.*, 2011; Weiss, 2010). Weiss (2010, p.286) found that only 7% of men victimised by women reported incidents to the police compared to 22% of men victimised by men. This difference was statistically significant to understand how men talk to each other about women and the shaming effect of owning up to being vulnerable. Weiss (2010, p.286) believes this discrepancy is likely to be related to a hegemonic understanding of gender that "casts men as sexual instigators and women as gatekeepers." Weiss (2010, p. 286) also argues that this discrepancy concerns "men's fear of ridicule or stigma from admitting to sexual victimisation by women." Most

scholars argue that men are being held accountable for certain notions of “hegemonic masculinity” within a given culture (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) argue that hegemonic masculinity needs to be distinguished from dominant masculinity and that this distinction is often overlooked. Furthermore, it is essential to understand the relational construction of hegemonic masculinity, both to subordinated males and to women (Messerschmidt, 2019; Stacey and Connell, 1988).

The above studies have significant implications to this research as it allows for systemic psychotherapists to understand how difficult it was for men to admit to their vulnerability. The above studies are also useful for therapists to understand and better support those who display misogyny as it contextualises why hate speech against women were accepted on MGTOW and raises the importance to deconstruct the discourses of hate speech when working with misogyny. It highlights the importance for therapists to see vulnerability when listening to misogyny and be curious about the discourses of hegemonic patriarchy.

This research wants to highlight to therapists that MGTOW may long for closer connections with women and were looking for inclusion and not separateness. Drawn from relational cultural theory, Jordan (2017) argues that humans grow towards connection because all humans long to be connected and require inclusion; MGTOW men, therefore, have the same need for inclusion (Alsawalqa, Alrawashdeh, and Hasan, 2021). MGTOW men see needing relationships as a weakness. However, the above scholars perceived relationships as vital to being human throughout the lifespan.

To illustrate the importance to therapists about the effects of the separateness ideology of MGTOW and how it affects men's mental health and the development of healthy masculinity, I want to draw on the relational and cultural theories. Jordan (2017), indicate that the separateness idea of MGTOW leads to sexism, racism, and homophobia, as well as significant mental health problems. There is also a collection of studies that conclude that patriarchy affects men negatively (Peterson, 2017; Pleck, Sonenstein, and Ku, 1994), and most scholars agree that healthy relationships would help men to develop more healthily, although there is not enough clarity regarding what healthy development means (Pleck, Sonenstein, and Ku, 1994). This research therefore highlighted the importance for therapists to understand how the relational and cultural aspects are paramount when working with misogyny and that the meaning for men about how to be a man was learned by observing others and through exposure to messages about what men should and should not do (Di Bianca and Mahalik, 2022).

This research also wants to highlight MGTOW's emotions. All humans, regardless of gender, have emotions. However, boys and men, in most cases in society, learn from experience and from being shamed by significant people in their lives that men showing emotions is inappropriate. There are strong discourses within society reinforcing that men should not experience or show emotions such as sadness, anxiety and hurt; only "weak men or sissies" show these emotions. Most men, therefore, disconnect from emotions, or only express anger as an acceptable form of emotion (Di Bianca and Mahalik, 2022). This fear of being shamed by significant others for showing vulnerability stifles authenticity in men. (Di Bianca and Mahalik,

2022). Di Bianca and Mahalik, (2022) warns that this cultural influence can harden boys' and men's hearts, and refers to controlling images or discourses within society such as "boys do not cry" or "man up," concepts which men internalise. The fear of being shamed and rejected can teach men to keep feelings, experiences, and thoughts out of relationships and inhibits the natural expression of authentic emotions. Many men hide their feelings even from their friends in face to face interactions by saying "I am fine" to seek approval of their masculinity. However, men lose out on having their true feelings valued. A vast amount of research indicates that emotional stoicism enables men to cope with pain in a "manly way," which could show up in symptoms such as overusing alcohol and drugs (Di Bianca and Mahalik, 2022). This research wants to help therapists to understand that MGTOW are also less likely to rely on positive coping skills (Lin 2017) and suppress emotional vulnerability, which can discourage them from seeking help from therapists. They shy away from the transparency of true feelings, which can take its toll on men's well-being (Di Bianca and Mahalik, 2022). Suppressing emotions as described can increase men's risk of depression and suicide (Wong, Horn & Chen, 2013).

It is relevant for therapists to understand when working with misogyny that men who displayed misogyny may also fear of being shamed because of the effects of hegemonic patriarchy. When men fear being shamed and, as a result, do not express their emotions due to the discourse of "boys do not cry," they invalidate their pain, disconnecting them from their inner self. As a result, some men may feel that they have to mask their true selves. Di Bianca and Mahalik (2022) suggest that boys and men need to give

themselves permission to break away from the norm and express feelings of shame, fear, and rejection, as this will help them to experience empathy in relationships. This is an important contribution to this research as therapists could help men to deconstruct these discourses of shame.

Nonetheless, there is a concern that society constructs gender as prescribed by our DNA and there is nothing we can do about, for example, being aggressive like a man or being emotional like a woman (Dar-Nimrod and Heine, 2011; Haslam, Rothschild, and Ernst, 2000).

2.4.2 Essentialist Masculinity

Dar-Nimrod and Heine (2011) and Haslam, *et al.* (2000) view psychological essentialism as a belief that either male or female membership is caused by an underlying essence, such as assumed biological characteristics, based on the brain, genes, and/or hormones. An individual's biological capacities characterise gender essentialism. One major characteristic of an essentialist view of gender is the tendency to classify sex and gender into either male or female categories.

Butler (1990, p. 9) asks the question: "What is sex? Is it natural, anatomical, chromosomal, or hormonal?" This research highlighted that sex and gender may be constructed to have the same meaning and when it starts to have a meaning that men are like this or women are like that, then therapists need to show curiosity about how these discourses of gender were constructed. The power dynamic in how gender discourse was constructed is paramount for this research to help systemic psychotherapists understand and better treat those who display misogyny.

Studies have shown that some women identify with characteristics of the phallus, or Freudian idea of masculinity (McRobbie, 2007; Renold and Ringrose, 2012; Tamaki, 2011). Johanssen (2022), argues that the manosphere rationalises that the phallus concept only characterises men and that MGTOW men are inflexible in their sexuality, sexual orientation, and gender. The phallus idea therefore anchors heterosexual power and desire for both men and women (Johanssen, 2022).

When you see a man, the energy might be of a woman, and when you see a woman, the energy might be of a man, or when you see one person, the energy might be both male and female at the same time; the physical form (sex) does not explain the dominant “yin” or “yang” energy (Butler, 1990, p.9; Cohen, 2018; Foucault, 1976). Butler (1990, p.9) explains this well: “To claim that this is what I am is to suggest a provisional totalisation of this ‘I.’” Butler (1990, p.9) believes that gender is socially constructed and, therefore, “gender cannot be said to follow from a sex in any one way.” Butler (1990) challenges whether there could be a simplistic understanding of only two biological sexes. Instead, there are suggestions that sex (sex in this context does not refer to the intimate act between people) exists across a continuous spectrum of possibilities and that gender is not the causal result of sex and is not fixed as sex (Bohan, 1993; Knoppers, 2022; Maher, 2008; Misawa, 2010; Stead, 2009).

Gender is, therefore, multiple interpretations of sex, and a complex construct that is influenced by both biological factors and environmental circumstances, such as social roles and expectations (Bohan, 1993; Knoppers, 2022; Maher, 2008; Misawa, 2010). Studies indicate that the

formation of cultural ideals of masculinity and femininity is deeply entrenched in society and culture, including education (Rayman, Sadker, and Sadker, 1995), religion (Dzubinski, 2016), entertainment (Knoppers, 2022), and advertising (Kilbourne, 1990). According to these studies, masculinity and femininity may not be fixed properties of male and female physical bodies in any given society or in any given period. The construction of “man” does not belong exclusively to the bodies of males or that of “women” to the bodies of females.

However, most concerningly, women view men in an essentialist manner as well. Wong, Horn, and Chen (2013) conducted a study with 250 White American female college students to determine racial differences in perceived masculinity. These women were randomly assigned to 1 of 3 conditions to provide their reactions to one of the following target groups: GEM American men, or White American men. In this study, White American women perceived African American men and White men as more masculine due to men’s physical attributes, such as assumptions about penis size and athletic abilities (Wong, Horn, and Chen, 2013). In addition, the following stereotypes were identified to determine masculinity amongst women: interpersonal qualities, physical attributes, physical/athletic abilities, aggression, professional success, diligence, musical abilities, foreign status, normalcy, discrimination, and sexual/romantic abilities (Wong, Horn, and Chen, 2013).

Studies also suggest that even without a clear definition of masculinity, the American society consistently perceives some groups of people as more “masculine” than others and that White men have “normal” masculinity,

which means that other groups are stereotyped by society (Goff, Thomas, and Jackson, 2008; Jackson *et al.*, 1997; Wilkins, Chan, and Kaiser, 2011). This prompts the question of whether White men feel they need to “show up as men” with the strong stereotypes of White men with “normal” levels of masculinity (McIntosh, 1990) in contrast to GEM men who may be perceived as having too little or too much masculinity. Common speech acts about White normalness may suggest that members need no further focus, as privileged White men. There is a risk that White men are stereotyped and categorised as “dominant and privileged” and anyone other than White men is classified as an “underdog or victim.”

However, just as much as women view masculinity from an essentialist perspective, so do men. According to Niemann *et al.* (1994) and Wong *et al.* (2012), Asian Americans are often stereotyped by men as physically small and weak. Further, evidence suggests that men who have had sex with men viewed Asian American men as having smaller penises, being sexually submissive and reserved, having a petite frame, and being hairless or “smooth” (Wilson *et al.*, 2009). Asian American men were also considered by both women and men to be intelligent, hardworking, asexual, socially introverted, and perpetual foreigners (Fiske *et al.*, 2002; Liu, 2005; Wong *et al.*, 2012). On the other hand, GEM men were viewed as physically strong, tall, having large penises, and sexually powerful and passionate (Hall, 2001; Wilson *et al.*, 2009). Czopp and Monteith (2006) report from their research that GEM -men were perceived by other men as intellectually inferior to White Americans, and as having a propensity to use violence (Czopp and Monteith, 2006).

This research therefore wanted to help therapists understand how culture plays a role in the construction of the belief of what does it mean to be a strong man and how men were being influenced by a patriarchal culture to have stifling beliefs of who they were,

This ideological construction of what makes a man has a traditional construction within the Western world (Levant *et al.*, 2003). Flood and Pease (2005) concluded in their study that men were confined by the traditionally associated expectations of masculinity and manhood. According to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), these power positions require certain hegemonic notions of manhood that are specifically tied to White heterosexual middle- and upper-class men. Masculinity and sexuality are believed to be socially constructed, and these gender ideologies are different for men in different social groups (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Social class is one of the most vital factors that play a role in the construction of masculinity. Studies have evidenced that the ideology of masculinity is informed by a sociohistorical context, socialisation practices, and cultural differences (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Hunter and Davis, 1992; Pleck, Sonenstein, and Ku, 1994; Stacey and Connell, 1988).

Prior to analysing the discourse around misogyny and various forms of violence in the online group MGTOW, it is important to understand that the socialisation and especially cultural constructions of masculinity limit men in the expression of self and create prejudice towards men who do express themselves freely. Social sanctioning is grave, and most men try to avoid being different. According to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), dominant

male groups construct the narrative of masculinity for minority groups, such as younger men and GEM men. In addition, the American Psychological Association guidelines note that the construction of masculinity is considered by many forces, such as friends, family members, peers, and society. However, there seems to be a need for belonging, even when it feels like expressing oneself has consequences of shame. Being part of a group and being included are social needs for everyone, and the manipulative structures within a patriarchal system can convince men to stand together and congregate in online spaces such as MGTOW.

Sociological studies around White masculinity and racial attitudes have identified that White racism is now expressed in subtle manners, and this free expression of racism has moved to private spaces deemed safe and comfortable (Daniels, 2009; McKinney, 2013; Myers and Williamson, 2001; Picca and Feagin, 2007). These spaces also require men to express themselves in a particular manner. White men who congregate in private online spaces experience more significant levels of social isolation than GEM men and other non-whites (Massey and Denton, 2019, App 13). The way men produce discourses around their White identity in these private spaces is likely to affect how their collective identities become normalised, expected, and de rigueur. This argument leads to an understanding that discourses around White masculinity are performative, constitutive, and utilitarian (Goffman, 1981; Howard, 2000; Tiryakian and Goffman, 1968).

Most White men do not share a conscious group identity (Carter and Perry, 2003) However, men who gather in online spaces connect through the process of identity construction through discourse in language. Adopting the

social constructionist view of Erving Goffman (1981), I conclude that these discursive conversations are essential for the construction of reality, both externally (others, the world, objects) and internally (self-identity) for MGTOW men (Goffman 1981; Tiryakian and Goffman 1968). As Howard (2000, p.371-372), writes “Identities are thus strategic social constructions created through interaction, with social and material consequences... At the most basic level, the point is simply that people actively produce identity through their talk.”

Many authors support the idea of identity construction through language (Bonilla-Silva, 2018; Bonilla-Silva and Forman, 2000; Myers and Williamson, 2001; Pollock, 2009; Reisigl and Wodak, 2005; Wetherell, Potter, and Potter, 1992). How meaning unfolded on MGTOW made me think of Shakespeare’s plays; it was very dramatic. My observation of MGTOW men led me to understand that they tend to rationalise their speech as if it was informed by their natural desires and the normal way of how Red Pill Men should interact. Identity is constructed through this process of rationalisation.

Power played a significant role in identity construction as supported by the authors above. It highlights the importance for therapists who work with men about how this power game was acted out within the MGTOW group, and how men positioned themselves amongst each other (Blumer, 1958).

According to O’Brien, Hunt and Hart (2005, p.22), men within online spaces share meanings (consciously, semiconsciously, and unconsciously) that assist them with fitting into their categorised group (O’Brien, Hunt, and Hart, 2005).

Tölölyan (1989) is of the opinion that there is a tendency within the social sciences to favour models that will enable generalisation to suit their empirical discourses. The social sciences also develop instrumental aims that guide and constrain these favoured discourses. It is acknowledged that terrorism, for example, results from a complex repertoire of sociocultural, psychological, and political factors, but Tölölyan (1989) asks how this can be addressed by the political sciences, if the terrorist's self-image and motivation are a significant issue. Low self-esteem can show up in behaviours such as withdrawing from others or aggression, although such behaviours also appear in men who believe it is not manly to show vulnerability. Therapists, therefore, need to help men identify issues of hyper-independence as well as expressions of anger, which may be the only acceptable emotion a man feels he can share.

2.4.3 Othering and “Being Othered”

Daniel (cited in Krause , 2018) believes that therapists need to be careful not to give meaning to the utterances of others too quickly. Instead, she suggests that respectful practice should take an imaginative leap into the worlds of others to search for meaning, especially when those worlds look strange and inaccessible (Krause , 2018). Frosh (2009) argues further that therapists need to remember that differences are inevitable and they must respect “the other as ‘other,’ with whom one has connections but whose inner space cannot be colonised” (Frosh, 2009, p.189).

This brings us to the question of how we can work and challenge a culture such as MGTOW without colonising their inner spaces with our truths,

without being honest about our own reflections on misogyny. There is undoubtedly, in my experience in the field of systemic psychotherapy and our endeavours to be more cross-cultural, a risk of being too honest with one's reflections of differences.

I understand Daniel's (2018, cited in Krause, 2018) argument that therapists in Britain may be shamed by their "colonial" history and want to be overly correct to avoid offending anyone or feed into an already blaming position. If therapists are afraid to be honest about their own views on misogyny because of the fear of being othered by MGTOW men, are therapists essentialising male gender misogamy or showing curiosity about the construction of male gender misogamy? This context surely calls for a reflexive stance towards context and culture. This reflexivity can show curiosity about how MGTOW view us as therapists with similar beliefs and feelings and how privileging one aspect of identity (MGTOW man) can mean losing sight of the therapist's own reflections on misogyny, which could hinder a rich understanding of the production of gender and the effects of powerful discourse on men and women (Butler, 1990). If therapists are too cautious about their otherness and resist having honest reflections about their experiences of MGTOW because of fear of disempowering themselves or being othered, then close encounters with men who have similar beliefs as MGTOW can be lost? It seems to me that this will be achievable if we as therapists are willing to learn from the conditions and experiences of MGTOW men, and from women affected by discourses similar to those on MGTOW and reach into our own experiences of "othering." Krause, 2018) refers to "double consciousness." This idea is to be conscious about the

experiences of both men and women, as well as the truthful reflections of therapists, because if we do not “leap into” the risk of othering others and being othered, we cannot learn the “art of living life at different levels” (Daniel, quoted in Krause, 2018, p.94). Double consciousness, therefore, albeit emotionally painful as you are now being viewed through the eyes of others, is positive according to Krause, (2018, p. 94) as it “enhances the skill to be culturally reflective.” This will, drawing from Said in *Orientalism* (1978, cited in Krause, 2018), identify how men and women construct their own unitary positions through categorising a subjugated and victimised position of a gendered other.

When working with people who are very much invested in their negative experiences of the other, (so much so that they cannot move on from this victimised position), therapists find it helpful to ask questions as if the experiences have disappeared: “If you did not feel disappointed in your mother for saying your self-harm behaviour was attention seeking, what would you protect in yourself and your relationship with your mother? What would you recover? What would you give up?” (Said, 1993, quoted in Krause 2018, p.407). However, ignoring the mother’s reaction and the child’s experiences of the mother’s reactions, even if she found a new way of moving on, may also be problematic in the long run. Therapists need strategies to move on working with gender troubles, without making phoney or patronising assumptions of equivalence. Moving on when working with gender can be difficult “if we do not understand the politics of identity, the relationship between self and other, and the learning that can take place

through all the different levels of engagement with the positions of others” (Daniel, 2018, quoted in Krause *et al.*, 2012. p.95).

2.4.4 The Necessity of an Intersectional Understanding

Liang, Salcedo and Miller (2011) argue that there needs to be a deeper discussion about the term “men” since it assumes a universal meaning in terms of White men. They also state that many men do not want their ideas to be based on hegemonic masculinity. Griffith (2022, p.333) claims that many men are not interested in living according to the ideals of hegemonic masculinity.

The following responses suggest that the therapist should not focus on the development of White male-centric theories. Instead, they should consider the various aspects of masculinity that are related to all men. It is therefore important that a more systemic approach is needed to address the issues of masculinity.

All men are exposed, subjected to, and coerced into hegemonic masculinity that is disingenuous to any human's true identity or humanity, and this may be harmful to themselves and others.

hooks (2004, p.66) explains this well:

Patriarchy demands of all males that they engage in acts of psychic self-mutilation, that they kill off the emotional parts of themselves. If an individual is not successful in emotionally crippling himself, he can count on patriarchal men who will enact rituals of power that will assault his self-esteem.

My study, although focussing on MGTOW, where most men are from the US and socialised via a hegemonic masculine culture, applies to all men with

different social identities and relations to hegemonic masculinity. As an example, to explain the statement, I want to emphasise hooks' (2004) work that explored how White supremacy dehumanised the identities of all men and especially influenced how GEM boys internalised what it meant to be a man, which led to them lacking self-love. When working with men, the holistic nature of diversity needs to be taken into consideration because homophobia is also central to hegemonic masculinity (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). This literature study highlighted the effects of hegemonic masculinity and reminds therapists to have an intersectional perspective when treating contemporary masculine issues among boys and men. This section of the research highlights the importance for therapists to have a relational cultural approach when working with men and masculinity; it highlights the power of healthy connections, appreciation, and identification and respect for the fullness of human diversity that will counteract how boys and men are harmed by internalising dominant discourses of ideals of manhood (hooks, 2004). This literature review made therapists aware when working with men to focus on helping men to be authentic by strengthening their sense of self and owning up to unwanted parts of self. In my experience, the gestalt approach is excellent for this, but this literature study has also emphasised the importance of a relational cultural perspective that integrates diversity issues. Therapists working with contemporary masculinities can help foster authentic expressions of self, as Griffith (2022) describes. Griffith et al. (2022) promote interdependence and a collective of cultural values. They advocate that power can be used in more effective ways to change unjust systems as opposed to harming self and others.

2.5 Concluding Thoughts

The visible and invisible “force” throughout this chapter and in fact throughout this research, is power relations and how that affects identity, in this case, the identity of men. I am curious about what I see in MGTOW men. I am curious about their hate speech against women, not because I want to judge them. I am compassionate to understand how we as systemic psychotherapists can help these men to be who they choose to be, and not be who they believe they should be. Even though there is a huge field of study on MGTOW already, I noticed a gap in the research around how systemic psychotherapists can work with misogyny in men and this research will focus on that.

Even though I have been passionate about Foucauldian Discourse Analysis, I have also critiqued the approach with the help of Jordan (2017). The critique of Jordan revealed that it was also important to consider the importance of categories as categories help systems to for example bring out the best in individuals. Jordan used the example that we would not have musical geniuses if we put all musicians for example within the same category. This is applicable to every aspect of individuality. I will in my reflections around my research questions show a willingness to move in and out of my preferred approach to make sense of misogyny and that seems important so that therapists could have a balanced view on misogyny and power relations.

This chapter looked at the relationship between discourse, knowledge and power and concluded that when one has the power to act in a particular way, one also has the right to claim resources to control or be controlled, which is a significant problem as people's rights can be abused. I noticed that there was a gap in systemic research about an understanding of the discourses that informed beliefs of power positions amongst misogynistic men. There is also a gap in knowledge about how systemic psychotherapists could work with men who had strong misogynist beliefs. This research will continue to analyse these discourses.

I also described different ideas around power and why it was important for this research. I turned to Turner (2005) and described how power can be acted out, such as through coercion, persuasion and authority and I also mentioned the work of Stevanovic (2013) that mentioned a healthier way of power construction, where power is constructed jointly between participants. This research will continue to contribute to literature around this joint understanding of how power was created and it will be a valid contribution to the knowledge of systemic psychotherapy.

Another crucial concept this literature study highlighted was on the problem of how power is being constructed in invisible ways in society. There is a gap in systemic research in terms of what contributed to these invisible discourses and how systemic psychotherapists could work with men who might be unaware of how they were being influenced by societal discourses of patriarchy. This research is necessary to identify discourses so that therapists can understand what informs MGTOW to feel the way they do.

This chapter, with the example of Althusser (1971), explained how individuals and groups of people are being spoken to and how we listen as a particular type of person when we are spoken to in a specific manner. This research is important as it will fill a large gap in systemic research to help therapists understand these discourses that address men and women as particular people. This study is important as it highlights the construction of subject positions through how MGTOW speak of women and how therapists speak of MGTOW. It is also important to conduct this research as it will highlight how men and women are being represented because these discourses will invite those identities. I did not find any systemic research that focused on this level of discourse analysis and it makes this study valuable for systemic practice.

The literature review highlighted a significant limitation in my research and that was that this research did not focus on the individual experiences of MGTOW as the focus was on broader discourses within society. This lack of analysing individual experiences of both MGTOW men and systemic psychotherapists can, however, also inform the reader of the importance of someone's personhood when thinking of misogyny and this research will highlight the subject positions MGTOW take up, such as Red-Pill man or "manginas"

This literature chapter highlighted a lack in research in how individuals are able to have a sense of agency in their own lives and raised curiosity about how we are being controlled by what others want for us. This research will contribute significantly to how MGTOW can experience their own lives without the visible or invisible control of social discourses. It will help

therapists to help men to question these social discourses. I mentioned Iphofen and Craib (1985) where they explained that humans are being controlled like puppets who were operated by social structures they could not see and this research will contribute significantly to systemic practice to help therapists to work with men regarding these discourses.

The literature review also focussed on how systemic psychotherapists work with power and this research will make a significant contribution to systemic practice as it will help systemic psychotherapists to know how to help men who were the products of unhealthy power dynamics. I explained how the concept of cybernetics developed in systemic psychotherapy and how helpful this was for therapists to deal with power issues in therapy. However, this research will contribute to understanding what these discourses were that could inform and maintain some of the power struggles men have with women. Systemic Psychotherapists, therefore, are very well trained to notice these aspects of power imbalance and it will be useful for MGTOW men to know that power and the abuse of power are important aspects when working with couples systemically. However, systemic psychotherapists are always curious to understand their own reflections and possible prejudice that influence their work and that is why understanding therapists' discourses were important information that may help MGTOW men to accept the help of a systemic psychotherapist.

This chapter also explained how feminist scholars have contributed to systemic practice in highlighting power relations. This research will continue to build on those highlighted ideas and will analyse patterns of actions of MGTOW about women. I explained how second order cybernetics can play a

role in getting closer to reflect on power dynamics. This research will continue to build on the already rich data of power within systemic practice, but will also include an observation of MGTOW as well as identifying the macro context of what informed therapists' discourses around misogyny, which will contribute significantly to helping therapists in their own reflections around misogyny.

This chapter also looked at the importance of therapists to help men to reclaim their self-worth and I made use of hooks', (2004) ideas of how patriarchy has contributed to men not sharing their emotions as much as women do. This research will continue to explore these discourses and contribute to the already rich scholarly work of feminist and systemic authors. Many of these authors have made a huge contribution to gender studies and this research will add in a significant way to understanding how therapists could help men who were affected by hegemonic patriarchy. This research will be different from the already rich data base as I will specifically focus on my observation of MGTOW and interviews with systemic psychotherapists.

This chapter explained culture and masculinity, as well as the detrimental consequences of hegemonic masculinity. The theoretical arguments led to an understanding that discourses around White masculinity are performative, constitutive, and utilitarian. I highlighted studies to identify the shame men felt, which in many cases prevented men from seeking help, when they themselves were taken advantage of sexually by women. This research will make a significant contribution to identifying the discourses in MGTOW, which therapists could use, to think about men in general, because everyone, as most of the scholars in this chapter identified, were subject to

patriarchy. This chapter also highlighted ideas of why men would rather not share their emotions. It will contribute to helping therapists' working with men to seek closer and healthier connections with women and men.

This chapter made use of the ideas of Butler (1990) and many other scholars to raise questions on the meaning of sex, gender and sexuality, as well as exploring how these categories were viewed in an essentialist manner. I will continue to add to this already rich data of information and will make a significant contribution in analysing discourses of my own reflections of observing MGTOW and interviewing systemic psychotherapists, which I have not seen in any other research. This will help systemic psychotherapists in working with men who have essentialist beliefs about sex, gender and sexuality.

I ended this chapter with more ideas around how to work with men who have been shamed by patriarchy and made use of scholars such as Daniel (cited in Krause, 2018) to think around the idea of "being othered" and how to prevent this from happening. This research will help systemic psychotherapists to work with men who were sensitive about their emotions as it will raise curiosity on how to move on from the stifling impact of hegemonic patriarchy.

The research questions to identify how therapists can help this group are presented in section 1.3. Chapter 3, which follows, reports on the methods used to collect and analyse data to answer the research questions.

3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This research analyses the discourse on various forms of violence that are commonly expressed in the online group, MGTOW to help systemic psychotherapists understand and better treat those who display misogyny.

This research also received full approval from the Tavistock Ethics Board for Research in conjunction with the University of Essex before I conducted the analysis. Relevant theory and research are reviewed in Chapter 2 regarding the research topic. The research questions are presented in section 1.3, and this chapter reports the methods of data collection and analysis to address them.

3.2 Qualitative Method and Assumptions

In the main, we choose a qualitative method if our research question is oriented towards the exploration and understanding of meaning, rather than the direct testing of a concept or hypothesis (Dallos and Vetere, 2005, p.49).

This study required a qualitative approach as I was interested in understanding processes, rather than establishing causal relationships or quantifying the size or extent of something (Harper and Thompson, 2011). Using a qualitative approach enabled me to understand experience and processes. However, I was unable to capture the embodied messages from participants due to the fact that I used FDA, which identifies the broader social structures that inform feelings, meanings, and actions. I questioned

the assumptive frameworks for gender and power and attempted to delineate what one would call “normal.”

Qualitative and quantitative research are two main types of studies that are commonly described in the literature. Quantitative research is often associated with the concepts of universal truth and positivist assumptions about the existence of such a truth. Both of these concepts are central to the belief that bias can be minimised (de Vos *et al.*, 2005).

There are a variety of methods to answer qualitative research questions. One type of qualitative method might be based on the assumption that what a participant says is a relatively transparent window into their thoughts and feelings. Another method might be based on the assumption that what people say is influenced by the context of interaction. In my research, I assume that there is direct correspondence between what participants say and how they subjectively feel. I therefore need to justify this through argument and evidence. The assumption I make about the relationship between the data of this study and the world is called my epistemological assumptions (Harper *et al.*, 2011).

3.3 Epistemology

The origin of epistemology comes from two Greek words:

Episteme = knowledge, understanding, and

Logia = science, study (Burr, 2003).

In philosophy, epistemology is the study of knowledge. The question I asked about “How can systemic psychotherapists learn from MGTOW?” is an

epistemological question seeking to understand what it means to know and how a person gets to know something. The term epistemology also refers to wanting to know what the basis for true knowledge is.

3.3.1 What Is Knowledge?

Knowledge is justified and a true belief. This means that:

- the person must be able to justify the claim;
- the claims that are made must be true. The person must believe in it (Harper et al., 2011).

In order to justify the claims I made about the research questions, I adopted a critical realist social constructionist position, which I elaborate on in the following section.

3.3.2 Social Constructionist

Social constructionist researchers are less focussed on phenomena in themselves and are more interested in how phenomena are seen. As a social constructionist researcher, I questioned taken-for-granted assumptions, and approached knowledge from a social, historical, and cultural context (Harper *et al.*, 2011). I was interested to know how some claims of gender or power had more validity than others because claims about knowledge were made through language. I was interested in how language was used and this is a key concept of social constructionism. Furthermore, adopting a social constructionist epistemological approach allowed exploration of how experiences of MGTOW members and therapists

were viewed through culturally shared categories of meanings. I was critical of an individualist and intrapsychic meaning to gender, culture, and power. I was interested in what informed knowledge and power as well as how culture informed the production of meaning.

3.3.3 Critical Realists

According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), critical realists could also be termed post-positivists. I did not take the data as a correct mirroring of truth, because I was guided throughout this process by a Foucauldian epistemology (See 3.4.1) (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). For example, although I might have interviewed therapists about their experiences of hegemonic masculinity and patriarchy, I was also interested in those factors therapists were not fully aware of themselves that influenced their experiences, such as early life experiences, family beliefs, cultural expectations, the history of the battle against patriarchal power. According to Harper *et al.* (2011) the data analysed from such a study may not be able to tell us directly and explicitly what might have informed it, such as historically or politically. Critical realists argue that researchers must go beyond the text and draw on other evidence, such as systemic knowledge, and experience from systemic psychotherapists.

3.3.4 Critical Realist Social Constructionist Epistemological Position

I wanted to go beyond the text data from MGTOW and the interviews with therapists to add a further layer by interpreting and understanding the construction of hegemonic patriarchal masculinity from a historical, cultural,

and social context. My ontological stance drew from critical realism as well as social constructionist ideas. Although an ontological realist (I believe in an observable truth), epistemologically I am a relativist (truth is relative to the individual as absolute truth cannot be known). From my view, context changes all the time and the meanings we give to context also change in every moment in the worlds that we live in. I am also firmly positioned within systems and social constructionist theory. I therefore made use of the Foucauldian approach to discourse analysis. I was concerned with the ways in which available discourses of MGTOW men and systemic psychotherapists could constrain what could be said or done in the contexts of the MGTOW platform or discussions about misogynistic men. For example, I wanted to explore how the historical context and culture of the abuse of women might affect the ways in which therapists talk about learning from misogynistic men (Harper *et al.*, 2011).

Epistemological relativists argue that ontological realism and epistemological relativism lead to inconsistency and selective relativism, in that the foundations of knowledge claims are only being challenged selectively (Harper *et al.*, 2011). I had to be mindful not to consider some discourses to be problematic and others not, to avoid the risk of being biased towards certain groups or issues. For this reason, if discourses of similar meaning appeared more than once I did not use them again. Critical realists are concerned that the relativist position could lead to political and moral relativism and that there is a huge risk of not exploring beyond the text. I took note of the fact that it is my orientation to question rules and order, especially what people consider to be laws; I followed my heart to know what was true

and what was not, to avoid becoming political or biased (Butt, 1999; Davie, 1998).

This study was conducted with the aim of helping systemic psychotherapists work with contemporary masculinity and to make a significant difference to systemic practice; I also approached this study from a systemic or relational focus, as explained in the following section.

3.3.5 A Systemic or Relational Focus

Critical researchers start from an ethical principle and do research designed to emancipate people from patterns of social relations prejudged to be oppressive, to expose patterns of exploitation, or to subvert structures of power that allow some people to be dominated by others (Pearce and Walters, 1996, p.10).

Systemic inquiry is positioned within qualitative inquiry as it is concerned with open and relational inquiry, taking into consideration a multiverse with polyvocal participation across all parts of a research process, which is concerned with beneficial consequences for participants (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Lather, 1994; Parker, 2005; Pearce and Walters, 1996; Reynolds, 2010, 2013; Visweswaran, 1994).

Systemic inquiry moves away from normative and pathological discourses and looks at systems from a social constructionist-systemic-collaborative-dialogical perspective. Systemic inquiry, therefore, takes into consideration the narratives of people and moves them emotionally to take action through the stories that they hear. It is relational as people are influenced by one another and this moves them to become activists in trying to overturn injustice and experiment with creative, socially inclusive, relational practices

(White and Denborough, 2005). For example, Anderson and Gehart (2006) encourages practitioners to be moved by the circumstances of those whose stories they hear. Seikkula and Arnkil (2006) suggest that therapists should jump in the water if their clients were drowning, even if this puts the practitioner at risk. Reynolds (2013 cited in Simon and Chard, 2014, p. 13) speaks of the systemic researcher as a “fluid, imperfect ally” when she describes colonial practitioner positioning.

It is important for me to consider a systemic research approach in collaboration with a critical social constructionist’s epistemological position because systemic practice is a caring approach that aims to be relational in all complex, interrelated dynamics of a community. It encourages openness to change through the construction of how others’ words and feelings touch us and prepare us to take action to improve the lives of others (Simon and Chard, 2014). This caring, involvement, and intention to create change by a systemic researcher, requires a great deal of self-reflection. Deep realisation is required of what informs us to position ourselves to take up a certain position, as such a position is likely to hold some prejudice. This construction of change for the systemic researcher is a continuous process moving between feelings, meanings, and actions, and considering all aspects of cybernetics as stipulated in the theoretical chapter.

3.3.6 Working the Prejudicial Turn

Producing “things” always involves value – what to produce, what to name the productions, and what the relationship between the producers and the named things will be. Writing “things” is no exception. No textual staging is ever innocent (including this one). Styles of writing are neither fixed nor neutral but reflect the historically

shifting domination of particular schools or paradigms (Richardson, 1994, p.518).

Critical systemic practitioners draw on a postmodern critique to acknowledge that it is impossible to be free of prejudice. They say that we can work through our prejudices in a mindful manner.

It is often assumed that the language of systemic practitioners is redundant. There is much expertise about how to evaluate our work fairly and without prejudice from other academic discourses. We are all trained to be fair and rigorous, but we are also capable of working through our prejudices in a mindful manner.

And we are prejudiced because we value the stories people tell us, we recognise their uniqueness, we want to be moved by people and perhaps show people how we are moved – and we want this movement between us to count as something (Simon and Chard, 2014, p.14).

Many people do not get to hear stories that therapists hear. Stories that are worth sharing are those of people who have taken the time to find a suitable platform and an audience. Selective hearing is a process that we use to influence our way forwards. It allows us to be moved by the conversations that we have with our conversational partners. We also work with people so that they can hear what they want to say, and we can find ways of saying it to ourselves and to others who matter. Despite the complexity of our work, therapists are not neutral.

There is also the question of whether different researchers can ask the same question and receive the same response: however, we know is not true.

Systemic researchers know the importance of the working relationship and there is a strong recognition how different relationships and concepts bring

out different parts of us, different stories resulting in different talents, hearings, and meanings.

Cronen, (2000, quoted in Simon and Chard, 2014), suggests for systemic inquiry:

It would be better to say that in the process of inquiry we make determinations of what related elements need to be included for any purpose of inquiry and call that the situation-in-view. Identifying the situation-in-view is a provisional judgement. Further inquiry might lead to including new elements and disregard[ing] others. Situations-in-view must be understood to include the inquiry. The inquirer cannot be outside the system. The only choice to make is what kind(s) of relationship(s) one chooses for the purpose of inquiry (Cronen, 2000, quoted in Simon and Chard, 2014, p.15).

I tried to inquire systemically. However, MGTOW was not part in the decision-making process of what I took to therapists to discuss. This is a huge limitation of this research. The observations of MGTOW required a deep reflection of my own culture, prejudice and meaning making and I considered this process as a systemic inquiry. The frustration is that I have not explored the narratives between MGTOW and myself as I could not join up with individuals. I therefore judged what was important information and what was not, from my own reflections. I was outside the system, but tried to be as much part of it as possible through my own reflections. I took my reflections to the systemic therapists and we had an opportunity to form meaning together in a relational and reflective manner.

Leppington (1991) argues that relational know-how is important to the development of systemic practice. She provided a way of contextualising which stories and which voices had more prominence. Leppington described systemic practice as a discursive practice because she proposed a move

away from a method-led model, which advocated training therapists to learn theory and applying techniques to help people.

3.4 FDA

3.4.1 Philosophy of FDA

I refer to FDA as a method and philosophy as it allows me to be in both positions. Michel Foucault looked at discourse as a precursor to understanding systems of representation (Burr, 2003). 'Discourse' simply means textual passages, which are connected to writing or speech. Foucault (1975) argues that there are rules and practices that produce meaningful statements and regulate discourse within given historical conditions. With discourse, a range of statements provide language and way of talking about something (Foucault, 1975). Discourse provides a way of representing knowledge about a practical subject matter at a particular given historical juncture.

All social practices entail meaning and meaning shapes and influences what we do – all the social practices that we have possess a discursive aspect to them (Hall, 1992, p.291).

For Foucault (1975), discourse was about building language and practice, making a distinction between what one says, when one talks about ideas, and what one does, how one puts those ideas into practice. Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language and there are rules and practices that produce meaningful statements that regulate discourse in particular historical periods (Burr, 2003; Foucault, 1975).

Statements in discourse are not singular; discourses range across a number of statements which provide a language and a way of talking about something. Discourse constructs the topic. It defines and produces the objects of our knowledge. That is to say, discourse governs the way that we talk about knowledge, and how we rationalise it. It influences how ideas are being put into practice and how these ideas regulate our conduct and the conduct of others.

Just as a discourse determines a certain way of talking about something and defining an idea in an acceptable and intelligent way, that is how we speak and write about it, it also excludes other ways of talking about something. We conduct ourselves accordingly in relation to certain subject matters and constructing knowledge about those subjects through discourse.

Discourse never consists of just one statement or just one action or one source of information (Foucault, 1975). The same discourse that characterises a way of talking or thinking in a state of knowledge at any one time can cross a range of texts that may lead to different forms of conduct within different institutional sites within a society. However, whenever these discourses come together and they refer to the same topic, they possess the same style, they support the same strategy; they then become “discursive formations” (Burr, 2003, p 170). With discursive formations, institutionalisation of a particular way of thinking and acting about a particular topic emerges, often in support of particular political ideologies or institutionalised ways of thinking about things. Meaning, and meaningful practice is therefore constructed through discourse.

The idea that discourse produces objects of knowledge and that nothing exists outside discourse was central to Foucault's (1975) thinking process. This is not to say that there is no real particular existence to an object like a tree or a book or an apple. These exist physically in the world; you can see them and you can touch them but what Foucault (1975) argues is that these objects have no real meaning outside discourse – the way one talks about them and acts upon these ideas.

The concept of discourse is not about whether something exists; it is about what meaning and what action is attached to that object. Physical objects, though they exist, have no fixed meaning and become institutionalised objects through the language attached to them and the social practices that accompany those ideas – with discourse, language and practice – how we talk about something and what we do about that talk. For example, I am interviewing systemic psychotherapists around misogynistic men. The first is linguistic, I am asking and talking to therapists about MGTOW men. The second act is bringing the conversation into creation between us. Separately, they mean nothing, but together they mean a whole way of thinking, depending on one's orientation, heteronormative relationships, human rights, fear, institutionalism, insecurity, law, and order etcetera. It is therefore impossible to determine what the meaning of an object is outside of how it is used. Physical things and actions exist but they only take on meaning and become objects of knowledge within discourse – how they are talked about and how they are put into practice and become institutionalised. This, therefore, is the heart of the constructionist theory of meaning and representation. What Foucault (1975) argues is that we only have knowledge

of things if they have meaning, or if they have discourse. We cannot have knowledge of the things in and of themselves, that is to say, that meaning only comes through discourse (objects + practice) and this produces knowledge – a way of thinking about and acting on things that then become institutionalised. In the end, Foucault (1975) argues, objects and practices are provided meaning through discourse.

The power accorded to discourse is similar to that given to language by other cultural theorists – the power to define how the world is categorised and perceived. Rather than possess innate meaning, individuals give meaning to objects and events (Foucault, 1975). An example is the mass media. Foucault rejects the notion that the media is a transparent reflection of reality. In fact, discourses for Foucault are the rejection altogether of absolute truth and meaning. His analysis of what he calls “truth regimes” led him to argue that portraying an object or an event will reflect journalistic interpretation and ways of thinking and seeing.

Foucault rejected the reduction of the relationship between knowledge and power to one solely confirmed to class interests – preferring to believe that other social forces are in operation as well (Hall, 1992, p.48).

3.4.2 Critique of FDA

According to Wodak, Johnstone, and Kerswill (2010) and Burr (2003), FDA neglects what the speaker is doing with their talk, whereas in critical discourse analysis, the speech is analysed in detail. Taking a political stance on the truth claims made by discourses may help maintain oppressive power relations or increase marginalised discourses' voices. However, it creates difficulties in justifying one's perspective. Questions may arise as to

why one can justify one discourse over another (Burman, 1990, 1991; Burman and Parker, 1993). Abrams and Hogg (2015) question whether researchers are qualified to identify certain discourses and whether certain marginalised groups, such as MGTOW, should have a voice in society, to justify their anti-woman movement.

A further critique of the FDA, is that the identification of discourses may be confusing everyday common-sense categories of events as discourses through labelling. Billig and Parker (1993) identify discourses as a set of representative statements that are coherent. Burr (1995, p.175) indicates that discourses “are culturally available ideas as to what we think of as a topic.” The problem with FDA is that we end up with familial and scientific discourses and are, therefore, in danger of discovering discourses for every common-sense category we operate in. This may leave researchers in a weaker position if they want to question culturally available, common-sense categories, or hold them in abeyance until validated by analysis, because the risk is that those categories were at the outset implicitly taken to be a valid part of identifying and describing the discourse that one wished to study.

3.5 What Counts as Evidence?

All research approaches are sensitive to the topic of what should be considered as evidence when it comes to assessing the effectiveness of practices. Social constructionists argue that even a successful professional relationship does not always equate to good practice (Burr, 2013; Simon and Chard, 2014). However, in the diagnostic research world, the statistical

significance of a test or a sample of practices can be considered evidence (Burr, 2003; Simon and Chard, 2014).

The self-report of participants or clients in the interpretive research world is considered to be evidence (Harper and Thompson, 2012). However, in the relational constructionist world, new understandings that allow people to move beyond identified problems are also considered evidence. Therefore, it is not enough to report that the practice of a professional is working well. Instead, the recognition and creation of new forms of practice for clients, researchers/practitioners, or participants are also considered evidence (Burr, 2003; Simon and Chard, 2014).

3.6 Ethical Issues

Before commencing my research, I first had to consider how I could do a study on gender and take into consideration the ethical dilemmas that practitioners in mental health encounter when conducting qualitative research including:

- ethical principles in relation to the general conduct of research.
- the specific ethical issues and dilemmas that I had to look out for before conducting this particular study; and
- how to address any issues identified.

I observed MGTOW and reflected on my experiences within a reflective diary. I also interviewed eight United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapists (UKCP), systemic and family psychotherapists that I recruited from the Association of Family Therapy (AFT) platform.

Many authors outline the importance in research of considering: informed consent and self-determination; confidentiality and privacy; avoiding harm; dual-role and over-involvement; and politics and power (Allmark *et al.*, 2009; Graham, Grewal, and Lewis, 2007; Harper and Thompson, 2012).

According to Francis (2009), ethics refers to moral principles that guide action and are essentially derived from philosophical theories. In considering ethical issues, I held in mind a set of fundamental moral rules that we had to adhere to as clinicians within the National Health Service (NHS):

- Respect for autonomy: I respected therapists rights to make decisions and enabled them to make reasoned informed choices.
- Beneficence: Although there may be some risk to myself through this research, achieving the aim of improving practice (beneficence) outweighed this risk in my view.
- Non-maleficence: avoiding causing harm.
- Justice: addressing issues fairly in the same or similar situation (Beauchamp and Childress, 2001).

In the following sections, I consider and explain how I addressed relevant ethical issues: justice in terms of inclusive practice, protecting vulnerable participants, respecting confidentiality and privacy, and ethical practice in data collection and storage.

3.6.1 Non-maleficence

Preventing harm to research participants was a central concern in conducting this study and I followed the guidelines of the Research

Governance Framework for Health and Social Care in the UK, which state: “The dignity, rights, safety and well-being of participants must be the primary consideration in any research study” (Department of Health, 2007, p. 7). As an example, I kept all names of MGTOW and therapists anonymous.

I looked into the most recent guidelines that were published by the Association of Internet Research (Franzke, Muis, and Schäfer, 2021, p.69), which makes it clear that user-generated content is often published in “informal spaces that users often perceive as private but may strictly speaking be publicly accessible.” The guidelines stipulate that users may be unaware in such circumstances of how their data are being analysed for research purposes.

I was mindful that I was working with potentially vulnerable men (although not speaking with them face to face) and that I was researching a very sensitive topic. The analysing data would not put MGTOW at risk because the aim is to help therapists understand MGTOW’s position better. Names linked to quotes of MGTOW were anonymised.

The responsibility rests upon the researcher to reflect on who will be vulnerable, as opposed to making assumptions about vulnerability (Jenkins, 2008). According to Davison (2004, p.381), when qualitative research is conducted, the “capacity for harm is incumbent in any research-vulnerability and conflicting emotions can be linking experiences for both the research informant and the researcher.” It is therefore important to remember that both the researcher and researched are vulnerable, as we are all humans with emotions, and as such we are vulnerable in certain situations to both physical and psychological harm.

I struggled to assess risk for myself. I would be observing people's discussions on the internet. They would not know my name, address, or location in the UK. I was also not interacting with these men so it was therefore impossible for anyone to know where I was. I also had no idea who I was observing, as they all used pseudonyms for names and there was no indication where they lived. None of these MGTOW men knew each other as they were all addressing each other with their pseudonyms.

Protection from risk to the MGTOW men and myself was therefore afforded through anonymity. It would, therefore, be inaccurate to assume that I or the MGTOW men were vulnerable in this study.

Having a starting position of seeing MGTOW and myself as inherently vulnerable would have been theoretically at odds with my social constructionist and critical epistemological approach. I also did not assume that therapists would be vulnerable but took care to inform them that if they were unsettled by anything we discussed, even prior to our interview, they had the freedom to opt out. Therapists could also opt out at any point of the study up to the point when I started my analysis. Therapists are accustomed to dealing with psychological issues, but this study also explored deeper layers of structures of power and control that may have unsettled them. They knew that they could self-refer to their GPs for a referral to the NHS to care for their mental health. However, most therapists found it unnecessary when I discussed this with them. I also knew that MGTOW members would not have given their informed consent but made use of the guidelines of the Association of Internet Research (Franzke *et al.*, 2021) as discussed above.

3.6.2 Confidentiality and Privacy

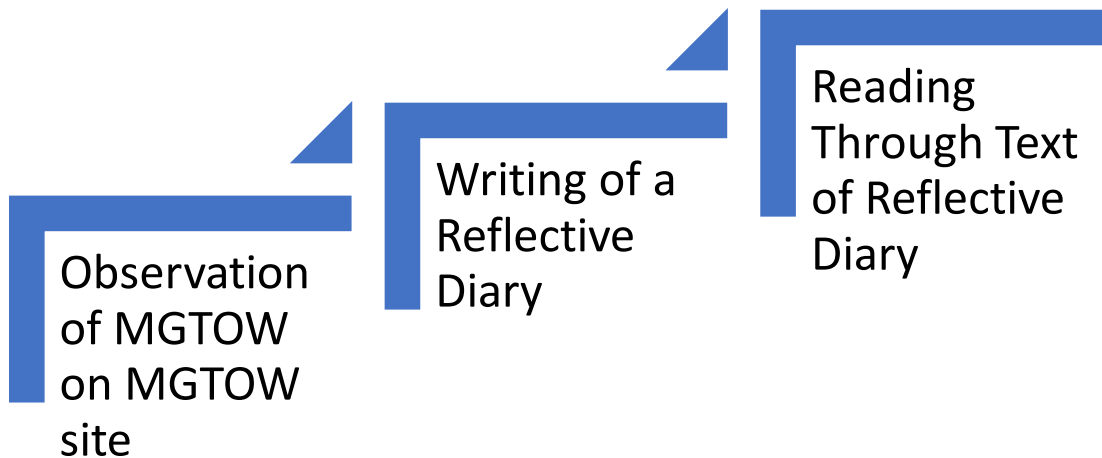
According to Allmark *et al.* (2009), the researcher needs to distinguish between privacy and confidentiality. Privacy is related to areas of life one wishes to keep private. Confidentiality relates to the protection of private information. Many of the therapists for example spoke about their partners, who had not given consent to participate. To ensure privacy, I asked therapists to read the transcripts of our conversations afterwards and to seek permission from their partners for me to use the data. All therapists and partners agreed that the data could be used if anonymised. I also amended the information letter I sent to therapists about the study to address this issue.

MGTOW members were all anonymised as they used pseudonyms. As they had published their information out there for the world to see, it was clear that they did not want to keep their stories private.

All audio and video recordings will be deleted following evaluation of the research study. I have made files on my computer with passwords to protect the information and data analysis, and will erase these files following evaluation. I followed the procedures outlined in my ethics approval.

3.7 Data Collection

3.7.1 Observation of MGTOW



I wanted to get as close to MGTOW as possible as I wanted to understand how systemic psychotherapists could help men who have similar issues as MGTOW men. When I explored if access to MGTOW was available to non-members, I was surprised to find that everyone could have access to MGTOW discussions when they had an email address and paid a small joining fee (- <https://mensgroup.com/community>).

I introduced myself on the MGTOW platform and stated my intention of doing an ethnographic study, that is, becoming part of the lived experiences of the group for a few months. I explained that I wanted to learn from these men so that we, as therapists, could be mindful of the many discourses that they have about gender and power, and learn from them to better treat contemporary male gender issues. My intention to learn from this group was interpreted negatively and I received much abuse on the platform. I therefore

felt unwelcome on the MGTOW platform. I had wanted to do an ethnographic study, but I could only observe the group because of the animosity. I was therefore unable to do an ethnographic study or become part of the lived experiences of MGTOW. This would have allowed a richer understanding of the MGTOW culture. However, as an observer rather than a participant, I immersed myself in the MGTOW forums to gain an understanding of the ideologies, culture, and rhetoric power of MGTOW discourses. I observed data from the platform between 6th January 2020 and 15th June 2020 and recorded my observations and reflections as part of a reflective diary.

Adopting this overarching approach revealed group dynamics, MGTOW's position within the manosphere, how users negotiated meaning, and the internal power struggles and fragmentations within the MGTOW group.

Sandman, one of the MGTOW members, also posts YouTube videos regularly to bring MGTOW's issues to the public. These audios and observation of members' conversations on the MGTOW platform gave me a context to understand the lived experiences, albeit through observation rather than participation.

The information obtained from observing MGTOW and Sandman videos informed the interviews with systemic psychotherapists.

3.7.2 Interviews with Systemic and Family Psychotherapists

3.7.2.1 Interviewee Recruitment and Profiles

I contacted eight systemic and family psychotherapists from the AFT web page, including males and females, as I was working on an issue of gender and power. Inclusion criteria were:

- qualified systemic psychotherapists who could therefore add to the knowledge of systemic practice: MSc in systemic and family psychotherapy with at least six months of post-graduate experience working with couples, and gender issues.
- experience working with vulnerable men. I was interested in their lived experiences to add to my own reflections on masculinity, especially given my own journey of identity formation.

I researched profiles on the AFT website to find profiles which matched my inclusion criteria. I emailed the first eight candidates I found who matched. All eight agreed to participate. The reason I chose eight therapists were because time and resource limitations prevented interviewing a larger number of participants. I explained what MGTOW was about and asked them all to have a look at the MGTOW web page. I also sent these participants an audio to listen to before our interviews https://youtu.be/_LhtC1pbn4o (Data are reported in Appendix 10).

All eight therapists were happy to participate in this study.

Table 1 presents the participant profiles.

Table 1: Interviewee Profiles (CAMHS, ...)

Therapist	Nationality	Gender	Experience (years)	Therapy practice
1	British	Female	8	Works in her husband's church with couples and in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
2	British	Female	20	Works in Relate with couples and in CAMHS
3	British	Male	2	Works in Relate and CAMHS (Honours degree in Psychology and MSc)

4	British	Male	10	Works with men and women victims of domestic violence
5	British	Male	22	Worked in CAMHS, an Eating Disorder Hospital, and in Private Practice
6	British	Male	10	Worked in adult mental health services, but now works in private practice
7	British	Male	10	Works in CAMHS and in private practice
8	British	Male	20	Works in an eating disorder hospital and in private practice with couples

3.7.2.2 Interview Design

The interview is a conversation, the art of asking questions and listening. It is not a neutral tool, for at least two people create the reality of the interview situation. In this situation, answers are given. Thus, the interview produces situated understandings grounded in specific interactional episodes. This method is influenced by the personal characteristics of the interviewer, including race, class, ethnicity, and gender (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p.48).

I used a semi-structured interviewing technique to collect data. This type of interview allows the researcher to talk about the participant's priorities and also allows the participant to discuss the research topics related to their interests (de Vos *et al.*, 2005).

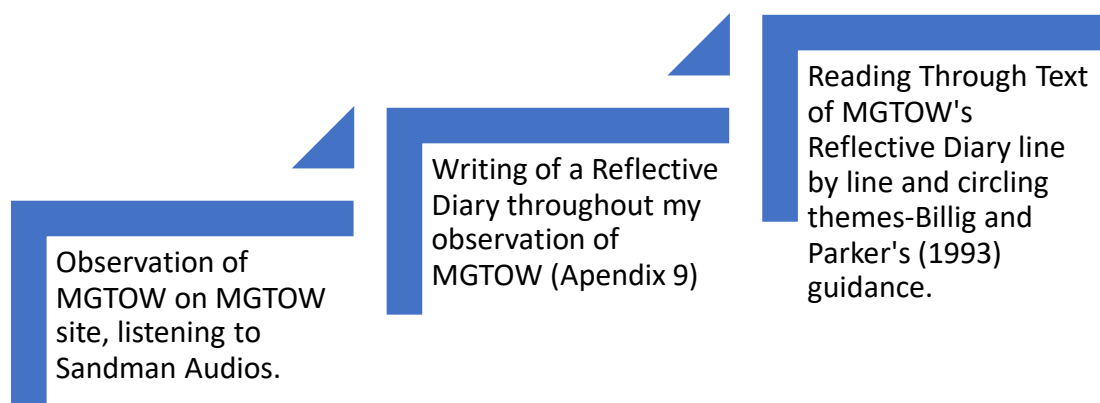
I developed questions to frame a semi-structured interview for systemic psychotherapists (See Appendix 1). These questions were informed by the MGTOW observation data and discourses, which I had coded from the Sandman YouTube audios. I listened to and transcribed the following YouTuber audios of Sandman:

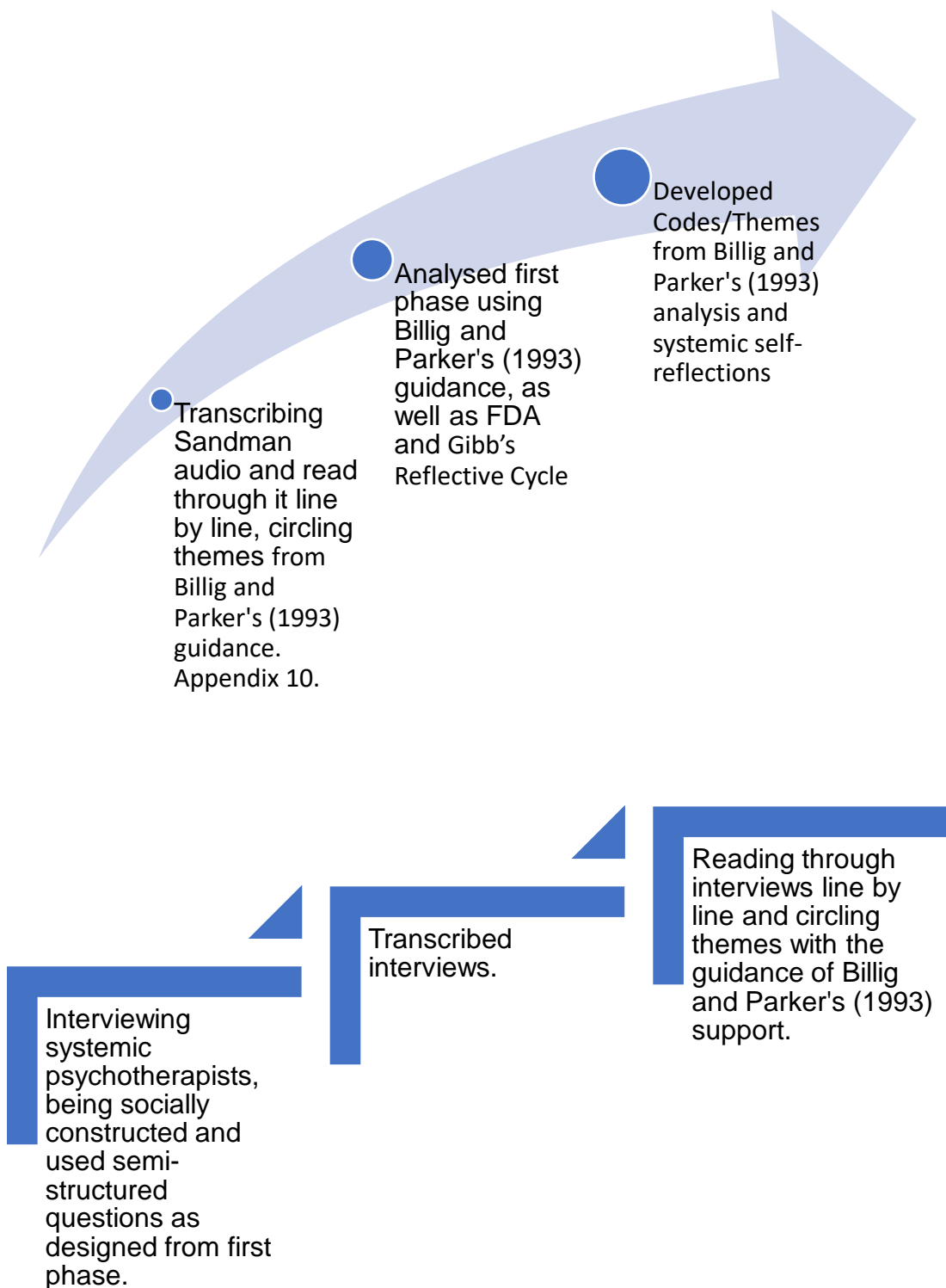
- Women react to MGTOW: https://youtu.be/qVbR1ol_200
- Never live with women. MGTOW: <https://youtu.be/UrhDB3GUsmI>
- My message to ladies. MGTOW: <https://youtu.be/njY8jFWpD1k>
- My message for Manginas: <https://youtu.be/k4Qa9tY2Uw0>
- My message for Gynocentric media. MGTOW: <https://youtu.be/UZgoEVqNC1M>

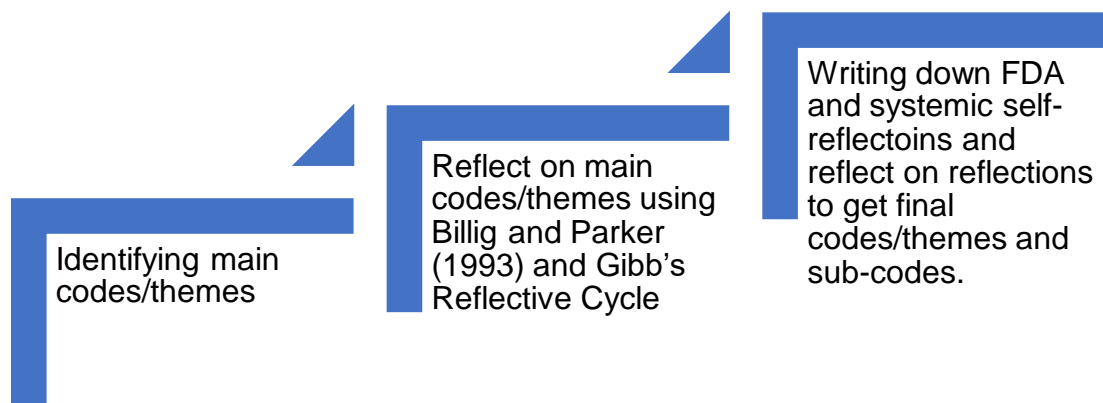
I chose to share one audio with systemic psychotherapists to listen to before our interviews because, in my opinion, it summarised most of what MGTOW stood for: https://youtu.be/_LhtC1pbn4o

All systemic psychotherapists agreed to listen to the audio and explore the online Sandman, YouTube MGTOW platform before our interviews. The audio was 20 minutes long and the interviews lasted around 45 minutes. (Data are reported in Appendix 10).

3.8 Data Analysis-Step by Step process







3.8.1 FDA - Stages of Analysis

According to Billig and Parker (1993) there are 20 stages of doing FDA , and these are described below.

3.8.1.1 *Subjects and Objects*

I read through the observations and reflections of MGTOW as well as the interviews with therapists to identify discursive resources, such as asking myself questions about what type of interpretative repertoires, topics, and themes came up.

This led me to develop codes and sub-codes. It was essential to keep this at a macro level and not to get involved with the minute detail. I used my cultural knowledge, living in the Western world, but I have also tried to understand the cultural knowledge of MGTOW men, which is reflected in the MGTOW transcript (Appendix 9). I looked at indirect references, not always just explicit references linked to the topic.

I looked at the relationship between the discourses that were coded and sub-coded and focussed on contrasting discourses about objects and events as well as contradictory discourses. I positioned myself in the historical and cultural position of gender and power to analyse these discourses.

After the above, I asked myself how these discourses arose, how they were informed, how they came into being, and what institutions and power were associated with their growth and dominance. After identifying the discourses, I looked at the action orientation, such as how these different constructions were used. What were they doing? Who gave them gains (or losses) from the particular subject position that was identified in the discourse? Which institutions were identified in that discourse? I looked at how these discourses were used in everyday speech and context to attribute responsibility, highlight one's contribution or disclaim responsibility and how these discourses were used to achieve things.

I also looked at the range of positioning these discourses constructed and asked myself, what subject positions the discourse offered. I asked what kind of different people and individuals this discourse spoke about and informed, and what or whom the person or group could allow themselves to be. I looked at how the discourse categorised people or what types of people

were categorised. I asked myself what activities were offered that people could adapt for themselves or assign to others. Finally, I looked at what kind of actions these discourses made possible or what kind they prohibited.

I focussed on power and asked myself how these discourses supported institutions and reproduced power relations. I looked at how these discourses evaluated gains and losses that subjects felt they had to experience, and the moral or political stance.

I looked particularly for the following:

- Hidden relations of power in the text.
- Who was exercising power? That is, whose discourses were presented (people or institutions)?
- Who was the "ideal subject" or audience for the text? Who was meant to listen to this, and who was meant to respond to it?
- What was unspecified, left out, or unsaid?
- I searched for the use of passive voice or processes expressed as "things" rather than people (reification).
- I searched for the use of colourful, descriptive language (adjectives) to indicate a robust discourse and the use of reliable power behind those discourses.

I also asked the following in my search through the data:

1. Would alternative wording of the same information have resulted in a different discourse being privileged?
2. How were the events presented?

3. How were people in the text characterised? Were women or MGTOW men characterised as certain kinds of individuals? Were they allowed certain behaviours?
4. What message did the author intend the other to get from the text?
5. Why were particular words chosen to accompany the text?
6. What repetition exists (a) within the text and (b) between different texts on the same topic?
7. What professional media practice assisted with presenting dominant discourses, such as editorial constraints, and journalistic standards?

To conduct discourse analyses on both parts of the study, I used the guidelines of Billig and Parker (1993) and Potter and Wetherell (1987). I first wrote down my reflections and observations of MGTOW and started to develop codes by examining the text closely.

3.8.2 Example Coding

This is an example of how I used the stages of Parker (1993) for my analysis:

Code 1: Brotherhood dominant heteronormative masculine framework (App 2.1) (App1)

Emotional closeness was described through brotherhood. In my Western culture that means someone has your back and is close to you. Someone is on your side. In my personal reflections, if a man shows emotional closeness to me within a group of 40 000 men who support that affection, then I will be positively influenced by that, maybe because I did not receive enough

emotional closeness from my own father. We know patriarchy keeps fathers emotionally distant from their children.

MGTOW men who received approval from others were the subject position, and therefore an important person to convince the member that MGTOW was a group that cared.

There was a hidden relation of power, because if one is loved and accepted in a group that loves and accepts one more than women, then one has to pledge allegiance to such a group.

Coding was possible because the research focus was evident in both areas of the study. I read and reread the text, looking for recurrent discursive patterns shared by everyone involved in the study. I became sensitive to how language was used and developed several hypotheses about which discourses I would use, which I formulated, and reformulated (Burr, 1995).

When I looked at the text, I was also searching for what version of events the speaker tried to counteract or leave out, as this might indicate what was intended to be constructed as more persuasive (rather than the parts that were left out).

Further to identifying broad discourses, I started to ask myself questions about what the function of the text was and what it wanted to achieve, that is, what the purpose and consequences of language in the text were. I therefore had to look at the context of discussions very closely, bearing in mind the cultural trends and political and social issues to which the text alluded (Burman and Parker, 1993).

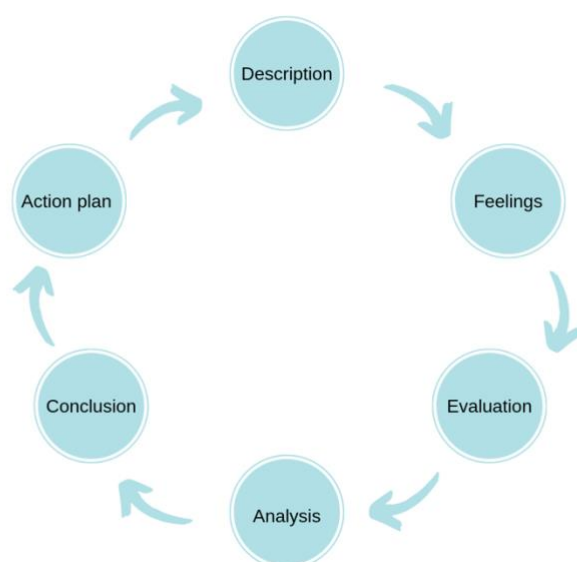
I also searched for text that had a rhetorical function to make a speaker's position more persuasive such as “all women,” “always,” “never,” “nobody,” and “everyone,” as these were extreme case formulations (Potter and Wetherell, 1987).

Further to the above, I looked out for lack of variability, how an individual's opinion was explained away by the masses, which indicated power, and consequences. For example, when there was a lack of individuation in conversations, most agreed with the dominant discourse (Potter and Wetherell, 1987).

3.9 Gibb's Reflective Cycle

I wanted to be as reflective as possible and have made use of Gibb's Reflective Cycle (Gibb's, 1988) to help me with this.

(<https://libguides.cam.ac.uk/reflectivepracticetoolkit/models>)



There are six stages in Gibb's cycle

- Description
- Feelings
- Evaluation
- Analysis
- Conclusion
- Action plan

When analysing reflectively, I started with an outline of the experience that I was reflecting on. This encouraged me to focus on my feelings about the experience, both during and after. I then evaluated the experience and asked myself what was good or bad about it from my point of view. I used this evaluation to analyse and try to make sense of it. This analysis resulted in a conclusion about what other actions (if any) I could have taken to reach a different outcome. The final stage involved building an action plan of steps that can be taken next time I find myself in a similar situation.

3.10 Limitations

The focus of my study was on macro processes and not on individuals' behaviour and mind. This prevented me from gaining a deeper understanding of the various individual experiences of MGTOW men and therapists.

After becoming more aware of the social structures and powers of the workings of discourse and the various analyses using FDA, I was still left with many questions that I could not ask individuals per se. However, the analysis left many interesting open-ended ideas that can be used as tools in therapy.

Willig (1999) echoes my concerns with discourse analysis with respect to FDA as I have questions about the accountability for the emotional investment that people make in particular discursive positions. How can we explain individual differences in the subject positions that people habitually adopt, or why people sometimes position themselves disadvantageously?

When I looked into the various aspects of discourse, I noticed that there was a lack of aspects such as an analysis of individuals' psychological makeup, which includes their personality, characteristics, motivations, and attitudes.

A further critique of FDA is that I also struggled to explain the various experiences of individual MGTOW men and therapists, as well as their roles in the decisions that they make in their lives. If I had used a more interpretative analysis such as IPA, or a psychoanalytic interpretation, I would have had a closer connection to the lived experiences of others. To claim that discourses create these positions is not enough to explain how these processes work, as it fails to acknowledge the reality of these individuals' experiences.

FDA also fails to explain why these men continue to feel trapped by their power relations and the implications of discourses on their identities. Despite

being able to place emphasis on the various aspects of discourse, I was not able to fully understand the inner workings of MGTOW men.

3.11 Conclusion

There were nine stages in the design of this research methodology. First, I explained that I worked from a qualitative approach and why I chose this approach. Secondly, I asked the question how systemic psychotherapists could learn from MGTOW and explained what I meant by epistemology as I was seeking to understand what it meant to know and how I got to know something about MGTOW and systemic psychotherapists. Thirdly, I explained why it was important to justify my claim of knowing something about MGTOW and systemic psychotherapist and why I adopted a critical realist social constructionist position and explained how I got to know and inquire about MGTOW and therapists systemically. Fourthly I explained that I will be reflecting on my own position as part of this knowing process and explained why it was impossible for the researcher not to be free from prejudice. Fifthly, I explained the philosophy of FDA, critiqued the approach as a research methodology, in order to ensure that I consider both the positives and negatives of this methodology and asked the question of what would be valid evidence for the research and explained this to the reader. The sixth stage was asking what would be ethical and how I could do a study on MGTOW and therapists ethically, without harming anyone. The seventh stage was to explain how I collected the data, how I went about introducing the research participants and how I was going to interview participants. The eighth stage was analysing the data and I explained in detail how I went

about doing this from the very start. The ninth and last stage in this research methodology was to make sure that the research stood strong in the field of research and I therefore made sure all limitations of this research were thought about.

In the next chapter, I present the findings and discussions of this research study.

4 Findings and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This study analyses the discourse on various forms of violence that are commonly expressed in the online group, MGTOW, (men going their own way) to help systemic psychotherapists understand and better treat those who display misogyny. The research questions are presented in section 1.3, and to answer these questions, I observed the online discourse of MGTOW and interviewed eight systemic psychotherapists about them. The methods are reported in Chapter 3.

In this chapter I first overview the key findings of the research and then discuss my self-reflections of MGTOW and findings for:

RQ 1: What can systemic psychotherapists learn from MGTOW to help with therapy and to be more sensitive to contemporary male gender identity?

RQ 2: What are the discourses that therapists hold concerning MGTOW?

RQ 3: What discourses are constructed between MGTOW?

RQ 4: How can MGTOW contribute to healthy attitudes and behaviours towards themselves, women, and men?

I then present analyses of discourses from MGTOW observation and Sandman audio data, and analyses of MGTOW discourses through reflective discussions in interviews with systemic therapists to further answer the research questions.

4.2 Summary of Key Findings

In summary, the data suggest the following in relation to each research question:

RQ1: Therapists can learn from MGTOW; the MGTOW discourses helped them to develop greater sensitivity to male gender identity.

RQ2: The discourses which therapists held about misogynistic men were rooted in wanting to facilitate interpersonal and relational connections.

RQ3: MGTOW men's oppositional discourses were rooted in essentialist masculinity.

RQ4: The extremism of MGTOW men's discourses limits the development of healthy attitudes and behaviours in men.

4.3 Observation of MGTOW

4.3.1 Overview

In this section, I describe content from MGTOW observations of member introductions and reflect on them. Dates and times of each observation and reflection are recorded (Appendix 9).

4.3.2 Summary of Observation and Reflection Records

In this section I have written down my observations and reflections of MGTOW. The following ten characteristics of the group were identified that informed my discussions with systemic psychotherapists.

Firstly, I noticed that all MGTOW are angry with women. Secondly, all MGTOW blamed women for the break-up of the relationship. Thirdly, MGTOW shared their feelings and thoughts of frustration, anger, hurt and sadness on the group with each other. Fourthly, the group was emotionally available and responsive to the needs of these men. Fifthly, emotional responsiveness was also reciprocated if these men appeared to be following a Red Pill man identity. The sixth characteristic of the group was that MGTOW looked at gender as essentialist. The seventh characteristic was that MGTOW felt men could better themselves, but that all women were the same and were incapable of changing. The eighth characteristic was that MGTOW felt that it was better for men to give up sex with women and for men to renounce any relationships women. MGTOW felt men should seek emotional support either on their own through finding a hobby, or connect to other MGTOW. The ninth characteristic is that MGTOW overall supports an aggressive attitude towards women, gays, Blue Pill men and even their own mothers. The tenth characteristic is that MGTOW believes the legal, political and economic systems in The Western Society were supporting women and tried to trap white heterosexual males in the hope that men will give up their identities as independent, creative, and free individuals.

4.4 Findings from Observations of MGTOW and Sandman

4.4.1 RQ 3 Code 3: MGTOW Oppositional Discourse Rooted in Essentialist Masculinity (App 5)

4.4.1.1 Code 3.1: MGTOW Challenges Dominant Discourses in Society: MGTOW Men Believe That the Female Nature Is Controlling and Coercive and Not Nurturing

Many men spoke about how they were hurt by women and accused women of being naturally inclined to use men for what they could get out of them.

There was a strong belief in these men that women were willing to provide men with sex if they could get something material out of them. However, if women did not receive financial gains, then they would ignore the man.

MGTOW men consoled each other by advising not to get angry at women for withholding sex, because women could not really help being like this: it was in their nature to play men with sex and gifts.

MGTOW men feel strongly that women do not reveal their true colours in the beginning of a relationship, but if a woman does not get what she wants then her true colours come out and she snatches the man's freedom away.

MGTOW men also feel that mothers desensitise boys by colonising their free space. Men get used to being abused by women from an early age, because their own mothers.

MGTOW men also believe that when the man is in a relationship with a woman, and cannot go to a family function due to work, then the female will

tell the man that he works too hard. However, if he does not work hard enough, she will not give the man sex.

These men were of the opinion that when a man lives with a woman, she trains the man to give her what she wants in life. They feel the man is already trained by his mother and that is why training by a woman feels comfortable. MGTOW men therefore recommend that boys from an early age disobey their mothers and find their own way early in life.

Sandman and MGTOW men argue that men have built the world the way it is today, such as farms, and buildings, and women want men to do the work that is set out for women, such as nurturing children, and domestic tasks in the house. There is a strong discussion that whilst women want men to do all of the work, women slip into management positions. These men believe that if women carry on this way, then there will be no world at all.

MGTOW men also believe that women enslave men, but that these men are done with women. They feel women will be replaced by new reproductive technologies. Here are quotes supporting these beliefs:

Women dish out sex to men like dog treats. If we take you to a dinner party or buy that purse or flowers that you've always wanted, then you typically reward us with your affection, love, and sex. And if we don't then what do you do? You put us in the doghouse. MGTOW men, accept that this is female nature (App 5.1 Sandman 1, Reference 1).

It seems perfectly normal first you go from doing what your mother wants you to do in life. Then you grow up and get your own place and enjoy freedom temporarily until it's snatched up from you by a fascist, with a snatch (App 5.1 Sandman 2, Reference 2).

Instead, you thought that you could be sneaky and convinced us to vacuum, wash the dishes, take care of children. In addition to farming the land and building the man-made world. You wanted to take your responsibility of nurturing and building the next generation of human beings, and basically burden us with that as well. And by getting us to

do all of that, you would in turn slip into the ownership and management class in our society (App 5.1, Sandman 3, Reference 1).

We made life easier for you in the 20th century because we loved you and you ended up throwing it back in our faces... New reproductive technologies will displace your place in our hierarchy (App 5.1, Sandman 3, Reference 3).

4.4.1.2 Code 3.1.2: MGTOW Rejects the Breadwinner Role (App 5.2)

These men explained that they want to be free, because women have turned men into slaves through the war of sexes with feminism. They want to do what they want, as investing in women does not give the man any good return. They believe MGTOW is the liberation of men.

In essence, MGTOW is the search for low investment, high return activities, and these things are not found in women, careers, or consumerism (App 5.2, MGTOW data, Reference 1).

And that's been my experience, men going their own ways about male liberation for the first time in history, we're free to do what we want and we're no longer required to be providers (App 5.2, Sandman 1, Reference 1).

You started this war of the sexes by basically trying to turn us men into slaves in a world that we built... (App 5.2, Sandman 3, Reference 2).

4.4.1.3 Code 3.1.3: Rejection of Marriage and Co-parenting (App 5.3)

MGTOW men feel families will not understand the actual cost to benefit ratio in engaging with women and getting married and having kids with them. They see marriage with women as slavery and MGTOW helps men to be liberated. MGTOW men also believe that women promise love and sexual attention and trap men into slavery. They call these men who fall for this trap, 'manginas.'

Our immediate families will not put into perspective the actual cost to benefit ratio in engaging with women and especially in getting married and having kids with them (App 5.3, MGTOW data, Reference 1).

Women are using men to get what they want. Men are waking up to our slavery and leaving the plantation that you call marriage (App 5.3, Sandman 3, Reference 1).

But for you, manginas you're doing what women want you to do... The false promise of love and sexual attention appears to be powerful motivators for you, manginas (App 5.3, Sandman 5, Reference 1).

4.4.2 Code 3.2: MGTOW Made the Following Discursive Claims (App 6)

4.4.2.1 Code 3.2.1: MGTOW Claims a Gynocentric Order in Favour of Women and That Men Are Victims in Society (App 6.1)

MGTOW explained that the biggest difference between MGTOW and feminism is that MGTOW is not trying to legislate or coerce anyone to take any action. It merely encourages people to pursue things to their own accord, to their own trumpet, and to their own volition. Whereas feminism endeavours to pass laws to coerce people into following their ideals, without reason, fact, or truth.

MGTOW men also believe that a job should go to the most skilled worker but will automatically go to a female, because of feminism's methodology of men and women being equal. They ask why it is about equality and not someone's natural best ability to do the job. MGTOW men believe that this is the feminist imperative and a deep channelling of gynocentrism through feminism.

Shouldn't you be able to attain that position through your natural ability to be equal and thus with a bit of work your ability to supersede men?

That is the feminist imperative and really a deeper channelling of gynocentrism (App 6.1, MGTOW data, Reference 2).

But now you use the feminist courts to take this away from us. And so many of us are leaving and never coming back (App 6.1, Sandman 3, Reference 1).

These men ask the following questions:

Which sex is the liability, and which sex is the asset? Are women facing alimony in high amounts? Do women ever serve time, any jail time for missing alimony, or for not paying child support? What about false rape accusations? Are even domestic violence cases taken as seriously when a man makes it against a woman as opposed to the other way around and what if a woman's accusations are found to be false? What about all the men that have been entrapped into having kids and what about the men that have to pay child support for children that aren't even theirs? (App 6.1 MGTOW data, Reference 5).

4.4.2.2 Code 3.2.2 “Lame-stream” Media Ignores Topics Important to Men (App 6.2)

MGTOW men calls the media, “lame-stream” media because they film feminist events and what is important to them, but do not cover topics that are important to men. They believe that the only people who will continue to watch television will be “baby boomers.” Sandman explains that the “lame-stream” media shut down Ezra Levant, who did stories men in the manosphere wanted to hear, because Levant was combative, controversial, and contrarian, and believed in freedom of speech.

MGTOW men believe that men invent everything and ask why men should not make all the money, and keep the power for themselves. They also believe that the man first lives his life, the way his mother wanted him to live, and then he lives the way his wife wants him to live, stating that men are not free to choose their own paths in life.

Men make businesses and create as well as innovate. Women, predominantly manage and redistribute the wealth and innovation that men create. Men invent everything. So why shouldn't they make the money? (App 6.3, Sandman 1, Reference 1).

4.5 RQ4: Code 4: MGTOW Contributes to Healthy Attitudes and Behaviours Towards Self, Women and Men (App 9)

4.5.1 Code 4.1 A Space to Voice Feelings of Disenfranchisement (App 9.1)

Therapists felt MGTOW was shocking. It did not sit comfortably with them, and they felt that this group was like a cult that provided space to voice feelings of disenfranchisement and loneliness. Therapists also felt that MGTOW men pull in vulnerable men, who feel that something is going to be taken away from them. They interpreted MGTOW as like a cult, brainwashing men into believing something that they may not have experienced himself. Therapists also felt that this was a group of men who seemed to be looking for belonging, or to see themselves through the eyes of others, and this made the group quite attractive. They refer to each other as “brothers” at times and this gives a sense of belonging too, and that someone will have your back. This space to voice one’s feelings is popular because it is different and easier to be on a computer than working with a therapist on issues.

MGTOW men, on the other hand, felt that the best strategy society as a whole could use was to expose and shame; when men talk together, they are able to see that which is exposed in society. They feel people do not ask them why they do not want to get married and have the MGTOW beliefs;

people just shame them, and because of this, MGTOW men congregate together, and come up with the right answer. MGTOW men also ask whether those who criticise them are helping men with their issues.

You kind of, you've got these different ends of the spectrum there, and it's just too much yet for me, when I heard it, it was kind of like, this sounds like a cult or something where he's trying to mind, you know, trying to, slightly brainwash you really a little bit, and it has its own gurus, doesn't it? And they have their own little special names, and stuff like that (App 9.1, Therapist 6, Reference 1).

I think they've kind of grabbed hold of something and they're kind of pulling in people that, you know, that feel disempowered in some way that anything like this is going to attract people that feel like there's something being taken away from (App 9.1, Therapist 6, Reference 2).

If there were benefits, I suppose it would be a benefit of, there's a voice for them, there's a, there's a platform where they can share their opinions. And there's a sense of agreement. It's a bit like, you know, finding somebody that agrees with you, with your narrative, if you see what I'm saying, but your story (App 9.1, Therapist 6, Reference 3).

4.5.2 Code 4.2 MGTOW Supports Men to Feel Self-actualised and Empowered (App 9.2)

The group supports men to take back their masculinity and begin to define it on their own terms, so that men do not have to look to women to feel like a man. It is a group that claims to help men to look within, like a spiritual group, and not rely on the external material world. The group appears to give men the message that men can reclaim their power that has been taken away from them by women and feminism. It is strongly communicated that when a man is free, he will have more time to work on himself and create real value within, and then he has a higher chance of succeeding with the things that interest him. They feel that MGTOW wins because it does not hinge on those

people who criticise the group because MGTOW allows men to transcend the opinions of others and pursue happiness how they want.

They take back their masculinity and begin to define it on their own terms. They're no longer looking to woman X Y Z. They're no longer looking to job X Y Z and they are no longer looking to possession X Y Z. They are instead looking within. Thus, they're reclaiming the power that they always had but one that appeared to have been taken away from them (App 9.2, MGTOW data, Reference 1).

A MGTOW man actually has way more time, more resources, and emotional energy to attain things that actually objectively enhance his life. He has more time to expand his mind, he has more time to improve his body, he has more time to network, he has more time to meditate (App 9.2, MGTOW data, Reference 2).

4.5.3 Code 4.3 MGTOW Helps Men to Recognise and Discuss the Negative Impacts from Discourses (App 9.3)

Therapists also found the group prompted conversations and provided men with benefits as it allowed men to discuss the negative stereotypical ideas about masculinity and the effects of some discourses in society. However, the group does not allow men to have a space for discussions.

I mean, I think they have some points. I mean, I've certainly felt, as a man, it's hard to get away with some of that kind of stereotypical demands (App 9.3, Reference 1, Therapist 5).

So I guess that men who still think that they are the main breadwinners are going to feel like, well, if we have to do half the childcare and cleaning and shopping, you can see how they might be fed up (App 9.3, Reference 2, Therapist 5).

I think it invites a conversation, but I think within, within the context of them, I don't know whether or not there'd be space to have debates. It seems very extreme (App 9.3, Reference 1, Therapist 6).

4.5.4 Category: There Is a Need for Therapists to Be More Flexible With Men Like MGTOW Men and This Flexibility Can Invite a Redefinition of Masculinity

What do you think of the role of men today? Just to link into that? So, there's confusion, there's more clarity in the past you said; today there's a bit more of a confusion as to what the identity and the role is. So it's a difficult question. Maybe a subjective one. Yeah. What do you think is the role of a man today? (App 5, Reference 2, Therapist 4).

Yeah, it's hard because in my mind it, yeah, it could be many things. Can it depend on context, I suppose? (App 5, Reference 1, Therapist 6).

I remember going to cubs and scouts when I was younger and the scout leader would say, "Don't be a girl." Like, what does that mean? And, that's been challenged now. And I think that's a good thing. (App 5, Reference 1, Therapist 8)

4.6 Findings from Interviews with Systemic Psychotherapists

4.6.1 RQ 1: Code 1: Therapists Can Learn from MGTOW Discourses

Seventeen references were made that indicate that therapists felt that they could learn from MGTOW and that learning from MGTOW could create sensitivity in how therapists could work with men who held misogynistic views. Learning from MGTOW was identified through that which MGTOW men were not doing or the beliefs MGTOW men had that therapists disagreed with. MGTOW men felt threatened by the changes to masculinity, such as the man not being the only bread winner, but the wife also having the same rights in the workplace. However, these polarities were seen to be aspects therapists could learn from, as illustrated here:

The role of men, I don't necessarily see men as being the main breadwinner. I mean, I'm in our house. I don't earn as much as his wife... (App 5, Reference 2, Therapist 4).

The following therapist, for example, feels that the unconscious discourses of male talk are now being made more reflective, as something men need to be aware of. While negative for women, this was a positive thing to learn, although MGTOW men are angry about feminism wanting to change men's language.

I suppose it is about, I think we are living in a world now where we pay more attention to actually how we position ourselves and how we position others and how we view others (App 5, Reference 1, Therapist 8).

There was also a sense that therapists could learn from MGTOW in relation to being mindful of what kind of role model the man would be for his son or daughter, if he holds onto negative discourses around sexuality, gender, or race.

...my view of being a man changes a lot through being a father and also changes through my own wish for my own kids..., in terms of how, like, whom she ends up with, of course, male or female but if she's with a man, the kind of relationship I want for my daughter in terms of how I would want her to live her life and for my son as well that respectfulness of that attention to how I want him to be as a man and how he lives his life. So, it does affect how you as a father, how you think about your position as a man... (App 5, Reference 2, Therapist 8).

4.6.1.1 Code 1.1 There Needs to Be Flexibility and an Invitation to

Redefine Masculinity

Ten references communicated that therapists felt they could learn from MGTOW men not being flexible in how they defined masculinity and MGTOW men's views on masculinity being unhealthy for the construction of masculinity. The following therapist, for example, viewed pregnancy as

something that was a shared responsibility for men and women, and claimed that the woman being the only one to have a say about an unborn baby was questionable. The need for the man to take more responsibility in the pregnancy was also highlighted as something that needed to be redefined in terms of masculinity.

I contribute to making a baby. So there's, there's something around that somewhere in there, even if they're not present, you know, there's a sense of we're still, the man still has a role there at some level (App 5, Reference 1, Therapist 6).

The idea of masculinity becoming more fluid, for example, was seen as a healthy way to redefine masculinity.

I think we need to redefine ourselves in many ways and become more flexible, and more fluid than perhaps what these men suggest (App 5, Reference 1, Therapist 4).

Flexibility also meant according to this therapist that traditional female roles could now also belong to men.

You know, I like being at home. I like being with my kids. I cook, I clean, I clean the toilet (App 5, Reference 3, Therapist 4).

Even though therapists felt that it was healthy to redefine masculinity, there was also a sense that this process of redefinition was a challenging one as men and women's brains are wired differently, and the culture of patriarchy was still strong because we are all encultured.

I think the masculinity, and males, can be more, I think the role has to be more flexible than what you have been. I'm not too sure if, and I think that's a challenge for some of our brains, and how we're wired and how we're cultured (App 5, Reference 5, Therapist 4).

The idea of men being able to take a different position, embracing more parts of the self and being more reflective were important.

I think there are times when we need to perhaps be able to show vulnerability or we need to be able to listen and we need to take a different position to things, you know, perhaps embrace other points of view that might not necessarily be associated with being masculine (App 5, Reference 1, Therapist 7).

4.6.1.2 Code 1. 2: Therapists Need to Meet Male Clients Where They Are (App 6)

It was interesting that only Therapist 2 felt that learning from the discourses of MGTOW meant that therapists needed to meet male clients where they were. She felt that it was important for therapists to “really” hear them and to be with these men in their strong emotion.

...and I think with any client where someone comes with strong emotions, our role initially, isn't it, is to really hear them, and to be with them in their strong emotion, whether it be sadness, or disappointment or frustration or even joy, or anger (App 6, Reference 1, Therapist 2).

This therapist also felt that validating strong emotions would be helpful for these men.

...to acknowledge it and to really to, in a sense, even validate it (App 6, Reference 2, Therapist 2).

4.6.1.3 Code 1. 3: Therapists Need to Understand What MGTOW Men Reject and What They Gain Through Discourses (App 7)

Four therapists felt that it was important to hear about the discourses of MGTOW men. They felt it was important to pay attention to what men rejected and what they felt burdened with, as many of these discourses were societal constructs that men had inherited.

That's something we need to pay attention to... I feel slightly, not, burdened but my beliefs are slightly informed by the traditional view. So, I have to earn more money, I have to work full time, support my family. I'm not saying at all that's not oppressive, that's a choice, but

it's, you know, something I've inherited. So, you could learn from MGTOW in that it's a thought that men have the right to opt out of that (App 7, Reference 1, Therapist 5).

It was felt important to know what MGTOW reject as it could indicate extreme behaviours and the forming of dangerous groups, that might lure vulnerable men. The manner in which these men play on the language of the media – of not wanting a man like this, but a man like that – is used in MGTOW to influence vulnerable men.

I think against extremes all this now, I think they've kind of grabbed hold of something and they're kind of pulling in people that, you know, that feel disempowered in some way that anything like this is going to attract people that feel like there's something being taken away from. So I would say that they get the feeling that society is saying, we don't want men like this, we want men like this, and they're kicking against it right now. So there's we don't need to listen to that stuff. That's sort of feminist kind of propaganda, so let's get away from it (App 7, Reference 1, Therapist 6).

Vulnerability was not just viewed in the structures of the group that lured men into the group. It was also felt that knowing what MGTOW men reject may reflect their real vulnerable positions in society, and therapists had to listen to that.

These groups come out of a genuine vulnerability or genuine needs. So, although, you know, there's lots about what that guy was saying, that is a bit biased, and I think it's slightly hateful, I'd say. I think nevertheless men go to groups like that because they're feeling disenfranchised, or they're feeling powerless, or perhaps feeling lonely (App 7, Reference 1, Therapist 7).

There was a feeling that it may be distressing if someone believes he has no choice in society. Free will and choice are two important aspects of helping people.

I suppose it is about how much choice one feels and I think that's the important part in terms of how to be the man that I want to be and the

choices that do with the world that I live in and social world that I'm a part of (App 7, Reference 1, Therapist 8).

Therapist 8 also felt that there was a reason for these men to feel and speak the way they do and as a therapist, he learns from these men that there is something to be explored within their views and experiences of their positions in society.

I do think that they're in these positions for a reason, there is an understanding for the position that they're taking and what that means for them and their experiences of feeling subjugated (App 7, Reference 2, Therapist 8).

4.6.2 RQ 2: Code 2: There Are Differing Expectations for Men and Women in Society

4.6.2.1 Genes and Strengths

Therapists felt that society is responding to how men and women are wired in their brains, because men and women have different strengths and different abilities. There was a sense that the opposite genders sometimes complement each other, but gay relationships were not seen as different from heterosexual relationships.

but I think men and women are, they are wired differently, the brain is different, we have different strengths, and different abilities, and actually, quite often, will complement each other as men and women but also in gay relationships too (App 8.1, Reference 1, Therapist 1).

4.6.2.2 Sex (The intimate act between people)

Sex was seen as something that was very different for men and women, because sex for a female was reflected on as an act with potential for pregnancy: the female would be the one to carry the baby and be the main carer for the child. It was felt that sex for men did not leave such a level of

responsibility; men could easily not invest into the women and this was an issue for many young women.

Females, you know, it's a bit more involved than having sex, you know, you could end up having to carry a child for nine months and then be around that child, you know, and be a mother to that child. Men don't have to invest, can quite easily not invest into that women. It's a huge thing (App 8.1, Reference 1, Therapist 4).

4.6.2.3 Code 2.1: *The Dominant Discourses in Society Favour Men (App 8.2)*

Seven therapists felt that systems and laws were favouring men and not women and that there is a very real history of how women and GEM's have been abused (App 13). There was some acknowledgement about how domestic violence was experienced by men, although it was mostly women who were abused by men. There was also some mention of how men may be confused about the language feminist scholars use. However, feminism as a methodology was helpful to help women to have a voice and to understand inequality and societal structures with patriarchal rules that abuse their power. It was felt that masculinity was not under attack and that the changes that were happening were positive for men and women. It was also felt that although feminism was positive, its focus should be on how women gain a voice and how it supports women rather than how men subjugate women or what men have done to women. The following quotes to demonstrate this discussion:

My view on that would be, rape victims should be anonymous... I can't think of many examples of where the law kind of, gives women, any kind of advantage... I suppose, you know, if you don't have a prenuptial agreement, you might argue that when women marry rich successful men and end up with half the money, you might argue,

that's an example where the law favoured women (App 8.2, Reference 1, Therapist 5).

I have worked with men as victims of DV, whose have been absolutely terrified of a female partner. So, that side of his argument stood up, but we do still, in this country, live in a patriarchal society still (App 8.2, Reference 1, Therapist 1).

And we know that historically many women have been mistreated by men (App 8.2, Reference 1, Therapist 2).

I suppose the distinction for me is partly about how do women have a voice, how feminism supports women, to have a voice, as opposed to feminism, where actually to talk about how men subjugate women, how men have, what have men done to women? (App 8.2, Reference 1, Therapist 8).

**4.6.2.4 Code 2.2: The Dominant Discourse Negatively Impacts Women
(App 8.3)**

All the therapists were of the opinion that the dominant discourse in society still negatively impacts women, although they were open minded in their reflections on how MGTOW men could be understood differently. There was a strong reference to history and the abuse and deprivation women have endured in society, a fact that cannot be argued away. The mere fact that there was an attempt to argue this away and to rationalise it to be an innate state of women being weaker than men is concerning in itself. Therapists experience in their work how women are still being raped and taken advantage of sexually daily. Discrimination against women can also be seen in sports and politics, but on football stadiums, women are being chanted at in a sexualised manner regularly. Women are also not safe walking down the street, an issue that has been going on for a very long time and there is no protection for women by the law. Therapists also felt that women were not even protected by the police and that change within a society needed to

happen from the top down. There was also a feeling that women are being undervalued, especially mothers. Therapists also mentioned an example of the pronouns of females and how females change their surnames to their husbands' names. Here are a few quotes evidencing these views:

She never had to worry about it when she was at home. On the other hand, that must've been very unfulfilling for her because she is a bright enough woman (App 8.3, Therapist 5, Reference 1).

I think, erm, and so the meaning of violence can be, can be different for women in this society, and different for men in that people don't take them seriously enough (App 8.3 Reference 1 Therapist 1).

I hear in my work story after story, after story of women being raped, being sexually assaulted, touched inappropriately in bars, made complaints, and nothing is done about it (App 8.3, Reference 1 Therapist 4).

I see it in sport as well... if you were a female, you would, you'd be sexually harassed, verbally harassed (App 8.3 Reference 2, Therapist 4).

I can walk down the street and at night time and now be fine. And I watch a female walk down the street and there'll be later two guys eyeing her up, you know, they'll be looking behind, looking at her bum or whatever. I think men generally have it better still (App 8.3, Reference 3, Therapist 4).

4.6.2.5 Code 2.3: Everyone Is Imbedded in a Larger Cultural System

(App 8.4)

Therapists felt that everyone was encultured, gendered, and classed, especially in the UK, and we are all part of a wider system. Masculinity was therefore not separate from anyone or anything else. Therapists felt we are all confined by language and no one on the planet can do what they want to do, which also means that going our own way is impossible.

No I don't think we can be independent (speaking as a man)... we're gendered, we're classed, especially in the UK... we have a language,

we have an education, and I think we operate as part of a bigger system (App 8.4, Reference 1, Therapist 4).

I think we're all slaves. I don't think that's unique to females as I think all humans are confined by our language and just, you know, no one on this planet can do what they want to (App 8.4, Reference 2, Therapist 4).

4.6.2.6 Code 2.4: Social Expectations of Men As the Aggressive

Breadwinner (App 8.5)

Therapists felt men still had a traditional view of their role and considered the role of men to be to work and look after the family financially. Men have many stories and experiences of needing to be successful and there is much pressure on men to be successful. There is a social belief that men want their wives to argue less and to have sex with them when they want it, but women do not feel appreciated or valued and usually want less sex than men. Here are quotes evidencing these views:

To earn money, to be able to have a big enough house, to provide security, to bring up my children, to be good-enough kids (App 8.5 reference 2, Therapist 5).

We're sort of designed, to be fighting and, you know, we're fighters. So either, you know, we're either lovers or fighters that kind of, you know, going out, and killing the deer, and bringing it back and ripping it apart this kind of thing (App 8.5 reference 3, Therapist 6).

Often men who complain that I don't have enough sex, it's men who are saying that they want their wives to, also want more sex, and then they want their wives to argue less and just accept what they say. Whereas females again, as I said earlier, just want to be understood and appreciated and valued (App 8.5 reference 1, Therapist 4).

So there's particular stories that can be around a man, figure to be successful, that's fed to the man, you know, to be energetic to, we had this, I think this shows that men might experience in terms of how they need to be or how they shouldn't be. Expectations of how one should be can be constraining and can be challenging when your life does not fit within that, how you manage those expectations and pressures,

and whether you have permission to step outside of that context (App 8.5 Reference 1, Therapist 8).

4.7 DISCUSSION OF FIRST PHASE

The following data are discussions from my reflective diary on the findings of MGTOW observations and Sandman audios. I will reflect on what curiosities these statements aroused in me to move closer to the goal of what systemic psychotherapists can learn from MGTOW.

4.7.1 Code 1: Brotherhood Dominant Heteronormative Masculine Framework (App 2.1)

Therapists do not have to stay neutral when it comes to abusive language. However, this finding shows that there is something happening within the construction of how these men bond that therapists can learn from.

Brotherhood within the MGTOW group shows therapists that emotional closeness is important to engage MGTOW . I question how close therapists would feel to angry men who seem proud of their abusive language, however. This finding suggests that systemic therapists need to be aware of their own judgemental feelings, which could lead to a power imbalance.

Power is described as “the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests” (Weber, 1978, p.53).

This finding is also supported by feminist theorists, such as Hoffman (1985) and McGoldrick, Anderson, and Walsh (1989), who inspired systemic psychotherapists to focus on the meanings of language as it carried within it a heritage of ideas and assumptions about any culture.

And you know what... I did it because I am a man... and as a man I can accomplish anything. I put my mind to anything positive that I want to achieve.

Don't look backwards brother ...you aren't going that way (App 1, Reflections: 2020-01-25 at 12:17 AM).

This finding aligns with feminist theorists; therapists need to be mindful how words are used. "Brother" can carry unhealthy ideas and assumptions: would a brother tell his brother to go his own way, away from a woman, where he may have a fulfilling relationship? (Burr, 2003; Dallos, 2017; Foucault, 1979; Hoffman, 1985; McGoldrick, Anderson, and Walsh, 1989; Williams and Watson, year, cited in Miller and McClelland, 2006). One member gave a member emotional motivation and tried to make him feel better by saying:

Don't look down brother...look up (App 1.1 Reference 1).

Welcome my friend... brother (App 2.1 Reference 3).

4.7.2 Code 2: MGTOW Provides Fraternal Encouragement to MGTOW Men (App 2.2)

Systemic practice can learn that when men feel encouraged to belong somewhere, this helps with a sense of fraternal connection.

He empathised with him saying that he was not alone as he had been in that position as well and he believes many men felt like that (App 2.2, Reference 1; App 1, self-reflections of 2020-01-06 at 10:41 PM).

'Fraternal' means as close as a brother. However, the focus for therapists was encouragement. There was also a sense that to be as close as a brother, the MGTOW member had to believe that only a man could accomplish things in life.

And you know what... I did it because I am a man... and as a man I can accomplish anything. I put my mind to anything positive that I want to achieve (App 1, reflection of 2020-01-25 at 12:17 AM and App 2.2, Reference 2).

Systemic therapists could learn to be curious about an essentialist view that only men can accomplish things in life, curiosity about what happened in this man's life for him to have such a belief. This concurs with the theory of feminist scholars that a variety of societal influences can affect people's experiences in families (hooks, 2004; McGoldrick, Anderson, and Walsh, 1989; McGoldrick and Hardy, 2019).

He said that this member needed to attach that energy source to some constructive action and he will be an unstoppable force (App 2.2, Reference 3, and App 1, self-reflection of 2020-01-25 at 3:06 AM).

Showing honest feelings is helpful for systemic practice because within the MGTOW group, men experience men to be truthful and honest, even though they at times appear to be aggressive. Aggressiveness is also seen as care, something systemic therapists can take from this finding. Within couple relationships, emotions are shown through aggression.

Please understand that although we are here to share knowledge and sometimes we have a shout and rage... there is another side...

We care... we care about you and each other (App 2.1 reference 4).

This finding concurs with the theory of Williams and Watson (cited in Miller and McClelland, 2006), McGoldrick, Anderson, and Walsh (1989), hooks (2004), and Hoffman (1993), that the interactions between people can be volatile and unpredictable. It was interesting how language was used to construct some men as aggressive carers and those who are shouted at as benefitting from the abuse. This finding concurs with the theory of the above

feminist authors that in a family, people may ascribe increasingly divergent identities and meanings, and suggests that one person is more likely to be considered an ill member. In contrast, the others are more likely to be well-rounded.

4.7.3 Code 3: MGTOW Strengthens the Concept of Masculinity (App 2.3)

Systemic therapists can learn that many men find support within groups of men. This is similar to men playing rugby or football together or forming close all-male friendship groups. Systemic therapists can possibly focus on all-male groups within schools or universities to work with men.

This member reminded him that he will be okay now that he is part of the MGTOW group and that he had the one essence that makes a real man, and that is self-realisation, and the resolute sovereignty it inspires! (App 2.3, Reference 1)

This finding aligns with Bateson's theory (1972), which emphasises the importance of meanings in the interactions between people. Furthermore, Anderson and Gehart (2006) describe this kind of feedback as an exchange of meanings.

4.7.4 Code 4: MGTOW Compare a Relationship With Women to Slavery (App 3.1)

Systemic therapists can learn from this MGTOW discourse that there is a belief in freedom when groups of men were congregating together and that MGTOW men feel trapped within the traditional concept of heterosexual relationships.

That is the most worthwhile aspect of MGTOW to me. Literally helping others to see their own capacity, their own potential, and their own ability to transcend the paradigm and leave the plantation (App 3.1 reference 1).

There is a sense that the dynamics of the MGTOW group provide a relocation of their problems of feeling trapped in their societal constructs of masculinity, from the person to a societal one, and this finding concurs with the literature of Sutherland *et al.* (2016). These researchers found it helpful to highlight the complexity and intersectionality of gendered subjectivities, as it provided a relocation of the problem from the person to a societal one (Sutherland *et al.*, 2016).

4.7.5 Code 5: MGTOW Men Dismiss Women and Refuse to Engage With Women (App 3.2)

The manner in which gendered power is produced within MGTOW can be useful for systemic practice, especially when working with heterosexual couples. This discourse highlights the importance of helping clients to find ways to resist being positioned in personally damaging discourses.

Therapists can challenge certain social practices, structures, and power relations when working with heterosexual couples.

One of the chief beauties of MGTOW is it makes it okay to not engage in their fake ass bulls~~~.

No smileys, no emoticons. No pussy pass, in any sense.

The only caveat is I don't usually go into depth with women like I do with men. Men generally want to understand how things work or why something is the way it is, whereas women just want to FEEL GOOD and don't care much for further knowledge.

Often silence is the best response (App 3.2 Reference 1).

This finding is supported by feminist scholars' findings that therapists can make use of discourse analysis to help clients clarify the link between language and power (Sutherland, Lamarre, and Rice, 2017).

4.7.6 Code 6: Not Enough ROI to Be in a Relationship With Women (App 3.3).

The belief in poor return from relationships with women is helpful to know. MGTOW men think concretely in terms of winning and losing when it comes to relationships and the exploration of how language is used to win or to lose in couple therapy is a useful finding for systemic practice. This also heightens some awareness to engage differently with some men. It makes more sense for some men to understand a relationship in concrete terms of winning and losing and comparing it to metaphors of the economy is a good way to start a reflective, and explorative discussion. However, therapists need to include aspects such as compassion, care, gratitude, and appreciation when working with men and this may be a challenging task for the therapist.

In essence, MGTOW is the search for low investment, high return activities, and these things are not found in women, careers, or consumerism (App 3.3 Reference 2).

This finding is supported by the theory of White and Epston (1990) that people have problems because of the internalisation of oppressive problem-saturated ways of seeing themselves and others. Gebel (2022) also suggests that therapists need to help men to challenge the unconscious internalisation of gender discourses.

This finding valuably informs therapists that MGTOW men want to feel appreciated.

Why should I care about serving something that doesn't serve me?
Why should I do what other people tell me especially when those people would be willing to throw me away at the first chance they sent to profit in doing so? (App 3.3 Reference 1).

MGTOW men used the words “serve” and “throw me away” which may originate from a religious discourse: when you serve God you will be saved but when you choose your own way, you will be punished, or rejected. This may represent fear of loss, or emotional pain. This finding helps therapists to show great compassion for the “hate speech” without condoning it, as it suggest a story of loss.

Why should I do what other people tell me especially when those people would be willing to throw me away? (App 3.3 Reference1).

This finding also links to the literature of hooks (2004), who explains that in gender discourses, perceptions of self and others are filtered and shaped by what kind of relationship we expect and attempt to create (hooks, 2004).

MGTOW members position themselves as experts on all women and want to convince members what a woman is, and what her place in the relationship or in society is:

MGTOW encourages men to pursue their free will and puts into proper perspective what women are, their place, and what value you should place on these relationships (App 3.3 Reference 3).

Systemic therapists can learn from this discourse that such arrogance in “knowing all women” might actually be a feeling of insecurity and inferiority within men, maybe an untold story. However, it can lead to violence.

They understand the dangers of engaging with them: alimony, divorce, rape, jail time, possibly dealing with being cuckolded (App 3.3 Reference 7).

This finding also concurs with feminist scholars who have found that when there is a rift between the expectations of men and women, there will be frustrating attempts to coerce others to fit into prescribed roles. These frustrations may lead to threats and violence (mainly from men) (Gebel, 2022; hooks, 2004; McGoldrick, Anderson, and Walsh, 1989; McGoldrick and Hardy, 2019).

4.7.7 Code 7: Men Perceive Themselves As Victims at the Hands of Women (App 3.4)

MGTOW men feel vulnerable at the hands of women and this helps systemic therapists to focus on men's potential and to challenge their perceived losses and sense of victimhood. This man says that his ex-wife destroyed him completely, which suggests that he believes he has nothing left. Helping him to focus on what he does have may help him to look at his previous relationship in a more reflective manner.

He claims she "destroyed him completely" after a 5-year divorce battle. He said that he had lost everything he had worked for and feels completely drained of everything (App 3.4, Reference 1, and App 1, self-reflections of 2020-09-24 at 10:08pm).

MGTOW men express issues about their mental health to other MGTOW men. This is relevant to this research because men showed trust in the group that others would not ridicule or judge them. They also expressed vulnerable emotions and this goes against patriarchal beliefs that men do not show vulnerability to other men, which might make them seem weak. If MGTOW

men feel better speaking to other men than there is something very therapeutic within the structure of the group. However, it is also important for therapists to understand how people can use a discourse of mental health to communicate the message of not taking responsibility and blaming others, or in fact, taking a victim position. Therapists can learn from MGTOW because MGTOW speaks openly with each other about the unspoken power dynamics within couples rather than through professional support from a therapist.

This concurs with the literature: Foucault (1970 quoted in Burr, 1995, p.169) argues that discourses provide different possibilities for what a person “can do, what they may do to others, or what they are expected to do for them.” It also links with the literature of Foucault (1970) that not all stories have equal status; in fact, some stories are made peripheral or subjugated (Foucault, 1970, 1978, 1995; Hall *et al.*, 2001, Dallos 2017).

He felt there was nothing to look forward to but just suffering in life. This member expressed that he wanted to end his own life. “Men, I don’t want to live anymore!!!” He is asking the members if they knew of a quick and painless way to die. He is asking about hanging or an overdose (App 3.2, Reference 1, and App 1 reflections of 2020-09-24 at 10:08pm).

This finding also shows how MGTOW men use blame to create a certain reaction from an audience. This is important for therapists as blame is not necessarily an unwillingness to take responsibility, but is informed by many discourses of cultural expectations, in this instance, possible gender expectations. If therapists make use of feminist ideas to bring the social context into therapy and to address stories and experiences of social inequalities, then men will be able to tell different stories. The question of

how this can be applied by therapists who work with misogyny remains, and it is important for therapists to understand their own prejudices, to work with them, and to use them as a form of strengthening the connection with the misogynistic man. (McGoldrick, Anderson, and Walsh (1989), McGoldrick and Hardy (2019), and Williams and Watson (cited in Miller and McClelland, 2006) concurs with this finding.

Some MGTOW men had experienced abuse from their mothers when they were children and it is important for therapists to take note and sensitively explore what informed these experiences for men.

I remember how I was abused by these monsters in my childhood and figured they'd be old bitches by now (App 3.4, Reference 4).

I use the word sensitive, as sensitive is what these men feel, but they present as being insensitive. Experiences from my own therapy suggest reality may be the opposite of what people present in therapy. For example, I may ask a child how their family life is and they may respond: "Very happy, there is nothing wrong." However, if I ask "What is not so happy?" they usually tell a different story.

Therapists can learn from MGTOW to take note of the verbs, adverbs, and adjectives men use, such as "gives me the chills," as using these words may help men to make an emotional connection with their experience of anger.

I'd gladly have a drink with any man while the very thought of drinking with any woman gives me the chills as I'd know my life would certainly be in danger (App 3.4 Reference 5).

Anger is also only one emotion in a repertoire of many emotions. I usually help people in my private practice to connect with anger by giving them a drum to bang on or asking them to play notes on the piano in my office to

express their feelings. This helps in connecting emotions of loss, fear, and anger with stories.

Therapists also do not have to stay neutral in cases where a misogynistic man was abused. When therapists can move away from the programmed discourse of “right” and “wrong” it will help therapists to move to a place of calm and healing can start to take place. This finding can contribute to systemic practice, highlighting that neutrality does not always have to take place, especially in cases of abuse, because this could condone such behaviours, as also supported in the literature (McGoldrick and Hardy, 2019). McGoldrick and Hardy (2019) also highlight the importance of a feminist approach that can help therapists with essential observations regarding the nature of power and abuse in families.

4.7.8 Code 8: There Is an Appeal to the Traditional Masculine Discourse and a Desire for Dominance (App 4.1.1)

MGTOW men feel women lure men into relationships with their sex appeal and that some men are driven by their natural masculine instincts not to be able to resist women. Men get into relationships that trap them from developing to their full potential. This is important for systems practice as these discourses speak many stories. Data of this research made me reflect that going slower helps speed up recovery, such as speaking slowly, using pauses after reflecting on an idea, and focussing on one of the many intellectualised reasons given not to be with women. The aim is not to get men to be in a relationship with women but to help them uncover the societal

discourses of their feelings, meanings, and actions so that they can feel able to make their own decisions.

It makes sense from a purely biological perspective to have white knights, to have pussy sicko fans, and to have men who are willing to throw themselves away to save a damsel in distress (App 4.1.1 Reference 1).

4.7.9 Code 9: There Is an Appeal to the Traditional Masculine

Discourse Because MGTOW Men Believe That Men and Women Are Vastly Different (App 4.1. 2)

MGTOW men consider themselves the only species of importance, that they have given women all the benefits they had in society, and that they made all the original contributions to society.

Their natures collide and if it wasn't for one side making massive concessions, there would have been no cooperation, to begin with (App 4.1.2 Reference 1).

The essentialist belief men and women have around gender is an important discourse that therapists can take from this finding. Nature or nurture is a debatable concept within the academic world, but also when working with clients. The implication for systemic practice is that if families have essentialist beliefs around men and women, it will also put gender in a hierarchal position and disempower both men and women.

Men generally want to understand how things work or why something is the way it is, whereas women just want to FEEL GOOD and don't care much for further knowledge (App 4.1.2 Reference 2).

An appeal to the traditional masculine discourse links with the theory of feminist scholars (Butler, 1990; hooks, 2004; McGoldrick, Anderson, and Walsh, 1989; McGoldrick and Hardy, 2019) who emphasise how patriarchal

notions construct the concept of women as less important in a scientific, rational, competitive workforce. On the other hand, feminist scholars argue that these discourses reduce the context in which men are burdened with accountability for the financial needs of the family and deprived of nurturing and emotionally responsive experiences (Butler, 1990; hooks, 2004; McGoldrick, Anderson, and Walsh, 1989; McGoldrick and Hardy, 2019).

4.7.10 Code 10: There Is an Appeal to the Traditional Masculine

Discourse Because MGTOW Men Believe Society Privileged

Women and Feminism and Were Blind to the Needs of Men (App

4.1.3)

MGTOW men believed the methodology of feminism was against men, which is not true. Such a stance would be equivalent to patriarchy. (hooks, 2004; McGoldrick, Anderson, and Walsh, 1989; McGoldrick and Hardy, 2019).

Whereas feminism endeavours to pass laws thus coercing people into following their ideals and this isn't even through reason, fact, or truth (App 4.1.3 Reference 1).

The implication of this finding for systemic practice is that therapists need to be sensitive in using words such as “feminism” when working with heterosexual couples or men who are angry at women. Using such words might close men up, preventing them from reflecting on the nature of powerful societal gender discourses. The name of the approach, “feminism” may be incorrect because further study of the approach has revealed how the lens of thinking around power inequalities is helpful for both men and

women. There may, therefore, be an argument for integrating feminism within the systemic field.

This finding also revealed that MGTOW men believe laws were in favour of women.

Feminism endeavours to pass laws thus coercing people into following their ideals (App 4.1.3 Reference 1).

This finding can help therapists to be flexible with their listening skills because every man's experience is different and mistakes in making legal judgements in court can be made. There is a reality out there, which is independent of the observer (Butler, 1990; Foucault, 1975; McGoldrick, Anderson, and Walsh, 1989).

From a Foucauldian (1997) perspective, laws are informed by power and discipline (Foucault, 1997; Ryder, 2013). The concept that one day we will govern ourselves as a species and not rely on laws to micro-manage and moralise our expressions and experiences is a bold statement that may be sensitively introduced to men in therapy. In this way, men may start to understand the discourse from which these laws originated and that they are their own best version of the law, by being compassionate, free, and caring, which is not always found in human-made laws, which do not speak of love but fear and punishment. There are, however, still positives around laws, and the balance can be discussed. This finding opens up many possibilities to discuss sensitive issues but has the potential to move people to a higher spiritual level. This links with the theory of Dallos (2017) and Anderson (1990, 1995, 1997), which explains that clients can be helped to engage in internal dialogues and reflecting processes. White and Epston (1990), argue

that people have problems because of the internalisation of oppressive problem-saturated ways of seeing themselves and others.

MGTOW men described women as “thieves:”

...she steals ...For example, the job that should have gone to the most skilled worker but instead automatically is going to a woman (App 4.1.3 reference 2).

This finding informs systemic practice to be curious about the meanings people give to words and to think of them in terms of possible trauma of loss. These are raw feelings that may not sound like trauma, but as therapists, we need to be curious about which is not said or explained, without condoning violence.

4.8 Discussion Second Phase: Interviews With Systemic Psychotherapists

4.8.1 Code 1: There Needs to Be Flexibility to Invite a Redefinition of Masculinity

but it's very hard to get the man to come to the sessions you normally find the mum comes with the kids dad can't make it, dad is too busy Dad is working late (App 5, Reference 1, Therapist 6).

But yeah, I think there've been, but men as a collective, I think we need to redefine ourselves and I don't mean redefine ourselves in one way. I think we need to redefine ourselves in many ways and become more flexible, and more fluid, than perhaps what these men suggests. (App 5, Reference 1, Therapist 4)

The need to be flexible to invite a redefinition of masculinity revealed that becoming involved with emotional issues of the family seems to be the role

of the mother and not so much of the father. This suggests that emotional talk is difficult when there is a need for men to be more emotionally involved in family issues, such as being involved in family therapy sessions. This links with the work of Hook (2004), who indicates that men appear cut off from emotion due to a patriarchal system that does not care about men's emotional pain. Therapists' therefore can learn from MGTOW that there is more to explore about what informed men to feel and believe that emotional issues were more the mother's responsibility than the father's.

The finding highlights that men have a challenging position in terms of their role in today's society. Their role is constructed with the beliefs that carrying a baby, for example, is entirely a woman's issue as it is her body (App 5, Reference 1, Therapist 6).

if you saw the man as well, I contribute to making a baby. So there's, there's something around that somewhere in there... I think, to have to challenge some of those pre-existing beliefs or some of those things that have been, they've been brought up with themselves or from those years gone past. I think that that is quite a big role of the man really, to be able to have to really challenge those biases perhaps, within themselves and within society. (App 5, Reference 1, Therapist 6).

This links to the literature: hooks (2004) claims that healthy masculinity is a liberated concept for men to live lives in which they can commit to others.

This finding therefore informs systemic practice to be sensitive to the push and pull experience that MGTOW may experience: they may feel it is not their body, so it is the woman's issue, but they may still want to be part of the pregnancy experience.

Therapists can learn from MGTOW that flexibility in masculinity may mean that therapists need to be more aware that even if men say certain issues

are women's issues, they may not have the emotional language to describe that they want more participation in the process and this may seem too feminine to them. Patriarchal mores often construct a form of emotional stoicism in men (hooks, 2004).

On self-reflection this heightens the emotions in me that this push and pull tension over family issues may be particularly stressful for adolescent men experiencing teenage pregnancy. They may also want to be part of the family journey, rather than this being confined to the girl and her parents. However, an adolescent male may find it hard to move away from the locker room male language of "getting a girl pregnant" and getting on with his own life. There is therefore a need for a systemic process to become relational with boys and men to help them dismantle hegemonic ideas about what real men are. This is possible since hegemonic masculinity is learned and maintained relationally.

I think the masculinity, and male-ism, can be more, I think the role has to be more flexible than what you have been. I'm not too sure if, and I think that's a challenge for some of our brains, and how we wired and how we're cultured. (App 5, Reference 5, Therapist 4).

Cultural constructs around redefining masculinity are important for systemic practice because it highlights the importance of therapists in helping men let go of the historically prescribed gender roles to reduce stress for families. On self-reflection this highlights ideas for me that men may feel vulnerable to let go of these "socially expected roles." In media and television, discourses describe men as looking after women financially and positioning themselves to rescue women, but this act of rescuing women may affect identify

formation of some men. Foucault (1970, 1978, 1995) and Hall *et al.* (2001) argue that society contains a repertoire of dominant narratives which shape our thinking and experience, how we think about ourselves, our inner conversations, and how we interact with each other.

The confusion men have about their definition of masculinity highlights the importance for therapists to be sensitive about the dominant discourses regarding men not wanting to be part of traditionally feminine tasks in families. It also highlights a need to understand what social discourses informed the belief that being on their own meant that they would be happier (App 5, Reference 2, Therapist 4; App 5, Reference 3, Therapist 4; App 5, Reference 5, Therapist 4; App 5, Reference 1, Therapist 7; App 5, Reference 2, Therapist 8).

There exists a stock of available discourses that are considered appropriate and relevant to the expression or representation of particular aspects of our lived experience (White and Epston, 1990, p.27).

The need to redefine masculinity suggests that therapists may explore men's experiences of positioning themselves in the roles of both genders to their children. How the negotiation of parenting emerges between heterosexual parents may also be valuable to explore (App 5, Reference 1, Therapist 6; App 5, Reference 2, Therapist 4; App 5, Reference 4, Therapist 4; App 5, Reference 1, Therapist 7; App 5, Reference 2, Therapist 8). This finding aligns with the findings of feminist studies showing that patriarchal discourses can deprive men of the nurturing and emotionally responsive experiences (hooks, 2004; Butler, 1990; McGoldrick, Anderson, and Walsh, 1989; McGoldrick and Hardy, 2019).

The need to redefine masculinity has raised awareness about how meanings and context around gender construction and gender production are being coordinated and managed by men.

...and the role of a man to, I think, to have to challenge some of those pre-existing beliefs or some of those things that have been, they've been brought up (App 5, Reference 1, Therapist 6).

To conclude, therapists need to be more aware of unconscious structures of power within society that construct hegemonic patriarchy.

4.8.2 Code 2 Therapists Could Learn from MGTOW to Meet Male

Clients Where They Are

Well I think, I don't know if we can listen to them differently, but I think we can listen to them and I think with any client where someone comes with strong emotions, our role initially, isn't it, is to hear them, and to be with them in their strong emotion, whether it be sadness, or disappointment or frustration or even joy, or anger. (App 6, Reference 1, Therapist 2)

And I think that one way to help people to process emotion in the first instance is to be with them in that emotion and to acknowledge it and to really to , in a sense, even validate it. (App 6, Reference 2, Therapist 2).

The need for therapists to meet male clients where they are highlighted the importance of making a connection with another, in an unconditional caring manner, regardless of these men's anger, sadness, disappointment, frustration or joy. On self-reflection it highlighted emotion in me that therapists who have strong views on misogyny may not be able to validate MGTOW and to be with them in such a caring manner. This will make it

difficult to meet male clients where they are. I suggest for therapists to discuss their true feelings in supervision so that they could reflect on their true feelings.

The need for therapists to meet male clients where they are indicate that if therapists could also show curiosity for the social structures these men believed were causing their anger, without being drawn into the anger, it might help men to feel that therapists are trying to be with them in those moments of anger. Therapists could have a “both and position,” by being with them in their anger, showing curiosity about where that came from, listening in a curious and inquiring manner and reflecting on truths, as opposed to letting misogynistic information create an immediate moral stance and cause therapists to judge, or be lured into unhelpful discourses. This idea is supported by the literature (McGoldrick, Anderson, and Walsh, 1989; McGoldrick and Hardy, 2019) that indicates that feminist approaches attend to individual relationships and the broader social context, and uncover unhelpful discourses. In conclusion, therapists can meet male clients where they are by identifying social structures and deconstructing what informed anger, without prejudice and without being drawn into these men’s stories themselves.

4.8.3 Code 3: Therapists Could Learn from MGTOW in Understanding What These Men Reject and or Gain Through Their Discourses

Therapists felt it was important to pay attention to when men say that they want to reject the traditional male female partnership.

So if we take that video at face value, what they're arguing for is MGTOW's permission to opt out of, the traditional male female partnership, which you could argue. That's something we need to pay attention to because I mean, I've said myself that I feel slightly, not, burdened but my beliefs are slightly informed by the traditional view (App 7, Reference 1, Therapist 5).

This is important for systemic practice as traditional expectations may lead to men marrying or having children because they believed they should. These "should" discourses need uncovering in therapy as they present an issue of power imbalance.

Therapists felt that MGTOW men spoke honestly about their difficulties and that the defensiveness of their talk showed that they were vulnerable.

Therapists need to be aware of the meanings men give to belonging to groups such as MGTOW; these men can feel disenfranchised, powerless, or lonely (App 7, Reference 1, Therapist 7). This therapist had a strong connection to these men feeling lonely:

It's interesting; I've gone back to that word lonely again, and, I'm not sure where that comes from. I don't know if it's, whether it was my own experience because I lived on my own for quite a long time and I was single for quite a long time. So, I'm wondering if there's something about loneliness that speaks of my own experiences of being a man (App 7, Reference 1, Therapist 7).

This therapist also reflected on his own experiences to inform the meaning he gave to why MGTOW men would join MGTOW, and reflected that loneliness was a strong unwanted emotion that drove men to do things that they possibly did not want to do. The feeling of need or want is a strong energy in the world and drives people to become very dependent or reliant on others.

This is best described by Hook (2004, p.115):

Our work of love should be to reclaim masculinity and not allow it to be held hostage by patriarchal domination... those of us committed to ending patriarchy can touch the hearts of real men where they live, not by demanding that they give up manhood or maleness, but by asking that they allow its meaning to be transformed, that they become disloyal to patriarchal masculinity in order to find a place for the masculine that does not make it synonymous with dominance or the will to do violence (hooks, 2004, p.115).

Therapists felt the group constructed a limited and generalised perception of what it meant to be a man and this is important for systemic therapists, to remind us to look at every person's context, because there is no meaning without context. Therapists felt that working with MGTOW men would involve helping them become the man they choose and want to be for themselves.

The choice I make with the world that I live in and social world that I'm a part of (App 7, Reference 1, Therapist 8).

Jordan (2017) argues that therapists need to become curious about the effects of power on the decisions people make about their lives and the effect these power discussions have on people's mental health and well-being.

Therapists also felt that in the work therapists do daily, there was a risk of being sensitised about taking a negative position against narratives of hate and anger, while also trying to be understanding and accommodating to a client who uses hate speech (App 7, Reference 2, Therapist 8).

To conclude, Therapists' discourses evidenced that they could learn from MGTOW in the sense that MGTOW men are holding onto MGTOW knowledge from of a fear of being lonely, rejected or ridiculed and that this fear of punishment is informed by structures of knowledge about patriarchy and social punishment.

4.8.4 RQ 2: Code 1: There Are Differing Expectations for Men and Women in Society

This finding was also useful for systemic practice to consider whether men and women need different approaches when working with gender issues.

But I think men and women are, they are wired differently, the brain is different (App 8.1, Reference 1, Therapist 1).

This suggests that men and women could be approached differently because of how gender was constructed in society and the language and manner in which we make connections will either make men feel connected with the therapist or push men away from exploring aspects such as sexuality, shame, and vulnerability.

This therapist reflected on MGTOW's ideas around sex and felt that there were differences between men and women in relation to sexual desire as:

Men wanted to have an orgasm and women's sexual needs were more on having a baby and raising a family (App 8.1, Reference 1, Therapist 4).

The sense of responsibility was also different for men and women as society prescribes a certain sense of moral obligation to women as women can become pregnant and there was a societal expectation [of] women to care for the child (App 8.1, Reference 1, Therapist 4).

This highlights ideas within my self-reflection that society expects women to be nurturing and somehow forgive a man easily for not being involved in a child's life. This construct of masculinity can convince the man that being nurturing or wanting to be more involved emotionally with the child may not be masculine enough. It can also convince females that this is how men are.

Therapists need to help men to realise that these discourses were informed by society/culture, that prescribed a discourse of “sex, desire, and nurturing:” this finding reflected the theory of Foucault that disciplinary power can be invisible (Foucault, 1976, p. 86).

4.8.5 Code 2: The Dominant Discourse Favours Males (App 8.2)

Therapists discourses around MGTOW were that that the laws in society favour males in general and that there were no clear examples of where the law gave women any advantage over men. It was highlighted that women victims of rape are not always being kept anonymous and that women still get paid less than men

I'm trying to think of any examples where you might think that, women rape victims get anonymity, but, people accused of rape do. My view on that would be, rape victims should be anonymous. (App 8.2, Reference 1, Therapist 5).

Discourses, therefore, therapists have that dominant discourses favours males therefore need to be sensitively explored with misogynistic men as strong feelings about what is right and wrong usually holds a lot of prejudice and a personal story. These strong feelings and emotions were also seen within the MGTOW observation.

As an example of therapists' discourses with strong emotion:

I can't think of many examples of where the law kind of, gives women, any kind of advantage... I'm pretty certain that, you know, women still get paid less on average jobs, the female-dominated jobs tend to be less well paid, you know (App 8.2, reference 1, Therapist 5)

The discourse that the dominant discourse favours males further highlighted that men are also victims of domestic violence and pointed out that we are still living in a patriarchal society where women are more abused than men (App 8.2, Reference 1, Therapist 1).

On self-reflection, this favoured male discourse highlights thoughts and feelings within me that there are fundamental core values of what we know as right and wrong and these are still being ignored by a patriarchal-informed society. This statement is supported by all feminist scholars, and feminist studies especially highlight that therapists need to focus on the meanings of language, as it carries within it a heritage of ideas and assumptions about any culture (Hoffman, 1985; McGoldrick, Anderson, and Walsh, 1989).

Women and young girls are abused on a daily basis and the discourse of male sexual power is being promoted subconsciously on television and within the locker room boys talk in schools and colleges. This reflection links to the work of Di Bianca and Mahalik (2022); the performance of masculinity is learned by observing others and exposure to messages of what men should and should not do.

These discourses defining women as weak sex objects (App 8.2, Reference 1, Therapist 2; App 8.3, Reference 1 Therapist 4; App 8.3 Reference 2, Therapist 4; App 8.3, Reference 4, Therapist 4) are being used to control in conversations. Men and women are disagreeing on something that has to do with morals and values, not gender power. One cannot just agree to disagree on something like violence against a category of society, because abusing anyone is wrong. However, this highlights the need for a reflexive discussion

so that therapists can understand the urgency and risk to vulnerable people, but also better understand the reasons for violence.

It is not about either or, because we know that women have been abused and mistreated historically (App 8.2, Reference 1, Therapist 2).

The discourse in language to perpetuate this form of abuse is being constructed in society, something therapists can learn from MGTOW and address, so that men can feel empowered not to become part of this perpetuation of patriarchal hegemonic, abusive societal discourses. This argument links with the studies of Rayman, Sadker, and Sadker (1995), Dzubinski (2016), and Knoppers (2022), that the formation of cultural ideals of masculinity and femininity is deeply entrenched in society and culture.

4.8.6 Code 3: The Dominant Discourse Negatively Impacts Women (App 8.3)

This finding reminds us of the historical issues of women being “*subjugated in the workplace*” and not achieving their potential in life

On the other hand that must've been very unfulfilling for her because she is a bright enough woman, and was, you know, an Admin assistant and, you know, that's a secretarial job (App 8.3, Reference 1, Therapist 5).

This is a reminder for systemic practice not to lose sight of the past and to work sensitively to include men in the stories women have about discrimination of the past. Inclusion may help men understand what women

have gone through in the past, to instil the practice of inclusion and compassion within men. This finding links with the theory of Daniel (2018 cited in Krause, 2018 p.95), who indicates that:

Working with gender issues requires both men and women to understand the politics of identity construction and different levels of engagement with the positions of others (Daniel, 2018, cited in Krause, *et al.*, 2012. p.95).

The finding revealed that therapists feel that daily in society:

Women are being raped, being sexually assaulted, touched inappropriately in bars, and if they make complaints then nothing is done about it on many occasions (App 8.3, Reference 1 Therapist 4; App 8.3 Reference 2, Therapist 4).

One reason for unhelpful aggressive masculine discourses may be that the media desensitise gender to look a certain way and many other violent and horrific behaviours are in this way made acceptable. Foucault (1975) supports this reflection. This is evidenced by people watching horror movies, playing violent video games or watching pornographic content (App 8.3, Reference 1, Therapist 4; App 8.3, Reference 3, Therapist 4).

All of these discourses desensitise humans to aggression. In conclusion, therapists may be able to help people to recognise how these subtle discourses desensitise them to violence, and in this way help them to remove these things from their lives. These hegemonic male constructions have led to many men internalising messages that shame the expression of emotions, discourage desires for intimate connection, and encourage aggression rather than compassion.

This finding reflects that certain heterosexual discourses are unhelpful for women. All therapists felt that men did not experience life worse; they

believed that women were still subjugated to violence in society on a daily basis. For example, males can walk safely in the street at night. However, for females walking in the street:

...there'll be guys eyeing her up, you know, there'll be looking behind looking at her bum or whatever (App 8.3, Reference 3, Therapist 4).

These heterosexual discourses are supported in the literature (Hollway, 1984); male sexual drive discourse constructs a belief that a biological drive directly produces male sexuality and this drive exists because the species need to be propagated.

4.8.7 Code 4: Everyone Is Imbedded in a Larger Cultural System (App 8.4)

This finding highlighted as expressed by Therapist 4 that “we are all part of a bigger system” (App 8.4, Reference 1, Therapist 4; Therapist 4, Reference 2). However, we may be supporting a system of slavery (unconsciously under the control of powerful discourses). It may be difficult to differentiate what we want and who we are if we are unconscious of the bigger system we are living within. We may be accepting the systems around us as an inevitability, without speaking up against them. The philosopher Althusser writes about how we come to take on board ideologies (Althusser, 1971; Ryder, 2013), which supports this finding.

If we accept that we are part of a bigger systemic world with diversity and power issues, but fail to question who created the laws, we are saying that we want someone to create the law and make the rules, i.e., the state or the government. If we just accept that we will not differentiate our will over the

influences of a cultural and wider system, we are also saying that we want someone else to take responsibility for our lives and everyone else's lives and to tell people how to live and to punish them for that. That total acceptance without questioning the systems we are in supports the systems of slavery, and power differences, and we adhere to the discourse of slave masters and slaves. This reflection is supported by the following therapists:

I think we're all slaves. I don't think that's unique to females as I think all humans are confined by our language and just, you know, no one on this planet can do what they want to. App 8.4, Reference 2, Therapist 4

Yeah, I think it also gets you into trouble some time. yeah, the social order I suppose I was kind of thinking then about what is the, social order, and we live in lots of different cultures and societies and you know, how we get, kind of the hierarchy of things. App 8.4, Reference 2, Therapist 7.

No I don't think we can be independent. I think we, going back to our system, our systemic training is that we're part of a wider system of kind of the John Burnham and stuff. we're gendered, we're classed, especially in the UK. We have class we have a culture, we have a colour, we have a language, we have an education and I think we operate as part of a bigger system. I don't think we can be independent. App 8.4, Reference 1, Therapist 4.

The discourse that everyone is embedded in a larger culture is supported by the theory of Willig (1999), Billig and Parker (1993), and Hollway (1984, 1989), who argue that discourses address us as particular people and construct subject positions that we cannot avoid, leading to the representations of ourselves and others that these discourses invite.

Therapists in my view need to help clients like MGTOW men to become assertive in speaking truth. Truth needs to be spoken louder than lies if the

lies are on every single platform in society. This finding reflects the literature of Foucault who argues that humans are being described in ways in which discourses manifest themselves in text and practices and that discourses live themselves out through people (Ryder, 2013; Burr, 1995; Ard 1993). This means that human beings amount to little more than puppets who are operated by social structures they cannot see. This act of control has been referred to as the "death of the subject" (Burr, 1995, p.121).

4.8.8 Code 5: Expectations of Men As the Aggressive Breadwinner (App 8.5)

I think to be strong, to be providers yeah, to be caring, to show responsibility, to sort of to be leaders, to kind of- for some people to be head of the house. So there's particular stories that can be around a man, figure to be successful, that's fed to the man, you know, to be energetic to, we had this, I think this shows that men might experience in terms of how they need to be or how they shouldn't be. Expectations of how one should be can be constraining and can be challenging when your life doesn't fit within that, how you manage those expectations and pressures, and whether you have permission to step outside of that context. App 8.5 Reference 1, Therapist 5

And so I think my self-imposed, social expectations, are to earn money, to be able to have a big enough house, to provide security, to bring up my children. Therapist 5, Reference 2, Therapist 5

I find men's conversations less interesting. you know, I don't want to talk about, emotional, whatever we're talking about at length. I don't want to talk about, stocks and shares. I think men's conversations are sometimes kind of more competitive, so I guess men are more competitive.. App 8.5 Reference 3, Therapist 5

These findings highlight the double standards society has for men and how these discourses affect family relationships.

This led to the following personal reflections about societal expectations that can construct an aggressive breadwinner discourse. This may be useful for some therapists and to systemic practice. There is a discourse within society defining that a man should get a high-paying job so that he can take care of his family, but he should also have enough spare time to spend with his spouse and children so that they do not get lonely. There is a societal narrative that if you are a father, you need to be there and support your children, but do not try to guide them or structure them, or especially discipline them in any way or as a man you will be judged as abusive. The man is expected to be masculine to be attractive, but should also get in touch with his sensitive side, but not enough to cry, as that makes him look weak. To win the attention of a woman, a man must be prepared to take her out to a fancy dinner in a fancy car and get her flowers and drinks, but not expect anything in return, because then he would be judged as pushy. There is a discourse that men have to dote on a girl in every possible way, but in the end, it is her decision as to whether or not all his time and energy was worth giving the man anything in return. If she leaves the man after a six-year relationship, the man is made to believe that she was just doing what is best for her, but if the man leaves her after six years, the man is a "scum bag," who obviously never cared. Make sure you are intelligent or women will look down on you, but "women are always right" so they will look down on you anyway, plus if you are really smart, they are going to see you as arrogant. Also, be confident as confidence is sexy, but do not be cocky. Sleep with too many women and you are just a man whore who is afraid of commitment, but do not sleep with enough women and you are less desirable because of your

lack of experience. Be independent, but do as you are told. Have high standards, but not high expectations. Accept women at their best and their worst but change every negative aspect of yourself in order to prove your love. You are a man, you should have all the answers, but if you have all the answers, you are aggressive or a narcissist. This suggests that when we work with men and women, we need to be aware of how everyone's positions in discourse provide people with the content of their subjectivity, as Davies and Harré (1990) explains.

This finding heightens the importance for therapists to be curious about the masculine discourses of needing to be strong and how emotions are allowed by society to be expressed in men (App 8.5, Therapist 6, Reference 3; Therapists 7, Reference 1; 8, Reference 1).

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter explained the findings of this study and discussed it analytically from a social constructionist paradigm. I approached the discussions from an FDA and looked at the findings in a critical context, bearing in mind the existence of social power and control. This chapter brought awareness to those practices in society that hindered the expression of self and possibly took away individual choice. This chapter further concluded that MGTOW as a platform to help men become "enlightened" raised many concerns as this platform was not mainly disseminating knowledge, but it was conducted in such a way to maintain power within a certain MGTOW social class. It also raised questions about how MGTOW men would find a therapist helpful if

they believed that their emotional needs were met within MGTOW. This study identified the unease therapists felt with the MGTOW group and raised curiosity about how discourses about misogyny could impact on treating misogynistic men. My self-reflections were guided by Gibb's reflective model and I concluded that social power to maintain patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity exists on a much deeper level and raised questions about the existence of a very deep-seated hatred these men have for women, a hatred that was socialised with many unhelpful discourses that kept men in prison, yet they seem to be deceived by their MGTOW freedom.

5 Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This study analyses the discourse on various forms of violence that are commonly expressed in the online group, MGTOW, (men going their own way) to help systemic psychotherapists understand and better treat those who display misogyny. The research questions are presented in section 1.3, and to answer these questions, I observed the online discourse of MGTOW and interviewed eight systemic psychotherapists about them. The methods are reported in Chapter 3

In the previous chapter, I presented and discussed the findings of this study in detail. I will conclude this study by summarising the key research findings related to the research aims and questions and the value and contribution thereof. I will also review the study's limitations and propose opportunities for further research.

5.2 How Did This Study Achieve the Research Aims?

This study aimed to investigate how systemic psychotherapists could learn from discourses constructed between men from MGTOW to help therapists be more sensitive to contemporary male gender identity. The results indicate the detrimental impact of the power structures within society that maintain hegemonic masculinity as seen from the discourses of MGTOW men. These social power structures also affect therapists' discourses on misogyny, which may affect how they support misogynistic men. The findings suggest the

need for systemic psychotherapists to acknowledge how they feel about sensitive issues such as men wanting to rationalise their abusive language and attitudes about women; acknowledging their feelings in this way may help therapists support men towards more integrated and healthy relationships with women.

This study highlighted the construction of masculinity: boys and men do not become misogynistic independently, but within the context of relationships, communities, and societies. As they grow up, something makes them believe that they should be different from their authentic expression of self.

MGTOW men see the need for relationships as a weakness. However, healthy relationships, were vital to being human throughout the lifespan.

This study concluded that MGTOW men seem vulnerable and that their anger spoke of a fear of loss and lack. Systemic therapists in this study thought men expressed emotional pain through hate language and that men were afraid of showing “weakness” if they did own up to their vulnerabilities. In addition, men believed that showing vulnerabilities could harm their societal position and relation to other men. Further findings of this study were that MGTOW men perceive strength as separation from others and the ability to overpower others, which reflects a culturally dominant discourse.

5.3 What Contribution Does This Study Make to Theory and Practice?

5.3.1 Summary

In summary, this study contributed to systemic theory and practice in the following ways:

Learning from MGTOW – increased sensitivity to male gender identity;

- Systemic Therapists' Discourses around MGTOW were grounded in facilitating interpersonal and relational connections;
- MGTOW's oppositional discourses were rooted in essentialist masculinities;
- MGTOW contributes to supporting men on the MGTOW platform.

All the research questions were answered and can be summarised as follow:

5.3.2 Response to Research Question 1

The following bullet points summarise what systemic therapist could learn from MGTOW

RQ1: What can systemic psychotherapists learn from MGTOW to help with therapy and be more sensitive to contemporary male gender identity?

- A realisation of the unconscious structures of power within society that construct hegemonic patriarchy as well as possible prejudice amongst therapists may help systemic psychotherapists in providing therapy and be more sensitive to contemporary male gender identity because:
- There were more to explore when working with men about the social structures that inform men to feel and belief that emotional issues were more the mother's responsibility than the fathers'.
- Therapists' discourses evidenced that they could learn from MGTOW in the sense that there is a need for flexibility in what it means to be a man, and this invites a redefinition of masculinity.
- Therapists' discourses suggested that they could learn from MGTOW in the sense that there is a greater understanding of what MGTOW men reject and what they gain through their discourses.
- Therapists' discourses evidenced the need for sensitivity about the push and pull experience that MGTOW may experience about being part of the pregnancy experience for women.
- Therapists' discourses evidenced that flexibility in masculinity may mean that therapists need to be more aware that even if men say certain issues are women's issues, that they may not have the emotional language to describe that they want more participation in family life.
- A realisation that there is a need for a systemic process to become relational with boys and men to help them dismantle hegemonic ideas about what real men are.

- Therapists' discourses evidenced that in order to reduce stress on families, therapists need to show an awareness that cultural constructs around redefining masculinity can help men let go of the historically prescribed gender roles.
- Therapists' discourses evidenced that they could learn from MGTOW in the sense that MGTOW men are holding onto MGTOW knowledge from of a fear of being lonely, rejected or ridiculed and that this fear of punishment is informed by structures of knowledge about patriarchy and social punishment.
- An awareness of the confusion men have about their definition of masculinity highlights the importance for therapists to be sensitive about the dominant discourses regarding men not wanting to be part of traditionally feminine tasks in families.
- Therapists' discourses evidenced a need to understand what social discourses informed the belief in MGTOW that being on their own meant that they would be happier.
- Therapists' discourses evidenced that visibility of what is seen as misogyny may actually be a trap because this misogyny and anger may indicate a vulnerable man.
- Therapists' discourses evidenced that even though these men claim to be free, what they really seem to want is to be someone else who they were not at the beginning of where they believe their anger started. They may or may not be angry at women, but at the control of masculine social power that restricts them from expressing their own experiences with women

- Therapists' discourses evidenced that there was a need to be curious about how the negotiation of parenting emerges between heterosexual parents.
- Therapists' discourses evidenced that they could learn from MGTOW in the sense that everyone was embedded in a more extensive cultural system.
- Therapists' discourses suggested that they could learn from MGTOW in that the perceived role of men in society was that of an aggressive breadwinner, which is something that needs questioning.
- Therapists' discourses evidenced that they could learn from MGTOW in the sense that these men were socially constructed to believe that identity was fixed; greater curiosity needs to be shown in how to help men embrace a change into a more fluid self.
- Therapists can learn from MGTOW that MGTOW want to make a connection with another, in an unconditional caring manner.
- Therapists' discourses evidenced that strong views on misogyny may hinder therapists to validate MGTOW and to be with them in a caring manner and will make it difficult to meet male clients where they are.
- Therapists' discourses evidenced that they can learn from MGTOW when they meet male clients where they are by identifying social structures and deconstructing what informed anger, without prejudice and without being drawn into these men's stories themselves.
- Therapists can learn to try to uncover "should" discourses in therapy as they present an issue of power imbalance.

- Therapists discourses evidenced that MGTOW men spoke honestly about their difficulties and that the defensiveness of their talk showed that they were vulnerable.
- Therapists discourses evidenced that they need to be aware of the meanings men give to belonging to groups such as MGTOW as these men can feel disenfranchised, powerless, or lonely.
- Therapists also felt that in the work therapists do daily, there was a risk of being sensitised about taking a negative position against narratives of hate and anger, while also trying to be understanding and accommodating to a client who uses hate speech.

5.3.3 Response to Research Question 2

Furthermore, this study helps us understand the discourses therapists have around men like MGTOW members and the following learning points were identified that could improve the quality of therapeutic interventions:

RQ2: What are the discourses that therapists hold concerning MGTOW?

- Men may not always have the emotional language to describe how they want to be part of a child's life and experience the journey of pregnancy.
- Discourses of therapists show that men and women could be approached differently because of how gender was constructed in society and the language and manner in which we make connections will either make men feel connected with the

therapist or push men away from exploring aspects such as sexuality, shame, and vulnerability.

- There is a need to reframe the belief that changes in gender roles are negative, as this may reduce anxiety; MGTOW men need to let go of the historically prescribed gender roles.
- Curiosity and reflection are needed on how the media constructs traditional roles for men.
- Exploration is needed into what informs social discourses of stoicism and the redefinition of healthy family life with men who believe happiness means being alone and separated from women and families.
- Therapists need to be self-reflective about their own experiences of family life and how this may influence the manner in which they work with misogynistic men.
- The need to be a “good enough” father was acceptable to MGTOW men and there was a sensitivity to how this new emotional construct of fatherhood was introduced by therapists to men who were possibly emotionally starved from knowing how to show this was important.
- Therapists need to be mindful of traumatic childhood experiences stifling the expression of the true self as the man grew up.
- Therapists need to be neutral without judgement when working with MGTOW men because not all MGTOW men have similar

beliefs on the platform: sensitivity is needed to get men to feel safe to question masculine constructs.

- Greater curiosity and reflexivity are needed around what meaning men give to their claims of feeling under attack, on an individual basis, away from the influence of the group.
- Greater curiosity and circularity in the questioning is needed to explore how performing masculinity a certain way is helpful for men and women and their relationships with each other.
- Curiosity should be explored about the subconscious construction of MGTOW men's language, how hegemonic masculinity constructs language, and how this social construction positions men.
- Therapists need to work with men to pay attention to how their constructs towards gender, sex, and relationships may affect their children's relationships and expression of sexuality.
- The anger these men show suggested that they needed more compassion and care.
- MGTOW men may not feel safe and the therapist can help these men to feel safe by how they listen to them, making them feel safe enough to make changes in their lives.
- The idea of making a connection with another, in an unconditional caring manner seems to be important, regardless of these men's anger, sadness, disappointment, frustration or joy.

- People who are angry need to feel validated and therapists need to be curious about this therapeutic dance so that MGTOW men can process emotion.
- Therapists could formulate questions, informed by ideas of Foucault's (1979) concept of power and discipline, in relation to intimate heterosexual relationships, and question men's desires to be in relationships.
- The tendency to blame society or feminism prevents MGTOW men from being curious about the discourses that led them to blame others and not be responsible.
- MGTOW men are men, who, because of their vulnerability, join MGTOW because they feel disenfranchised, powerless, or perhaps lonely.
- MGTOW men construct a limited and generalised perception of what it means to be a man: one has to look at every person's context because there is no meaning without context.
- MGTOW men need help to recognise that there are many discourses that can influence choices: they can question what they really want for themselves and become aware of those discourses in society that make them feel obliged to look like a certain man.
- Therapists need to be curious about what informed the positions these men took in society and what that meant for them in their experiences of being subjugated.

- Tolerance is not always acceptable when it comes to hate speech and therapists not staying neutral may help men to find clearer safe boundaries.
- Men and women need to be approached differently because of how gender is constructed in society and the language and the manner in which therapists make connections will either make them feel connected with the therapist or push them away from exploring aspects such as sexuality, shame, and emotional vulnerability.
- Therapists need to be mindful that what they say which may be perceived as prejudice.
- Therapists need to stay curious about discourses about hegemonic masculinity, as it is very hard for men to admit to sexual assault by a woman; most people think that this could not happen.
- Therapists remain curious about how violence against women has become normalised.
- Therapists can help men to recognise their emotions.

5.3.4 Response to Research Question 3

RQ3: What discourses are constructed between MGTOW?

- The construction when men talk to men was rooted in essentialist masculinity.

- The female nature is controlling and coercive and not nurturing. There is a belief that females should be more nurturing than men.
- Men reject the social role of the breadwinner.
- MGTOW Men reject the idea of marriage, and some MGTOW men feel that co-parenting is seen as slavery.

The following conclusions about what MGTOW men claim to be were identified:

- MGTOW men claim a gynocentric order and see men as victims.
- MGTOW men claim that mainstream media ignores topics important to men.
- MGTOW men claim that men are not free, have less power, but invent everything and are therefore entitled to the majority of wealth in the world.
- MGTOW men claim that most men are willing to give up women to explore the universe.

5.3.5 Response to Research Question 4

RQ4: How can MGTOW contribute to healthy attitudes and behaviours towards self, women, and men?

- By finding a space to voice feelings of disenfranchisement.
- By achieving self-actualisation and empowerment.

- By recognising and discussing negative impacts of societal discourse.

5.4 Limitations of Study

This study attempted to cover a vast area of interest. With the benefit of having completed the study, I can see that it would have been sufficient to only focus on the MGTOW community or systemic psychotherapists' discourses around MGTOW. The data gathered was overwhelming and made it challenging to analyse. A smaller sample of reports from MGTOW would have been sufficient as discourses started to repeat.

No research on MGTOW had been completed at the time of commencing this study. However, in 2020/2021, several studies arose to explore discourses of MGTOW, duplicating most of the lessons learnt from this study. Much time went into analysing information, therefore which had already been analysed by other studies. Analysis of data could have been more focused had the study been focused only on discourses of therapists around MGTOW.

Systemic psychotherapists had to do much work on their own to understand the MGTOW community before interviews. I was fortunate to have had willing and generous participants who accommodated this requirement.

Face to face interviews rather than forum observations would have given a more balanced view of discourses of MGTOW men and therapists. However, anonymity of MGTOW members made this impossible. Interviewing private

clients on MGTOW men's discourses would have exposed vulnerable people to the platform and so was unethical.

There was a small interview sample size. I think it would have been useful to hear from more systemic psychotherapists as it could have added to the validity of the findings of the research. However, the data from both MGTOW observations and interviews of systemic psychotherapists felt overwhelming at times.

I only spoke to systemic psychotherapists in the UK and it would have been useful to hear from therapists in countries such as South Africa and the US where violence is reported to be higher than elsewhere.

There was also a risk of me influencing the responses of systemic psychotherapists unknowingly. However, I worked from a social constructionist approach so the meaning making of a joint action between me and respondents were welcomed.

There is much research on gender issues, especially masculinity so I found it challenging to make a significant difference in psychotherapy in an already saturated field of study. However, the findings to RQ1 and RQ2 may inform on practice.

5.5 How Can My Contribution Be Applied in Systemic Research and Practice?

The focus of this study was using a social constructionist and FDA approach to critically understand the construction of masculinity. This understanding

was supported by analysing the use of language and how this language represented knowledge about gender.

This study contributed to systemic practice in the sense that meaning was constructed through observing the MGTOW platform and engaging with systemic therapists around a sensitive topic such as misogyny. The analysis of this study contributed to how knowledge can be shaped about misogyny and how this newfound knowledge may influence the manner in which systemic psychotherapists work with men.

This study made a significant contribution in highlighting how systemic psychotherapists need to be mindful of their own prejudices which may influence how they work with misogynistic men. In addition, it contributed to the systemic practice of self-reflection, and being able to say the things that are different, possibly dangerous, such as “thinking it, but cannot say it out loud.”

This study contributes to systemic practice in raising awareness of the importance to help men to explore how they could be more compassionate towards themselves. I believe this would enable men to manage their anger better. I recommend that compassionate focussed systemic therapy might be a way forward with men who hold the same truths as MGTOW.

This study also highlighted that therapists can also be more compassionate towards themselves when they identify their own prejudices. When doing so, we can work with them and become better at what we are doing.

Furthermore, this study also revealed that men want to hear it as it feels, not tiptoe around the truth.

Therapists can listen to men differently as this may make men feel accepted and validated, leading to boys and men expressing their emotional lives better.

Therapists can unambiguously disprove the shaming of vulnerability by assuring boys and men that it is natural to feel and express their vulnerable feelings – even to cry – and that these vulnerabilities are not defective features of their maleness.

Therapists may benefit from self-reflections around their understanding of the impact of hegemonic socialisation labels: men may believe that asking for help means that they are weak or feeding into a discourse of feminism.

Men need to feel that they have the freedom to be in a relationship with others and that their sense of self is growing from being in a mutual relationship. This sense of freedom can be constructed by developing robust and authentic relationships.

Through therapy, men can develop solid, and authentic relationships with one another, which can help them grow as individuals rather than as isolated and separated. This support can also help them feel valued and included in their growth.

Therapists who identify as female or non-binary know the lived experiences of what it is like to be and work in a world with gender categories, as these individuals have contributed massively to our understanding of discourses around power relations in systemic practice. I trust that this study will continue to stimulate robust reflections amongst these therapists that can

touch more hearts and reach more men who are silenced from their true expressions of selves due to hegemonic patriarchy.

Connections can help boys and men develop their power and self-esteem instead of being dominated by hegemonic socialisation. Therapists can also help men set new expectations for themselves and their friends. For instance, men could start to see real friends as “friends that can help one to develop new goals for relationships and resist aggression.”

This study also reminds us that shaming boys for being vulnerable, weak, and lacking in compassion does not prepare them to be strong and healthy men. Instead, it can make them more susceptible to social and health crises.

5.6 Reflexivity

There was much information, and I felt I had to conclude quickly to bring some order to the study. However, a central lesson I have learned was that I had to permit myself to feel like “this study took forever to complete” and accept that there would be a mess. My supervisor told me to expand the data with self-reflections, and I almost fainted as the data was already colossal. However, staying with the data helped me find coherence between my inner dialogues and how we spoke in the interviews or how MGTOW men spoke. This systemic awareness enabled me to be more explorative with discourses.

I was able to conclude on discourses as a collective as opposed to just me taking responsibility for this individually. Staying on edge, with an expectation that anything could evolve from the data and my reflections, allowed for

certain moments to emerge when I knew this was a code or discourse. These moments had a felt experience of things coming together. Staying with the mess allowed me to relate to the otherness of MGTOW, myself, and therapists. It constructed a different sensitivity and led to the different positioning of knowing. Staying with what is, helps us to understand how to go on in particular contexts and, in the case of research, the not yet actualised (Witgenstein, 1953). I immediately saw that I would be arriving at general categories if I ignored being on edge with a systemic attitude. The idea was to put some newness into language. I allowed myself to develop a new perspective on something already known, such as "MGTOW men were misogynistic." These new attitudes were not created solely on an intellectual level. Still, it was a felt experience in the relational dynamic with respondents and data, as well as noticing what was going on within me as I was doing it. I tried not to re-create the language of others with known categories but brought forward my language.

Interestingly, as I was forming opinions from the data, the data were also forming me, almost precisely what I think happens on the MGTOW platform. You have an idea of what others are saying, and then you are being created by the opinion on your opinion of what other's opinions of you are.

As I first moved into the world of MGTOW, I experienced rejection. When I put my judgements away, I felt a feeling of belonging, a sense I never thought I would feel in a group such as MGTOW. I usually make connections easily with people, but I chose not to pursue further links or observe the group. I wonder if I avoided a feeling of further rejection. Maybe I tried to avoid rejection from my father or maybe God. "I love God, and I need God."

There is a male issue for me, but I also think a female problem. I think it was easier to retract my involvement in the group to talk about “these men” as opposed to “becoming like these men.” Maybe there is a story of me not wanting to be like my father, or perhaps the feeling of belonging was an intolerable feeling as I could not face the idea that I also agreed with many of the arguments of MGTOW men. I did not like myself for this realisation.

I had to critically reflect on the position of knowing and the goal of not knowing. I, therefore, had to critically reflect on the patterns of my thinking and the patterns of my interpretations. Finally, I had to pay attention to my role in the sense-making process of the data.

I read through the interviewees’ data and started circling words and sentences connected with my culture, gender, prejudice, and power. I also looked at how specific ideas positioned me to feel closer or further away from thoughts. I was very much mindful of the feelings that I shared with MGTOW, such as my concerns about marriage, co-dependencies, attachment issues, and overpopulation. I started to make up files on my computer about words and sentences and summarised my interpretation of the meaning of clusters of words and sentences.

5.7 Recommendation and Ideas for Future Research

Systemic psychotherapists must conduct more qualitative research to identify areas of their practice that can help improve the well-being of men. For example, systemic psychotherapists can help men to be less angry with the world if they see more positives in trying to connect with others.

Systemic curiosity about the broader systemic context of boys and men may help these men to optimise their personal growth and connections with others and help them to see the relational value of being part of others. For example, MGTOW men had strong feelings of a lack of agency. If systemic psychotherapists were mindful of their unhelpful discourses, they could help men be compassionate towards others, for example, when men exercise their ideas of competition. This could help men to treat others with compassion and dignity.

I recommend helping men to realise that a “real man” is compassionate and has a sense of himself as a unique expression of his idea of who he wants to be. Systemic psychotherapists can help men to realise that healthy masculinity means men do not isolate or segregate themselves, do not see themselves as victims and, as a result, believe violence to be acceptable. Systemic psychotherapists can also help men realise that healthy masculinity means respect for differences and grey areas.

I encourage further research into how masculinity-focussed interventions in other countries may help researchers to engage men and boys in social contexts where there is much violence against women, for example, in South Africa, and the US.

Masculinity-based programmes can help boys and men separate from the construction of hegemonic masculinity and school-based groups and activities. These community-based programmes are needed to help men and boys to develop healthy relationships and prevent violence among young men.

These masculinity-based community approaches should focus on improving men's mental health, providing social support, and decreasing the continuation of performing hegemonic constructed masculinity.

These groups can also help men process diversity issues. They can additionally create opportunities for boys and men to develop deeper relationships with other boys and men. This may be achieved, for instance, by facilitating conversations about sexual orientation; these groups may help individuals feel more comfortable and eliminate their own biases.

Through the development of environment-focussed prevention programmes, researchers can partner with schools, organisations, and communities to address various community challenges. These programmes can also help support the development of effective strategies and masculinity-based programmes. Research that addresses the challenges and goals of communities engaged in various forms of participatory activities may be a valuable way to support the existing resources and strengths of these communities.

Future research could examine how experiences with boys and men affect their participation in interventions. It may also explore whether these experiences transform into healthy changes for boys and men.

In response to some of the questions I could not answer in this study, I acknowledge that many complex issues need to be discussed in more depth.

There is a complexity about how men and boys are affected by hegemonic masculinity and oppression. For instance, intervention therapists should be aware of how pressure and hegemonic masculinity affect them.

This issue highlights the need for a trauma-informed approach to address the harmful behaviours of men. Instead of shaming or ignoring those who have experienced or caused violence, further interventions should focus on a relational lens of power dynamics between men and boys.

Every man needs to be able to express the various ways men and boys are themselves without holding on to a single definition of what it means to be a man.

Interventions must not remove or marginalise the damage of hegemonic socialisation on men. It should also not limit men in their diverse expression of self, for example trans men's identities, masculine identities, and racial identities, or ecological masculinities that define relationships with nature. We do not want to erase the unique issues of men. Recognising the tension between the traditional norms of hegemonic masculinity and the need for space for diverse masculinities is essential. Although I consider hegemonic masculinity to be critically important, the issues highlighted in this study by no means cover the complexities of the construction of masculinity and power issues.

Hegemonic masculinity is often implicated in various social, environmental, and health crises that I did not fully explore in this study. Future interventions on masculinity may help inform the development of effective interventions that can interrupt the effect of normalised hegemonic trends, e.g., hyper-individualism, colonialism, nationalism, and advance equitable, sustainable social change, and public policy. In addition, further interventions can help address the various challenges men face, such as managing the increasing prevalence of nationalism and hyper-individualism.

The increasing field of interventions that promote social change and health promotion among young men and boys may be strengthened by recognising the social context of their experiences. Though hegemonic masculinity remains prevalent in the UK, relational interventions can help promote a more inclusive and practical approach to addressing systemic issues.

5.8 Closing Summary

In this thesis, I analysed the discourse on various forms of violence that are commonly expressed in the online group, MGTOW, to help systemic psychotherapists understand and better treat those who display misogyny. The focus of this study was using a social constructionist and FDA approach to critically understand the construction of masculinity.

I aimed to construct meaning through observing the MGTOW platform and engaged with systemic therapists around a sensitive topic such as misogyny. I concluded in my analysis on how knowledge could be shaped about misogyny and heightened awareness on how this knowledge may influence the manner in which systemic psychotherapists can work with men.

I highlighted how systemic psychotherapists need to be mindful of their own prejudice which may influence how they work with misogynistic men. This research emphasised how crucial self-reflection is when working with sensitive topics, such as gender and power. I invited greater transparency for therapists to being able to say the things that are different, possibly dangerous.

This research raised awareness of the importance for therapists to help men to explore how they could be more compassionate towards themselves as I believe this would enable men to manage their anger better. Furthermore, this research aimed to let systemic psychotherapists know that it was just as important to be compassionate to oneself as a therapist when they identify their own prejudices.

I concluded in this research that men want to hear it as it feels and that tiptoeing around the truth did not seem to work for MGTOW. It became clear that therapists can listen to men differently as this may make men feel accepted and validated, leading to boys and men expressing their emotional lives better.

Furthermore, this research can conclude that showing vulnerabilities are not defective features of maleness and it is natural to feel and express vulnerabilities. Therapists can unambiguously disprove the shaming of vulnerability by assuring boys and men of this and help men to understand the impact of hegemonic socialisation labels.

This thesis raised awareness that men need to feel they have the freedom to be in a relationship with others and that their sense of self is growing from being in a mutual relationship. It also highlighted that self-growth can be constructed by developing robust and authentic relationships, rather than as isolated and separated.

I trust that this study will continue to stimulate robust reflections amongst MGTOW men and therapists. I trust that the passionate manner in which I wrote about my father and self-reflections will touch more hearts and reach

more men who are silenced from their true expression of selves due to hegemonic patriarchy.

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Appendix 1: Semi-structured Interviews

1. What do you think/feel about the group?
2. How do you feel the group helps men to be more self-actualised?
3. What do you feel 'a real man' means?
4. What are your feelings about men being slaves to a system that supports feminism and segregates men?
5. What is your view on MGTOW men's beliefs that the laws and systems mainly take on the view of women today?
6. What is your view on MGTOW men's beliefs that masculinity is under attack?
7. What are your views on who has it worse in society, men, or women?
8. How do the social orders in society affect men's self-actualisation?
9. What are the social expectations of men?
10. How do you think the MGTOW platform constructed masculinity?
11. What are your views on masculinity 50 years ago?
12. How do you feel about the role of men today?
13. What are your feelings when I say that men feel castrated from their position in society?
14. What are your views on the difference between men and women?
15. How do you view violence in men?
16. What informs violence in men?

Appendix 2

Brother

<Files\\MGTOW data> - § 3 references coded [2.57% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 0.47% Coverage

2020-01-06 at 10:41pm

One member gave him emotional motivation and tried to make him feel better by saying “Don’t look down brother...look up”

Reference 2 – 1.74% Coverage

2020-01-25 at 12:17 AM

This member also confirms that he had a similar situation. He calls the member “brother.” This is how emotion is shown between men. As a man I know this. It means I have your back. You only call someone this if you were emotionally touched but still wanted to keep a safe distance, that is I suppose to make it more socially acceptable. He motivated him by saying that life gets better. This member echoed what the other member said about material possessions and not measure yourself against that.

Reference 3 – 0.37% Coverage

The Red Pill can really drag on you in early stages so reach out if needed.

Welcome my friend brother.

Faternal Encouragement

<Files\MGTOW data> - § 4 references coded [5.72% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 1.88% Coverage

2020-01-06 at 10:41pm

One member gave him emotional motivation and tried to make him feel better by saying “Don’t look down brother...look up.” He empathised with him saying that he was not alone as he had been in that position as well and he believes many men felt like that. I wonder if they do? He motivated this member to imagine a bright future and to get some dreams to aspire towards as he would then prove to those who told him life is over that it is not. He said the following:

Get ya head straight,.... this is YOUR LIFE.

Look forward, not behind you!

Reference 2 – 1.39% Coverage

And you know what... I did it because I am a man..and as a man I can accomplish anything. I put my mind to anything positive that I want to achieve. Don’t look backwards brother ...you aren’t going that way.

The above sounds like an older brother is giving his younger brother a pep talk to motivate him. There is a discourse about what a man is, he said “he did all of what he had to do because that is what men do.”

Reference 3 – 1.09% Coverage

2020-01-25 at 3:06 AM

Another member mentioned that the feelings of sadness, anger, and spite are powerful fuel! He said that this member needed to attach that energy source to some constructive action and he will be an unstoppable force. He reminded him that there must be something good in the world for him, like a hobby.

Reference 4 – 1.37% Coverage

Another member wrote this:

Please understand that although we are here to share knowledge and sometimes we have a shout and rage there is another side..

We care we care about you and each other.

Yes you ... we don't know you ... but we do ... very well. Because you are us and we know how you feel.

So right now is the time to lean on us if needed don't worry ... at some point we'll need the same.

Masculinity Support

<Files\MGTOW data> - § 1 reference coded [0.70% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 0.70% Coverage

This member reminded him that he will be okay now that he is part of the MGTOW group and that he had the one essence that makes a real man, and that is self-realisation, and the resolute sovereignty it inspires!

Appendix 3

Comparing Relational Exchange to Slavery

<Files\MGTOW data> - § 1 reference coded [1.30% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 1.30% Coverage

That is the most worthwhile aspect of MGTOW to me. Literally helping others to see their own capacity, their own potential, and their own ability to transcend the paradigm and leave the plantation. MGTOW is the unleashing of male potential through first losing the inhibition that so many men have in tying their masculinity to a woman, to a family, to what others think, and to their kids.

Dismissal-Refusal to Engage with Women

<Files\MGTOW data> - § 3 references coded [3.10% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 1.43% Coverage

One of the chief beauties of MGTOW is it makes it okay to not engage in their fake ass bulls~~~.

No smileys, no emoticons. No pussy pass, in any sense.

The only caveat is I don't usually go into depth with women like I do with men. Men generally want to understand how things work or why something is the way it is, whereas women just want to FEEL GOOD and don't care much for further knowledge.

Often silence is the best response.

Reference 2 – 0.44% Coverage

MGTOW members response to the above post

I don't treat them like men...I treat them like children. Or, I just completely avoid them.

Reference 3 – 1.22% Coverage

All I know is that I would forgive a child in a split second while my forgiveness for weemins is permanently shut off.

If I had a choice between saving a woman or saving a child you know what my choice would be. I'd leave the woman to die open-mouthed rattling her last bulls~~~ before meeting her maker while I take the kid to the hospital and try to find his father.

Note Enough ROI in Relationships with Women

<Files\MGTOW data> - § 8 references coded [8.65% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 0.74% Coverage

Why should I care about serving something that doesn't serve me? Why should I do what other people tell me especially when those people would be willing to throw me away at the first chance they sent to profit in doing so?

Reference 2 – 0.47% Coverage

In essence, MGTOW is the search for low investment, high return activities, and these things are not found in women, careers, or consumerism.

Reference 3 – 0.54% Coverage

MGTOW encourages men to pursue their free will and puts into proper perspective what women are, their place, and what value you should place on these relationships.

Reference 4 – 1.71% Coverage

The axiom really being that women, they may come along for the ride but never ever ever ever deviate your own course for them because they will never be the ride, they are not the ride. MGTOW is seeking to have more men who are liberated from the act from the system because society, women, and our immediate families will not put into perspective the actual cost to benefit ratio in engaging with women and especially in getting married and having kids with them. This is why this is an important aspect of MGTOW.

Reference 5 – 1.41% Coverage

It is, it is so that the first notions that people have about the way things need to be can be broken down through logic, rationality, studies, and experiences of others. Then and only then are they totally, totally free because you have to have a proper understanding and context of relationships. Women and signing contracts, having kids, and sharing your wealth with them before you are truly able to understand it all.

Reference 6 – 2.81% Coverage

it's about saying, look at everything in the world, look at it for what it is and in spite of all of this you have an amazing opportunity. Here is how you can take advantage of it and here is how to avoid the problem that many men face and that many men are left to deal with because of a lack of knowledge.

How much money, time, effort, and emotional investment have been lost by men who could have taken the same resources, channelled it into the self or into something higher, and have been more fulfilled for it. And that those very things, how much of that has been lost on women? How much of it needs to be lost before men wake up to their reality? The irony is that by channelling it into something other than women, they actually end up with more women due to their higher success in life and thus, the acquisition of status, and money for it.

Reference 7 – 0.41% Coverage

They understand the dangers of engaging with them, alimony, divorce, rape, jail time, possibly dealing with being cuckolded

Reference 8 – 0.56% Coverage

He had spent thousands of hours on dating sites, and wildly more time than that – tens of thousands of hours – working on relationships that were doomed from the start.

Perception of Self as a Victim at the Hands of Women

<Files\MGTOW data> - § 5 references coded [5.91% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 1.96% Coverage

2020-09-24 at 10:08pm

This MGTOW member expressed his anger towards his ex-wife who he claims has “destroyed him completely” after a 5-year divorce battle. He said that he had lost everything he had worked for and feels completely drained of

everything. This member is worried about his retirement. He felt there was nothing to look forward to but just suffering in life. This member expressed that he wanted to end his own life. "Men, I don't want to live anymore!!!" He is asking the members if they knew of a quick and painless way to die. He is asking about hanging or an overdose.

Reference 2 – 1.18% Coverage

2020-01-24 at 11:01 PM

Another member responded by saying if he killed himself that this act would be his ex-wives final victory. I have heard women supporting each other like this on "marriage and relationship" groups on Facebook as well, just focussing on the person who seemed to be victimised and demonising the other, without all the information.

Reference 3 – 0.98% Coverage

2020-03-12 at 3:32 PM

This member introduced himself by saying that he has spent his "entire life looking for love" and for his "soulmate." He said that he had made tremendous sacrifices for women whom he believes didn't care about him. He said that these women were more than happy to use him.

Reference 4 – 1.10% Coverage

When an old man needs a seat I get up, when an old woman needs a seat I remember how I was abused by these monsters in my childhood and figure they'd be old bitches by now.

I'd gladly have a drink with any man while the very thought of drinking with any woman gives me the chills as I'd know my life would certainly be in danger.

Reference 5 – 0.70% Coverage

I don't know about all that, Carnage. You may very well be right while I have a soft spot for the younger ones, I can't help it. NO child has EVER threatened my life like these bitches have on several occasions

Relationship as Commodity Exchange

<Files\MGTOW data> - § 1 reference coded [1.40% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 1.40% Coverage

It is, it is so that the first notions that people have about the way things need to be can be broken down through logic, rationality, studies, and experiences of others. Then and only then are they totally, totally free because you have to have a proper understanding and context of relationships. Women and signing contracts, having kids, and sharing your wealth with them before you are truly able to understand it all.

Appendix 4

Desire for Dominance

<Files\\MGTOW data> - § 3 references coded [3.19% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 1.31% Coverage

it makes sense from a purely biological perspective to have White knights, to have pussy sicko fans, and to have men who are willing to throw themselves away to save a damsel in distress. If we didn't have those characteristics, MGTOW may have come about a lot earlier, and who knows whether the species would have survived at that point, and really that's all evolution and nature cares about.

Reference 2 – 0.54% Coverage

MGTOW encourages men to pursue their free will and puts into proper perspective what women are, their place, and what value you should place on these relationships.

Reference 3 – 1.33% Coverage

This member reminded him that if he dropped the fantasies about how a relationship should look like that he will experience a type of peace he thought was never possible. He also reminded him that this will lead to more control in life and ultimately to more freedom. He said that only then he will realise that happiness has always be within him and that he will never find happiness outside himself.

Men-Women Vastly Different

<Files\MGTOW data> - § 2 references coded [1.64% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 0.84% Coverage

People are afraid of the implications that MGTOW has in showing us that men and women are actually insanely different. Their natures collide and if it wasn't for one side making massive concessions, there would have been no cooperation, to begin with.

Reference 2 – 0.81% Coverage

The only caveat is I don't usually go into depth with women like I do with men. Men generally want to understand how things work or why something is the way it is, whereas women just want to FEEL GOOD and don't care much for further knowledge.

Privilege Blindness-Dismissal

<Files\MGTOW data> - § 5 references coded [6.89% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 1.27% Coverage

The biggest difference between MGTOW and feminism is that MGTOW is not trying to legislate or coerce anyone to take any action. It merely encourages people to pursue things to their own accord, to their own trumpet, and to their own volition. Whereas feminism endeavours to pass laws thus coercing people into following their ideals and this isn't even through reason, fact, or truth

Reference 2 – 2.28% Coverage

Where is the MGTOW equivalent of this? There is no coercion or things that come up MGTOW that steal and he steals that something that should have been a women. For example, the job that should have gone to the most skilled worker but instead automatically is going to a woman because if men and women were equal, why would you, why would you even need to have a quota? Shouldn't you be able to attain that position through your natural ability to be equal and thus with a bit of work your ability to supersede men? That is the feminist imperative and really a deeper channelling of gynocentrism but where is the MGTOW equivalent of this? I'm waiting. Oh, that's right it does not exist.

Reference 3 – 2.03% Coverage

Ignorance: people that are either wilfully ignoring evidence of what is being said, using subjective conjecture that nobody can possibly confirm or they have negative knowledge and they believe something that is flat-out a lie. Or to finally to come to the last part, bias. In that it's obviously way easier to disregard what MGTOW says than to actually look at a paradigm-shifting evidence. The Simon wise reflex because rewiring neurons, realising you were wrong, and looking at past mistakes isn't the most fun thing in the world especially when it's something that is so embedded in our gynocentric society.

Reference 4 – 0.91% Coverage

As Sun Tzu said, "It is best to win without fighting.", this is MGTOW in a nutshell. Why fight to change the female nature? Why try to legislate laws to

coerce women in the way that men have been coerced, ruined, and bullied by the gynocentric laws that feminism has passed

Reference 5 – 0.40% Coverage

When a man works I help, when a woman works I figure she doesn't need my help; why, with being all independent and strong...

What Women Are

<Files\MGTOW data> - § 8 references coded [7.21% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 2.82% Coverage

As Sun Tzu said, "It is best to win without fighting.", this is MGTOW in a nutshell. Why fight to change the female nature? Why try to legislate laws to coerce women in the way that men have been coerced, ruined, and bullied by the gynocentric laws that feminism has passed. MGTOW is really prophylaxis or the prevention of future problems which is why it's so important for men to be aware, to see these videos, and to look at the cold harsh truth. Their very potential, yes their very fucking potential hinges on it because MGTOW isn't about whining and saying, "Oh women are not truly evil. We as men we're, we're such victims, pity-party. Come on guys everybody on board. Okay let's all feel bad together." it's about saying, look at everything in the world, look at it for what it is and in spite of all of this you have an amazing opportunity.

Reference 2 – 1.10% Coverage

It's not so much that women are inherently evil creatures, hell-bent on destroying men. It's that unless men and women understand their nature,

specifically men understanding female nature, they can end up in terrible, terrible positions as we've seen in the West with all of the issues the two sexes have had in the last 50 years.

Reference 3 – 0.92% Coverage

MGTOW can literally save lives as a straight shooter so pointing it in the pointed out. If men see the gynocentric nature of society, how women can behave if it benefits them and the sort of consequences they face, their whole way of thinking can undergo an epic transformation.

Reference 4 – 0.77% Coverage

MGTOWs have no need to be bitter. They've already won. They have the proper context of women, they understand their nature, their hypergamy, solipsism, how they love, their love style essentially being conditional, and their loyalty.

Reference 5 – 0.40% Coverage

When a man works I help, when a woman works I figure she doesn't need my help; why, with being all independent and strong...

Reference 6 – 0.28% Coverage

NO child has EVER threatened my life like these bitches have on several occasions.

Reference 7 – 0.52% Coverage

I'd leave the woman to die open-mouthed rattling her last bulls~~~ before meeting her maker while I take the kid to the hospital and try to find his father.

Reference 8 – 0.39% Coverage

Women are more than happy to be grouped with children if it means they get to avoid accountability for their actions.

Dismissal of Feminism

<Files\MGTOW data> - § 5 references coded [9.51% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 1.27% Coverage

The biggest difference between MGTOW and feminism is that MGTOW is not trying to legislate or coerce anyone to take any action. It merely encourages people to pursue things to their own accord, to their own trumpet, and to their own volition. Whereas feminism endeavours to pass laws thus coercing people into following their ideals and this isn't even through reason, fact, or truth

Reference 2 – 1.48% Coverage

Pretty much everything they cite can be easily debunked by even a bit of research. Things like you know why don't they consider that men are half of the victims of domestic violence? What about that, men are more likely to be homeless, have a higher suicide rate, or be killed? What about the fact that men are more likely to pay child support, alimony, or end up in jail for not doing so? What about the fact that women cheat as much if not more

Reference 3 – 1.04% Coverage

In some places, they get paid more and affirmative action is really all about forcing as in using coercion through the use of Big Daddy government in

having companies and universities have quotas for women. Where if these companies and universities don't follow these so-called laws, they could be penalised for it

Reference 4 – 4.82% Coverage

What is the call to action that feminism takes? Do these women ever talk about their hobbies or things that women can do to enhance the reality? As a matter of fact, the fact that they propagate this 'everyone is beautiful' nonsense, this body-positive stuff, this actually inhibits women because men are not fooled by this, nature is not fooled by this. So, we find the things we find attractive for a biological purpose. So, they're actually disserving the women that they are supposedly fighting for. How can you possibly liberate a human being if its state stays the same or it actually becomes worse because of the philosophy you put forward. This is the biggest difference because when you look at the most popular MGTOWs, they all have hobbies, passions, pursuits, and in ways, these are things that they would encourage their subscribers, the people that follow them, to check out. For example, Stardusk has his language study, his neurological study, and his exercise. Barbarossa has his running coupled with his interests in chemistry and running his blog. Sandman has his photography, editing, and writing. This is outside of their study of psychology, philosophy, and evil psychology which is evident in their videos. Thus, we can see, we can see what the major difference is. MGTOW encourages men to pursue their free will and puts into proper perspective what women are, their place, and what value you should place on these relationships.

Reference 5 – 0.91% Coverage

As Sun Tzu said, "It is best to win without fighting.", this is MGTOW in a nutshell. Why fight to change the female nature? Why try to legislate laws to coerce women in the way that men have been coerced, ruined, and bullied by the gynocentric laws that feminism has passed

Feeling Judged

<Files\MGTOW data> - § 2 references coded [4.39% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 3.02% Coverage

The criticism always comes outside of someone who is a MGTOW. If people actually read, spoke, or asked how the MGTOW actually lived their lives instead of projecting themselves by calling names, making assumptions, shaming them, or just being outright obtuse in your ideas. They find out that pretty much all of the men are immensely happy and if you have a rational philosophy, one that encourages free thought, one that uses studies, one that focuses on objectivity, and one where people, where the people that follow or identify with it are very happy. Why would you not look at it? The reason, the root, fear, ignorance, or bias and it's just that simple. People are afraid of the implications that MGTOW has in showing us that men and women are actually insanely different. Their natures collide and if it wasn't for one side making massive concessions, there would have been no cooperation, to begin with.

Reference 2 – 1.37% Coverage

People, that criticise MGTOW, you have to wonder, how many men's lives are they saving? What good are they doing for men around the world? I

mean, hell I've only been on YouTube for three months with this channel and I've already gotten men from Greece, France, Asia, America, telling me how much my videos have helped them understand things differently and how they are so much happier for having this knowledge.

Gynocentric Society

<Files\MGTOW data> - § 4 references coded [4.25% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 0.17% Coverage

MGTOW exists as an adaption to an anti-male world

Reference 2 – 1.14% Coverage

Are men really valued in the world? So then is the proposition to keep the system training along one of the mutual benefits or is it a zero-sum game? And that's fine, that's fine you know that men aren't necessarily valued that's just how biology has hardwired, hardwired the world. Obviously, a vagina has inherently more worth than a penis.

Reference 3 – 2.03% Coverage

Ignorance: people that are either wilfully ignoring evidence of what is being said, using subjective conjecture that nobody can possibly confirm or they have negative knowledge and they believe something that is flat-out a lie. Or to finally to come to the last part, bias. In that it's obviously way easier to disregard what MGTOW says than to actually look at a paradigm-shifting evidence. The Simon wise reflex because rewiring neurons, realising you were wrong, and looking at past mistakes isn't the most fun thing in the world

especially when it's something that is so embedded in our gynocentric society.

Reference 4 – 0.92% Coverage

MGTOW can literally save lives as a straight shooter so pointing it in the pointed out. If men see the gynocentric nature of society, how women can behave if it benefits them and the sort of consequences they face, their whole way of thinking can undergo an epic transformation.

Masculinity

<Files\MGTOW data> - § 1 reference coded [0.86% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 0.86% Coverage

MGTOW exists as an adaption to an anti-male world but one of the best things that I see about MGTOW is the rationality of the proposition it brings forward in men going their own way. They take back their masculinity and begin to define it on their own terms.

Current Social Order Not Beneficial

<Files\MGTOW data> - § 7 references coded [11.60% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 1.65% Coverage

A MGTOW man actually has way more time, more resources, and emotional energy to attain things that actually objectively enhance his life. He has more time to expand his mind, he has more time to improve his body, he has more time to network, he has more time to meditate. Things, these being things

that retain their value and ask for very little in return. In essence, MGTOW is the search for low investment, high return activities, and these things are not found in women, careers, or consumerism

Reference 2 – 2.32% Coverage

So really from a very very basic perspective, the question comes down to somebody criticising MGTOWs, “Are you not for a favourable strategy? So then how can you possibly criticize MGTOW?” The funny thing is that because the MGTOW man ends up with more time to work on himself and create real value within, he then actually has a higher chance of succeeding with these very things that interest him. So, he is much more average to be successful than an average man who just pursues what others tell him to pursue. Except unlike that drone who doesn't think for himself, the biggest thing is that the MGTOWs have the choice, they have the choice between following the status quo or going their own way

Reference 3 – 2.15% Coverage

That is where the real beauty of MGTOW lies. It enhances people's free will and I've seen some criticism that always stands from people who don't really understand MGTOW as a whole or what it's really about. For example, I mean one of the more common ones that I see is, “Oh you guys are just like bitter feminists. Wah wah whining about women, nobody cares.” There's a difference between whining, bitterness which is more of a systemic behaviour where the identity becomes meshed with that which what you're talking about, and righteous indignation that says, “This is bullshit. This is why this is bullshit and this is why you should avoid it.”

Reference 4 – 1.71% Coverage

The axiom really being that women, they may come along for the ride but never ever ever ever deviate your own course for them because they will never be the ride, they are not the ride. MGTOW is seeking to have more men who are liberated from the act from the system because society, women, and our immediate families will not put into perspective the actual cost to benefit ratio in engaging with women and especially in getting married and having kids with them. This is why this is an important aspect of MGTOW.

Reference 5 – 0.79% Coverage

This is why MGTOW wins because it doesn't hinge on those people. What MGTOW allows men to do is to transcend the opinions of others and pursue happiness how they wanted. So, hey, it comes down to haters gonna hate but MGTOW is gonna MGTOW.

Reference 6 – 0.38% Coverage

they understand how society views them. Cogs in the wheel, cannon fodder, and to be thrown out if they are broken.

Reference 7 – 2.59% Coverage

2020-01-25 at 3:24 AM

Another member reminded this member that real life is not like in a Disneyland, where all good men are rewarded for their good deeds and unconditional love. He said in such a world, women respect a man with a good heart and in return, a man will give his life for his female partner. He made him aware that this is fantasy and that he had to lift his head and live.

He asked this member if he actually even know what suffering is and that he should Google real suffering.

He quoted: “The good man doesn’t get the girl, and the just man doesn’t get the promotion. People don’t care about you or me, it’s all about their own ass 24/7. Life has become a popularity contest, and decent people are chewed up and spit out. You got f~~~ed, welcome to the club.”

Romantic Discourse as Fantasy

<Files\\MGTOW data> - § 2 references coded [2.06% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 1.22% Coverage

He said that everything he had been told about relationships in his childhood was either fantasy or simply a lie. He refers to the books he read, TV shows, and movies he watched, songs he listened to. He said all of these discourses were mostly created out of wish fulfilment or by people at the start of a relationship. He feels they weren’t reality and just fiction.

Reference 2 – 0.84% Coverage

2020-03-12 at 3:51 PM

A MGTOW member confirmed that all those wonderful dreams that were constructed in childhood vaporise into nothingness and we temporarily seem to be more lost than we’ve ever been. There seems to be a great level of disappointment.

Social Expectations of Men

<Files\MGTOW data> - § 4 references coded [10.02% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 4.02% Coverage

The problem is that the best strategy that society used as a whole has been exposed; shaming and what happens when something is exposed, it becomes transparent. People begin to see it for what it is and the more men talk, congregate, and communicate with one another, the more similarities they begin to see within the matrix. For example, we'll take a group of men one from France, one from England, one from Thailand, one from America, one from Chile, and they all begin to talk online. They say, "Wait wait wait, they tell you as well that you need a girlfriend? Oh, wait wait wait, they say that you two need to get married? Oh, and then they also tell you that you need to have this career?" But then comes the important question, why? Well if you ask the people if you ask this to the people that are telling you what you need you have already lost because you have given it to their frame. Who the fuck cares about the why? If someone proposes that you inject crookadility into your pecker, you're not going to ask them why because you already know it's a stupid idea. So instead of asking them why, these men begin to ask each other why and they come up with the correct answer. There is no good why.

Reference 2 – 3.37% Coverage

However, we have now reached a point where it's no longer about gene replication. So, a lot of the old strategies that have gotten us this far are being rendered useless.

Why should I care about serving something that doesn't serve me? Why should I do what other people tell me especially when those people would be willing to throw me away at the first chance they get to profit in doing so? Why should I follow orders from somebody that I don't even think is happy? I don't think that these people that are propagating a lot of these ideas are happy with themselves, so why do I need to follow them? MGTOW is just a rational proposition that seeks to understand the world, our nature, and how our systems are set up. Except instead of doing what other people do when they find out the truth and take up arms against the system, MGTOW just says, "Ight, cool, so that's why things are the way they are. Well, then I might just do me and they can do them but I'm gonna keep my distance and my research to myself.

Reference 3 – 1.30% Coverage

That is the most worthwhile aspect of MGTOW to me. Literally helping others to see their own capacity, their own potential, and their own ability to transcend the paradigm and leave the plantation. MGTOW is the unleashing of male potential through first losing the inhibition that so many men have in tying their masculinity to a woman, to a family, to what others think, and to their kids.

Reference 4 – 1.33% Coverage

This member reminded him that if he dropped the fantasies about how a relationship should look like that he will experience a type of peace he thought was never possible. He also reminded him that this will lead to more control in life and ultimately to more freedom. He said that only then he will

realise that happiness has always be within him and that he will never find happiness outside himself.

Appendix 5: Need for Flexibility. Invite Redefinition of Masculinity

<Files\\Doctorate Transcript 6> - § 1 reference coded [3.92% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 3.92% Coverage

Therapist 6: Yeah, it's hard because in my mind it, yeah, it could be many things. Can it depending on context, I suppose? I mean, even to the point of, if you saw the man as well, I contribute to making a baby. So there's, there's something around that somewhere in there, even if they're not present, you know, there's a sense of we're still, the man still has a role there at some level. even just with regards to birth of a child, not necessarily the bringing up of a child, but, I would imagine, and the role of a man to, I think, to have to challenge some of those pre-existing beliefs or some of those things that have been, they've been brought up with themselves or from those years gone past. I think that that is quite a big role of the man really, to be able to have to really challenge those biases perhaps, within themselves, and within society.

And we have to hold onto that, to stick with that really, I guess. It's quite interesting when you do, when I did a lot of family therapy. I'm not sure if you feel the same, but it's very hard to get the man to come to the sessions you normally find the mum comes with the kids Dad can't make it, dad is too busy Dad is working late. I always ended up seeing people at eight o'clock at night, just so I could get the, you know, which I shouldn't have done obviously, but, there's something around that. So I still think that the role that, yeah, I think the I thing, and the man's role is to support the woman doing

that. That's how I think society, I don't necessarily think I'd believe that, but, I'd leave that to the wife or the partner, you know.

<Files\\Doctorate Transcript 4> - § 6 references coded [3.44% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 0.58% Coverage

But yeah, I think there've been, but men as a collective, I think we need to redefine ourselves and I don't mean redefine ourselves in one way. I think we need to redefine ourselves in many ways and become more flexible, and more fluid. Than perhaps what these men suggests.

Reference 2 – 0.72% Coverage

Speaker 2: I think that we are, I say we as a male, I think we – the role of men. I think we're going through a period of change, which is positive. I think, in towards a more, equality structures, and things. the role of men, I don't necessarily see the men as being the main breadwinner. I mean, I'm in our house. I don't earn as much as his wife...

Reference 3 – 0.40% Coverage

I think the role of men is to be more to a person, perhaps it's just me, but I'm a family man. You know, I like being at home. I like being with my kids. I cook, I clean, I clean the toilet.

Reference 4 – 0.42% Coverage

Speaker 2: I think we, as a father, I feel that my role is to be a good role model for my boys and to empower, and be a healthy role model in a, in a healthy construct of masculinity here is one of them

Reference 5 – 0.53% Coverage

I think the masculinity, and maleism, can be more, I think the role has to be more flexible than what you have been. I'm not too sure if, and I think that's a challenge for some of our brains, and how we wired and how we're cultured.

Reference 6 – 0.81% Coverage

And I thought we know quite good on them really now expressing who they are and stuff. But you could see, there was lots of men who are disgusted by that. And I wonder why they find that threatening. It doesn't bother me. I mean I thought it's quite liberating in a way to see a male, another male, be more flamboyant, and out there, and not be constrained by the shackles of masculinity.

<Files\\Doctorate transcript 7> - § 1 reference coded [1.72% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 1.72% Coverage

I think there are times when we need to perhaps be able to show vulnerability or we need to be able to listen and we need to take a different position to things, you know, perhaps embrace other points of view that might not necessarily be associated with being masculine. but I think we've all got our different ideas of what masculinity is. haven't we I guess, or, you know, you might have a different idea to me. And therefore there are lots of elements to masculinity. So to say, masculinity is under attack. I don't think that is entirely how I see it. I think there are elements of masculinity and the way it gets performed, that we're invited to revisit and reflect on and consider how helpful is this for us really.

<Files\\Doctorate transcript 8> - § 2 references coded [6.31% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 1.74% Coverage

I suppose it is about, I think we are living in a, world now where we pay more attention to actually how we position ourselves and how we position others and how we view others So we wouldn't pay attention to the idea that this kind of behaviour is discriminatory it is just the way that I speak [Inaudible 06:36] comes off as a boy and something I'm not aware of, biases that I might have I'm not aware of, you know, unconditional bias that I'm not aware of, that are just inherited part of how I live my life, but I'm not exactly aware of that. And so it's kind of really paying attention to that.

Reference 2 – 4.57% Coverage

Because I think for me also, my view of being a man changes a lot through being a father and also changes through my own wish for my own kids in the future in terms of how I want them, so my son to be a man of the future, and my daughter, in terms of how, like, who she ends up with, of course, male or female but if she's with a man, the kind of relationship I want for my, daughter in terms of how I would want her to live her life and for my son as well that respectfulness of that attention to how I want him to be as a man and how he lives his life. So it does affect how you as a father, how you think about your position as a man about, what you want and it chips in terms of when you don't have kids, it's very different You're just thinking of yourself as a man. And I want, that might be, it can be so different in terms of, you know, yeah in terms of gender, in terms of sex, in terms of relationships, and that will happen in terms of when you have children and it just flips and when they become adolescents even more so, I mean, it just changes.

So I think it's just changing, thinking about, that context in terms of what it means to be a man in those different contexts. And even, I think age is an

issue. Cause I think as I got older now, as you know, my mom gets older and she's the next generation, I'm like, you know, my mom, would pass on, and she would die thinking of that, of how is that generational stuff affect you? That all of a sudden, you're this older man in a house in one generation, and then you're the next person in terms of generation.

Appendix 6: Need to Meet Males Clients Where They Are

<Files\\-Doctorate transcript 2> - § 2 references coded [1.53% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 0.99% Coverage

Well I think, I don't know if we can listen to them differently, but I think we can listen to them and I think with any client where someone comes with strong emotions, our role initially, isn't it, is to really hear them, and to be with them in their strong emotion, whether it be sadness, or disappointment or frustration or even joy, or anger.

Reference 2 – 0.54% Coverage

And I think that one way to help people to process emotion in the first instance is to be with them in that emotion and to acknowledge it and to really to, in a sense, even validate it.

Appendix 7: Understanding What MGTOW Men Reject and What They Gain Through Discourse

<Files\\Doctorate Transcript 5> - § 1 reference coded [1.72% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 1.72% Coverage

Speaker 2: Yeah. So if we take that video at face value, what they're arguing for is MGTOW's permission to opt out of, the traditional male female partnership, which you could argue. That's something we need to pay attention to because I mean, I've said myself that I feel slightly, not, burdened but My beliefs are slightly informed by the traditional view. So I have to earn more money. I have to work. Full time, support my family. I'm not saying at all that's not oppressive, that's a choice, but it's, you know, something I've inherited. So you could learn from MGTOW that it's a thought that men have the right to opt out of that.

<Files\\Doctorate Transcript 6> - § 1 reference coded [1.44% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 1.44% Coverage

Speaker 2: yeah, I think I shouldn't be really, but I think against extremes all this now, I think they've kind of grabbed hold of something and they're kind of pulling in people that, you know, that feel disempowered in some way that anything like this is going to attract people that feel like there's something being taken away from. So I would say that they get the feeling that society is saying, we don't want men like this we want men like this and they're kicking against it right now. So there's we don't need to listen to that stuff. That's sort of feminist kind of propaganda, so let's get away from it.

<Files\\Doctorate transcript 7> - § 1 reference coded [3.03% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 3.03% Coverage

Speaker 2: Yeah, well, I think we definitely can because these groups come out of a genuine vulnerability or genuine needs. So although, you know, there's lots about what that guy was saying that is a bit biased and I think it's slightly hateful, I'd say. I think nevertheless men go to groups like that because they're feeling disenfranchised or they're feeling powerless or perhaps feeling lonely. it's interesting I've gone back to that word lonely again, and, I'm not sure where that comes from. I don't know if it's, whether it was my own experience cause I lived on my own for quite a long time and I was single for quite a long time. So I'm wondering if there's something about loneliness that's speaks of my own expenses have been mailed.

So I'm wondering why I've said that a few times and you picked up on that as well. But yeah, you know, I think it's, we can certainly understand something of these men of the men's vulnerabilities and, and sense of powerlessness, and perhaps sense of not being heard or been treated unfairly. but I think we can work with that in a way where we're not necessarily colluding with the, hateful stuff, but we're understanding the condition and our experiences and trying to get to the heart of where they come from.

<Files\\Doctorate transcript 8> - § 2 references coded [4.38% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 1.68% Coverage

I suppose if you need to meet those descriptions, this was the thinking about being independent, having that freedom of choice, being able to make decisions. It doesn't form me around what it means to me to be a man or

what being a man means to me and less about how others yeah want it to be or how others want me to act [Inaudible 04:25] context I and I suppose it is about how much choice one feels and I think that's the important part in terms of how to be the man that I want to be and the choices that do with the world that I live in and social world that I'm a part of.

Reference 2 – 2.71% Coverage

Speaker 2: Yes. I we can, because I think we have to understand the language and the position of what it means and I think for them it isn't about them feeling silenced or them feeling, you know ostracised to one side, I do think that they're in these positions for a reason, there is an understanding for the position that they're taking and what that means for them and their experiences of feeling subjugated. And, and then of course there are moments where, you know, we have become so sensitised to how we manage our work. That actually, sometimes it just becomes difficult to know how to live our life because we trip over itself, just paying attention to every, you know, every, every kind of, every view that's, that's allowing us to [Inaudible 35:10] non-discriminatory equal, you know, we're being, you know, appreciative that we're kind of, we're being positive. We're being affirming, we're being nurturing.

Appendix 8:

Different Expectations

<Files\\-Doctorate Transcript 1> - § 1 reference coded [2.24% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 2.24% Coverage

Yes, yes and I think the systemic perspective was quite erm, erm, it was really quite fascinating for me, erm, because in other trainings that I have done, you know, it was always “You’ve got to be neutral,” “You’ve got to be neutral” and then that gets tied up with political correctness and actually how do we explore that, but I think men, and women are, they are wired differently, the brain is different, we have different strengths, and different abilities, and actually, quite often, will complement each other as men and women but also in gay relationships too.

<Files\\Doctorate Transcript 4> - § 1 reference coded [0.70% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 0.70% Coverage

Speaker 2 females, you know, it's a bit more involved than having sex, you know, you could end up having to carry a child for nine months and then be around that child, you know, and be a mother to that child. And, men can, what's the word dis yeah. Men don't have to invest, can quite easily not invest into that women It's a huge thing.

<Files\\Doctorate Transcript 5> - § 1 reference coded [3.44% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 3.44% Coverage

Speaker 2: I don't think so. you know, the examples where you [Inaudible 12:58] happens and so people like the labour party, sometimes I will think about shortlists [Inaudible 13:04] for vacant MP positions. I'm trying to think of any examples where you might think that, women rape victims get anonymity, but, people accused of rape don't. You might think that's an example. My view on that would be, rape victims should be anonymous. I think there's an argument that people accused of rape could be anonymous as well. I can't think of many examples of where the law kind of, gives women, any kind of advantage.

I suppose, you know, if you don't have a prenuptial agreement, you might argue that when women marry rich successful men and end up with half the money, you might argue, that's an example where the law favoured women. I'm not sure about that. I'm pretty certain that, you know, women still get paid less on average jobs, the female-dominated jobs tend to be less well paid, you know, think of our profession, the worst paid people, the nurses, the majority of females in our profession.

<Files\\Doctorate Transcript 6> - § 1 reference coded [1.29% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 1.29% Coverage

Speaker 2: So I would say probably yes, it is that they're still set up in that way for men, they still have the ability to, to reach the, the high goal is as these people were talking about the MGTOW people, you know, being able to achieve higher and greater than you could, if you are bound, women, and the rest of it, I think that they would probably women would say that that's more like that in this country for them than it is for us. So I still think, yeah,

the opportunities, et cetera, et cetera, seem to be greater, I would say for the men.

<Files\\-Doctorate Transcript 1> - § 1 reference coded [2.27% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 2.27% Coverage

What comes out, sometimes, and it was interesting about, you know, he said “Why weren’t the families agree that it is 50 percent men and 50 percent women.” There are all kinds of arguments as to why that is not accepted in this country. I can’t really speak for other countries. Erm, and in part its how different people count it, erm, and certainly, I have worked with men as victims of DV, whose have been absolutely terrified of a female partner. So, that side of his argument stood up, but we do still, in this country, live in a patriarchal society still.

<Files\\-Doctorate transcript 2> - § 1 reference coded [0.44% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 0.44% Coverage

And we know that historically many women have been mistreated by men, you know there has been, you know, for centuries, women have been mistreated by men

<Files\\Doctorate Transcript 4> - § 2 references coded [1.69% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 0.99% Coverage

Speaker 2: I think it is. Yeah, but rightfully so. you know, I've kind of think of White male privilege, yeah, so I think masculinity is under attack, but I don't see that as a bad thing. It depends on how we define masculinity, but I see, you know, I think from where I come from, I remember going to Cubs and

Scouts when I was younger and the scout leader would say, don't be a girl. Like, what does that mean? and, that's been challenged now. And I think that's a good thing.

Reference 2 – 0.69% Coverage

Speaker 2 but I've got a big but here now, and it's the same argument that I use with, I also think of the Black lives matter and all lives matter is that yes in principle all lives matter. And in principle, I believe in equality, but I think those two viewpoints don't recognise the oppression that women and Black people have had.

<Files\\Doctorate transcript 7> - § 1 reference coded [1.51% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 1.51% Coverage

read, the Have you, have you descent of man by Grayson Perry?

Speaker 1: I know the book I have the book actually I haven't read it

Speaker 2: I basically tried to read the first chapter before I spoke to you today, Andre, but he talks about, men that have been a knapsack of privileges and codes and language. You know, that's still not available to women, you know, as an area of difference than, and so I think there's still a long way to go in terms of to be any kind of a fair playing field, a level playing field. but I can also see how some feminist discourses in some language can make some men feel quite powerless

<Files\\Doctorate transcript 8> - § 1 reference coded [2.30% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 2.30% Coverage

Speaker 2: Yeah, I suppose for me it's about understanding feminism in terms of the idea of women having a voice and thinking of what you said earlier that part of them look back 40, 50 years ago, and women being kind of marginalised or having a voice, being my position to kind of, you know, in a very kind of patriarchal world where a man, has a stronger voice and man had responsibility and that's control. And, and so how feminism helps women to have a voice and how it allows us to be much more attentive to the needs of women for what it means? I suppose the distinction for me is partly, about how does women have a voice how feminism supports women, to have a voice, as opposed to feminism, where actually to talk about how men subjugate women, how men have, what have men done to women?

Dominant Discourse Favours

<Files\\Doctorate Transcript 5> - § 1 reference coded [3.44% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 3.44% Coverage

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<Files\\Doctorate Transcript 6> - § 1 reference coded [1.29% Coverage]

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<Files\\-Doctorate transcript 2> - § 1 reference coded [0.44% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 0.44% Coverage

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<Files\\Doctorate Transcript 4> - § 2 references coded [1.69% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 0.99% Coverage

Speaker 2: I think it is. Yeah, but rightfully so. you know, I've kind of think of White male privilege, yeah, so I think masculinity is under attack, but I don't see that as a bad thing. It depends on how we define masculinity, but I see, you know, I think from where I come from, I remember going to Cubs and Scouts when I was younger and the scout leader would say, don't be a girl. Like, what does that mean? and, that's been challenged now. And I think that's a good thing.

Reference 2 – 0.69% Coverage

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<Files\\Doctorate transcript 7> - § 1 reference coded [1.51% Coverage]

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<Files\\Doctorate transcript 8> - § 1 reference coded [2.30% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 2.30% Coverage

Speaker 2: Yeah, I suppose for me it's about understanding feminism in terms of the idea of women having a voice and thinking of what you said earlier that part of them look back 40, 50 years ago, and women being kind of marginalised or having a voice, being my position to kind of, you know, in a very kind of patriarchal world where a man, has a stronger voice and man had responsibility and that's control. And, and so how feminism helps women to have a voice and how it allows us to be much more attentive to the needs of women for what it means? I suppose the distinction for me is partly, about how does women have a voice how feminism supports women, to have a voice, as opposed to feminism, where actually to talk about how men subjugate women, how men have, what have men done to women?

Dominant Discourse Negatives

<Files\\Doctorate Transcript 5> - § 1 reference coded [1.88% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 1.88% Coverage

Speaker 2: I think it's really hard to answer. I think some men would say they would, I think, you know if you think back to the 1950s or some such dates where it certainly my dad worked full time. my mum didn't work when we were young and then she had some, part-time jobs. there's something quite attractive about getting part-time jobs no stress, you know, the work job My mum did. She never had to worry about it when she was at home. On the other hand that must've been very unfulfilling for her because she is a bright enough woman, and was, you know, an Admin assistant and, you know, that's a secretarial job. I think if we could find a middle ground somewhere that would be lovely.

<Files\\-Doctorate Transcript 1> - § 1 reference coded [0.65% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 0.65% Coverage

I think, erm, and so the meaning of violence can be, can be different for women in this society, and different for men in that people don't take them seriously enough.

<Files\\Doctorate Transcript 4> - § 8 references coded [8.25% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 0.51% Coverage

Speaker 2 I hear in my work story after story, after story of women being raped, being sexually assaulted, touched inappropriately in bars, made

complaints, and nothing is done about it. And I think that's the system that's not necessarily the law.

Reference 2 – 1.35% Coverage

I see it in sport as well. You know, when I was very young, I've always been a rugby fan. And when I was young, they would always be, in rugby stadiums like internationals, if you were a female, you would, you'd be sexually harassed, verbally harassed. You would be, not chanted in a sense of like an abusive way, but it wasn't always, you know, you'd be looked at, and it's almost as though what are you doing here you don't know the game of rugby, you're a girl kind of attitude, now we're going to put internationals and it's 50 50. and there are sell-out stadiums for women's football and rugby and hockey as much as what there are men's stadiums.

Reference 3 – 1.23% Coverage

Speaker 2: No. I don't I can, I can walk down the street and at night time and now be fine. And I watch a female walk down the street and there'll be later to guys eyeing her up, you know, there'll be looking behind looking at her bum or whatever. I think men generally have it better still. That's a cultural thing. I, yeah, I think, men are especially when it comes to sexual offences. I think women get it worse. I think if you look at the statistics, if you look at, yeah, I think in big crowds, I think, women are far more vulnerable by a group of men than a male with a group of females.

Reference 4 – 1.38% Coverage

Speaker 2: I think the UK in particular, the social order does, does position women, I think, if we look at the case of the Sarah Everett in the vitriol and

the way women were treated by the police, I thought was unbelievable. I found it quite shocking to be honest. I often think that if we want to change a society and a culture, we have to work from the top. And I think it's probably where my political sway goes, but I do think that we currently have a conservative Tory government that is full of masculinity, testosterone, public school boys who look after themselves. And I do think that, that testosterone needs diluting with some oestrogen, in parliament.

Reference 5 – 1.00% Coverage

Speaker 2: And I think whatever you see going on at the top within Westminster, I think that kind of trickles down. if you look at the abuse, someone like Diane Abbott gets or Theresa May, or, the – What's her name? the Scottish, first lady -I think they get a torrent of abuse. And I think that that creates and help, that trickles down through government structures, through organisational structures, through business, it filters down. And I think that does affect social order.

Reference 6 – 1.25% Coverage

Speaker 2: What do I think of women? God, good question. I think women are, what I think of women God I think of lots of things. from a – I think women are often undervalued, especially mums. I think raising, I think being a parent and particularly being a mum you know, you go to a supermarket, not so much now, but I remember a few years ago there'll be a dad with their kids and being always that's sweet and there'll be a mum with a kid and goes, oh, it's normal. You know, that's the job. so I think women and what

women have to offer culture and society is underrepresenting undervalued. I think

Reference 7 – 0.63% Coverage

Speaker 2 we didn't recognise that. so I think feminism, for me, highlights years, and years of oppression, the vote, all that stuff, that, you know, if, a male or kind of years and years ago, and oppression in the sense as well that a female's identity is constructed around their relationship with a man.

Reference 8 – 0.90% Coverage

Speaker 2 so that's not in relationship to a female, but even the Ms. Mrs Miss and Merz is defines a woman in relationship, not necessarily to a male because of same-sex partners and things, but historically has been. And I think that's quite subjugating. so I think we have to – I think feminism highlights that, but I do think we need to get to a point of, equality, and then it, then I think we should, that's where it should go.

<Files\\Doctorate transcript 7> - § 2 references coded [3.18% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 0.70% Coverage

I can see why some men might feel, that feminist discourses can be quite powerful in terms of what rights you have. But I think in the broader context of society, you know, women, you know, there's still a long way to go for there to be equality that women still don't have the same rights

Reference 2 – 2.49% Coverage

Speaker 2: I think feminism was, was necessary because women were getting a really bad deal and I still don't think women have as good a deal as

man. but feminism can be quite dismissive of, sometimes you know, that t kind of thing of typical man said by my partner, who's a sociology teacher, you know, there can be elements of feminism that, well, I'm not saying that's necessarily a feminist idea, typical man, or is it no.

Feminism can be, perhaps some of the discourses can be, subjugating if that's the right word of male narratives and not necessarily in a helpful way in a healthy way. but I think feminism has been very necessary and it's, it's been very important in redressing relationships of power in the sense of power in society of, of women. but it's still got a long way to go, I think. And I sort of think said, man, because I think there's an assumption that feminism is, just by women, but actually men need to engage in feminism as well. And I think we're part of feminism. we're part of that dialogue, you know?

Everyone Embedded

<Files\\Doctorate Transcript 4> - § 2 references coded [1.64% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 1.22% Coverage

Speaker 2: No I don't think we can be independent. I think we, going back to our system, our systemic training is that we're part of a wider system of kind of the John - Burnham and stuff. we're gendered, we're classed, especially in the UK. We have class we have a culture, we have a colour, we have a language, we have an education, and I think we operate as part of a bigger system. I don't think we can be independent. And the idea that we're independent means that we wouldn't have females and that wouldn't be very good for the population we will become extinct in a generation or 2.

Reference 2 – 0.42% Coverage

Speaker 2: I think we're all slaves. I don't think that's unique to female as I think all humans are we're bound. We're confined by our language and just, you know, no one on this can do what we want to.

<Files\\Doctorate transcript 7> - § 2 references coded [4.00% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 1.26% Coverage

Speaker 2: I think to be, to be a real man, I suppose we've got, I mean, that's, I suppose that's a construction, isn't it of what is it to be a man? So are we talking about how we are physically? So, you know, the fact that we are biologically male or is it about masculinity and how we construct our masculinities and, or how our masculinities get constructed in the context of our upbringings and our societies. so I suppose we get a concept of what it is to be a man by how we're raised and our societies and our cultures.

Reference 2 – 2.74% Coverage

Speaker 2: Yeah, I think it also gets you into trouble some time. yeah, the social order I suppose I was kind of thinking then about what is the, social order, and we live in lots of different cultures and societies and you know, how we get, kind of the hierarchy of things, you know, if that's, what's meant by social order, Andrew, kind of the hierarchy of things, can be very different in different societies and different classes and even different areas of the country, I guess. So I suppose in terms of self-actualisation, is it about it, you know, is it more about access to resources of, you know, education and, finance? not so much finance, but I think education. in order to find self-actualisation, do we need to have access to education and consider different

ideas, but also do we need to have cultural capital to connect with people as well in terms of gaining a sense of ourselves and gaining in a sense of personal agency, of coming to peace with ourselves, accepting who we are. to me part of that is about education, but it's also who we – the sorts of people that we have access to and we can get perspectives from them.

Expectations of Men

<Files\\Doctorate Transcript 5> - § 6 references coded [6.14% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 0.20% Coverage

Speaker 2: Get as good, a job as possible, earn as much money as possible.

Reference 2 – 0.92% Coverage

Speaker 2: And so I think my self-imposed, social expectations, are to earn money, to be able to have a big enough house, to provide security, to bring up my children, to be good-enough kids, to bring up my children So they do well in exams, don't get into trouble. turn out well enough human beings. I think there are social expectations of

Reference 3 – 1.29% Coverage

When my kids were in junior school, there was a men's book club, which didn't involve any books, at all just involved pub and drinking. the book club thing was a kind of ironic joke. I don't know. I find men's conversations less interesting. you know, I don't want to talk about, emotional, whatever we're talking about at length. I don't want to talk about, stocks, and shares. I think men's conversations are sometimes kind of more competitive, so I guess men are more competitive.

Reference 4 – 2.20% Coverage

Speaker 2: Okay. So, rockers kind of official rock and roll, leather long greasy hair, motorbikes mods, 1960s mopeds.

Speaker 1: I didn't know they were violent though

Speaker 2: Oh yeah, yeah. Huge fights., go to Blackpool the modern rockers turned up with the idea of, just fighting, lots of, huge violence. and I think to some extent that's just, you know, that's just one of that sense of belonging. I belong to this group, this group, and I belong so much to this group that I'm going to fight people who don't. so I guess that kind of sense of belonging and belonging is stronger when you can identify another. I imagined it might be the social expectations. you know, the idea that, maleness is about strongness, about not giving in, I guess partly it must be about not being coached to process emotions.

Reference 5 – 0.63% Coverage

Speaker 2: Well, I don't think that they're encouraged to practice it. I'm sure men inherently are, some men do but hopefully more now, but I'm sure it is sort of traditionally, it wasn't part of kind of socialisation and upbringing.

Reference 6 – 0.90% Coverage

Speaker 2: Okay. What informed violence in men. I guess on some level on a, you know, historically there wasn't room to be emotional, you know, if you're, working 12 hours down the mine if you're a soldier, Factory worker, there is just not time to be emotional and there's not the need. I have no idea. yeah. I think it would be seen as a weakness.

<Files\\Doctorate Transcript 6> - § 3 references coded [9.84% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 3.90% Coverage

I think within working on a building site, I think there would be that general camaraderie of men together slightly, you know, rough, tough world. Everybody's, you know, I mean, you get extremes as you do anywhere, but on a building site, it's quite a masculine environment. I would say generally, I have come across female brick layers, et cetera, et cetera. If we're talking about male, female divide, rather than something different. But I think, yeah, it was very much like you'd struggle to hold. I think if you try to put forward a middle ground thinking, I think you would be seen as somebody who was slightly going against the grain, as it were a bit, you'd be a little bit ostracised, I think, or in the old days. I mean, I had worked on building sites for 30 years now, but that's how it used to be. It was quite extreme and it'd be like pornography, you know, in the mess room that, you know, they've watched blue movies at Christmas, that kind of stuff. This is London we're talking about that on London sites, it could be a bit extreme. I would imagine that doesn't happen now because of how society has moved on and, you know, but it was kind of, it was kind of powered into you. I mean, remember I was on building sites at the age of 17, 16, 17, and looking at learning that stuff really from them, you know, this is what men were doing, you know, and we were called, me, and my mate, who we had a little shed of our own and we were called the Virgin soldiers. I remember it very clearly. And, we'd get all the hassle for that for being young. So there was that kind of real sort of junky, but slightly, bullying kind of process going on with that,

Reference 2 – 4.37% Coverage

Speaker 2: Okay. I think there's still the idea. It depends on their age groups, doesn't it? I think social status are different and those kinds of things, but I still, I would imagine, and again, religious, you've got religious aspects as well. Haven't you, you know, the different, you know, how it might, you know, religion, and say, for example, Christianity portrays, you know, the male first, the female second that the female came from the male body. So there's already this, this, you know, there's a slightly different level. So if you take that further, I think it's this idea of man being the breadwinner. Those kinds of stories are still around. I think I would say at some level, that match their responsibility is to be the breadwinner as a story. I think not my story necessarily, but, and I think men feels less if they're not.

So if the wife is working and the man isn't, I think that that becomes difficult, they'd become, emasculated or, you know, in some way. I think there's the expectation that they will protect, their family. And that could mean many different things and a sense of, yes, shouldering. I think there's a sense of expectation that they shoulder the pressure on the family unit. If we're talking about a man in that unit, the sense of that yeah That they would, when, when everybody else is struggling, that they, they gonna have to take it on. They're going to have to manage it, I think. But also maybe that their job is more important than the women's. I think there's something around that. I'm not saying this is true, but I see that a lot where, the man's job and role seems to be yeah top of the list. I think it probably was in this house at some level when I was working full time. Is that the idea because I was earning more money than that. Then my job becomes more important than my wife's job if you like.

Reference 3 – 1.57% Coverage

Speaker 2: Yeah. I suppose I had this sort of idea that we were sort of designed, to be fighting and, you know, we're fighters. So either, you know, we're either lovers or fighters that kind of, you know, going out and killing the deer and bringing it back and ripping it apart this kind of thing. If we were saying that rather than, you know, if you believe evolution, for example, there was a sense of, we've got it in us, we're programmed to be aggressive, to defend. it's just misconstrued so the defence kind of kicks in, it's an expression of masculinity in their mind. It's, I will front up, I'm hard I'm tough nobody's going to want to over me sort of thing.

<Files\\-Doctorate Transcript 1> - § 1 reference coded [1.01% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 1.01% Coverage

Or is it about power, that was the first word I jotted down and put a little box around it because that seemed to be really important and it did, I was kind of, my thoughts were wondering in terms of the four centuries where men have really had the power.

<Files\\Doctorate Transcript 4> - § 2 references coded [1.39% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 0.79% Coverage

Speaker 2: Yeah. I do. Especially in the couples work that I meet its often men who complain that I don't have enough sex it's men who are saying that they want their wives to, [Inaudible 41:16] Sex, and then they want their wives to argue less and just accept what they say, where with females again, as I said earlier, they just want to be understood and appreciated and valued.

Reference 2 – 0.60% Coverage

And I think men have a lot to offer the world. I just wish we did it with less, most men by far a really good people. you know, re really good, really good kind heart-warming, nice pleasant, thoughtful guys. but I do sense that the male masculine power White male privilege is the problem.

<Files\\Doctorate transcript 7> - § 1 reference coded [2.36% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 2.36% Coverage

Speaker 1: I think violence is – violence can be I suppose verbal, but also physical. And I view it as unnecessary and harmful. and I think it probably is informed by the way boys`` are raised, you know, in terms of how masculinity, you know, masculinity is about being strong and fighting that sort of thing. but we're also, we're given guns as children, you know, like sort of Cowboys, and Indians or, light sabres, Although women had light sabres didn't they in star wars. But there's a lot in play when you were a child about fighting and guns and soldiers, all that kind of stuff. So I think we're sort of raised to be violent really from the beginning. And I'm fairly confident that a lot of that goes across a lot of cultures and societies of kind of play-fighting and, but I suppose there is an element to that that's about perhaps being protective as well. but I think being protective is a different thing to be in violent think you can be protective in, in a non-violent way.

<Files\\Doctorate transcript 8> - § 1 reference coded [1.85% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 1.85% Coverage

Speaker 2: I think to be strong, to be providers yeah, to be caring, to show responsibility, to sort of to be leaders, to kind of – for some people to be head of the house. So there's particular stories that can be around a man,

figure to be successful. to be fed to, you know, to be energetic to, we had this, I think this shows that men might experience in terms of how they need to be or how they shouldn't be. [inaudible12:17] how one should be can be constraint can challenging when your life doesn't fit within that, how you manage those expectations and pressures, and whether you have permission to step outside of that context.

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<Files\\Doctorate Transcript 6> - § 3 references coded [9.84% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 3.90% Coverage

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<Files\\-Doctorate Transcript 1> - § 1 reference coded [1.01% Coverage]

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<Files\\Doctorate Transcript 4> - § 2 references coded [1.39% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 0.79% Coverage

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<Files\\Doctorate transcript 7> - § 1 reference coded [2.36% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 2.36% Coverage

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<Files\\Doctorate transcript 8> - § 1 reference coded [1.85% Coverage]

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Speaker 2: I think to be strong, to be providers yeah, to be caring, to show responsibility, to sort of to be leaders, to kind of – for some people to be head of the house. So there's particular stories that can be around a man, figure to be successful. to be fed to, you know, to be energetic to, we had this, I think this shows that men might experience in terms of how they need to be or how they shouldn't be. [inaudible12:17] how one should be can be constraint can challenging when your life doesn't fit within that, how you manage those expectations and pressures, and whether you have permission to step outside of that context.

Gender Role Expectations

<Files\\Doctorate Transcript 5> - § 2 references coded [3.10% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 1.35% Coverage

Speaker 2: Yeah, traditional masculinity. That was, you know, this might be that kind of middle-class social work and biased view of the nasty White working-class, masculinity but, you know, drunken football supporters, then drunken fighting football supporters is no longer acceptable, you know, going to the pub drinking while your wife cooks the meal, if that is someone's view of masculinity, even that's under attack. I guess the question is, does anyone really think that is masculinity anymore?

Reference 2 – 1.75% Coverage

there are certainly, males who act in more female ways who get a lot of positive feedback. So when I say traditionally female ways, so prince Harry, is kind of talking about his mental health and now, you know, talking about the impact of his parenting on himself and his children. there's a lot of a fair number of modern music now, I couldn't tell you names, but you know, it's just kind of, a lot of male songs about, kind of what their life was like growing up. this one is about when I was seven years old, so there is, you know, there's a lot of positive feedback and the invitation towards men acting in ways that are more traditionally feminine.

<Files\\Doctorate Transcript 6> - § 4 references coded [5.16% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 2.12% Coverage

Speaker 2: Good question. yeah, it's, it's hard, isn't it? Because it's about, you know he's trying to hold a belief with all the different influences in the world and about how you, you know, how one should be. And if you say something that's slightly against the grain, of what they should be in the world, currently, you know, but I suppose I think, I suppose like in my mind, I think I don't see necessarily a great difference between a man and a woman in that sense. So for me, I think it's about the qualities of your personality. so whether or not it was, so it could be, it would, you know, for me it would be somebody that's sensitive, but also compassionate, but also could be protective as well within that fair and honest, I guess the other things that I would see as what a real man or what a real man means, I guess, but that could be a woman to my mind. It's just those, those qualities.

Reference 2 – 0.73% Coverage

Speaker 2: And trying to fight the narratives that have been imposed if you're interviewing my granddad, you know, he's dead now, but my granddad used to call women winches. That's how he used to talk about them. I always said if he was alive today, he would not be able to cope with a sense of this equality.

Reference 3 – 1.19% Coverage

Speaker 2: And he knew where, you know, he, it was kind of like this as a power thing for him. I think so, but I think as we get on and, I'm 57. So I think it's a sense of, the ability to try and challenge the narratives and made to feel uncomfortable when I hold something that doesn't fit. Or actually, I need to question that I need to challenge that within myself, not from the point of view of, these guys, not the Midtown guys, but more on a sense of equality and, you know, we're all the same, really.

Reference 4 – 1.12% Coverage

Speaker 2: I think men would say, I think if you, so those men that wasn't existing then now I think there's a sense of that there's less boundaries. There's less, it's much more fluid I think. And so therefore I would imagine that a man generally, a man would know where he stood, what he was meant to be doing 30 or 40 years ago. Whereas now he's a bit muddled up. He's a bit, he's not sure where he should be sitting and therefore would feel maybe a bit unhappy about that.

<Files\\-Doctorate Transcript 1> - § 2 references coded [6.64% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 1.68% Coverage

I think women in the last 50 years maybe, 60 years. I think particularly since the Pill, or maybe in the last century maybe it started with the Suffragettes, but gradually over time, women are becoming more powerful erm, and so suddenly there is this back lash against it. And so suddenly there is the backlash against it and it is more of who holds the power? Erm, I think that's really interesting to explore.

Reference 2 – 4.96% Coverage

I can remember having a conversation with a teacher when my children were small and, you know, I'm now just thinking about the role of mothers in how they have been socialising boys, again, I don't know when it started, maybe the seventies, I don't know, but you know, men and boys have to be more in touch with their feminine side and their feelings and all this kind of stuff. And I think that there is a very strong argument to be made that mothers became too powerful and erm men have become confused. And I think that, that carries on now, kind of, how much in touch with their feminine side and how much, you know, what does being masculine, what does being a man mean now and who calls the shots? And I think that the mothers were really, really powerfully, and this teacher, that I was telling you about, was saying, you know, that the mothers put pressure on the school, and banned guns in schools, so pupils couldn't play cowboys and, which is what everybody did then, erm, and she said that it was terrible, absolutely the worse decision ever, because the boys now thump each other instead of acting out and miming. But it was born from an ideal of we must teach our sons not to like guns, because we don't want them growing up aggressive.

<Files\\Doctorate Transcript 4> - § 5 references coded [8.43% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 1.65% Coverage

Speaker 2: I think there's a shift in power. do the laws, no, I don't think laws do I think laws have to be equal. if you, if we were to look at a law or a piece of legislation, I don't think the law itself is inherently leaning towards males and females. The only exception I would think about that would be maybe paternity leave, things like that. you know, I like in Germany where you have parental leave, which is a year, and that can be split between both parents, regardless of gender, and sexuality, but, you know, you can have six months off together. You can have one person have six months and the other person has six months. You can have, you know, or mum could have nine months and Dad has three months, you know, but you have parental leave and you can choose to use it, how you like.

Reference 2 – 3.00% Coverage

Speaker 2: I think really basic. I think it's to be kind, thoughtful, caring, loving, considerate. I think I think we should have a fair, I believe in equality, maybe I'm being idealistic. but I do think that men have a part to play in childcare and, in, yeah, in childcare and in teaching and nursing and kind of female-dominated areas. so yeah, I think the role, or expectation of a male should be more equality. and be all those kinds of virtues really? That's not to say we still can't play football and go to rugby and all that stuff. you know, but I think that we can be more thoughtful. When I say more thoughtful. I think we can be considerate and caring considerate as the role of men.

I think, what, and I see this a lot in therapy as well, especially the couple's therapy is that men are doers and women are think, feelers. and I see that a

lot, especially when arguments between, between different-sex couples, and sometimes same-sex couples as well. But let's say, when a female is distressed, she just wants a husband or partner just to understand her and feel her sense of distress or vulnerability or worry or, whatever the feeling might be, where I think the masculine approaches you're distressed, you're vulnerable, I'll fix it. And I'm a female is I don't want fixing, I just want you to understand, maybe we need a bit of both, but I think that if, if, if we could do it a bit more of that, I think that would go a long way.

Reference 3 – 1.71% Coverage

Speaker 2: It depends what you mean by better off. I think if we're looking at through the lens of power and White male privilege and maybe Black male privilege within the Black culture, comes to sport, fame, pay, work standards, that men could go to the pub. It was quite commonplace that if your wife was in labour, the male will go to the pub, and then you get a phone call in the pub to say, and that'd be the time to go around. And I think they called it wet the baby's head, and then the dad would go and see the new baby and then go straight back to the pub, you know, and tell everybody whether that's a good thing or not. I don't know. But I think men certainly had more power and had an easier life and more privilege, whether that was a good thing. I don't think so, but they certainly had more privilege and power.

Reference 4 – 1.09% Coverage

Speaker 2 but again, some of the men who I meet certainly feel that, there role in the workplace has changed the banter, the humour thing, what was traditionally a male job has shifted. and it's become there are more females.

You drive down the road now and you know, you see a lot more female bus drivers and lorry drivers and posters. I mean, we've got female posts and she's great. She's got these amazing tattoos. I admire bright blue purple-y hair is great. you see, again the word castrated. I hear where it comes from.

Reference 5 – 0.97% Coverage

I think also if we look at, masculinity and how it's changed even on TV with sexuality, it's more visible now with gay lesbian. If you're thinking about gay, particularly for men, it's more out there. And I think a lot of men have been liberated from that, but a lot of men find that threatening as well. I remember, I was walking through. I live in Norwich and I was walking through Norwich and there was this guy walking through Norwich in a very short mini skirt.

<Files\\Doctorate transcript 7> - § 2 references coded [11.94% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 5.93% Coverage

Speaker 2: Yeah. so, you know, I suppose I've, been in a relationship for six years, but it's the first long-term relationship I've ever had. and I'm in a, family where I don't have any brothers or sisters, so I suppose I don't have a brother to compare myself with, within the family, but I've got a dad and I suppose some of my expectations perhaps come from my dad and maybe from my mum a little bit as well, in terms of how he performed his masculinity. And I suppose my dad. was, you know, sort of very, sporty, but also quite a bright guy as well. And did well at work quite strong, quite tall. I suppose he is more reluctant to show his vulnerability, and he could, it could be quite aggressive as well sometimes and quite forceful and possibly a bit of a bully sometimes as well. So I took that as one example of, of

masculinity, I suppose. And to some extent it was a hard act to follow in terms of him being very good at things, very sporty, quite bright guy. but I think in terms of what I expect from myself.

I probably almost went to the other end of the scale, where I sort of became quite soft and I became, not very aggressive at all. And I ended up doing, a line of work that's about listening to people. and yet I still wonder if I don't quite come up to the mark in terms of what it is to be a, you know, successfully a, man, you know, in terms of, I don't know, earning lots of money, or being very strong, or being very athletic or, and I wonder if we're expected to be that way sometimes, but at the same time, we're now being encouraged to talk more about our feelings and address our mental health. And we've got a lot to, I think we've got to live up to the legacy of, histories, and the legacy of the, our cultures, or no.

So I'm talking about here, but say English culture of what a man should be, or, but we're also being expected to evolve quite quickly in terms of, being able to talk about feelings and being empathic and being soft when we need to be. so I think there's an, expectation to be quite a lot of things actually. living up to our dated ideas from the past, which whether we like it or not, sometimes we still bring with us, we're still off the shoulder, but also more modern postmodern ideas. I'm not sure if I ever knew what postmodernism, is Andrew. but, you know, sort of, kind of more, more evolved reconstructed ideas about being able to be strong, but also empathic and, vulnerable and it's a lot of ground to cover.

Reference 2 – 6.01% Coverage

Speaker 2: It's interesting though. Isn't it like when men and then you suddenly think, well, actually yeah, there would have been men who were really well off and then there would have been men who were really struggling, you know, just to keep their families going. And so I think 50 years ago we'd be talking, you know, 70, early seventies. What was life like then, I know the working life would have been tough. Less women perhaps would have been working independently compared with now I guess. Maybe there would be more women staying at home. So there would have been a lot more responsibility on men if they were the only people earning in the family, which, again, it's a part assumption, but I'm assuming there were more men with that responsibility as being the only wage earner in the household.

So a lot of responsibility really I think there would have been much less awareness about mental health difficulties experienced by men. And again, I use the example of my dad that he struggled with that as well, but probably wouldn't be allowed to show vulnerability about any of that. I sort of thought I was saying maybe 50 years ago, men didn't feel as though they have the same rights to be able to be vulnerable, to talk about how they were struggling, which I think perhaps these days there are more opportunity to do that. It's quite a big question compared to now. I know that the sort of – from what I can gather, I think rates of suicide have increased in men from, from what I can gather. And what does that speak of? I think they're higher than, women, although more women make attempts from what I can gather.

So I think there would have been less opportunity for men 50 years ago to show vulnerability and, and talk to people about struggling. I think there

would have been a lot pressure on men 50 years ago, but I think they might have had more of a sort of preordained sense of value as been, perhaps someone who's going to get a job for life, or, you know, there are more people with jobs for life and perhaps been the main breadwinner afforded some kind of status. I should be able to give you a sort of fluid answer Andrew, but I'm just kind of thinking what was life like back then sort of for four years before I was born. I know economically it would have been tough perhaps tougher than it is now. but men, some perhaps had a greater power over women. women had less equality, there was less equality, but I don't think that necessarily means things were any better.

<Files\\Doctorate transcript 8> - § 1 reference coded [1.85% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 1.85% Coverage

Speaker 2: I think it's changed a lot. I think part of what it means to be a man in terms of how one positions themselves and all of that, but [Inaudible16:00] yeah. In terms of, yeah. How men, manage emotion, show, sensitivity, manage responsibility, yeah. Engage with, life. And I think it's different for different people. I mean, even just sense of sexual identity, sexual expression, sexual orientation, those ideas have changed a lot in terms of what has [Inaudible 16:30] and what we feel is okay. And what's seen as a, as a social norm, which is quite different to where we were, yeah, 20, 30 years ago, I think so very different

Masculinity-Feminity

<Files\\Doctorate Transcript 5> - § 1 reference coded [1.29% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 1.29% Coverage

Speaker 2: I guess again, obviously the emphasis on earning money, I guess there are kind of typical ways of relating. So, you know, forming groups around hobbies, you know, football teams, fishing, running, cycling, whatever. whereas I guess, you know the male connections are, stuff outside of the family is stereotypical, whereas female connections, you know, my wife's female friends, there is more of a kind of getting together if it was more relational not too much sense,

<Files\\Doctorate Transcript 4> - § 1 reference coded [0.97% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 0.97% Coverage

There was one bit, I did feel a bit frustrated, which was around that, masculinity and femininity, or, you know, both separate things and they don't need each other. And I fundamentally disagree with that because I don't know you can have one without the other, men need women to be, or masculinity needs femininity to have its place. And so does femininity or feminism that needs masculinity as well in order to establish itself. So I think they are co-dependent.

Stereotypical Masculinity

<Files\\Doctorate Transcript 5> - § 4 references coded [7.65% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 2.12% Coverage

Speaker 2: I mean, I think they have some points. I mean, I've certainly felt, as a man. it's hard to get away with some of that kind of stereotypical demands. I say to my wife on occasion, you know, if you want to work, part-

time, it's fine. I couldn't allow myself to work part-time. cause I'm still kind of, you know, the Protestant male work ethic, you know you have to provide for your family.

I'm still caught up with that kind of stereotype view of a man. I know it's not real. I know that's really the requirement of being a man what does it mean to be a man? really, I have no idea. the bits that I would say, so earning money, kind of providing for my wife, protecting my wife, protecting my family, those kinds of things aren't really about being a man it's about being a person

Reference 2 – 2.01% Coverage

so I think there is a part of kind of male in this moment where there's problematic because I think we are, well, I still do feel like I have to be the main breadwinner. My wife would disagree.

She would say, you don't have to be this as a joint bill. but often we are still the main breadwinners. And women expected to do half the childcare and half the cleaning, half childcare, and half the cleaning is fine. But if I then am also still caught up with, a belief, I have to earn more of the money and that's a self-imposed thing. So I guess that men who still think that they are the main breadwinners are going to feel like, well, if we have to do half the childcare and cleaning and shopping, et cetera, you can see how they might be fed up.

Reference 3 – 1.91% Coverage

Speaker 2: I was saying we're all, better off than 50 years ago. Cause we don't have twice as many cars. We have television, we have Netflix, you know, we all go abroad for holidays now whereas 50 years ago we went to

Blackpool. The penalty for that I think is that, you know, have to have to, if you're in a household that is paid for by, two incomes rather than one. so an official 50 years ago, couple the man was working the woman was stereotypical, was at home, looking after the kids, making sure dinner was on the table. so in that sense men have an added burden, but, and they're worse off. cause we all now have to work and they come home and take turns cooking rather than it being ready for us.

Reference 4 – 1.61% Coverage

I don't believe the traditional division of jobs was, healthy. So I'd have to stay the better off on that. I think capitalism has kind [Inaudible31:15] some awful monster, so I'm not sure overall, I think we are probably worst off overall.

Speaker 1: Thank you. Could you just say that thing about capitalism again?

Speaker 2: Yeah, I think, yeah, the striving, but you know, you have to keep having a [Inaudible31:36] you know, bigger house mentality. You can never step backwards. Some people manage you have to keep up with everyone else and the penalty of that is having to work so hard.

<Files\\Doctorate Transcript 6> - § 1 reference coded [0.69% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 0.69% Coverage

Speaker 2: well, I think it's been caught in the crossfire between the extremes I feel. As a male is kind of that you've got these two kinds of battles going on and somewhere in the middle there's the general man, who's just trying to do his best and manage all the differences and changes.

<Files\\-Doctorate Transcript 1> - § 1 reference coded [0.32% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 0.32% Coverage

And I think it is really hard to be a man and to be a father in today's society,

<Files\\-Doctorate transcript 2> - § 1 reference coded [0.51% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 0.51% Coverage

I think there is a value in supporting men and in hearing them and validating their stories and letting them know that it is not okay to be mistreated if they have been mistreated.

<Files\\Doctorate Transcript 4> - § 1 reference coded [1.32% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 1.32% Coverage

Speaker 2: I think that's it fear, men, can't cry they do violence, when men are scared, whether it's from a football match, rugby field, whether it's in a bar, I think its fear, and protection. and it may be protecting themselves them. They might be protecting their identity and masculinity, you know, be tough, be brave. Don't take no nonsense off anybody, but also, I think men are fearful of their team going down or losing or whatever. I think it's fear, but men aren't allowed to be scared or we've been told many years men shouldn't be scared, man up, you know, this kind of thing. So it comes out as aggression and violence, yeah.

<Files\\Doctorate transcript 7> - § 1 reference coded [3.05% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 3.05% Coverage

And does domestic violence when the female is the perpetrator, to the male, does that get taken less seriously by the courts and by the law and that kind of thing. And, I suppose in terms of domestic violence, that is something that

I have considered as to whether men who are the victims of domestic violence, don't get taken quite as seriously by the law, because I guess the space to be the space to be made – maybe the more scenes manners not been vulnerable in the same way.

and generally, I suppose, physically, to some extent, you know, manner, perhaps biologically stronger, you know, that's not necessarily the case at all. but perhaps there's an assumption made that men are physically stronger in that. Therefore couldn't be the victim of domestic violence in the same way that women can. so I wonder about that. I wonder, or is it more just the fact that men don't come forward as much? so yeah, I suppose I must admit, I don't know enough about it, you know, in terms of how the law works, but my prejudice would say that perhaps sometimes men get, dis-favourable deal in terms of when that the victim of domestic violence, it doesn't get taken as seriously, but I don't know whether that's backed up by any sort of fact or statistic or anything like that.

<Files\\Doctorate transcript 8> - § 3 references coded [9.85% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 2.57% Coverage

I can see that it's for some men it's unhelpful. so in terms of the social order around how to work. And again, it's that position of men, do this women do that until you can understand that for some people that position it does create a kind of power and balance. I think it makes, positions unclear. I think it creates a level of in-flexibility, which is [Inaudible 10:30] for us, as psychotherapist it's concerning because it positions some people in particular ways. So it's a bit like I think that our work, how we often see men and boys

who, you know, in terms of their ability to do emotions, ability to kind of express themselves often that you see, you know, violence, lashing out limited use of vocabulary and [Inaudible 10:52] did not feel permission to use language therapies. You know, the stories around [Inaudible 10:57] the shoulder to show sadness, to, show emotion.

Reference 2 – 1.68% Coverage

I think sometimes the social order, but it's our way of being our way of relating, our way of understanding how to be a man that can constrain or be less helpful. And in this day and age, I think it makes it much more confusing, much more challenging, and much more silencing. So therefore we see greater crimes, we see more violence, we see multiple domestic violence. We're seeing much more extreme expressions of, emotion. So I think that not so many as a social order, I think man contribute to that in a way, in terms of those pressures of knowing how to be or not to be okay.

Reference 3 – 5.60% Coverage

Speaker 2: Yeah, I mean, I do think that the men I work with a is about, I think, early experiences of trauma for young people. I think particular it's issues to do with relationship at an early age, I think also about, having permission to have a voice, but also having a language to express yourself. I think that's quite difficult in terms of, and stories that they might have in terms of, boys shouldn't cry, you know, having a boy issue, you know, you use your fist, you kind of, fight your battles. [Inaudible 32:13] it's a very strong stories about how to be a man and then very strategic use of language in terms of how to talk about emotions and how to talk about feelings. So after the part

of feeling, just get pen and talk and sort of the avenue for kind of getting something off it's just to be violent, to be destructive, to really cause pain because the pain inside is intolerable.

But I do think a lot is about the part of how to really have an appropriate way of knowing how to express, and talk about feelings and how to be with yourself. and it's you see it quite a lot in terms of how to manage that, at that point of how to do relationships, how do you, how do you allow yourself to enter someone else's world? How do you allow yourself to experience something else? in a way you don't feel under attack or feel that you're losing something, so allow you to be in my world, you know, it's, yeah, it's a bit like if I allow myself, you have to be like, if you allow yourself to talk to a gay man, does that make, you're going to be gay? You talk about yourself, even allow your children to hang out with lesbians are they all going to become, you know, that these kind of fears that the people have actually, rather than actually having the experience otherness and wider perspectives and really thinking about life and that you have choice in terms of how you want to live your life and what that looks like.

Appendix 8

RQ2

Code 1: There are differing expectations for men and women in society

Yes, yes and I think the systemic perspective was quite erm, erm, it was really quite fascinating for me, erm, because in other trainings that I have done, you know, it was always "You've got to be neutral", "You've got to be neutral" and

then that gets tied up with political correctness and actually how do we explore that, but I think men and women are, they are wired differently, the brain is different, we have different strengths and different abilities and actually, quite often, will complement each other as men and women but also in gay relationships too.

App 8.1, reference 1, Therapist 1

Speaker 2 females, you know, it's a bit more involved than having sex, you know, you could end up having to carry a child for nine months and then be around that child, you know, and be a mother to that child. And, men can, what's the word dis yeah. Men don't have to invest, can quite easily not invest into that women It's a huge thing.

App 8.1, reference 1, Therapist 4

Code 2: The dominant discourses in society favour men. (App 8.2)

I don't think so. you know, the examples where debates in politics happen and so people like the labour party, sometimes I will think about shortlists for vacant MP positions. I'm trying to think of any examples where you might think that, women rape victims get anonymity, but, people accused of rape don't. You might think that's an example. My view on that would be, rape victims should be anonymous. I think there's an argument that people accused of rape could be anonymous as well. I can't think of many examples of where the law kind of, gives women, any kind of advantage.

I suppose, you know, if you don't have a prenuptial agreement, you might argue that when women marry rich successful men and end up with half the money, you might argue, that's an example where the law favoured women. I'm not sure about that. I'm pretty certain that, you know, women still get paid less on average jobs, the female-dominated jobs tend to be less well paid, you know, think of our profession, the worst paid people, the nurses, the majority of females in our profession.

(App 8.2, reference 1, Therapist 5)

Speaker 2: So I would say probably yes, it is that they're still set up in that way for men, they still have the ability to, to reach the, the high goal is as these people were talking about the MGTOW people, you know, being able to achieve higher and greater than you could, if you are bound, women, and the rest of it, I think that they would probably women would say that that's more like that in this country for them than it is for us. So I still think, yeah, the opportunities, et cetera, et cetera, seem to be greater, I would say for the men.

(Ap 8.2, reference 1, Therapist 6)

What comes out, sometimes, and it was interesting about, you know, he said "Why weren't the families agree that it is fifty percent men and fifty percent women". There are all kinds of arguments as to why that is not accepted in this country.

I can't really speak for other countries. Erm, and in part its how different people count it, erm, and certainly, I have worked with men as victims of DV, whose have been absolutely terrified of a female partner. So, that side of his argument stood up, but we do still, in this country, live in a patriarchal society still.

App 8.2, reference 1, Therapist 1

And we know that historically many women have been mistreated by men, you know there has been, you know, for centuries, women have been mistreated by men

App 8.2, reference 1, Therapist 2

Speaker 2:

App 8.2, reference 1, Therapist 4

Speaker 2 but I've got a big but here now, and it's the same argument that I use with, I also think of the black lives matter and all lives matter is that yes in principle all lives matter. And in principle, I believe in equality, but I think those two viewpoints don't recognize the oppression that women and black people have had.

App 8.2, reference 2, Therapist 4

Have you, have you read descent of man by Grayson Perry?

Speaker 1: I know the book I have the book actually I haven't read it

Speaker 2: I basically tried to read the first chapter before I spoke to you today, Andre, but he talks about, men that have been a knapsack of privileges and codes and language. You know, that's still not available to women, you know, as an area of difference than, and so I think there's still a long way to go in terms of to be any kind of a fair playing field, a level playing field. but I can also see how some feminist discourses in some language can make some men feel quite powerless

App 8.2, reference 1, Therapist 7

Speaker 2: Yeah, I suppose for me it's about understanding feminism in terms of the idea of women having a voice and thinking of what you said earlier that part of them look back 40, 50 years ago and women being kind of marginalized or having a voice, being my position to kind of, you know, in a very kind of patriarchal world where a man, has a stronger voice and man had responsibility and that's control. And, and so how feminism helps women to have a voice and how it allows us to be much more attentive to the needs of women for what it means? I suppose the distinction for me is partly, about how does women have a voice how feminism supports women, to have a voice, as opposed to feminism, where actually to talk about how men subjugate women, how men have, what have men done to women?

App 8.2, reference 1, Therapist 8

Code 3: The dominant discourse negatively impacts women. (App 8.3)

I think it's really hard to answer. I think some men would say they would, I think, you know if you think back to the 1950s or some such dates where it certainly my dad worked full time. my mum didn't work when we were young and then she had some, part-time jobs. there's something quite attractive about getting part-time jobs no stress, you know, the work job My mum did. She never had to worry about it when she was at home. On the other hand that must've been very unfulfilling for her because she is a bright enough woman, and was, you know, an Admin assistant and, you know, that's a secretarial job. I think if we could find a middle ground somewhere that would be lovely.

(App 8.3, reference 1, Therapist 5)

This discourse was identified by an interpretative repertoire of how women were described in the 1950s. It was also identified through my own cultural knowledge, living in the Western World, and my knowledge of the MGTOW culture. I also positioned myself in the historical and cultural position of gender and power.

I think, erm and so the meaning of violence can be, can be different for women in this society, and different for men in that people don't take them seriously enough.

App 8.3 Reference 1 Therapist 1

I hear in my work story after story, after story of women being raped, being sexually assaulted, touched inappropriately in bars, made complaints and nothing is done about it. And I think that's the system that's not necessarily the law.

App 8.3, reference 1 Therapist 4

I see it in sport as well. You know, when I was very young, I've always been a rugby fan. And when I was young, they would always be, in rugby stadiums like internationals, if you were a female, you would, you'd be sexually harassed, verbally harassed. You would be, not chanted in a sense of like an abusive way, but it wasn't always, you know, you'd be looked at, and it's almost as though what are you doing here you don't know the game of rugby, you're a girl kind of attitude, now we're going to put internationals and it's 50 50. and there are sell-out stadiums for women's football and rugby and hockey as much as what there are men's stadiums

App 8.3 Reference 2, Therapist 4

No. I don't I can, I can walk down the street and at night time and now be fine. And I watch a female walk down the street and there'll be later to guys eyeing her up, you know, there'll be looking behind looking at her bum or whatever. I think men generally have it better still. That's a cultural thing. I, yeah, I think, men are especially when it comes to sexual offenses. I think women get it worse. I think if you look at the statistics, if you look at, yeah, I think in big crowds, I think, women are far more vulnerable by a group of men than a male with a group of females.

App 8.3, reference 3, Therapist 4

I think the UK in particular, the social order does, does position women, I think, if we look at the case of the Sarah Everett in the vitriol and the way women were treated by the police, I thought was unbelievable. I found it quite shocking to be honest. I often think that if we want to change a society and a culture, we have to work from the top. And I think it's probably where my political sway goes, but I do think that we currently have a conservative Tory government that is full of masculinity, testosterone, public school boys who look after themselves. And I do think that, that testosterone needs diluting with some oestrogen, in parliament.

App 8.3, reference 4, Therapist 4

And I think whatever you see going on at the top within Westminster, I think that kind of trickles down. if you look at the abuse, someone like Diane Abbott gets or Theresa May, or, the - What's her name? the Scottish, first lady - I think they get a torrent of abuse. And I think that that creates and help, that trickles down through government structures, through organizational structures, through business, it filters down. And I think that does affect social order.

App 8.3, reference 5, Therapist 4

What do I think of women? God, good question. I think women are, what I think of women God I think of lots of things. from a- I think women are often undervalued, especially mums. I think raising, I think being a parent and particularly being a mum you know, you go to a supermarket, not so much now, but I remember a few years ago there'll be a dad with their kids and being always that's sweet and there'll be a

mum with a kid and goes, oh, it's normal. You know, that's the job. so I think women and what women have to offer culture and society is underrepresenting undervalued. I think

App 8.3, reference 6, Therapist 4

we didn't recognize that. so I think feminism, for me, highlights years and years of oppression, the vote, all that stuff, that, you know, if, a male or kind of years and years ago, and oppression in the sense as well that a female's identity is constructed around their relationship with a man.

App 8.3, reference 7, Therapist 4

so that's not in relationship to a female, but even the Ms. Mrs. Miss and Merz is defines a woman in relationship, not necessarily to a male because of same-sex partners and things, but historically has been. And I think that's quite subjugating. so I think we have to- I think feminism highlights that, but I do think we need to get to a point of, equality and then it, then I think we should, that's where it should go.

App 8.3, reference 8, Therapist 4

I can see why some men might feel, that feminist discourses can be quite powerful in terms of what rights you have. But I think in the broader context of society, you know, women, you know, there's still a long way to go for there to be equality that women still don't have the same rights

App 8.3, reference 1, Therapist 7

I think feminism was, was necessary because women were getting a really bad deal and I still don't think women have as good a deal as man. but feminism can be quite dismissive of, sometimes you know, that t kind of thing of typical man said by my partner, who's a sociology teacher, you know, there can be elements of feminism that, well, I'm not saying that's necessarily a feminist idea, typical man, or is it no.

Feminism can be, perhaps some of the discourses can be, subjugating if that's the right word of male narratives and not necessarily in a helpful way in a healthy way. but I think feminism has been very necessary and it's, it's been very important in redressing relationships of power in the sense of power in society of, of women. but it's still got a long way to go, I think. And I sort of think said, man, because I think there's an assumption that feminism is, just by women, but actually men need to engage in feminism as well. And I think we're part of feminism. we're part of that dialogue, you know?

App 8.3, reference 2, Therapist 7

I think it's really hard to answer. I think some men would say they would, I think, you know if you think back to the 1950s or some such dates where it certainly my dad worked full time. my mum didn't work when we were young and then she had some, part-time jobs. there's something quite attractive about getting part-time jobs no stress, you know, the work job My mum did. She never had to worry about it when she was at home. On the other hand that must've been very unfulfilling for her because she is a bright enough

woman, and was, you know, an Admin assistant and, you know, that's a secretarial job. I think if we could find a middle ground somewhere that would be lovely.

App 8.3 Reference 1 Therapist 5

I think, erm and so the meaning of violence can be, can be different for women in this society, and different for men in that people don't take them seriously enough.

App 8.3 Reference 1 Therapist 1

I hear in my work story after story, after story of women being raped, being sexually assaulted, touched inappropriately in bars, made complaints and nothing is done about it. And I think that's the system that's not necessarily the law.

(App 8.3 Therapist 4, reference 1)

This discourse was identified by the ways in which women's experiences were described. I positioned myself in the historical and cultural position of gender and power. I also asked how these different constructions of power were used, how they were informed and how they came into being. I asked what institutions and power were associated with the growth of dominance.

I see it in sport as well. You know, when I was very young, I've always been a rugby fan. And when I was young, they would always be, in rugby stadiums like internationals, if you were a female, you would, you'd be sexually harassed, verbally harassed. You would be, not chanted in a sense of like an abusive way, but it wasn't

always, you know, you'd be looked at, and it's almost as though what are you doing here you don't know the game of rugby, you're a girl kind of attitude, now we're going to put internationals and it's 50 50. and there are sell-out stadiums for women's football and rugby and hockey as much as what there are men's stadiums.

App 8.3 Reference 2 Therapist 4

No. I don't I can, I can walk down the street and at night time and now be fine. And I watch a female walk down the street and there'll be later to guys eyeing her up, you know, there'll be looking behind looking at her bum or whatever. I think men generally have it better still. That's a cultural thing. I, yeah, I think, men are especially when it comes to sexual offenses. I think women get it worse. I think if you look at the statistics, if you look at, yeah, I think in big crowds, I think, women are far more vulnerable by a group of men than a male with a group of females.

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testosterone, public school boys who look after themselves. And I do think that, that testosterone needs diluting with some oestrogen, in parliament.

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This discourse was identified with me asking how the discourse of violence was normalised through my understanding of MGTOW.

And I think whatever you see going on at the top within Westminster, I think that kind of trickles down. if you look at the abuse, someone like Diane Abbott gets or Theresa May, or, the - What's her name? the Scottish, first lady - I think they get a torrent of abuse. And I think that that creates and help, that trickles down through government structures, through organizational structures, through business, it filters down. And I think that does affect social order.

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App 8.3 reference 6 Therapist 4

we didn't recognize that. so I think feminism, for me, highlights years and years of oppression, the vote, all that stuff, that, you know, if, a male or kind of years and years ago, and oppression in the sense as well that a female's identity is constructed around their relationship with a man.

App 8.3, Reference 7 Therapist 4

so that's not in relationship to a female, but even the Ms. Mrs. Miss and Merz is defines a woman in relationship, not necessarily to a male because of same-sex partners and things, but historically has been. And I think that's quite subjugating. so I think we have to- I think feminism highlights that, but I do think we need to get to a point of, equality and then it, then I think we should, that's where it should go.

App 8.3 Reference 8 Therapist 4

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App 8.3 Reference 1 Therapist 7

I think feminism was, was necessary because women were getting a really bad deal and I still don't think women have as good a deal as man. but feminism can be quite

dismissive of, sometimes you know, that t kind of thing of typical man said by my partner, who's a sociology teacher, you know, there can be elements of feminism that, well, I'm not saying that's necessarily a feminist idea, typical man, or is it no.

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App 8.3 Reference 2 Therapist 7

Code 5: Everyone is Imbedded in a larger cultural system (App 8.4)

No I don't think we can be independent. I think we, going back to our system, our systemic training is that we're part of a wider system of kind of the **John - Burnham** and stuff. we're gendered, we're classed, especially in the UK. We have class we have a culture, we have a colour, we have a language, we have an education and I think we operate as part of a bigger system. I don't think we can be independent. And the idea that we're independent means that we wouldn't have females and that wouldn't be very good for the population we will become extinct in a generation or 2.

we're gendered, we're classed, especially in the UK

(App 8.4, reference 1, Therapist 4)

This discourse was identified through how everyone was described. It was also identified from my cultural knowledge living in the UK.

I think we're all slaves. I don't think that's unique to females as I think all humans are confined by our language and just, you know, no one on this planet can do what they want to

(Therapist 4, reference 2)

This discourse was identified through the construction of talk between the Therapist and myself, my own cultural knowledge, as well as my historical and cultural position. I asked myself what institutions and power were associated with the growth and dominance of the discourse.

I think to be, to be a real man, I suppose we've got, I mean, that's, I suppose that's a construction, isn't it of what is it to be a man? So are we talking about how we are physically? So, you know, the fact that we are biologically male or is it about masculinity and how we construct our masculinities and, or how our masculinities get constructed in the context of our upbringings and our societies. so I suppose we get a concept of what it is to be a man by how we're raised and our societies and our cultures.

App 8.4 Reference 1 Therapist 7

Yeah, I think it also gets you into trouble some time. yeah, the social order I suppose I was kind of thinking then about what is the, social order, and we live in lots of different cultures and societies and you know, how we get, kind of the hierarchy of things, you know, if that's, what's meant by social order, Andrew, kind of the hierarchy of things, can be very different in different societies and different classes and even different areas of the country, I guess. So I suppose in terms of self-actualization, is it about it, you know, is it more about access to resources of, you know, education and, finance? not so much finance, but I think education. in order to find self-actualization, do we need to have access to education and consider different ideas, but also do we need to have cultural capital to connect with people as well in terms of gaining a sense of ourselves and gaining in a sense of personal agency, of coming to peace with ourselves, accepting who we are. to me part of that is about education, but it's also who we- the sorts of people that we have access to and we can get perspectives from them.

App. 8.4 Reference 2 Therapist 7

Code 6: Social Expectations of men as the aggressive breadwinner (App 8.5)

Get as good, a job as possible, and earn as much money as possible.

Therapist 5, reference 1

And so I think my self-imposed, social expectations, are to earn money, to be able to have a big enough house, to provide security, to bring up my children

Therapist 5, reference 2

I find men's conversations less interesting...

Therapist 5, reference 3

Discourses were identified by how these discourses were described. The Therapist and my ideas about an aggressive breadwinner through our systemic training and experience and our knowledge, living in the UK. I also looked at how the discourses categorised people. I looked at the subject position these discourses offered and asked myself what kind of different people these discourses referred to.

And so I think my self-imposed, social expectations, are to earn money, to be able to have a big enough house, to provide security, to bring up my children, to be good-enough kids, to bring up my children So they do well in exams, don't get into trouble. turn out well enough human beings. I think there are social expectations of

App 8.5 Reference 2

I find men's conversations less interesting. you know, I don't want to talk about, emotional, whatever we're talking about at length. I don't want to talk about, stocks and shares. I think men's conversations are sometimes kind of more competitive, so I guess men are more competitive.

App 8.5 Reference 3

Yeah. I suppose I had this sort of idea that we were sort of designed, to be fighting and, you know, we're fighters. So either, you know, we're either lovers or fighters that kind of, you know, going out and killing the deer and bringing it back and ripping it apart this kind of thing. If we were saying that rather than, you know, if you believe evolution, for example, there was a sense of, we've got it in us, we're programmed to be aggressive, to defend. it's just misconstrued so the defense kind of kicks in, it's an expression of masculinity in their mind. It's, I will front up, I'm hard I'm tough nobody's going to want to over me sort of thing.

App 8.5 reference 3

Yeah. I do. Especially in the couples work that I meet it's often men who complain that I don't have enough sex it's men who are saying that they want their wives to, also want more sex, and then they want their wives to argue less and just accept what they say. Whereas females again, as I said earlier, just want to be understood and appreciated and valued.

App 8.5 Reference 1

I think to be strong, to be providers yeah, to be caring, to show responsibility, to sort of to be leaders, to kind of- for some people to be head of the house. So there's particular stories that can be around a man, figure to be successful, that's fed to the man, you know, to be energetic to, we had this, I think this shows that men might experience in terms of how they need to be or how they shouldn't be. Expectations of how one should be can be constraining and can be challenging when your life doesn't fit within that, how you manage those expectations and pressures, and whether you have permission to step outside of that context.

App 8.5 Reference 1

Appendix 9

Observation and Reflection Records

2020-01-06 at 10:08pm

<https://www.mgtow.com/forums/topic/checking-out/>

A MGTOW member expressed his anger towards his ex-wife, who he claims has “destroyed him completely” after a 5-year divorce battle. He said that he had lost everything he had worked for and feels completely drained of everything. This member is worried about his retirement. He felt there was nothing to look forward to but just suffering in life. This member expressed

that he wanted to end his own life. “Men, I don’t want to live anymore!!!” He asks the members if they know of a quick and painless way to die. He asks about hanging or an overdose.

I will take the above to the therapists to discuss how we can be helpful in similar situations. What do we need to look out for? What questions would they want us to ask them? What does this man need? This man seems emotionally tired. I sense a feeling of learned helplessness. I wonder what support he has. I wonder why he and his wife had such an acrimonious divorce and why he thinks it is all so unfair. I am interested to see what the other men are saying about this.

2020-01-06 at 10:41pm

One member gave him emotional motivation and tried to make him feel better by saying “Don’t look down brother... look up!” He empathised with him saying that he was not alone as he had been in that position as well and he believes many men have felt like that. I wonder if they do? He motivated this member to imagine a bright future and to get some dreams to aspire towards, as he would then prove to those who told him that his life was over that it is not. He said the following:

Get ya head straight... this is YOUR LIFE.
Look forward, not behind you!

Maybe we need to talk to men more like this. I know I like straight talking.

I also noticed a quick response to this member’s post, so I wonder what level of anxiety his post has elicited in the member above? What do we want to

construct through what we say, how we say it, and when, and how we respond to what the other is saying?

2020-01-24 at 11:01 PM

Another member responded by saying if he killed himself, this act would be his ex-wife's final victory. I have heard women supporting each other like this on "marriage and relationship" groups on Facebook as well, just focussing on the person who seemed to be victimised and demonising the other, without all the information. It is easy to judge, to fall in love with one's own truths and not to explore a narrative. I will take this to the therapists.

This member confirms what the previous one said, that there have been many men on the group who have gone through similar situations. He said some men have ended up living in their trucks, sofa-surfing, and so on. I also think some women ended up in financial hardship after a divorce. This member said something quite wise, that when one loses everything in life, one can know oneself better as one would then have nothing else but the soul. He said anything else but your soul is nonsense. The Buddha also stated that suffering is due to an identification with form. I connected with this. I suppose that's easier said than done for most people.

2020-01-25 at 12:17 AM

This member also confirms that he had a similar situation. He calls the member "brother." This is how emotion is shown between men. As a man I know this. It means: I have your back. You only call someone this if you were emotionally touched but still wanted to keep a safe distance, that is, I suppose, to make it more socially acceptable. He motivated him by saying

that life gets better. This member echoed what the other member said about material possessions and not to measure yourself against that. It sounds like there is an undertone of religion. I wondered who promoted the religious support when they were children? I know my mother used to read the Bible and we prayed together. This was comforting. I wonder what their relationships with their mothers were.

And you know what... I did it because I am a man... and as a man I can accomplish anything. I put my mind to anything positive that I want to achieve.
Don't look backwards brother... you aren't going that way.

The above sounds like an older brother is giving his younger brother a pep talk to motivate him. There is a discourse about what a man is. He said "He did all of what he had to do because that is what men do." I wonder if this part of his advice was really helpful? Do we as therapists have to be mindful not to construct gender identities when we work with men? How could we elicit true feelings through our questioning as therapists?

2020-01-25 at 3:06 AM

Another member mentioned that the feelings of sadness, anger, and spite are powerful fuel! He said that this member needed to attach that energy source to some constructive action and he would then be an unstoppable force. He reminded him that there must be something good in the world for him, like a hobby.

I noticed the time this member responded and was wondering about this member's own mental health and sleeping patterns? Do we as therapists ask enough about people's sleeping patterns? I know I do, as I work in mental health, but what do people actually do when they can't sleep?

2020-01-25 at 3:24 AM

Another member reminded this member that real life is not like in Disneyland, where all good men are rewarded for their good deeds and unconditional love. He said that in such a world, women respect a man with a good heart and in return, a man will give his life for his female partner. He made him aware that this is fantasy and that he had to lift his head and live. He asked the member if he actually even knew what suffering was and that he should Google real suffering. I think many times we can simplify someone's pain by telling them that there are others with worse pain than them and that they should be grateful. I suppose that is good at the right time, but maybe this man was not ready for his emotional pain to be dismissed and rationalised. Do we as therapists, especially in busy NHS settings, spend enough time listening to people's stories or do we come up with solutions and want to get them to "snap out of it?"

The good man doesn't get the girl, and the just man doesn't get the promotion. People don't care about you or me, it's all about their own ass 24/7. Life has become a popularity contest, and decent people are chewed up and spit out. You got f~~~ed, welcome to the club.

I suppose many of us, men, and women have felt like the above many times. This could be a helpful behavioural technique to stop the rumination of victim thoughts in one's head. However, is this really how the world is or is that just a perception when we feel low in mood? Everything always seems negative when we feel stressed and worried. I think this concept can be broken down, to understand how we position the world, others, and how we through our own positioning are being positioned, and then to move to how we want to punctuate ourselves. That sense of agency is important.

He wrote:

I would never ever give someone my life. I would never ever get kicked around and then lie on the floor crying about it. I would never ever give anyone (and I mean no one) the satisfaction. I'm going down fighting.

2020-03-12 at 3:32 PM

<https://www.mgtow.com/forums/topic/introduction-10/>

This member introduced himself by saying that he has spent his “entire life looking for love” and for his “soulmate.” He said that he had made tremendous sacrifices for women who he believes did not care about him. He said that these women were more than happy to use him. Everything he had been told about relationships in his childhood was either fantasy or simply a lie. He referred to the books he read, TV shows, and movies he watched, and songs he had listened to. He said all of these discourses were mostly created out of wish fulfilment or by people at the start of a relationship. He feels they were not reality and just fiction. He had spent thousands of hours on dating sites, and wildly more time than that – tens of thousands of hours – working on relationships that were doomed from the start. It had been a rough year, and he said that he had fought a tremendous amount of anger and depression after taking The Red Pill and realising what the world was – really – like. He now said that he was rebooting his life in many ways, like many people in the MGTOW community.

2020-03-12 at 3:51 PM

A MGTOW member confirmed that all those wonderful dreams that were constructed in childhood vaporise into nothingness and we temporarily seem to be more lost than we have ever been. There seems to be a great level of

disappointment. Who in their families informed them that these discourses were trustworthy? How do these men now secretly feel about these morally obliged sources of knowledge? Does that leave men with trust issues? This is clearly the same for women. Are boys and girls socialised with different fantasies or ideas about relationships?

This member reminded him that if he dropped the fantasies about how a relationship should look like, he would experience a type of peace he thought was never possible. He also reminded him that this would lead to more control in life and ultimately to more freedom. Only then would he realise that happiness has always been within him and that he would never find happiness outside himself. Do we as therapists when working with couples show curiosity about how individuals find their own peace first? How they first and foremost look after themselves first? Do we question the social discourse of relationships and roles within the relationship? Do we place enough focus on the coordination and managing of how meaning is being constructed?

2020-03-12 at 4:17 PM

Another member said that he liked this member's introduction and put some caring emotion in how he wrote: "It reads like something you copied from the scars on your heart. It reads true." These men show care towards each other, even though their language at times is unsavoury. Do we need more platforms where we can express the rough diamond feelings so that we can feel readier for real life? Is this similar to Bateson's (1971) study of the Latvet community and schizmogennis?

This member reminded him that he will be okay now that he is part of the MGTOW group and that he had the one essence that makes a real man, and that is self-realisation, and the resolute sovereignty it inspires!

2020-04-13 at 1:09 AM

Another member wrote this:

Please understand that although we are here to share knowledge and sometimes we have a shout and rage there is another side..

We care we care about you and each other.

Yes you ... we don't know you ... but we do ... very well. Because you are us ... and we know how you feel.

So right now is the time to lean on us if needed... don't worry... at some point we'll need the same.

The Red Pill can really drag on you in early stages... so reach out if needed.

Welcome my friend... brother.

Does the use of language like the above by this MGTOW man create more change in angry men than therapy by a qualified psychotherapist? Do therapists really care when a misogynistic man sits in front of them, especially if that therapist is a female and has a personal story about a misogynistic partner? Would the therapist's prejudice and judgement be sensed by the client? I have experienced that from psychotherapists and psychologists and have never felt comfortable that I would be understood by them. I felt judged and demonised. Is there something we as clinicians can learn from the manner in which this man was spoken to? The language that speaks to men?

2020-05-13 at 1:09 AM

<https://www.mgtow.com/forums/topic/treat-women-like-men/>

One MGTOW member wrote:

One of the chief beauties of MGTOW is it makes it okay to not engage in their fake ass bulls~~~.

No smileys, no emoticons. No pussy pass, in any sense.

The only caveat is I don't usually go into depth with women like I do with men. Men generally want to understand how things work or why something is the way it is, whereas women just want to FEEL GOOD and don't care much for further knowledge.

Often silence is the best response.

It's win win for MGTOW. If you want to not attract women, it works. Paradoxically it also attracts women – they sense you're not trying, so if you enjoy a bit of P&D it works for that too.

If only the blue pillers of the world knew this truth, they'd become RP overnight.

How do we know our truth, if we are not making use of our highest feelings? Why would you pursue anything, if you don't feel good about something? It is interesting that he mentions "silence is the best response" and I have had many women in therapy telling me that their husband's silence was very difficult to live with. Was this because men had this view about women, that they will drain them with an expectation to be something emotionally that they did not always know how to be like? I am wondering about emotional literacy in this member. There also seems to be a need to be accepted by MGTOW by telling the men, "it's win win with MGTOW."

The worse theme about MGTOW for me is the terrible generalisations about women. I know women who are like men and I know men who are like women.

2020-04-15 at 3:00 AM

MGTOW member's response to the above post:

I will never treat a woman like I treat a man for the simple reason that I have respect for men, while I strive to ignore and avoid weemins, no respect, or disrespect involved, just cold dispassionate stoic stance. When a man speaks I listen, when a woman babbles I switch off. When a man is down I pick him up, when a woman is down I laugh. When an old man needs a seat I get up, when an old woman needs a seat I remember how I was abused by these monsters in my childhood and figure they'd be old bitches by now. I'd gladly have a drink with any man while the very thought of drinking with any woman gives me the chills as I'd know my life would certainly be in danger. When a man works I help, when a woman works I figure she does not need my help; why, with being all independent and strong... Point being f~~~ these bitches, young and old I won't discriminate.

This is really a worrying and frightening response. It instils a violent attitude in men towards women. Clearly this man has some distraught perceptions about women. More men abuse men than women abuse men in my clinical experience, working with young men in CAMHS. Was he abused by his mother? How did he form his meanings around women? Is he even safe to be around women in the community? He would laugh when a woman is down? Does this person have neurodevelopmental issues? He would pick a man up when he is down but laugh when a woman is down? How can this sound right for men in the group? If this sounds right, then clearly the police needs to know about this. However, I wonder if it was liberating for men to be able to write what they normally would not verbalise or do? I say many things to myself in my head that would sound worrying to others, or write it in a diary, but I will not do it. So, in a sense, this platform provides a 'safe' space to verbalise. Of course, there would be those men who do exactly what they say, but it might not be true for all the men on this group.

When an old woman needs a seat, I remember how I was abused by these monsters in my childhood and figure they'd be old bitches by now.

Okay, so it seems like this man is carrying with him scars of childhood abuse from his mother. Clearly, he needs professional help, not more angry and misogynistic men to construct more of the same violent attitudes towards women. However, it is easier to be among birds of a feather who make you feel good and wanted, than to work on stuff therapeutically.

Thought of drinking with any woman gives me the chills as I'd *know* my life would certainly be in danger.

Is he afraid that he might get drunk and then sleep with a woman, get her pregnant, and then have to pay for her and the child? Is this the belief of these men on the platform? Is this a fact?

He calls women "weemins." This is very derogative language. I wonder how making use of language like this was informed and socially constructed to be okay to use? I wonder how a female would respond to this? What about a female psychotherapist? Will we as psychotherapists hear what lies behind the derogative language or will we be offended and judgemental?

I am guessing his mother had an alcohol problem and he was abused when his mother was drunk. I wonder where his father was? I wish I could see this person in therapy. I feel touched by the emotional pain I sense and the danger these unresolved issues may expose women to in the community.

2020-05-20 at 5:00 PM

MGTOW member's response to the above post:

I don't treat them like men...I treat them like children. Or, I just completely avoid them.

I noticed the word “them.” Once again, a generalisation. However, generalising happens in most conversations we have, as it been the easiest way out. I personally feel these men are behaving like children; maybe they are regressing to sound like boys to be cared for by men. I know there are many boys with absent fathers and the mothers are usually the ones looking after the boys. Is this a way of trying to heal emotionally with other men? I wonder when he said that he avoids “them” whether he actually means that women ignored him?

2020-06-15 at 3:00 AM

MGTOW member’s response to the above post:

Women=person trying to kill me.

Men=person trying to kill me.

Kid=person trying to kill me.

Old=person trying to kill me.

Directive: Avoid people trying to kill me.

Secondary directive: If people trying to kill become active and are unavoidable, exterminate with extreme prejudice.

I don’t care what you are, sex, religion, colour, status, age, if you come at me, I will kill you. I will avoid you, I won’t help you, I won’t trust, friends don’t exist, I will defend myself in all situations.

My advice: STAY THE F~~~ AWAY FROM ME.

Somehow it feels like the above member feels alone and needs some attention. Who is so explicit that will try to kill him? When did that happen? Who was that? Maybe it is because he gets no attention and by saying this... I mean, maybe he needed more emotional nurturing as a child. There is a sense of emotional abuse that stands out for me.

2020-06-15 at 01:00 AM

MGTOW member's response to the above post:

I don't know about all that, pseudonym. You may very well be right while I have a soft spot for the younger ones, I can't help it. NO child has EVER threatened my life like these bitches have on several occasions.

All I know is that I would forgive a child in a split second while my forgiveness for weemins is permanently shut off.

If I had a choice between saving a woman or saving a child you know what my choice would be? I'd leave the woman to die open-mouthed rattling her last bulls~~~ before meeting her maker, while I take the kid to the hospital and try to find his father.

What does this actually mean? Has he just made threats to women? He would let the woman die to meet her maker? I am wondering if he thought he had the same maker as the woman? He would then take the child to his father? What if it was the father who abused the mother and left her to die? Would it be safe to take the child to the father according to him? I am wondering about his emotional literacy. However, would it not be the same if I said I would rather save a lion cub than a hunter, when a male lion wants to devour both. Because of my hatred for people who kill animals, I would rather save the animal. But then again, that is what I may say among friends in a group who feel the same way. Would I do it when I am in the actual situation? It brings us again to the safeness and distance the group provides that enables these men to maybe say more that they would actually do? Is there something we as psychotherapists can learn from MGTOW?

What is this hate about? Is it a cry for nurturing or a safe attachment? Are these the men I work with as a therapist? Perhaps when I do, I do not actually know how hurt/angry/dangerous they are?

2020-06-15 at 03:00 AM

MGTOW member's response to a MGTOW members response:

Women are more than happy to be grouped with children if it means they get to avoid accountability for their actions.

I mean a woman was let off imprisonment after she murdered her boyfriend by pinning him against a pole using her car. Her defence you may ask? PMS – that's right. I was bleeding between my legs. God made me bleed. And bleeding made me kill.

My mother could not be happier with all her children with her. I have not experienced this in my work working with mothers.

Some women and some men may want to avoid responsibility, but is this gender specific? There are more mothers looking after children than fathers. In most of my experience, men are the ones who disappear and leave the mothers with the children. How can we challenge this belief when the man is already angry and has preconceived ideas about therapists' intentions and all women being the same.

I am reading about a man who has ended a relationship with a woman who he said had a borderline personality disorder. Another member responded by saying that men should stay away from all women as they are all bipolar and that all women have some type of personality disorder. I spoke to my friend about this and he reminded me that if we did a survey, many people would know very little about mental health, even educated people.

It feels as if these men are hurt by women and are trying to polarise all women as the same, like an object of study that is already known. They seem angry at women and find solace within each other's anger.

I just saw one reader saying that he was dumped by his girlfriend for no reason but added that he told her that's good as he didn't want to be with her

anyway, and that this “sent her mental.” There is power in what he was able to create for her and the fear of what he could lose. Are we looking at couples and families just systemically or are we also thinking of how power in the animal kingdom is being coordinated, that could help us understand how to address this with humans?

It feels as if these men are fuelling each other’s narratives about a limited understanding of women. It is sad to read and to know that so many men can go along with this manner of talking about another being. This is similar to how I observed men in South Africa around a BBQ (‘braaivleis vuur’). They become a pack: this is part of identity configuration – how we (generalisation) were brought up to believe – the moment someone is different, it becomes a threat.

I wonder how they are functioning in society, at work, amongst their extended families, their sisters, their mothers, their daughters. Would they also say their daughters are “whores” like all women? No, most of them will not, but that is different. It is like being in a group where they call a guy a “faggot.” You either stay quiet or laugh with them, but you do not stand up for the guy, even if your brother, or you yourself are gay. It is about belonging. It makes people do crazy stuff. Do we think about this when we work with boys or with men?

Appendix 10

What's good boys?

Today's video: **'Why MGTOW wins corporate warfare?'**

MGTOW is evolution. MGTOW exists as an adaption to an anti-male world but one of the best things that I see about MGTOW is the rationality of the proposition it brings forward in men going their own way. They take back their masculinity and begin to define it on their own terms. They're no longer looking to woman X Y Z. They're no longer looking to job X Y Z and they are no longer looking to possession X Y Z. They are instead looking within. Thus, they're reclaiming the power that they always had but one that appeared to have been taken away from them. The problem is that the best strategy that society used as a whole has been exposed; shaming and what happens when something is exposed, it becomes transparent. People begin to see it for what it is and the more men talk, congregate, and communicate with one another, the more similarities they begin to see within the matrix. For example, we'll take a group of men one from France, one from England, one from Thailand, one from America, one from Chile, and they all begin to talk online. They say, "Wait wait wait, they tell you as well that you need a girlfriend? Oh, wait wait wait, they say that you two need to get married? Oh, and then they also tell you that you need to have this career?" But then comes the important question, why? Well if you ask the people if you ask this to the people that are telling you what you need you have already lost because you have given it to their frame. Who the fuck cares about the why? If someone proposes that you inject crookadility into your pecker, you're not going to ask them why because you already know it's a stupid idea. So instead of asking them why, these men begin to ask each other why and they come up with the correct answer. There is no good why. These are ideas and notions that are perpetuated in order to keep the system churning and moving along smoothly. But why serve the system? If you're

serving something greater than you, would you not want it to care? I say quote care for you or at least value. Are men really valued in the world? So then is the proposition to keep the system training along one of the mutual benefits or is it a zero-sum game? And that's fine, that's fine you know that men aren't necessarily valued that's just how biology has hardwired, hardwired the world. Obviously, a vagina has inherently more worth than a penis. So, it makes sense from a purely biological perspective to have white knights, to have pussy sicko fans, and to have men who are willing to throw themselves away to save a damsel in distress. If we didn't have those characteristics, MGTOW may have come about a lot earlier, and who knows whether the species would have survived at that point, and really that's all evolution and nature cares about. However, we have now reached a point where it's no longer about gene replication. So, a lot of the old strategies that have gotten us this far are being rendered useless.

Why should I care about serving something that doesn't serve me? Why should I do what other people tell me especially when those people would be willing to throw me away at the first chance they sent to profit in doing so? Why should I follow orders from somebody that I don't even think is happy? I don't think that these people that are propagating a lot of these ideas are happy with themselves, so why do I need to follow them? MGTOW is just a rational proposition that seeks to understand the world, our nature, and how our systems are set up. Except instead of doing what other people do when they find out the truth and take up arms against the system, MGTOW just says, "Ight, cool, so that's why things are the way they are. Well, then I might just do

me and they can do them but I'm gonna keep my distance and my research to myself.

A MGTOW man actually has way more time, more resources, and emotional energy to attain things that actually objectively enhance his life. He has more time to expand his mind, he has more time to improve his body, he has more time to network, he has more time to meditate. Things, these being things that retain their value and ask for very little in return. In essence, MGTOW is the search for low investment, high return activities, and these things are not found in women, careers, or consumerism. So really from a very very basic perspective, the question comes down to somebody criticizing MGTOWs, "Are you not for a favourable strategy? So then how can you possibly criticize MGTOW?" The funny thing is that because the MGTOW man ends up with more time to work on himself and create real value within, he then actually has a higher chance of succeeding with these very things that interest him. So, he is much more average to be successful than an average man who just pursues what others tell him to pursue. Except unlike that drone who doesn't think for himself, the biggest thing is that the MGTOWs have the choice, they have the choice between following the status quo or going their own way. That is where the real beauty of MGTOW lies. It enhances people's free will and I've seen some criticism that always stands from people who don't really understand MGTOW as a whole or what it's really about. For example, I mean one of the more common ones that I see is, "Oh you guys are just like bitter feminists. Wah wah whining about women, nobody cares." There's a difference between whining, bitterness which is more of a systemic behavior where the identity becomes meshed with that which what you're talking about, and righteous

indignation that says, "This is bullshit. This is why this is bullshit and this is why you should avoid it."

The biggest difference between MGTOW and feminism is that MGTOW is not trying to legislate or coerce anyone to take any action. It merely encourages people to pursue things to their own accord, to their own trumpet, and to their own volition. Whereas feminism endeavors to pass laws thus coercing people into following their ideals and this isn't even through reason, fact, or truth. Pretty much everything they cite can be easily debunked by even a bit of research. Things like you know why don't they consider that men are half of the victims of domestic violence? What about that, men are more likely to be homeless, have a higher suicide rate, or be killed? What about the fact that men are more likely to pay child support, alimony or end up in jail for not doing so? What about the fact that women cheat as much if not more? In some places, they get paid more and affirmative action is really all about forcing as in using coercion through the use of Big Daddy government in having companies and universities have quotas for women. Where if these companies and universities don't follow these so-called laws, they could be penalized for it.

Where is the MGTOW equivalent of this? There is no coercion or things that come up MGTOW that steal and he steals that something that should have been a woman's. For example, the job that should have gone to the most skilled worker but instead automatically is going to a woman because if men and women were equal, why would you, why would you even need to have a quota? Shouldn't you be able to attain that position through your natural ability to be equal and thus with a bit of work your ability to supersede men? That is

the feminist imperative and really a deeper channeling of gynocentrism but where is the MGTOW equivalent of this? I'm waiting. Oh, that's right it does not exist. What is the call to action that feminism takes? Do these women ever talk about their hobbies or things that women can do to enhance the reality? As a matter of fact, the fact that they propagate this 'everyone is beautiful' nonsense, this body-positive stuff, this actually inhibits women because men are not fooled by this, nature is not fooled by this. So, we find the things we find attractive for a biological purpose. So, they're actually disserving the women that they are supposedly fighting for. How can you possibly liberate a human being if its state stays the same or it actually becomes worse because of the philosophy you put forward. This is the biggest difference because when you look at the most popular MGTOWs, they all have hobbies, passions, pursuits and in ways, these are things that they would encourage their subscribers, the people that follow them, to check out. For example, Stardusk has his language study, his neurological study, and his exercise. Barbarossa has his running coupled with his interests in chemistry and running his blog. Sandman has his photography, editing, and writing. This is outside of their study of psychology, philosophy, and evil psychology which is evident in their videos. Thus, we can see, we can see what the major difference is. MGTOW encourages men to pursue their free will and puts into proper perspective what women are, their place, and what value you should place on these relationships.

The axiom really being that women, they may come along for the ride but never ever ever deviate your own course for them because they will never be the ride, they are not the ride. MGTOW is seeking to have more men who are

liberated from the act from the system because society, women, and our immediate families will not put into perspective the actual cost to benefit ratio in engaging with women and especially in getting married and having kids with them. This is why this is an important aspect of MGTOW. It is, it is so that the first notions that people have about the way things need to be can be broken down through logic, rationality, studies, and experiences of others. Then and only then are they totally, totally free because you have to have a proper understanding and context of relationships. Women and signing contracts, having kids, and sharing your wealth with them before you are truly able to understand it all.

This wouldn't work if Sandman just said, "Oh you know just, just be a photographer. It's a good hobby." Or if Stardusk just said, "Oh you know, study, study language it's uh it's challenging but it can be worthwhile." Or if Barbarossa said, "Well you know just uh just learn about chemistry it's it's neat." Because even if the men followed their instructions, there are so many ways that they can get fucked over, side-tracked, lost in society, or just trapped that they may not get past learning the word 'hello or taking one picture or learning one element'. What needs to be valued above everything else is truth. What does it matter if someone is mad saying it? What does it matter if they're happy saying it? Does the truth shift to tonality and emotion? Is something true based on the way it is said? What is this point about bitterness and unhappiness? This is a moot point because somebody could be the most unhappiest person in the world but if they've said $1+1$ is 2, would you be like, "Well now you're wrong because you're unhappy." At the same time, somebody could be the happiest person in the world, the nicest person and

they could have tons and tons of knowledge but if they say 1 plus 1 is 3 then is that the truth?

The criticism always comes outside of someone who is a MGTOW. If people actually read, spoke, or asked how the MGTOW actually lived their lives instead of projecting themselves by calling names, making assumptions, shaming them, or just being outright obtuse in your ideas. They find out that pretty much all of the men are immensely happy and if you have a rational philosophy, one that encourages free thought, one that uses studies, one that focuses on objectivity, and one where people, where the people that follow or identify with it are very happy. Why would you not look at it? The reason, the root, fear, ignorance, or bias and it's just that simple. People are afraid of the implications that MGTOW has in showing us that men and women are actually insanely different. Their natures collide and if it wasn't for one side making massive concessions, there would have been no cooperation, to begin with.

Ignorance: people that are either wilfully ignoring evidence of what is being said, using subjective conjecture that nobody can possibly confirm or they have negative knowledge and they believe something that is flat-out alive. Or to finally to come to the last part, bias. In that it's obviously way easier to disregard what MGTOW says than to actually look at a paradigm-shifting evidence. The Simon wise reflex because rewiring neurons, realizing you were wrong, and looking at past mistakes isn't the most fun thing in the world especially when it's something that is so embedded in our gynocentric society. This is why MGTOW wins because it doesn't hinge on those people. What MGTOW allows men to do is to transcend the opinions of others and pursue

happiness how they wanted. So, hey, it comes down to haters gonna hate but MGTOW is gonna MGTOW.

As Sun Tzu said, "It is best to win without fighting.", this is MGTOW in a nutshell. Why fight to change the female nature? Why try to legislate laws to coerce women in the way that men have been coerced, ruined, and bullied by the gynocentric laws that feminism has passed. MGTOW is really prophylaxis or the prevention of future problems which is why it's so important for men to be aware, to see these videos, and to look at the cold harsh truth. Their very potential, yes their very fucking potential hinges on it because MGTOW isn't about whining and saying, "Oh women are not truly evil. We as men we're, we're such victims, pity-party. Come on guys everybody on board. Okay let's all feel bad together." it's about saying, look at everything in the world, look at it for what it is and in spite of all of this you have an amazing opportunity. Here is how you can take advantage of it and here is how to avoid the problem that many men face and that many men are left to deal with because of a lack of knowledge. How much money, time, effort, and emotional investment have been lost by men who could have taken the same resources, channeled it into the self or into something higher, and have been more fulfilled for it. And that those very things, how much of that has been lost on women? How much of it needs to be lost before men wake up to their reality? The irony is that by channeling it into something other than women, they actually end up with more women due to their higher success in life and thus, the acquisition of status and money for it.

It's not so much that women are inherently evil creatures, hell-bent on destroying men. It's that unless men and women understand their nature,

specifically men understanding female nature, they can end up in terrible, terrible positions as we've seen in the West with all of the issues the two sexes have had in the last 50 years. But which sex is the one that pays for it? What is, which sex is the liability, and which sex is the asset? Are women facing alimony in high amounts? Do women ever serve time, any jail time for missing alimony, or for not paying child support? What about, what about false rape accusations? Are females against male domestic violence as feminism which likes a champion itself about human equality? Are even domestic violence cases taken as seriously when a man makes it against a woman as opposed to the other way around and what if a woman's accusations are found to be false? What about all the men that have been entrapped into having kids and what about the men that have to pay child support on children that aren't even theirs?

MGTOW can literally save lives as a straight shooter so pointing it in the pointed out. If men see the gynocentric nature of society, how women can behave if it benefits them and the sort of consequences they face, their whole way of thinking can undergo an epic transformation. What if the war machine understood the topics found in videos from Barbarossa, Sandman, Spetsnaz, and Stardusk videos? Would he have had the same fate? What about all the married men who have gone completely fucked over by the family courts, would their fate have been the same? That is the potential, that is the chance we have and that is the opportunity should we take it, if only we become aware. People, that criticize MGTOW, you have to wonder, how many men's lives are they saving? What good are they doing for men around the world? I mean, hell I've only been on YouTube for three months with this channel and I've already

gotten men from Greece, France, Asia, America, telling me how much my videos have helped them understand things differently and how they are so much happier for having this knowledge. That is the most worthwhile aspect of MGTOW to me. Literally helping others to see their own capacity, their own potential, and their own ability to transcend the paradigm and leave the plantation. MGTOW is the unleashing of male potential through first losing the inhibition that so many men have in tying their masculinity to a woman, to a family, to what others think, and to their kids.

You are a man! You define your masculinity! The world can be so fucking awesome as a man but the world can also be fucking terrible as a man. But unless you are armed with the correct knowledge, your reality will not be one of your highest potentials. Because regardless of the understanding you have of knowledge, if that knowledge is false, it matters not because if your reality will be false too. You will be in tempting to build the CN tower on quicksand. The knowledge is the foundation.

MGTOWs have no need to be bitter. They've already won. They have the proper context of women, they understand their nature, their hypergamy, solipsism, how they love, their love style essentially being conditional, and their loyalty. They understand the dangers of engaging with them, alimony, divorce, rape, jail time, possibly dealing with being cuckolded and they know their own nature, their sex drive, their disposability, and their tendency to the white knight if unchecked and they understand how society views them. Cogs in the wheel, cannon fodder and to be thrown out if they are broken. They are so far past these things. Now they can spend their time studying philosophy, finance, biology, psychology. Now they can spend their time lifting weights, running,

tracking their macros, meditating and now they can spend their time playing video games, leaving the country on a whim, or just doing whatever it is that they please. They have no ties to any particular philosophy. They have lost everything and some of them without ever losing a thing. Their reality, their mood, and their life does not hinge on others. Their thoughts, whether or not they have person X Y Z in their life or any shaming that anybody may enact upon them. They just don't give a Fuck!

MGTOWs are self-actualized, they're self-fulfilled and they are 'F R E E'. Free baby on the daily. So, my brothers, do what makes you happy. Pursue your own dreams. Let the world be your oyster. Come as you wish, stay as you please, and do it all with speeds.

Peace out boys.

Appendix 11



Tavistock and Portman Trust Research Ethics Committee (TREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL REVIEW OF RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

This application should be submitted alongside copies of any supporting documentation which will be handed to participants, including a participant information sheet, consent form, self-completion survey or questionnaire.

Where a form is submitted and sections are incomplete, the form will not be considered by TREC and will be returned to the applicant for completion.

For further guidance please contact Paru Jeram (pjeram@tavi-port.nhs.uk)

Project Details

Current project title	Working with men in Systemic Therapy. Can systemic practitioners learn from MGTOW in order to treat and be more sensitive to contemporary male gender identity? A Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA)		
Proposed project start date	As soon as ethics is approved	Anticipated project end date	September 2019 -2021

Applicant Details

Name of Researcher	Petrus Andries (André) Swanepoel
Email address	andre.swanepoel@blueyonder.co.uk
Contact telephone number	07850028496

Will any of the researchers or their institutions receive any other benefits or incentives for taking part in this research over and above their normal salary package or the costs of undertaking the research?

YES NO

If YES, please detail below:
Is there any further possibility for conflict of interest? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, please detail below:

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

FOR ALL APPLICANTS

Has external ethics approval been sought for this research? (i.e. submission via Integrated Research Application System (IRAS) to the Health Research Authority (HRA) or other external research ethics committee)	YES NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, please supply details below: Ethics did not approve previous research idea. This is a re-submission.	

COURSE ORGANISING TUTOR

Does the proposed research as detailed herein have your support to proceed?

YES NO

Signed	
Date	

APPLICANT DECLARATION

I confirm that:

The information contained in this application is, to the best of my knowledge, correct and up to date.

I have attempted to identify all risks related to the research.

I acknowledge my obligations and commitment to upholding our University's Code of Practice for ethical research and observing the rights of the participants.

I am aware that cases of proven misconduct, in line with our University's policies, may result in formal disciplinary proceedings and/or the cancellation of the proposed research.

Applicant	Petrus Andries (André) Swanepoel
Signed	Signed as above Petrus Andries Swanepoel

Date	04/08/18
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FOR RESEARCH DEGREE STUDENT APPLICANTS ONLY

<p>Name and School of Supervisor/Director of Studies</p>	<p>1) Dr Sarah Helps Consultant Clinical Psychologist, Systemic Psychotherapist Head of Discipline - Systemic Psychotherapy Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust 120 Belsize Lane London NW3 5BA</p> <p>2) Inga-Britt Krause PhD Consultant Systemic Psychotherapist Training & Development Consultant Lead, Systemic Psychotherapy Professional Doctorate Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust</p>
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	<p>120 Belsize Lane</p> <p>London NW3 5BA</p> <p>3) Dr Herman Grobler</p> <p>Associate Professor/Research Director</p> <p>COMPRES</p> <p>Faculty of Health Sciences</p> <p>North-West University</p> <p>Potchefstroom Campus</p> <p>South Africa</p> <p>0027 18 285 2271 (tel)</p> <p>www.nwu.ac.za</p>
<p>Qualification for which research is being undertaken</p>	<p>Professional Doctorate in Systemic Psychotherapy</p>

Supervisor/Director of Studies –

Does the student have the necessary skills to carry out the research?

YES NO

Is the participant information sheet, consent form and any other documentation appropriate?


Yes x NO

Are the procedures for recruitment of participants and obtaining informed consent suitable and sufficient?

YES NO

Where required, does the researcher have current Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) clearance?

YES NO n/a

Signed	
Date	15.12.17

Details of the proposed research

Provide a brief description of the proposed research, including the requirements of participants. This must be in lay terms and free from technical or discipline specific terminology or jargon. If such terms are required, please ensure they are adequately explained (Do not exceed 500 words)

This study will explore how power relations are exercised and negotiated in discourse.

It is important to know more about contemporary gender relations and to be curious about the underlying assumptions of why and how some misogynistic men's groups develop and why they are growing rapidly as this could help clinicians to be more aware of the structures that cause, maintain and contribute to violent attitudes and behaviour towards women.

This study will explore whether and if so how systemic practitioners need to adjust the way they work with the challenges of masculinities of today's modern man as well as their own reflexivity around male chauvinism, power and prejudice.

I have come across a polarised male gender group, calling themselves, Men Going Their Own Way (MGTOW). According to the MGTOW web page

(<https://www.mgtow.com/about>):

A MGTOW man is a man with supreme power or authority, autonomy, independence, self-government, self-rule, self-determination, freedom and self-governing.

MGTOW is perceived within the public domain as engendering hate speech against women, and I want to understand how systemic practitioners can engage with this so as to help to address this problem. I was surprised to see how freely MGTOW men expressed themselves to each other in contrast to how limited the expression of self and self in relation to their partners come across in my clinical office in private practice with men on their own and with couples and families.

Potential impact on Systemic Knowledge

The question of how systemic practitioners could change the experiences for men seeking help has been asked for over 20 years in systemic literature (Reimers & Dimmock, 1990, p.170). It is therefore timely for systemic practitioners to review their understanding of the contemporary man's needs and how to address men in therapy in order for men to feel less isolated in families. Walters, (1990) suggests that many of the methods and techniques in family therapy demonstrated a tunnel vision with gender stereotypes that men are irresponsible and women over responsible. (Walters, 1990, p. 21).

An exploration of how patriarchal beliefs disadvantage men in their gender role divisions is just as important as to explore as how patriarchy disadvantages women, as seen recently with the sexual harassment allegations of Harvey Weinstein and many celebrity men. Understanding MGTOW men's stories will help systemic psychotherapists help men (and women) in therapy and in this way help address this important and necessary area of gender development in systemic practice.

It is clear that men struggle with mental health issues just as women do and it is of concern that men less readily seek therapy for their difficulties compared with women. The YouGov survey polled 2500 people with mental health problems indicated that 28% of men admitted that they had not sought medical help, compared with 19% of women. (The Guardian, 5th November 2016). Engaging and working with men who seem disconnected in therapy is seen by many clinicians as a major stumbling block in successful therapy. Do men feel heard, understood and respected less than women when therapists work with men and women? (Carter, 1988; Reimers & Dimmock, 1990; Urry, 1990, p. 112-113).

In my initial observation of MGTOW, many men felt that therapists were in favour of women and feminist ideas and therapists themselves have noted that this possible positioning of therapists when working with men need to

be explored (Jones, 1991 p.13; Walters, 1990, p. 28; Palazolli et al., 1980; Jones, 1990, p.64).

Provide an outline of the methodology for the proposed research, including proposed method of data collection, tasks assigned to participants of the research and the proposed method and duration of data analysis. If the proposed research makes use of pre-established and generally accepted techniques, please make this clear. (Do not exceed 500 words

My study will be comprised of two phases. In the first phase I will observe videos and read stories of MGTOW men. This will be a purely observational role. I will draw on already, publically available, rich narratives and stories by observing the dialogues between men online. An analysis of these dialogues will inform my conversations with systemic psychotherapists.

MGTOW men already agree for their information to be of public use by putting it on the internet and indeed they want to publicise their point of view to the world. I therefore do not need permission to make use of what they

are saying on the internet platform. I will focus on issues related to marriage and divorce, relationships, dating, what makes a 'real man', and men's and father's rights.

In the second phase of the study, using the analysis of material from MGTOW, I will interview systemic practitioners. After playing an audio to describe MGTOW (<https://www.mgtow.com/audio/why-mgtow-wins/>). I will interview systemic psychotherapists regarding their experiences of the process of the material and will link this to a discussion of their own experiences when working with men individually and in couple therapy.

I will make use of FDA because I am interested in systemic psychotherapists theories, and experiences and power relations when thinking about working with men like the MGTOW men.

I will analyse my observations and reflections of the introductions and forums of MGTOW.

Transcribing

I will transcribe themes from the MGTOW observation and the audio I played to participants and then do a FDA on the interviews with therapists and themes drawn from the observations of MGTOW men.

Reading:

Following transcription, several close readings applicable to the research questions and coding will be performed. This reading and coding will involve a big selection of readings of the content of all the written scripts that will form part of the discussions with therapists, the already published digital ethnographic studies on MGTOW, but also readings on how violence, patriarchy, feminism, sexual crimes, socialising of boys, male identity, and attachment theories around male identity were informed culturally. I will immerse myself in the data and obtain a sense of the flavour and function of the text of both the MGTOW platform and interviews with Systemic Psychotherapists.

Analysis:

Language as constructive discourses: I first of all will look at the many ways MGTOW men/therapist constructed meanings around MGTOW men, women, sex, violence, marriage, blue pill men, red pill men, government, feminism. I therefore will look at how the object of study was constructed in the text. I will examine all instances where the object of study was mentioned or implied, and then focus on the variability in

the construction, for example, how the speakers tried to convince the listener that what they were saying made them to be an expert or good person. I will look at how MGTOW men/therapists in what they were saying tried to advance a particular ideology, convince the listener that they were telling the truth, or motivate the listener to act in a particular way. I will look at the function of language that constructed how women, MGTOW men were being viewed by therapists that can lead to men who present with violent attitudes not being treated effectively. After establishing the different modes of how the object of study was constructed, I will broaden my focus to look for where these constructions were located within culturally available systems of meanings, that is to say, discourses. By doing this, I will be able to link MGTOW ideology and therapists attitudes with interactions.

Language as functional: Rhetorical strategies: The second part of analysis will be when I examine how writers/speakers' use of language and the manner in which they manage interactions served their interpersonal functions, I will examine how accounts were organised and what rhetorical strategies speakers used to convince the listener that what they said were credible, reliable and rational. I will look at the manner in how they spoke, such as what came before and what followed, such as the kind of adjectives, metaphors, and how this

affected the unfolding interaction. There may be certain speakers with an influential way of speaking and I will therefore look at their discursive agenda, therefore a speaker's use of different discourses and the effects that had on the overall interactions. The agenda of speakers could be deduced when the function of their talk was analysed.

Positioning: I will look at how speakers were positioned, as the different positions of speakers will account for different degrees of accountability and will have a variety of functions, e.g., to distance the speaker from what is being said or to endow what is being said with authority. I will look at the positioning into a conversation from what and how it was said.

Practices, institutions, and power: I will look at how MGTOW men/therapists spoke about different discourses of power, the interpretations of the laws around marriage for example as well as their views in men's resistance to morals and values or refusal to take up certain legal and societal discourses.

Subjectivity: I will look at the subjective stories MGTOW men/therapists told as the level of subjectivity will have an effect on the way they thought, felt and experienced MGTOW men and themselves in relation to these men's views. I will try to

reconstitute what it meant to be a therapist with a certain discourse about MGTOW men, women, as this will influence my own interpretations of discourses

Suggested timetable

Task	Where	When	Total Hours
1. Observation of MGTOW	MGTOW internet platform	Start in September 2018, until October 2018.	10 Hours DONE
2. Interviewing 8 Systemic Practitioners	Zoom interviews	Whenever ethics approve the new TREC form.	8 hours
3. Analysis of FDA	My computer at home	Whenever ethics approve the	10 hours

		new TREC form	
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Participant details

Provide an explanation detailing how you will identify, approach and recruit the participants for the proposed research, including clarification on sample size and location. Please provide justification for the exclusion/inclusion criteria for this study (i.e. who will be allowed to / not allowed to participate) and explain briefly, in lay terms, why this criteria is in place. (Do not exceed 500 words)

Identifying, approaching and recruiting research participants.

I intend to recruit participants via AFT and Relate.

I have contacted Relate and discussed my proposed study to a lead systemic therapist who are willing to make systemic therapists at Relate aware of my proposed study. There were no other ethical issues that this lead therapist was aware of in relation to research at Relate.

Exclusion criteria for this study will be that respondents will be qualified with a masters degree in systemic practice with 6 months post graduate experience with men of all sexual orientations, individually or in couple/family therapy. I am of the opinion through my own clinical and post graduate experience, that the training in systemic therapy was robust enough to provide systemic practitioners with enough clinical and theoretical knowledge and that 6 months experience would give therapists enough knowledge to associate with the themes and ideas of MGTOW men. The experience however need to be with adult men from 18 years of age and upwards.

There is no personal relationship between me and the lead systemic therapists at Relate whom I have spoken to and there was no pressure or feeling of obligation for this person to help me with my proposed study. I will also contact AFT and recruit systemic practitioners with the same exclusion criteria.

I plan to include 8 male and female systemic practioners and there will be no exclusion criteria in terms of systemic therapists sexuality or sexual orientation.

Audio recordings will be stored with a password on my computer and it will be destroyed once transcriptions were encrypted.

Will the participants be from any of the following groups? (Tick as appropriate)

- Students or staff of the Trust or the University.
- Adults (over the age of 18 years with mental capacity to give consent to participate in the research).
- Children or legal minors (anyone under the age of 16 years)¹
- Adults who are unconscious, severely ill or have a terminal illness.
- Adults who may lose mental capacity to consent during the course of the research.
- Adults in emergency situations.
- Adults² with mental illness - particularly those detained under the Mental Health Act (1983 & 2007).
- Participants who may lack capacity to consent to participate in the research under the research requirements of the Mental Capacity Act (2005).

- Prisoners, where ethical approval may be required from the National Offender Management Service (NOMS).
- Young Offenders, where ethical approval may be required from the National Offender Management Service (NOMS).
- Healthy volunteers (in high risk intervention studies).
- Participants who may be considered to have a pre-existing and potentially dependent³ relationship with the investigator (e.g. those in care homes, students, colleagues, service-users, patients).
- Other vulnerable groups (see Question 6).
- Adults who are in custody, custodial care, or for whom a court has assumed responsibility.
- Participants who are members of the Armed Forces.

¹If the proposed research involves children or adults who meet the Police Act (1997) definition of vulnerability³, any researchers who will have contact with participants must have current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance.

² 'Adults with a learning or physical disability, a physical or mental illness, or a reduction in physical or mental capacity, and living in a care home or home for people with learning difficulties or receiving care in their own home, or receiving hospital or social care services.' (Police Act, 1997)

³ Proposed research involving participants with whom the investigator or researcher(s) shares a dependent or unequal relationships (e.g.

teacher/student, clinical therapist/service-user) may compromise the ability to give informed consent which is free from any form of pressure (real or implied) arising from this relationship. TREC recommends that, wherever practicable, investigators choose participants with whom they have no dependent relationship. Following due scrutiny, if the investigator is confident that the research involving participants in dependent relationships is vital and defensible, TREC will require additional information setting out the case and detailing how risks inherent in the dependent relationship will be managed. TREC will also need to be reassured that refusal to participate will not result in any discrimination or penalty.

Will the study involve participants who are vulnerable? YES NO

6.1. If YES, what special arrangements are in place to protect vulnerable participants' interests?

If YES, the research activity proposed will require a DBS check. (NOTE: information concerning activities which require DBS checks can be found

via <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-check-eligible-positions-guidance>)

Do you propose to make any form of payment or incentive available to participants of the research? YES NO

If YES, please provide details taking into account that any payment or incentive should be representative of reasonable remuneration for participation and may not be of a value that could be coercive or exerting undue influence on potential participants' decision to take part in the research. Wherever possible, remuneration in a monetary form should be avoided and substituted with vouchers, coupons or equivalent. Any payment made to research participants may have benefit or HMRC implications and participants should be alerted to this in the participant information sheet as they may wish to choose to decline payment.

What special arrangements are in place for eliciting informed consent from participants who may not adequately understand verbal explanations or written information provided in English; where participants have special communication needs; where participants have limited literacy; or where children are involved in the research? (Do not exceed 200 words)

Consent in internet research is paralleled to any other formal research approach. However, consent to use information is given through the act of putting ones information on the internet for everyone to see. I therefore do not need to ask for permission to make use of the information as members make a statement of consent when they join the group to let the world know what they think and feel.

Respondents will be fluent in English and the level of their education assume their capacity to consent with a clear mind.

RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Does the proposed research involve any of the following? (Tick as appropriate)

- use of a questionnaire, self-completion survey or data-collection instrument (attach copy)
- use of emails or the internet as a means of data collection
- use of written or computerised tests
- interviews (attach interview questions)
- diaries (attach diary record form)
- participant observation
- participant observation (in a non-public place) without their knowledge / covert research
- audio-recording interviewees or events
- video-recording interviewees or events
- access to personal and/or sensitive data (i.e. student, patient, client or service-user data) without the participant's informed consent for use of these data for research purposes

- administration of any questions, tasks, investigations, procedures or stimuli which may be experienced by participants as physically or mentally painful, stressful or unpleasant during or after the research process
- performance of any acts which might diminish the self-esteem of participants or cause them to experience discomfiture, regret or any other adverse emotional or psychological reaction
- investigation of participants involved in illegal or illicit activities (e.g. use of illegal drugs)
- procedures that involve the deception of participants
- administration of any substance or agent
- use of non-treatment of placebo control conditions
- participation in a clinical trial
- research undertaken at an off-campus location (risk assessment attached)
- research overseas (copy of VCG overseas travel approval attached)

Does the proposed research involve any specific or anticipated risks (e.g. physical, psychological, social, legal or economic) to participants that are greater than those encountered in everyday life? YES NO

If YES, please describe below including details of precautionary measures.

Physical risk: There is no risk in terms of physical risk regarding the internet group as the context of observation will not be face-to-face.

Physical risk for face-to-face interview

There is no physical risk speaking to another systemic practitioner. Respondents names will be anonymised.

Psychological risk:

There will be no psychological risk involved.

Legal: Internet participants will give consent that I can make use of their fragments of discourses by the act of making their information public and that will protect me legally.

Research ethics guidelines were informed by Zimmer and Kinder-Kurlanda, (2017). I was reflecting for an extended period of time about how to study a group ethically who was responsible for producing online gender and misogynistic abuse (Jones, et.al. 2019) in order for me to be protected, but also those whose comments I wanted to use to be protected against becoming targets of abuse themselves. I therefore looked into the most recent guidelines that were published by the

Association of Internet Research (Franzke, et al., 2020, p.69) that makes it clear that user-generated content is often published in “informal spaces that users often perceive as private, but may strictly speaking be publicly accessible”. It stipulates that users may be unaware in such circumstances how their data is being analysed for research purposes.

Where the procedures involve potential hazards and/or discomfort or distress for participants, please state what previous experience the investigator or researcher(s) have had in conducting this type of research.

If personal stories emerge for respondents, I would suggest they speak to their GP for a referral for their own therapy.

Provide an explanation of any potential benefits to participants. Please ensure this is framed within the overall contribution of the proposed research to knowledge or practice. (Do not exceed 400 words)

NOTE: Where the proposed research involves students of our University, they should be assured that accepting the offer to participate or choosing to decline will have no impact on their assessments or learning experience. Similarly, it should be made clear to participants who are patients, service-users and/or receiving any form of treatment or medication that they are

not invited to participate in the belief that participation in the research will result in some relief or improvement in their condition.

This proposed study may help systemic practitioners and myself understand what informs and maintains male chauvinism, their own biases or prejudices around male gender issues and explore the need for an adjustment in how systemic practice understands and deals with the challenges of the modern day man.

I am hoping that this study will provide data which will help systemic psychotherapists change men's experiences about seeking help. If I explore the meanings systemic practitioners give to the stories of a polarised group such as MGTOW men that more men would be reached and helped. MGTOW is providing something for a large number of men and systemic practitioners may have tunnel vision and are possibly failing in reaching men with similar beliefs. I believe, given the large number of men on MGTOW that many men we see in therapy have similar feelings and beliefs as MGTOW men, but these stories do not always come to the foreground in therapy. If we understood what men are experiencing, and also what discourses therapists have around misogynistic and violent men then we may help men to be more emotionally and physically involved in families.

There will be no financial or any other benefit for participants.

Provide an outline of any measures you have in place in the event of adverse or unexpected outcomes and the potential impact this may have on participants involved in the proposed research. (Do not exceed 300 words)

If participants respond negatively due to MGTOW material being shared with them, I will end the interview immediately, debrief, and suggest they seek support from their GP for therapy for themselves. This is very unlikely as Systemic Psychotherapists in my experience are resilient. It is part of our vigorous training and work that we do on a daily basis.

Provide an outline of your debriefing, support and feedback protocol for participants involved in the proposed research. This should include, for example, where participants may feel the need to discuss thoughts or feelings brought about following their participation in the research. This may involve referral to an external support or counselling service, where participation in the research has caused specific issues for participants. Where medical aftercare may be necessary, this should include details of the treatment available to participants. Debriefing may involve the disclosure of further information on the aims of the research, the participant's performance and/or the results of the research. (Do not exceed 500 words)

I will stop showing videos or end the conversation and help respondents to manage their distress. I would also suggest that respondents seek support for their distress via their GP. I will not continue to make use of the respondent for my study and explain to the respondent the reason for this, which is that I would not want to cause further distress to the respondent.

PARTICIPANT CONSENT AND WITHDRAWAL

Have you attached a copy of your participant information sheet (this should be in plain English)? Where the research involves non-English speaking participants, please include translated materials. YES NO

If NO, please indicate what alternative arrangements are in place below:

Have you attached a copy of your participant consent form (this should be in plain English)? Where the research involves non-English speaking participants, please include translated materials.

YES NO

If NO, please indicate what alternative arrangements are in place below:

The following is a participant information sheet checklist covering the various points that should be included in this document.

- Clear identification of the sponsor for the research, the project title, the Researcher or Principal Investigator and other researchers along with relevant contact details.
- Details of what involvement in the proposed research will require (e.g., participation in interviews, completion of questionnaire, audio/video-recording of events), estimated time commitment and any risks involved.
- A statement confirming that the research has received formal approval from TREC.
- If the sample size is small, advice to participants that this may have implications for confidentiality / anonymity.

- A clear statement that where participants are in a dependent relationship with any of the researchers that participation in the research will have no impact on assessment / treatment / service-use or support.
- Assurance that involvement in the project is voluntary and that participants are free to withdraw consent at any time, and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied.
- Advice as to arrangements to be made to protect confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations.
- A statement that the data generated in the course of the research will be retained in accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy.
- Advice that if participants have any concerns about the conduct of the investigator, researcher(s) or any other aspect of this research project, they should contact Paru Jeram, the Trust Quality Assurance Officer
pjeram@tavi-port.nhs.uk
- Confirmation on any limitations in confidentiality where disclosure of imminent harm to self and/or others may occur.

The following is a consent form checklist covering the various points that should be included in this document.

- University or Trust letterhead or logo.
- Title of the project (with research degree projects this need not necessarily be the title of the thesis) and names of investigators.
- Confirmation that the project is research.
- Confirmation that involvement in the project is voluntary and that participants are free to withdraw at any time, or to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied.
- Confirmation of particular requirements of participants, including for example whether interviews are to be audio-/video-recorded, whether anonymised quotes will be used in publications advice of legal limitations to data confidentiality.
- If the sample size is small, confirmation that this may have implications for anonymity any other relevant information.
- The proposed method of publication or dissemination of the research findings.
- Details of any external contractors or partner institutions involved in the research.
- Details of any funding bodies or research councils supporting the research.

Confirmation on any limitations in confidentiality where disclosure of imminent harm to self and/or others may occur.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY

Below is a checklist covering key points relating to the confidentiality and anonymity of participants. Please indicate where relevant to the proposed research.

Participants will be completely anonymised and their identity will not be known by the investigator or researcher(s) (i.e. the participants are part of an anonymous randomised sample and return responses with no form of personal identification)?

The responses are anonymised or are an anonymised sample (i.e. a permanent process of coding has been carried out whereby direct and indirect identifiers have been removed from data and replaced by a code, with no record retained of how the code relates to the identifiers).

The samples and data are de-identified (i.e. direct and indirect identifiers have been removed and replaced by a code. The investigator or researchers are able to link the code to the original identifiers and isolate the participant to whom the sample or data relates).

Participants have the option of being identified in a publication that will arise from the research.

Participants will be pseudo-anonymised in a publication that will arise from the research. (I.e. the researcher will endeavour to remove or alter details that would identify the participant.)

The proposed research will make use of personal sensitive data.

Participants consent to be identified in the study and subsequent dissemination of research findings and/or publication.

Participants must be made aware that the confidentiality of the information they provide is subject to legal limitations in data confidentiality (i.e. the data may be subject to a subpoena, a freedom of information request or mandated reporting by some professions). This only applies to named or de-identified data. If your participants are named or de-identified, please confirm that you will specifically state these limitations.

YES NO

If NO, please indicate why this is the case below:

NOTE: WHERE THE PROPOSED RESEARCH INVOLVES A SMALL SAMPLE OR FOCUS GROUP, PARTICIPANTS SHOULD BE ADVISED

THAT THERE WILL BE DISTINCT LIMITATIONS IN THE LEVEL OF ANONYMITY THEY CAN BE AFFORDED.

DATA ACCESS, SECURITY AND MANAGEMENT

Will the Researcher/Principal Investigator be responsible for the security of all data collected in connection with the proposed research? YES NO

If NO, please indicate what alternative arrangements are in place below:

In line with the 5th principle of the Data Protection Act (1998), which states that personal data shall not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose or those purposes for which it was collected; please state how long data will be retained for.

1-2 years 3-5 years 6-10 years 10> years

NOTE: Research Councils UK (RCUK) guidance currently states that data should normally be preserved and accessible for 10 years, but for projects of clinical or major social, environmental or heritage importance, for 20 years or longer.
(<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/reviews/grc/grcpoldraft.pdf>)

Below is a checklist which relates to the management, storage and secure destruction of data for the purposes of the proposed research. Please indicate where relevant to your proposed arrangements.

- Research data, codes and all identifying information to be kept in separate locked filing cabinets.
- Access to computer files to be available to research team by password only.
- Access to computer files to be available to individuals outside the research team by password only (See 23.1).
- Research data will be encrypted and transferred electronically within the European Economic Area (EEA).
- Research data will be encrypted and transferred electronically outside of the European Economic Area (EEA). (See 23.2).

NOTE: Transfer of research data via third party commercial file sharing services, such as Google Docs and YouSendIt are not necessarily secure or permanent. These systems may also be located overseas and not covered by UK law. If the system is located outside the European Economic Area (EEA) or territories deemed to have sufficient standards of data protection, transfer may also breach the Data Protection Act (1998).

Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, e-mails or telephone numbers.

Use of personal data in the form of audio or video recordings.

Primary data gathered on encrypted mobile devices (i.e. laptops).

NOTE: This should be transferred to secure UEL servers at the first opportunity.

All electronic data will undergo secure disposal.

NOTE: For hard drives and magnetic storage devices (HDD or SSD), deleting files does not permanently erase the data on most systems, but only deletes the reference to the file. Files can be restored when deleted in this way. Research files must be overwritten to ensure they are completely irretrievable. Software is available for the secure erasing of files from hard drives which meet recognised standards to securely scramble sensitive data. Examples of this software are BC Wipe, Wipe File, DeleteOnClick and Eraser for Windows platforms. Mac users can use the standard 'secure empty trash' option; an alternative is Permanent eraser software.

All hardcopy data will undergo secure disposal.

NOTE: For shredding research data stored in hardcopy (i.e. paper), adopting DIN 3 ensures files are cut into 2mm strips or confetti like cross-cut particles of 4x40mm. The UK government requires a minimum standard of DIN 4 for its material, which ensures cross cut particles of at least 2x15mm.

Please provide details of individuals outside the research team who will be given password protected access to encrypted data for the proposed research.

Dr Herman Grobler

Associate Professor/Research Director

COMPRES

Faculty of Health Sciences

North-West University

Potchefstroom Campus

South Africa

0027 18 285 2271 (tel)

www.nwu.ac.za

Please provide details on the regions and territories where research data will be electronically transferred that are external to the European Economic Area (EEA).

Faculty of Health Sciences

North-West University

Potchefstroom Campus

South Africa

0027 18 285 2271 (tel)

www.nwu.ac.za

OVERSEAS TRAVEL FOR RESEARCH

Does the proposed research involve travel outside of the UK? YES NO



Have you consulted the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website for guidance/travel advice? <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/>

YES NO

If you are a non-UK national, have you sought travel advice/guidance from the Foreign Office (or equivalent body) of your country? YES NO

NOT APPLICABLE

Have you completed the overseas travel approval process and enclosed a copy of the document with this application? (For UEL students and staff only) YES NO

Details on this process are available here

<http://www.uel.ac.uk/qa/research/fieldwork.htm>

Is the research covered by your University's insurance and indemnity provision?

YES NO

NOTE: Where research is undertaken by University Essex students and staff at an off-campus location within the UK or overseas, the Risk Assessment policy must be consulted:

<http://dl-cfs->

01.uel.ac.uk/hrservices/documents/hshandbook/risk_assess_policy.pdf.

For University Essex students and staff conducting research where University Essex is the sponsor, the Dean of School or Director of Service has overall responsibility for risk assessment regarding their health and safety.

Please evidence how compliance with all local research ethics and research governance requirements have been assessed for the country(ies) in which the research is taking place.

Will this research be financially supported by the United States Department of Health and Human Services or any of its divisions, agencies or programs? YES NO

Publication and dissemination of research FINDINGS

How will the results of the research be reported and disseminated? (Select all that apply)

- Peer reviewed journal
- Conference presentation
- Internal report
- Dissertation/Thesis
- Other publication
- Written feedback to research participants
- Presentation to participants or relevant community groups
- Other (Please specify below)

Other ethical issues

Are there any other ethical issues that have not been addressed which you would wish to bring to the attention of Tavistock Research Ethics Committee (TREC)?

CHECKLIST FOR ATTACHED DOCUMENTS

Please check that the following documents are attached to your application.

- Recruitment advertisement
- Participant information sheets (including easy-read where relevant)
- Consent forms (including easy-read where relevant)
- Assent form for children (where relevant)
- Evidence of any external approvals needed
- Questionnaire

- Interview Schedule or topic guide
- Risk assessment (where applicable)
- Overseas travel approval (where applicable)

Where it is not possible to attach the above materials, please provide an explanation below.

Date: 15/07/18

LETTER OF INVITATION

Dear Systemic Psychotherapist,

RE: Professional Doctorate (PhD) Research Project

Title of research: MGTOW and Online Misogyny: A Foucauldian Discourse
Analysis of Men Going Their Own Way (MGTOW) and Systemic
Psychotherapists' accounts of what they could learn from MGTOW.

I am conducting a doctorate research project in the study of systemic, couple and family psychotherapy. As you know, men seem to be in the spotlight nowadays with regards to how they are being treated, how they treat women, male sexuality, male identity and power (both men and women). I am interested to know more and to learn from you in relation to how you would feel about the information I gathered from a polarised male group, calling themselves Men Going Their Own Way (MGTOW). MGTOW is being seen currently in the public eye as a form of hate speech and I want to explore how we as systemic practitioners relate to these men and can engage with this so as to help address this problem. I would therefore be interested in your true

feelings and thoughts about this group , and these men's views and beliefs as well as your knoweldege and understanding of working with men in therapy, or in couples or family therapy. This study will be conducted from a Foucauldian Discourse perspective.

I will recruit ~~six~~ 8 systemic psychotherapist following an observation of the MGTOW group. These therapists all need to have a Masters Degree in Systemic Practice, would have 6 months post graduate experience and would have worked with men of all sexual orientations, individually, or in a couple or family therapy context. Due to the small sample group, there is a risk that information may not always be confidential and anonymity may be compromised. I will share with you an audio that summarise MGTOW and have a brief discussion about what MGTOW is all about before we start. This audio will be sent to you prior to our meeting and I will appreciate it if you could listen to this 20 min audio beforehand. I will audio record our discussion. My aim is to see if we as systemic psychotherapists need to adjust the way we work with men in therapy in order for men to feel and be more emotionally and physically available as individuals, partners and fathers.

Yours sincerely

Petrus Andries (André) Swanepoel

Researcher

Information on the Research Process – A Study on Gendered Discourses,
male identity and sexuality, analysed through the method of Foucauldian
Discourse Analysis

Do I have to take part?

Your participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate you do not have to do anything in response to this request.

The Research Process

I will observe the MGTOW group and view their videos in order to understand their stories and beliefs. This will inform me to speak to you as a systemic practitioner and we will have a conversation and reflection around this information. I will then analyse our discussion and ask you to look at the analysis with me, so that we can form categories of the ways we work with men. This will inform us if we have to adjust our thinking and approach when working with men in therapy

Data Protection and Anonymity

Your name and identity will be anonymised. However, due to the small sample group, complete confidentiality and anonymity can not always be guaranteed.

Right to Withdrawal

You are in your right to withdraw from taking part in this study at any time of the research process.

Sharing Results

The anonymised outcomes of the research will be shared with lecturers at the university and may be used in papers submitted to scientific journals. The study will also be published on the internet. General outcomes of the research will also be shared with you as you will be an active participant in the research findings.

Ethical Assurance

The proposed research has received formal approval from the Research Ethics Committee (REC).

If you have any concerns about the conduct of the investigator, researcher(s) or any other aspect of this research project, you could contact Paru Jeram,

the Trust Quality Assurance Officer pjeram@tavi-port.nhs.uk at the Tavistock and Portman Trust.

CONSENT FORM Face-to-face participant

Name of Researcher: Petrus Andries Swanepoel

1. I confirm that I have read the letter of invitation dated, 15/07/18, for the above study. I have had the opportunity to talk to Andre Swanepoel, to consider the information, to ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any point of the research process without giving any reason.

3. I understand that the conversations I have with Andre Swanepoel will be destroyed once transcriptions were encrypted. I understand that I will be given an opportunity to look at the findings and to contribute to them before they are published and to comment on those findings. I understand that there will be an opportunity to contribute to or co-author some of the publications that emerge from the inquiry.

4. I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant Date Signature

Name of Researcher Date Signature

References

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Tweed, A., Charmaz, K. in Harper, D. & Thompson, A.R. 2012. *Grounded Theory Methods for Mental Health Practitioners*. Wiley-Blackwell: London

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Appendix 12

Reflective Diary-to write a piece of about 500 words which describes the impact of interacting with the MGTOW site

Within the context of my observation of the MGTOW movement, I encountered a group of men who either experienced relationship difficulties or chose to pursue their own paths in life. These individuals strongly believed that men face oppression in society, often expressing the view that men are seen as disposable, exploitable wallets. They conveyed their discontent through belittling comments and harsh criticism of women. However, it became apparent that their resentment was not solely directed at women themselves, but rather a response to what they perceived as societal oppression. These men had reached a point where they rejected this oppression, leading them to adopt a distinct male identity.

As a therapist, I approached my observation of the MGTOW movement with pre-existing notions that were further solidified. However, I acknowledged my

biases and assumptions, recognising their impact on how I perceived the group. As a therapist, it was challenging for me to detach myself from the group's anti-therapy sentiment.

Unexpectedly, I faced aggression and rejection from some members of the group, which made me question whether I wanted to be part of a community that displayed such behaviour. My initial perception of the group as a supportive community sharing their experiences was far from reality.

During my observation, I found myself yearning for acceptance and validation from the MGTOW group, despite my reservations about their views on women and relationships. This desire to belong stemmed from my own personal experiences and anxieties tied to my attachment to my father.

Although I respected the idea of independence and personal space, I grappled with the group's rigid views that contradicted my own beliefs. The behaviour of the MGTOW members reminded me of my father's emotional detachment, similar to the push-away mentality he exhibited before his suicide. This emotional connection fuelled my desire to find a way to integrate into the MGTOW group. While independence is admirable, the potential loneliness of going it alone should not be overlooked.

In conclusion, my self-reflection on observing the MGTOW movement revealed the negative impact that group aggression and bias can have on

someone seeking knowledge and personal growth. It was an eye-opening and emotionally draining experience. The push-away tactics of the group reminded me of the importance of human connection and finding like-minded individuals to relate to. While I empathise with their desire for independence, I hope that they can find ways to connect with others who hold different views.

Despite the negative aspects, I acknowledge the value of engaging with groups like MGTOW for research purposes, as our understanding of masculinity continues to evolve. However, it is crucial to maintain respect and avoid ridiculing or attacking those who hold different perspectives. Everyone's experiences are unique, and it is important to consider different viewpoints.

This experience has prompted me to continuously challenge my assumptions and biases. I gained insight into the ideologies underlying the MGTOW movement, which can inform future research. I joined the MGTOW platform anonymously and expressed my fluidity concept of gender and sexuality honestly. Although I faced negative comments, I remained authentic in expressing my views. While I had initial reservations, I came to see myself as a new definition of MGTOW without the emphasis on gender, and I appreciate the freedom and absence of limiting concepts in relationships, sex, and parenthood.

In summary, my observation of the MGTOW platform revealed the influence of my unresolved anger towards my father and how I could have misplaced my emotional expectations on MGTOW members. Despite facing rejection, I remained true to my fluid understanding of gender and sexuality. I identify as a new definition of MGTOW without the emphasis on gender and am content with my freedom and rejection of limiting relationship concepts.

Appendix 13

Language – to look at where I have used the term “Blacks” in the thesis, to consider replacing it with a more appropriate term for the UK context and to consider my own cultural context in relation to this language. Up to 500 words.

In my exploration and self-reflection of conducting my thesis, I have reflected on how my white South African upbringing, influenced by the culture of apartheid and post-apartheid, shaped my perspectives on the term "Blacks." After much reflection, I have made a significant realisation and decided to replace the term "Blacks" with a more suitable one for the UK context, considering my cultural background and its impact on language.

Upon careful consideration, I have chosen to adopt the term "Global Ethnic Majority (GEM) in my thesis. While there are other terms like "Black, Asian, and minority backgrounds" (BAME), I find it essential to reflect that the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities recommended discontinuing BAME in March 2021. Their final report on COVID-19 disparities, published in December 2021, suggested referring to ethnic minority groups individually rather than grouping them together.

Understanding the nuances of language and identity, I believe the term GEM is more appropriate and inclusive for my thesis, and I have used the abbreviation (GEM) throughout my work, to replace the term Black people.

As someone who has experienced the apartheid and post-apartheid era in South Africa and has been living in the UK for the past 20 years, I have had the opportunity to observe how language and identity categories are contextualised differently. Thus, I want the reader to be mindful that when I refer to GEM, to refer to a specific identity category or categories, that part of my thinking and feeling were also informed by what was prevalent in South Africa when I grew up. However, I became mindful that terms such as Black or Coloured may carry different connotations in the UK and other contexts, even though perfectly acceptable in South Africa.

In South Africa, race and gender continue to play a crucial role in shaping people's lives, and I believe that ignoring or denying these differences would perpetuate past inequalities. Consequently, I adopted Foucauldian Discourse Analysis as my epistemology and a critical realist social constructionist perspective to explore the interplay of power and knowledge in various contexts and how individuals experience and interpret their realities.

My research discovered that categories like GEM, White, Men, and Women are not monolithic entities. Each individual's experience and perception of these categories are unique and influenced by their social, cultural, and political contexts. While these categories help examine power dynamics, I must be cautious not to apply them as a universal framework.

Furthermore, these categories might be seen as inappropriate or discriminatory in the UK context and elsewhere. Therefore, I believe it's essential to continually question and challenge what is "normal" and avoid assuming that any identity category speaks to a generalised term. Instead, I

must acknowledge these categories' diverse and multi-faceted identities, requiring sensitivity, nuance, and context-specific analyses.

Although using specific terminology may present challenges, it is vital not to downplay or dismiss the experiences of historically marginalised and oppressed communities. For instance, in the UK, the Black Lives Matter movement has emphasised the significance of recognising people's specific experiences. Using the abbreviation GEM helps acknowledge the history of anti-Blackness, colonialism, enslavement, and racial injustice that has shaped people's lives.

Similarly, when discussing gender, relying solely on terms like Men or Women might not capture the full diversity of gender identities and experiences. It is crucial to recognise and include trans people, non-binary individuals, and those who reject binary gender categories. Still, I must also analyse how gender norms and expectations operate within society and contribute to power differentials.

In addressing these complexities, I have adopted a more reflexive approach to terminology choice, considering my positionality and how it may influence my use of language. As a researcher identifying as a cisgender Black woman, I may very well choose to use the term Black women and not GEM to reflect on my unique experiences of racism and patriarchy while also acknowledging the limitations of this category in fully capturing the diverse backgrounds of Black women.

Similarly, researchers with different identities might opt for LGBTQ+ to encompass a broader spectrum of sexual and gender identities while remaining mindful of the potential erasure of intersectional experiences of marginalisation within this umbrella term.

In conclusion, the choice of terminology in academic discourse is far from neutral and reflects and reinforces societal power dynamics. As a scholar and researcher, I am conscious of these power dynamics and strive to use language that is both respectful and accurate. By recognising the specificity of the contexts in which I work and the diversity of experiences within and across groups, I contribute to more nuanced and inclusive academic discussions that prioritise the experiences of all individuals and communities.