



Swansea University  
Prifysgol Abertawe



## Cronfa - Swansea University Open Access Repository

---

This is an author produced version of a paper published in :  
*Gender and Education*

Cronfa URL for this paper:  
<http://cronfa.swan.ac.uk/Record/cronfa31426>

---

### **Paper:**

Ward, M. (2014). 'I'm a Geek I am': academic achievement and the performance of a studious working-class masculinity. *Gender and Education*, 26(7), 709-725.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2014.953918>

---

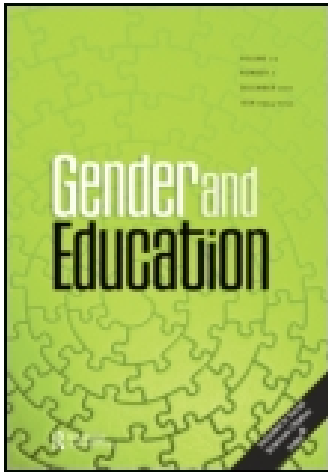
This article is brought to you by Swansea University. Any person downloading material is agreeing to abide by the terms of the repository licence. Authors are personally responsible for adhering to publisher restrictions or conditions. When uploading content they are required to comply with their publisher agreement and the SHERPA RoMEO database to judge whether or not it is copyright safe to add this version of the paper to this repository.  
<http://www.swansea.ac.uk/iss/researchsupport/cronfa-support/>

This article was downloaded by: [Cardiff University Libraries]

On: 11 December 2014, At: 09:45

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



## Gender and Education

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cgee20>

### 'I'm a Geek I am': academic achievement and the performance of a studious working-class masculinity

Michael R.M Ward<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Faculty of Health and Social Care, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK7 6AA, UK

Published online: 09 Sep 2014.

To cite this article: Michael R.M Ward (2014) 'I'm a Geek I am': academic achievement and the performance of a studious working-class masculinity, *Gender and Education*, 26:7, 709-725, DOI: [10.1080/09540253.2014.953918](https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2014.953918)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2014.953918>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

## ‘I’m a Geek I am’: academic achievement and the performance of a studious working-class masculinity

Michael R.M Ward\*

*Faculty of Health and Social Care, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK7 6AA, UK*

*(Received 25 July 2013; accepted 11 July 2014)*

During the last few decades, the South Wales Valleys (UK) have undergone a considerable economic, social, cultural and political transformation, altering youth transitions from school to work. Drawing on a two and a half year ethnographic study, in the paper I concentrate on a group of academically successful young white working-class men aged 16–18 years who were dealing with these changes. I argue that these studious performances of young working-class masculinity offer a different way in which to view a disadvantaged community and explore working-class educational success. However, I argue that their future aspirations to attend university are still tempered by the classed and gender codes that underpin expectations of manhood in this deindustrial community and which can impact on successful transitions to adulthood.

**Keywords:** young masculinities; academic achievement; working class; Geek; performance

### Introduction

This paper draws on scholarship from studies into young masculinities and educational identities and specifically seeks to develop the literature on the difficulties faced by working-class young men who seek to be academically successful in deindustrialised communities. Whilst there has been a large amount of literature on the problem of white working-class boys’ ‘underachievement’ (Green 1990; Epstein et al. 1998; McDowell 2007; Reay 2009) and the difficulties white working-class young men face in the post-industrial era (see McDowell 2003; Weis 2004; Kenway, Kraak, and Hickey-Moody 2006; Nayak 2006; Richardson 2010; McDowell 2012; Roberts 2013), there has been very little work conducted which has looked at the difficulties and challenges facing working-class young men who display alternative performances of working-class masculinity through academic success (see Ingram 2009, 2011). Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork with young men (aged 16–18) in a deindustrial community in South Wales (UK), in this paper I add to the emerging literature on academically successful young white working-class men, by focusing upon the lives of one group of friends who I term *The Geeks*. I address how the performance of a studious form of masculinity, which has been coded as compliant and feminine by different gender scholars (see Mac an Ghaill 1994, 1996; Connell 1989; Martino 1999; Frosh,

---

\*Emails: [michael.ward@open.ac.uk](mailto:michael.ward@open.ac.uk), [wardmr@cf.ac.uk](mailto:wardmr@cf.ac.uk)

Phoenix, and Pattman 2002; Reay 2002; Arnot 2004; Lingard, Martino, and Mills 2009), proved problematic in a formal industrial community. However, as *The Geeks* transitioned through school into older masculinities, contradictions within the performance became apparent. *The Geeks* in some situations and in settings away from the school and on occasions their home town engaged in many of the traditional, macho practices that they normally distanced themselves from.

In examining these performances of a more studious working-class masculinity, I draw upon ideas and issues from feminist and feminist inspired frameworks (Carrigan, Connell, and Lee 1985; Brittan 1989; Connell 1995; Adkins 1999; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Segal 2007), and importantly Goffman's (1959, 1974, 1976) work on the performance of self and the formation of social identity. I argue that Goffman's often overlooked dramaturgical framework (see Jackson and Scott 2010) has important implications for analysing performances of gender and specifically young masculinities. When applied to masculinities (and femininities), this framework highlights how gender comes into being through socially constructed performances which are understood (consciously and unconsciously) as publicly acceptable in a given situation, setting or community, not as innate biological accomplishments or discursive practices. Building upon the existing work with young working-class men in deindustrial communities in the UK and Australia (Nayak 2003; Kenway, Kraak, and Hickey-Moody 2006), this paper argues that young working-class men are not locked into one way of 'doing boy' and are demanded to perform their masculinities in different ways and to switch between performances given the audience and setting they are situated within. These contradictions highlight the pressures that an industrial and cultural legacy of a specific geographic area places on young men to conform to specific ideals of manhood.

I begin this paper by looking at the literature on white working-class boys' educational achievement. I focus especially on the role of place and address how this impacts on the development of a studious performance of working-class masculinity. After outlining the longitudinal ethnographic study and research methods, I define the peer group and look at what being a 'geek' meant in this context. The paper then analyses in detail the front displays of this more studious form of working-class masculinity, before moving on to outline some contradictions to this performance.

### **Working-class educational achievement and the performance of studious masculinities**

Social Science research that has centred on working-class young people in the UK (where this study was situated) and elsewhere has tended to focus on their problematic relationship with education. In particular this work has addressed three main themes. First, studies have concentrated on the role of education as a route to social mobility and as a way out of working-class origins. This pathway traditionally occurred through the grammar school system (Jackson and Marsden 1962; Lacey 1970; Halsey, Heath, and Ridge 1980; Brown and Scase 1994; Halsey et al. 1997). Second, a prominent focus has been on anti-school or rebellious behaviour, poor performances and educational underachievement (Hargreaves 1967; Willis 1977; Brown 1987; Corrigan 1979; Epstein et al. 1998; McDowell 2003). Third, this work has begun to look at the costs associated with educational achievement for working-class identity, once one has progressed to university or reached adulthood (Skeggs 1997;

Walkerdine, Lucey, and Melody 2001; Weis 2004; Reay, Crozier, and Clayton 2009; Wakeling 2010).

However, some of this research on working-class men has been accused of pathologising the working classes and there have been suggestions that some male authors have been guilty of glorifying oppressive forms of masculinity, such as the 'hooligan' (Skeggs 1992; Delamont 2000; Ingram 2009). Delamont (2000), in particular, has argued that this trend has a long history in ethnographic work and has occurred on both sides of the Atlantic. Alongside these criticisms, some studies have offered a more nuanced critique of the problems and practices associated with being a working-class young man and broadened the concept of masculinity to challenge, exploring male dominance and power inequalities between men and between boys (Connell 1989; Mac an Ghail 1994; Martino 1999; Reay 2002; Renold 2004; Francis, Skelton, and Read 2010). Nonetheless, what still appears to be missing from many of these studies and what many authors fail to engage with, is how the specifics of a locality impact upon social interaction and what it means to be a young working-class man in certain communities (Paechter 2003) and the effect this has on the performance of masculinity by academically successful working-class boys (see Francis 2009; Ingram 2009, 2011).

In Goffman's most renowned work *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* ([1956] 1959), he lays out a dramaturgical framework to represent the conduct of an individual's interactions using the stage metaphors of front (made up of setting, appearance and manner) and back regions to illustrate how the self is a social product of performances that individuals or 'teams' of individuals (Grazian 2007; Schrock and Schwalbe 2009; Hughey 2011) display in different situations. Goffman (1959, 32) argues that the front stage or front region is the part of the individual or team performance that functions 'to define the situation for those who observe the performance'. A large number of acts can occur behind a social front performance and different routines can be presented behind the same front. These performances are then overtly validated and a sense of front self develops. Goffman (1959, 85) also uses the term 'team' to refer to sets of individuals who 'co-operate in staging a single routine'. These co-operations then help to express meaning within different social relations. The overall team impression can be seen as a performance alongside the individual acts, through forms of impression management. The back-stage or back region, which occurs behind the front and the team performances, is further defined by Goffman (1959, 114) as 'a place, related to a given performance, where the impression fostered by the performance is knowingly contradicted as a matter of course'. Away from the front, things can be adjusted and changed. However, other actions, which might spoil or ruin the performance and the overall impression, are suppressed. Using Goffman's framework for interpreting social interaction, I turn now to outlining the study and methods, before moving on to explore the performances of a studious form of masculinity displayed by one 'team' of academically successful young working-class men in a deindustrialised community.

### Context and methods

For young working-class men in particular, the shift to adulthood was once inextricably linked to labour. However, as deindustrialisation has occurred across the global metropole since the 1970s, working-class young men are no longer likely to be 'learning to labour' (Willis 1977) but 'learning to serve' (McDowell 2000) in different industries to

what preceded them. The performances of a masculine self which accompany these newer industries are highly contradictory to what came before and require different skills and attributes (Weis 2004; Kenway, Kraak, and Hickey-Moody 2006; Walkerdine 2010; McDowell 2012). In former heavy industrial communities such as the South Wales Valleys, these shifting socio-economic processes continue to have a direct impact on the lives of young people and have greatly altered traditional transitions from school to work.

Developing at the end of the nineteenth century to feed the growth in iron manufacturing, the South Wales Valleys were once a major contributor to the British coal industry (Williams 1985) and one of the largest industrial centres in the UK employing up to a quarter of a million men (Grant 1991; Rees and Stroud 2004). Within these communities there was a strong division of labour, where men would distance themselves from anything seen as ‘feminine’, creating a strong masculine identity, which would enable the communities to survive (Walkerdine 2010). Men earned respect for working arduously and ‘doing a hard job well and being known for it’ (Willis 1977, 52). Kenway and Kraak (2004) suggest that these roles were often seen as heroic with punishing physical labour that involved different degrees of manual skill and bodily toughness, creating a stoic masculinity. Male camaraderie which was established through physicality and close working conditions underground also developed through jokes, story-telling, sexist language and banter at the work site and associated cultural practices. Over the past 30 years, the region has undergone rapid deindustrialisation (Williams 1985; Smith 1999; Day 2002) and the area is now characterised by what Adamson (2008, 21) terms a ‘triangle of poverty’ with low levels of educational attainment and high levels of unemployment, health inequalities and poor housing across the region.

Given this background, a two and a half year Economic and Social Research Council-funded ethnographic study was conducted to explore the diversity of a group of white, working-class, young men living within this former industrial region. The overall aim was to investigate how masculinities were formed, articulated and negotiated by one school year group at the end of their compulsory schooling, and then to subsequently follow them through their different post-16 educational pathways. This study was conducted in a similar district to that in which I grew up. However, I wanted to create a little distance between myself and my participants, so I made the decision to select a community that I was familiar with, but was not my own. After an initial search of secondary community schools (public high schools for pupils aged 11–18 years), two community schools were selected for final consultation. One of these was Cwm Dyffryn High School<sup>1</sup>, a single sexed boys’ school, and it was chosen for two reasons: first, it fitted in demographically with my research aims as it was situated in a largely white, working-class area in a former coal mining town and had a high proportion of pupils on Free School Meals (FSM) and entitled to the post-16 Educational Maintenance Allowance, indicating high levels of social and economic disadvantage; second, because of the overwhelming support and encouragement from the head teacher for the study and the access he granted.

At the time of the research, there were around 700 (male) pupils on roll with 22% of these being in receipt of FSM. The final year of compulsory schooling, Year 11 (where pupils are aged 15–16 years) was the initial focus of the study and consisted of 134 pupils. After completing Year 11, pupils had the option of returning to the school’s Sixth Form (Years 12 and 13), or various other post-16 education institutions in the area. After completing Year 11, a sample of 38 young men were followed through their various post-16 educational pathways. Furthermore as Nayak (2003, 148) has

argued that ‘young people’s gender identities cannot be adequately comprehended within the microcosm of the school institution alone’, this research was therefore also undertaken across multiple other arenas of their lives. This was carried out to further highlight the numerous ways that these young men performed their masculinities to different audiences and in different contexts.

As I acknowledged earlier, the research area was personally known to me, so as a result I was able to form close relationships with many of my respondents through a shared biographical history. At the time the research was conducted I was also an hourly paid Further Education lecturer, so I was familiar with the education system in the area. The fieldwork included participant observation supported by extensive field notes, focus group interviews, ethnographic conversations and more formally recorded one-on-one interviews with a number of young men. These interviews were fully transcribed and, along with the detailed field notes, coded using a CAQDAS package.

Several key themes emerged from the ethnographic study. First, the multiple, nuanced ways young men’s lives were lived in a specific deindustrialised place emphasised that there was a degree of code-shifting occurring, where respondents adjusted and altered their performances of masculinity with different audiences. Second, different academic and vocational educational pathways framed the definition of the situation for these young men, learning what roles were expected of them when studying a certain subject or course and what was also expected of people around them, ultimately resulting in classed and gendered implications that impact on their future life chances. Third, outside their educational institutions, the legacy of the region’s industrial past and the working-class cultural milieu of the locale were re-embodied and retraditionalised in different ways across other local sites and spaces.

I also drew the data together based on friendship ties that became apparent as the fieldwork progressed. This has been a common strategy for presenting young men’s subject positions within ethnographic and masculinities research over the last few decades (see for example Connell 1989; Edley and Wetherell 1996; Parker 1996; Nayak 2003, 2006; Dalley-Trim 2007). I identified that there were three distinct friendship groups who I termed *The Geeks* (described in this paper), *The Valley Boiz* (young men who came from families that would not have traditionally continued into post-compulsory education) and *The Emos* (those who embraced a transglobal form of youth culture known as the alternative scene). There were also individual young men, who crossed friendship groups and adopted multiple presentations of self (see Ward 2012, 2013).

### **Introducing *The Geeks*: Educational achievement, subject-choice and family biographies**

Those young men who transgress a locality’s social norms by being academically successful and having different cultural interests are often bullied and receive labels by their peers such as ‘nerd’, ‘dweeb’, ‘dork’, ‘freak’, ‘brainiac’, ‘boffin’ ‘swot’ and ‘geek’ (see Connell 1989; Martino 1999; Pascoe 2007; Zekany 2011; Mendick and Francis 2012). While the word geek is a relatively simple term, it is full of ambiguity and has multiple meanings changing from place to place. Nonetheless what these labels all tend to have in common is that those who receive them are deemed to be stigmatised (Goffman 1963) in some way or other as overtly intelligent, shy, or unattractive social outcasts, who often shun other people who do not share their stigmatised status.



Accompanying these labels are particular attributes of personal front (Goffman 1959) which are deemed abnormal, such as unfashionable hair and dress styles, glasses and reputations for bad personal hygiene. The word geek is likely to be used as a pejorative marker and to be labelled as such is to be defined as a social misfit (Kendall 2000; Comeau and Kemp 2007; Pascoe 2007).

*The Geeks* friendship group consisted primarily of Leon, Gavin, Ruben, Scott, Nibbles, Alan, Sean, Ieuan, Sam, Sin and Nixon.<sup>2</sup> Apart from Sin, who was of Chinese heritage, all were white and had been born in the town, and when I met them in Year 11, they had the highest grades in their year group. In the following extracts, a ‘geek’ is described by the young men themselves as someone who does not participate in sports and is more interested in video games, films and comics:

Sam: Get a sporting accolade and you’re already like the greatest person ever

Alan: If you don’t do sport in school you’re like ...

Sam: ... a geek ...

Sean: ... yeah a geek basically

[Group Interview Year 11]

MW: So do you play a lot of video games then?

Sean: Yeah, I’m a geek I am, I love games!

MW: So are you really a geek like when you say you are?

Sean: Yeah I love all the geeky things, like um games, films um ...

MW: ... you’re well into your films are you?

Sean: Ah yeah! Graphic novels, comics, things like that.

[Individual Interview Year 12]

As Sean indicates here, being defined as a geek was also evident in more subtle ways than just being positioned as academically successful. In Year 11 some of *The Geeks* were smaller in stature and less physically developed than many others in the year group, making them easy targets for bullying. They turned up for lessons on time with their own pens and pencil cases, did their homework and carried their books and other equipment in bags, which others in their year group did not always use. Along with this compliance to rules, they correctly adhered to the school dress code of white shirts, with red ties, black V-necked jumpers, black trousers and black shoes. This uniform was accompanied by neat haircuts and for some, horned rimmed glasses or braces on their teeth, which completed the stereotypical geek persona. These artefacts then operate as forms of what Goffman (1959, 32) refers to as ‘expressive equipment’ of personal front and marked *The Geeks* with their own recognisable identity.

Whilst *The Geeks* adhered to school rules and policy, others in their year group sought to disrupt uniform policy and replace compulsory items with one’s own. It was common practice to replace the standard black V-necked jumper, with a round necked one, because this then meant the school tie could be removed and it would go unseen by teachers. Other attempts by those in *The Geeks* year group to disrupt school rules included replacing shoes with trainers and wearing hooded jackets and baseball caps and some adorned their bodies with flashy rings, chains and single earrings or studs. Besides these uniform alterations, a large group of pupils who were registered on sports educational programmes were also allowed to wear a tracksuit instead of the regular uniform. This process not only validated a specific form of masculinity



based on sporting prowess by the educational institution itself (Mac and Ghail 1994), but also acted as a symbolic marker of status which *The Geeks* did not have access to and were therefore 'othered' as a group for not belonging to the sporting elite.

After achieving good General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) grades, all *The Geeks* returned to the school's Sixth Form (Years 12 and 13). The subjects chosen by *The Geeks* to study were predominantly in the arts (English, history or fine art), natural sciences (biology, chemistry or physics), maths and I.T. *The Geeks* had been in the highest sets<sup>3</sup> for all their core subjects at the GCSE level and even though they were a close group of friends, they were fiercely competitive over their grades. They also all harboured aspirations to go to university. This is not to say that others in their year group did not aspire to go to university or gain well-paid and meaningful employment, but for *The Geeks* this seemed to be of paramount importance to their projected futures. As Sam illustrates here, he had thought of a course he wanted to study at university and planned on spending a year in America as part of this:

Sam: Journalism is what I'd like to get into at the moment

MW: Alright

Sam: And I'd like to go to America as well for my university course

MW: So you've thought a little bit down the line where you want to go?

Sam: Yeah I have done a bit of research into it and they do offer it in some of the English universities and the exchanges into American universities, so I'll aim for that first ... if I get rejected I'll just go lower down the ladder

MW: So you've thought about going to uni then?

Sam: Yeah [shouts] I am going to uni!

[*Individual Interview Year 11*]

Sam's final statement here not only shows a powerful sense of agency, but also a commitment that he is not constrained by place, and his ambitions clearly illustrate a rejection of the locality and a willingness to move on. His determination to find a way to his goals by attending different universities, if his first choice is unavailable, is also clear. Attending a university for Sam is therefore a way to gain a hegemonic form of masculinity (Connell 1995), so often denied him (and other boys like him) who has invested in academic capital in this community.

*The Geeks* parents' occupational backgrounds give some indication of their positive outlook on academic qualifications and they shared similar, although not identical, family biographies. A few of the boys had fathers and mothers who had some experience of higher education (Ruben, Nixon, Ieuan and Leon) and some were employed in professional occupations as surveyors, teachers, secretaries or midwives. Other parents owned their own businesses in the form of motor repair (Sean) and takeaway food shops (Sin). However, there were also some parents who worked in more traditional working-class occupations such as lorry drivers (Scott), caretakers (Sam) or in supermarkets, or were unemployed (Gavin and Alan). Three of the boys (Scott, Ieuan and Gavin) said that their mothers stayed at home and described them as housewives. Sadly Nibbles' mother had died when he was 14 and his stepdad (his biological father has left the family years before) was on long-term incapacity benefit after being injured in an accident whilst driving a lorry.

Although some of these young men's parents could be seen as employed in middle-class occupations, my justification for using the term 'working-class' to refer to these young men as a group is because it is important to recognise the inequalities that they

experienced by coming from a deprived locale and the levels of social, economic and cultural capital they had access to. I suggest that having a parent who is a teacher in a deindustrialised area (with high levels of unemployment, low levels of health and educational attainment and employment opportunities) is very different from having a parent who is a teacher in a more affluent area (see Weis 1990). It is also important that the geo-demographics of place are considered when defining class and how successful boys from poorer communities experience education (Burrows and Gane 2006).

### **The performance of a geeky front: classroom practices and social interaction**

For Goffman (1959) the front stage is the part of the performance that functions to define what is occurring in a particular setting or before a particular audience. In Cwm Dyffryn High School, the focus on sports was high and for many young men this was a clear way of projecting a successful heterosexual masculine image (see Gard and Meyenn 2000; Messner 2001; Kimmel 2006). This focus on sporting success infuriated *The Geeks* and their front performances of a studious masculinity continued to be at odds with the school's emphasis on sport.

- Sam: Get a sporting accolade and you're already like the greatest person ever!
- Sean: Do you know where the old gym is by there?
- MW: Umm
- Sean: Well on the wall outside it, there are photos on the wall of sports men from the school, but you won't find any photos of people who done well and that ... it's just all sports
- Ruben: Yeah that's a point yeah ...
- Nibbles: ... yeah ...
- Ruben: Like with all the past students they got this one played football for, or amateur football, for Wales turns out he's now just a bin man now, but he did play amateur football for Wales once ... so have his picture up. Then you've got other people then, who've gone, like Mark Bowen, who recent left he's gone to Oxford to study in Oxford [University] and they haven't got, you know, no recognition of him around the school.

*[Group Interview Year 11]*

*The Geeks* occupied a difficult position in their deindustrialised community and, as I have shown, were often seen as socially deficient. In the previous extract from a group interview, they position their own performance of masculinity as superior to that of the school environment, as they felt the institution itself was complicit in producing a form of masculinity based on sporting prowess and physical attributes. Their studious form of masculinity based on academic interests is not seen as an essence of 'real' masculinity, forged through industrial labour or associated with specific cultural or sporting practices. It therefore illustrates a more feminised and socially marginalised form of masculinity in the community (Phillips 2005; Jackson and Dempster 2009). Ruben is also aware that some occupations, such as being a 'bin man', have distinct markers of status and class, and that by achieving academically he hopes to be able to distance himself from these lower class occupations.

The front performance of this studious, geekier masculine brought with it certain disadvantages. Bullying and intimidation were often a problem in Year 11 for *The Geeks*. Some of this bullying had been physical further down the school years, but it was still present through verbal altercations, subtle gestures and smirking. Sam, in particular, found solace in feeling intellectually superior to others and as a way of combating this bullying.

- Nixon: They do try and bully us, or try  
 MW: Obviously they're not stealing your dinner money ... [group laughter]  
 MW: So what type of bullying would it take?  
 Sean: Verbal abuse like  
 MW: Alright  
 Ruben: I wouldn't say I get bullied by them really, but they do always do their little in-jokes, like '*Nixon, Nixon high five*' and then they expect Nixon to turn around and they all find it funny that Nixon doesn't turn around  
 Sam: It's like little smiley little faces ...  
 Ieuan: [talks over the top of Ruben] ... it's so retarded that it's funny but it's easy to beat them just by speaking  
 Sam: We're more intelligent than them, as you probably all know, so you can just speak, you know just talk really fancy to them and they get annoyed and they just walk off, and you insult them without them realising it, which makes us feel big

[Group Interview Year 11]

Here Sam and his friends are illustrating a form of what Redman and Mac an Ghaill (1997, 169) call 'muscular intellectualness' (See also Edley and Wetherell 1997). This was a way for them to combat the verbal altercations that were targeted at them and to seem superior by using their intellectual capital. This front performance helped articulate a form of masculinity that differed from that which traditionally defined being a 'proper' man in their community. It also contradicted much of what the school culture tended to validate through its focus on sports. The development of 'muscular intellectualness' was also evident between lessons where it was common for *The Geeks* to play scrabble. Scores were kept and a record of who had won each game was collected. A dictionary was used to check words and cheating was frowned upon. During one game in the school's library, Ieuan had tried to use the Internet on his mobile phone to look for a specific word, and, when discovered, this was met with disdain by the others. The value of words in the scrabble game was a way to symbolise capital and power within the friendship group, but outside it, the capital provided less protection and it was not equal to the power held by the more sporty boys (see also Mac an Ghaill 1994 for a similar process).

Whilst the bullying had been reduced as *The Geeks* had grown older and the year group had grown smaller (at the start of Year 13, only 35 pupils remained out of 134 who finished the end of compulsory schooling in Year 11), Sean still found that Sam was not really able to deal well with confrontation:

- Sean: Sometimes he (Sam) doesn't really think about other people like  
 MW: I remember in Year 11 sometimes boys used to take the piss out of you but most of them have left now, so he used a bit of humour to deflect it?

Sean: Yeah, but sometimes when he does that, it doesn't really help the situation! Like say they're like, you know, casually taking the piss ...

MW: ... yeah ...

Sean: ... and he'll get really bitchy and snipe at them or something and they'll just get worse and you're thinking by doing that you're making yourself look weirder! Just take it like!

[*Individual Interview Year 13*]

The 'piss take' described here is a practice with a direct link back to a working-class occupational culture where male chauvinism and racist and sexist humour were a part of the industrial workplace and were accompanied by practical jokes, coarse language, banter and messing around between (male) colleagues (see Beynon 1973; Tolson 1977; Willis 1979; Cockburn 1983). In Sean's eyes Sam needed to 'take it' (the piss-taking or the banter) in order to stop being seen as 'weird' in front of some of his peers. In an individual interview with Sam, I enquired more about the banter that went on between his close friends, and he said:

We (do) take the mick out of each other, take the piss out of each other, if you fall over or spell something wrong, we laugh at each other.

[*Individual Interview Year 13*]

For *The Geeks* this banter was just another extension of their academic abilities, where 'having a laugh' came through picking out errors in others' academic work or commenting on their personal faults. The industrial legacy behind the 'piss take' is being expressed in a different way by *The Geeks*, but it still illustrated the importance and power of it, in determining one's own ability to perform an acceptable version of manhood within the friendship group.

Whereas Sam struggled with other forms of banter, Sean was good at this; being really quick-witted and in the context of the reduced student number in the Sixth Form, he could answer back with a joke and almost always get a laugh from others around him, even those who were trying to 'take the piss' out of his friends. Alongside his geekier interests (computer games and reading comics), he supported Liverpool Football Club and would regularly talk to others in the Sixth Form common room about whose team had beaten who, and whose team was better. However, because of his ability to take part in a football discourse and to make others laugh (he could also laugh at himself), he never experienced any 'piss-taking' that some of his friends were subjected to.<sup>4</sup> Scott, who was a lot shorter and slighter in stature than Sean and who did not have the quickness of wit, often attracted negative attention for his long hair and beard which grew longer and longer as Year 13 progressed. He was often referred to by others outside *The Geeks* group as 'Jesus' because of his supposed similarities to the religious figure. Only when his closest friends Sam, Ruben and Ieuan stressed how scruffy he looked and threatened to physically force him to shave and cut off his straggly beard and hair did he decide to get it cut. This then prompted much hilarity and questioning when he walked into the Sixth Form common room the next day. It would seem that Sean's ability to perform a traditional version of working-class masculinity by investing in football banter, alongside his geekier masculinity, allowed him to code-shift and get something that Sam and Scott were unable to do.

***Boyishness: the geeks doing ‘mature’ heterosexuality***

Through their position as academic achievers in the school year group, *The Geeks* were able to validate a form of masculinity through their high grades and performing a studious presentation of self (Goffman 1959). However, others in their year group tended to reproduce and perform a version of masculinity based around traditional forms of white working-class credibility. These included non-academic work, sports, a rejection of authority from schoolteachers, sexism, homophobia, misogynistic language and going out on ‘the pull’ (see also Mac an Ghail 1994; Nayak 2003). In the school and in the community more generally, there seemed to be official and unofficial ways of being male with *The Geeks* occupying a difficult position as academic achievers, not only in terms of their studiousness, but also in the way they treated the young women in their lives:

- Sam: Some boys you know are very boyish!  
 MW: So between the boys (friends) do you talk like that about your ...  
 Sam: ... no, no I keep my private life private, I’ve only had one girlfriend and everything I know and everything I have done has been with her, that’s it, she is the only person  
 MW: Well in some ways I think that it’s really nice cos some of the boys the way they talk about it you know ‘I was with her last night and cor!’  
 Sam: Yeah I know, it’s callous, something to do a bit of fun ... I know it’s as if they treat them, not to sound clichéd, as an object. You know like I’ve got the latest mobile phone, I’ve got the latest girlfriend, that sort of thing  
 [*Individual Interview Year 13*]

In this interview, Sam criticises others in the year group for being what he terms ‘boyish’. He portrays himself as against the objectification of women, a practice he perceives some of his peers are involved in. The expectation of this objectification in terms of acceptable manhood practices is also addressed in another individual interview with Ruben outlined as follows. He discussed a night out in the town where he had felt under pressure from other young men in the year group to chase after or ‘pull’ a girl he was friendly with and conform to a heterosexual script. Ruben told me:

- Like when we were in the Harp (local pub) with that Jenny ... everybody but you, said ‘ah go on, get in there Ruben’, But I explained to you what was going on and you listened. I tried to explain to the others but they weren’t having it, but you understood my side of it. ... you’ve got people expecting you to do stuff, making opinions on stuff, but they don’t know what situation you’re in ... boys think that you only want to talk to girls for only one reason!  
 [*Individual Interview Year 13*]

As with Sam, in this interview extract Ruben outlines the normal expectations of manhood that he feels are forced upon him by his peers and the pressures that are placed on him to interact with members of the opposite sex in order to create potential sexual conquests. To be simply friends with a girl, without another motive, is viewed as strange and draws criticism from other young men around him.

Whilst *The Geeks’* performances of a more studious masculinity are to a certain extent self-fashioned, Goffman (1959, 1974) argues that agency is mediated through the social context and interaction order where the individual is positioned. Selves cannot be totally created outside the social milieu one is situated within, which can

constrain one's actions and shape interactions with others. So despite their front performances outlined so far, *The Geeks* were far from the one-dimensional stereotype depicted by popular culture. The desire to distance one's self from the locale and from an archetype of masculinity was clearly evident, but at other times, their masculinities seemed to be performed in often contradictory ways. In the final section of this paper, I now want to move on to look at some of the contradictions to this studious front that I have outlined so far.

### Contradictions and social pressures

As *The Geeks* reached the legal drinking age of 18, they started to frequent the pubs and clubs of Cwm Dyffryn and consume large amounts of alcohol. For Scott's birthday Ruben had arranged for a game of 'pub snooker' to be played. Everyone invited had to attend dressed as if to play snooker in ties and waistcoats. A chart, which Ruben was carrying, had been drawn up with the names of all the players (Ruben, Scott, Alan, Sean, Sam, Ieuan, Sin and my name) on one side with the points scored or 'balls potted' on the other. However, alcohol was to be substituted for 'balls potted'. Pints of lager or cider were the 'red balls' and were worth 1 point each, shots of various coloured spirits were the 'coloured balls' and the more spirits that were drunk, the more points could be earned. In theory one had to drink a pint or pot a 'red ball' and follow it up with a shot of spirits or a 'coloured ball' progressing through the colours in sequence just like in the traditional game of snooker. However, as my field notes illustrate, this soon got a bit messy:

When we got to the rugby club the game of 'snooker' was really beginning to get out of control. I had deliberately shied away from drinking spirits so as to last the night, but Ruben who was in the lead and still keeping score, kept downing shots one after the other. Scott the smallest guy in the year group was beginning to slur his words and I couldn't quite understand what he was saying ... as the night progressed Ruben got in a bigger and bigger mess and at one point spilt a pint of lager all over the table, himself and the seats.

*[Fieldnote Extract]*

Even though a few years previously they had mocked their peers for indulging in under-age drinking, and acting out of character when drunk, playing pub snooker provided a way for *The Geeks* to perform the more traditional working-class masculinities they missed out on by being academic achievers. But remnants of their front display of a studious geeky masculinity are also evident and not totally discarded. Here the young men are drinking with an aim not only to get drunk, but to also score points and record their achievement in a chart as they went along, in keeping with their geekier masculinities and to gain a form of accreditation for the act. By embracing social practices (e.g. fancy dress) and drinking games of many undergraduates in higher education institutions, they could also be seen as preparing themselves for university life, highlighting how masculine pursuits such as binge drinking cut across social class groups (see Thurnell-Read 2012).

Away from the town and within their own close friendship group, *The Geeks* were able to further participate in some of the practices that they criticised their peers for doing. As the following detailed field notes illustrates, on one occasion when *The Geeks* went out to celebrate Sean's 18th birthday in the capital city Cardiff, they went into a lap-dancing club and paid for private dances with the women who worked in the club.



Whilst drinking in *Wetherspoons*<sup>5</sup> before leaving Cwm Dyffryn, Ruben had suggested that when they got to Cardiff that night they should go to a strip club to really celebrate Sean's birthday. The other boys seemed interested and 'up for it'. When we got to Cardiff later in the evening, I never seriously considered that they would go into one, but as we walked down one of the main streets and neared a club it appeared that we were going in! I momentarily tried to change the decision by saying that it was going to cost a lot of money and it would be better to go somewhere else, but no one seemed to listen and my pleas were ignored. As we paid our entrance fee (£6.00) and descended into the club the boys were rather excited. We were ushered over to a table in the middle of a large room full of comfortable low chairs and tables with floor to ceiling mirrors around the club and a small bar at the back. A small number of older men were spread out across the room with their eyes fixed on the dancer on the stage in front. She was naked apart from a G-string and *The Geeks* soon started nervously laughing and chatting to each other and pointing at the dancer on the stage. I noticed that there were half a dozen or so young women walking around the floor of the club just wearing underwear and small robes. Until we were served drinks by one of the clothed waitresses, they did not approach the table. Once the drinks been brought over, a few of the dancers came to chat to us. The women sat on the edges of the seats or stood in front of the seats towering about the seated boys. Some whispered into individual boys' ears or playfully encouraged the others to suggest a dance for one of the group. I was struck by how quickly the boys were persuaded to go off for a 'private dance' with the dancers. Each one-on one dance (costing £10 for three minutes) took place in a private booth. After midnight the prices were increased and the same dance cost £20. [*Fieldnote Extract*]

The pressure to conform to heterosexual practices, to hold the male gaze and to objectify women is fully on display here. *The Geeks*, who as I have shown normally distanced themselves from many of the attitudes that their peers expressed towards women, when away from their home town felt much freer to indulge in many of the same practices they chastised others for doing. Without the risk of being judged by anyone they knew, or having the contradicting to their usual studious front performance of self challenged, this night out was a chance for them to live the heterosexual fantasy and act like the 'real' men that their marginalised geeky position did not often allow. It can also be seen as an escape from the pressures that being an academic achiever in an area like Cwm Dyffryn brought on them.

### Conclusion<sup>6</sup>

This paper has highlighted how a 'team' of academically successful young, working-class men, who I have termed *The Geeks*, are progressing to adulthood in a deindustrialised community. I have explored the challenges involved in presenting a studious form of working-class masculinity, which differ to more credible performances of manhood in the region.

I argue that this studious or 'geeky' performance, rather than being a straightforward practice for these young men, illustrates that a high degree of complexity exists in young working-class men's lives and this must be understood when trying to understand the performance of young working-class masculinities and its relation to schooling and achievement (see also McDowell 2003; Nayak 2006; Ingram 2011). Whilst there are undoubtedly instances of studious practices of masculinity performed by *The Geeks*, and the adoption of middle-class academic aspiration, these are loaded with risks. The drinking and birthday trip to the strip club show that older versions of traditional working-class culture (speech, cultural practices and social activities) appear within these narratives. These young men are trying to be successful and



embrace a neo-liberal agenda within a globalised workplace; however, they are restricted by the heritage of their locale and the associated expectations of manhood. These working-class ‘achieving boys’ offer a hybridised form of masculinity, not only trying to escape but also falling back and feeling the pressure to perform traditional classed masculinities. The implication of this on their ability to achieve their goals is important and illustrates how much harder working-class boys must work than those from more privileged backgrounds in order to be successful in different aspects of their lives.

## Notes

1. Cwm Dyffryn is a pseudonym, which translated simply to ‘Valley, Valley’ in English. All respondents’ names used in this paper have also been changed, some selected by the young men themselves.
2. The young men chose their own pseudonyms.
3. All school subjects were streamed into ability groups or sets.
4. In the UK, football (along with other contact sports such as Rugby Union and Boxing) has traditionally been associated as a male working-class leisure activity and was a particular way to perform working-class masculinity away from industrial workplaces.
5. JD Wetherspoon is one of the biggest high-street pub chains in Britain with over 800 pubs. It also owns the Lloyds No. 1 pub chain and Wetherspoon Hotels. (See <http://www.jdwetherspoon.co.uk/home/discover-jdw/about-us> accessed 4th February 2014).
6. With the exception of Sin and Gavin (neither of whom did as well as expected and returned to the Sixth Form to resit their final year), all *The Geeks* progressed to university. Sam, Ieuan, Scott and Leon left Wales to study and made the largest moves out of their community. Whilst the rest stayed in South Wales, Ruben and Sean did move to the capital Cardiff to study, so they did make some break from Cwm Dyffryn.

## References

- Adamson, D. 2008. “Still Living on the Edge?” *Contemporary Wales* 21: 47–66.
- Adkins, L. 1999. “Community and Economy: A Retraditionalization of Gender?” *Theory, Culture & Society* 16 (1): 119–139.
- Arnot, M. 2004. “Male Working-Class Identities and Social Justice: A Reconsideration of Paul Willis’s *Learning to Labor* in Light of Contemporary Research.” In *Learning to Labor in New Times*, edited by N. Dolby, G. Dimitriadis, and P. Willis, 17–40. New York, NY: Routledge Falmer.
- Beynon, H. 1973. *Working for Ford*. Wakefield: EP Publishing.
- Brittan, A. 1989. *Masculinity and Power*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Brown, P. 1987. *Schooling Ordinary Kids, Inequality, Unemployment and the New Vocationalism*. London: Tavistock.
- Brown, R., and R. Scase. 1994. *Higher Education and Corporate Realities*. London: UCL Press.
- Burrows, R., and N. Gane. 2006. “Geodemographics, Software and Class.” *Sociology* 40 (5): 793–812.
- Carrigan, T., B. Connell, and J. Lee. 1985. “Towards a New Sociology of Masculinity.” *Theory and Society* 14 (5): 551–604.
- Cockburn, C. 1983. *Brothers: Male Dominance and Technological Change*. London: Pluto Press.
- Comeau, C. D., and C. Kemp. 2007. “Intersections of Age and Masculinities in the Information Technology Industry.” *Ageing and Society* 27 (2): 215–232.
- Connell, R. W. 1989. “Cool Guys, Swots and Wimps: The Interplay of Masculinity and Education.” *Oxford Review of Education* 15 (3): 291–203.
- Connell, R. W. 1995. *Masculinities*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Connell, R. W., and J. W. Messerschmidt. 2005. “Hegemonic Masculinity Rethinking the Concept.” *Gender & Society* 19 (6): 829–859.
- Corrigan, P. 1979. *Schooling the Smash Street Kids*. London: Macmillan Press.

- Dalley-Trim, L. 2007. "The Boys' Present: Hegemonic Masculinity: A Performance of Multiple Acts." *Gender and Education* 19 (2): 199–217.
- Day, G. 2002. *Making Sense of Wales*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Delamont, S. 2000. "The Anomalous Beasts: Hooligans and the Sociology of Education." *Sociology* 34 (1): 95–111.
- Edley, N., and M. Wetherell. 1996. "Masculinity, Power and Identity." In *Understanding Masculinity*, edited by M. Mac an Ghail, 97–113. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Edley, N., and M. Wetherell. 1997. "Jockeying for Position: The Construction of Masculine Identities." *Discourse & Society* 8 (2): 203–217.
- Epstein, D., J. Elwood, V. Hey, and J. Maw, eds. 1998. *Failing Boys? Issues in Gender and Achievement*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Francis, B. 2009. "The Role of The Boffin as Subject Other in Gendered Performances of School Achievement." *The Sociological Review* 57 (4): 645–669.
- Francis, B., C. Skelton, and B. Read. 2010. "The Simultaneous Production of Educational Achievement and Popularity: How Do Some Pupils Accomplish It?" *British Educational Research Journal* 36 (2): 317–340.
- Frosh, S., A. Phoenix, and R. Pattman. 2002. *Young Masculinities*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Gard, M., and R. Meyenn. 2000. "Boys, Bodies, Pleasure and Pain: Interrogating Contact Sports in Schools." *Sport, Education and Society* 5 (1): 19–34.
- Goffman, E. [1956] 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York, NY: Doubleday, Anchor Books.
- Goffman, E. 1963. *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall (Pelican Books Edition).
- Goffman, E. 1974. *Frame Analysis an Essay on the Organization of Experience*. New York, NY: Harper and Row.
- Goffman, E. 1976. "Gender Display." *Studies in the Anthropology of Visible Communication* 3: 69–77.
- Grant, R. 1991. *Cynon Valley in the Age of Iron*. Stroud: Alan Sutton.
- Grazian, D. 2007. "The Girl Hunt: Urban Nightlife and the Performance of Masculinity as Collective Activity." *Symbolic Interaction* 30 (2): 221–243.
- Green, A. 1990. *Education and State Formation: The Rise of Education Systems in England, France and the USA*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Press.
- Halsey, A. H., A. F. Heath, and J. M. Ridge. 1980. *Origins and Destinations. Family, Class, and Education in Modern Britain*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Halsey, A. H., H. Lauder, P. Brown, and A. S. Wells, eds. 1997. *Education, Culture, Economy, Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hargreaves, D. H. 1967. *Social Relations in a Secondary School*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Hughey, M. 2011. "Backstage Discourse and the Reproduction of White Masculinities." *Sociological Quarterly* 52 (1): 132–153.
- Ingram, N. 2009. "Working-class Boys, Educational Success and the Misrecognition of Working Class Culture." *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 30 (4): 421–434.
- Ingram, N. 2011. "Within School and Beyond the Gate: The Complexities of Being Educationally Successful and Working Class." *Sociology* 45 (2): 287–302.
- Jackson, C., and S. Dempster. 2009. "I Sat Back on My Computer ... with a Bottle of Whisky Next to Me: Constructing Cool Masculinity Through Effortless Achievement in Secondary and Higher Education." *Journal of Gender Studies* 18 (4): 341–356.
- Jackson, B., and D. Marsden. 1962. *Education and the Working Class*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Jackson, S., and S. Scott. 2010. "Rehabilitating Interactionism for a Feminist Sociology of Sexuality." *Sociology* 44 (5): 811–826.
- Kendall, L. 2000. "'Oh No! I'm A Nerd!' Hegemonic Masculinity on an Online Forum." *Gender & Society* 14 (2): 256–274.
- Kenway, J., and A. Kraak. 2004. "Reordering Work and Destabilizing Masculinity." In *Learning to Labor in New Times*, edited by N. Dolby, G. Dimitriadis, and P. Willis, 95–109. New York, NY: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Kenway, J., A. Kraak, and A. Hickey-Moody. 2006. *Masculinity Beyond the Metropolis*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

- Kimmel, M. 2006. *Manhood in America*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lacey, C. 1970. *High Town Grammar, The School as a Social System*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Lingard, B., W. Martino, and M. Mills. 2009. *Boys and Schooling, Beyond Structural Reform*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Mac an Ghaill, M. 1994. *The Making of Men*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Mac an Ghaill, M., ed. 1996. *Understanding Masculinities*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Martino, W. 1999. "Cool boys', 'Party Animals', 'Squids' and 'Poofters': Interrogating the Dynamics and Politics of Adolescent Masculinities in School." *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 20 (2): 239–263.
- McDowell, L. 2000. "Learning to Serve? Employment Aspirations and Attitudes of Young Working-class Men in an Era of Labour Market Restructuring." *Gender, Place and Culture* 7 (4): 389–416.
- McDowell, L. 2003. *Redundant Masculinities*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- McDowell, L. 2007. "Respect, Deference, Respectability and Place: What is the Problem with/for Working Class Boys?" *Geoforum* 38 (2): 276–286.
- McDowell, L. 2012. "Post-crisis, Post-ford and Post-gender? Youth Identities in an Era of Austerity." *Journal of Youth Studies* 15 (5): 573–590.
- Mendick, H., and B. Francis. 2012. "Boffin and Geek Identities: Abject or Privileged?" *Gender and Education* 24 (1): 15–24.
- Messner, M. 2001. "Friendship, Intimacy and Sexuality." In *The Masculine Reader*, edited by S. M. Whitehead and F. J. Barrett, 253–265. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.
- Nayak, A. 2003. "'Boyz to Men': Masculinities, Schooling and Labour Transitions in de-industrial Times." *Educational Review* 55 (2): 147–159.
- Nayak, A. 2006. "Displaced Masculinities: Chavs, Youth and Class in the Post-industrial City." *Sociology* 40 (5): 813–831.
- Paechter, C. 2003. "Masculinities and Femininities as Communities of Practice." *Women's Studies International Forum* 26 (1): 69–77.
- Parker, A. 1996. "The Construction of Masculinity within Boys' Physical Education." *Gender and Education* 8 (2): 141–157.
- Pascoe, C. J. 2007. *Dude You're A Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Phillips, D. 2005. "Reproducing Normative and Marginalized Masculinities: Adolescent Male Popularity and the Outcast." *Nursing Inquiry* 12 (3): 219–230.
- Reay, D. 2002. "Shaun's Story: Troubling Discourses of White Working-class Masculinities." *Gender and Education* 14 (3): 221–234.
- Reay, D. 2009. "Making Sense of White Working Class Educational Underachievement." In *Who Cares about the White Working Class?*, edited by K. Sveinsson, 22–28. London: Runnymede.
- Reay, D., G. Crozier, and J. Clayton. 2009. "Strangers in Paradise: Working Class Students in Elite Universities." *Sociology* 43 (6): 1103–1121.
- Redman, P., and M. Mac an Ghaill. 1997. "Educating Peter, The Making of a History Man." In *Border Patrols: Policing the Boundaries of Heterosexuality*, edited by D. Steinberg, D. Epstein, and R. Johnson, 162–182. London: Cassell.
- Rees, G., and D. Stroud. 2004. *Regenerating the Coalfields, the South Wales Experience*. Tredegar: The Bevan Foundation.
- Renold, E. 2004. "'Other' Boys: Negotiating Non-hegemonic Masculinities in the Primary School." *Gender and Education* 16 (2): 247–265.
- Richardson, D. 2010. "Youth Masculinities: Compelling Male Heterosexuality." *The British Journal of Sociology* 61 (4): 737–756.
- Roberts, S. 2013. "Boys will be Boys... Won't They? Change and Continuities in Contemporary Young Working-class Masculinities." *Sociology*, 47 (4): 671–686.
- Schrock, D., and M. Schwalbe. 2009. "Men, Masculinity and Manhood Acts." *Annual Review of Sociology* 35: 277–295.
- Segal, L. 2007. *Slow Motion. Changing Masculinities, Changing Men*. 3rd ed. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillian.
- Skeggs, B. 1992. "Paul Willis, Learning to Labour." In *Reading into Cultural Studies*, edited by M. Barker and A. Beezer, 181–196. London: Routledge.
- Skeggs, B. 1997. *Formation of Class and Gender, Becoming Respectable*. London: Sage.

- Smith, D. 1999. *Wales, A Question for History*. Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press Ltd.
- Thurnell-Read, T. 2012. "What Happens on Tour: The Premarital Stag Tour, Homosocial Bonding and Male Friendship." *Men and Masculinities* 15 (3): 249–270.
- Tolsen, A. 1977. *The Limits of Masculinity*. London: Tavistock.
- Wakeling, P. 2010. "Is there Such a Thing as a Working Class Academic?" In *Class Intersections -Spaces, Selves, Knowledges*, edited by Y. Taylor, 36–52. Surrey: Ashgate.
- Walkerdine, V. 2010. "Communal Beingness and Affect: An Exploration of Trauma in an Ex-industrial Community." *Body & Society* 16 (1): 91–116.
- Walkerdine, V., H. Lucey, and J. Melody. 2001. *Growing Up Girl: Psychosocial Explorations of Gender and Class*. London: Palgrave.
- Ward, M. R. M. 2012. *Working Paper 150: The Emos: The Re-Traditionalisation of White, Working-Class Masculinities Through the 'Alternative Scene'*. Cardiff School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University. <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/socsci/resources/wp150.pdf>.
- Ward, M. R. M. 2013. "The Performance of Young Working-Class Masculinities in the South Wales Valleys." Unpublished PhD Thesis, Cardiff University.
- Weis, L. 1990. *Working Class without Work: High School Students in a De-Industrializing Economy*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Weis, L. 2004. "Revisiting a 1980s 'Moment of Critique' Class, Gender and the New Economy." In *Learning to Labor in New Times*, edited by N. Dolby, G. Dimitriadis, and P. Willis, 111–132. New York, NY: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Williams, G. A. 1985. *When Was Wales?* Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Willis, P. 1977. *Learning to Labour, How working class kids get working class job*. Farnborough: Saxon House.
- Willis, P. 1979. "Masculinity and the Wage Form." In *Working Class Culture*, edited by J. Clark, C. Critcher, and R. Johnson, 185–201. London: Hutchinson.
- Zekany, E. 2011. "The Gendered Geek: Performing Masculinities in Cyberspace." Unpublished Masters Dissertation, Budapest, Central European University.