



Boys' Learning

Research group on men and their families.



ARTICLE



LEARNING HAS NEVER
BEEN SO EASY



SCHOOL MADE EASY
ARTICLES

A WAY FORWARD FOR MEN

PETER WEST*
CONFERENCE AT MOE, VICTORIA
OCTOBER 1999

* Dr Peter West is Head of the Research Group on Men and Families at the University of Western Sydney, Sydney, Australia. He can be contacted at p.west@uws.edu.au

The life of man [is] solitary, nasty, brutish and short

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 1651

***No man is an island, intire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main;...
Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to
know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.***

John Donne, *Devotions*, 1612.

The present is a difficult terrain for men. Gender is just contested territory. I was amused when the *Good Weekend* recently asked a group of men

'Do you think feminism has gone too far?'

Guess what? None of the men agreed with this question. Wow! And I bet you out there are thinking.... well I don't know who was asking that question, but I wouldn't say YES.

" It's OK.....Everything's fine... No problemo....."

men are used to saying that these days. Every male from 3 to 93 usually says no, there's no problem. Men don't HAVE problems, men SOLVE problems. Inside there is another story. Perhaps this doesn't quite capture your own uncertainties, for men are diverse and we have a wide range of opinion on many things. Men are gay and straight and bisexual and old and young and Aboriginal....it's a foolish person to try and capture this diversity! Anyway I'm going to try to talk about this challenging world in which men are quizzed and interrogated.

So that's the present in a nutshell, To find out how we go from this difficult present to an uncertain future, we have to understand how we got here in the first place. I want to explore the world of men in a number of periods from ancient Greece through to the present day.

So I am about to take you on a magic carpet into the past. Hang on and here we go.

MEN AND FATHERHOOD IN HISTORY

I want to explore the world of men partly through fatherhood, partly through work, partly as men relate to women, partly through war and battle, and partly through the experience of being a boy. I want just to look at *The Iliad* before moving ahead to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Fatherhood suffuses Homer's epic poem *The Iliad* - Achilles is the son of Peleus. Priam comes out to retrieve the body of his son Hektor, and so on. People are identified in the book as belonging to a family, linked from one father to the next.

And all these men are expected to go out to battle. (I always find those implied sentences fascinating. You have a penis, so you have to pick up the sword. You have a penis, so you know how to fix the car. Who, ME?!!)

Before one of the key battles in the Trojan war, Homer visualises Hektor with his wife, Andromache and infant son Skamandrios, 'shining lovely as a star'. Skamandrios does not recognise his father in his bronze helmet, with its nodding plume of horse-hair, and pulls away, crying. Hektor takes off the helmet and the boy goes happily to him. Then Andromache begs Hektor not to go into battle, lest he make her a widow. But Hektor replies

Wife, all that you say is surely in my mind also. But I would feel terrible shame before the men of Troy and the women of Troy with their trailing dresses, if like a coward I skulk away from the fighting

and he concludes

No, go back to the house and see to your own work, the loom and the distaff, and tell your maids to set about their tasks. War will be the men's concern, all the men whose homeland is Ilios, and mine above all.

The Iliad, 390-490

So Hektor sends his partner back to the household. Off he goes, without her, out to meet his fate, to kill many Greeks, and ultimately to be killed by Achilles and dragged across the Trojan plain, his long hair trailing in the dust.

The piece captures something about one man - perhaps about all men. Hektor can be affectionate with his wife, Andromache, and playful with his beloved son. But he is also called by Homer "the killer of men". How can a man take on such contradictory roles? Hektor, son of Priam, king of Troy, cannot afford to be called a coward. Hektor's own answer is that no man may escape his fate.

In this period, men's roles and women's roles seem to have been fixed fairly fast. Men fought, with some exceptions (musicians? actors? and others??) Women looked after home and family. Sons knew they would put on Dad's shoes and fight as he did. And in times of peace, men put down the sword and took up the plough, or diplomacy, or other work.

MEN IN NINETEENTH CENTURY USA

Now we move on the USA in the later part of the 19th century. Gillis, in a historical explanation of fatherhood, says that fathers were seen as the natural parent in nineteenth-century USA:

From coitus onwards, it was the father who was regarded as shaping the child, the natural parent, as it were.

Gillis 1995:7

Fathers took children into their daily lives in nineteenth-century America. Anthony Rotundo says that fathers in the USA took their sons' education as their own province. Fathers advised their sons on whether to take up the schoolmaster's rod or the carpenter's saw. They got their sons started in this calling with whatever means they could. Sometimes fathers and sons clashed over which occupation the son was to follow. Fathers lectured their sons about how to behave. They taught them prayers. They explained to them how to talk to women, and later, if they were still alive, how to raise kids. Women were still the cornerstone of hearth and home.. They were important to a boy in altogether different ways: teaching him manners, showing him how to get on with a girl and so on.

Fathers were one of the pillars on which the Christian world rested. Just as the whole family prayed to its Heavenly Father, so the earthly father was the guide and philosopher for the children. Fathers were especially the advisers on matters of work, achievement and property. Fathers might advise daughters on the necessary qualities in a husband - thrift, abstinence, loyalty and decency. Mothers and fathers were aware that the wrong husband could wreck a young daughter's life. Fathers taught their sons the importance of thrift, perseverance, diligence and punctuality, industry and ambition, says Rotundo:

A father was the first man a boy knew, was the ultimate source of material comforts, made decisions that controlled a boy's life, and was a boy's predominant role model as a man.

1993: 27.

It is as well to remind ourselves not to suffuse this picture with the rosy glow of nostalgia. First, Rotundo says that this picture of men and women in nineteenth century USA was changing in the nineteenth century as more and more men had to forsake the farm and seek work further afield. Secondly, it is fitting that we listen to Babette Smith's warning not to idealise fathers, lest we create a myth which present fathers cannot hope to emulate (1998).

MEN IN PENRITH IN THE 1930S

And so on to the 1930s in Australia. My main research on men and fathering is based on the town on Penrith, a little rural community based at the foot of the Blue Mountains. It is better to picture it as a country town far from the city than to conjure up modern image of red roofs and Westies, for all this was an invention of the 1960s and 1970s. Fatherhood - like all masculinity- is made in a context of place and time. I won't mention that this comes from a book I wrote called *Fathers, Sons and Lovers*. But we need to understand the context of gender. You can't escape it.

FATHERS

In Penrith at this time, most of the men I studied worked on the railway or the family farm. Most of them were fathers. And fathers were powerful people. They were head of the household and given the honoured name of breadwinner. They were feared, respected and loved by the women who spoke to us.

Some qualifications need to be made before we can explain this world of masculinity. I asked persistently about men who did not want to be husbands and fathers. There seemed little room for men in this regard; some became priests or clergymen. I spoke to one man who had been a priest and went into Sydney regularly for sex, but he declined an interview. Occasionally, Penrith males had other kinds of sexual experiences with other men, my informants said. But it was a small town where 'everybody knew everybody', Kevin Mitchell* said. Men were made to conform by the shunning of men seen as not masculine enough. Phrases were suggestive, not explicit: 'He's a bit of a nancy'; or 'he's a bit, you know' and there might be a telling dropping of the wrist. The world of masculinity in this era is difficult to understand to those of us who take Oxford Street and phone sex as part of the fabric of society. But men are still held in tough masculinity by fear - fear of not being masculine enough.

BOYS

Boys of this era looked up to their fathers with awe. It was commonplace for a boy to be told "Go down to the woodshed and wait till your father gets home". Worse than the pain of the beating was the anticipation of it. But the men we spoke to - with important exceptions - accepted the beatings as part of a father's loving guidance.

We asked Chris Crowhurst* how he felt about his Dad.

He beat me when I played up. With the cord on the iron. But I still loved him - desperately.

...I felt so proud of him. "My dad can do anything'., I'd boast. He was a fine man, well respected by everybody and he set an example which I follow today.

Boys were held in place by webs of authority: police, schools, churches, other members of the community. And fathers were a vital part of these webs of authority. Boys who played up were reported by one or another of these and they were almost invariably punished. Boys grew up close to their fathers and worked alongside them in a hundred different ways. In this way, a boy learnt by example. He saw his father help other families out when they were hit by flood or poverty. Fathers and mothers were powerful figures in this social landscape. Women and men still lived virtually in separate spheres. Raising a boy was both a mother's and a father's job. A boy without a father could be taken in hand by a school principal or another member of the community. Informants told me that in the little town that was Penrith, men and women worked in their different spheres, co-operating in bringing up children. Men of this era speak very passionately about their fathers. Often it was only in retrospect that they could appreciate what their fathers and mothers had done for them. When we asked these men about masculinity, their first words were usually "Well my Dad used to.." Work, education and money were matters which fathers seemed to emphasise with their sons. As Stephanie Dowrick argues, a boy looks for masculinity, and the first place he usually finds it is in his father (1991:91). But Dowrick argues sensibly that both boys and girls need a loving older male in their lives.

However, my research confirms what common sense says - some fathers abused their trust. Some fathers were violent. Brian Boland* describes how in Penrith in the 1960s his family would be sitting around at home. The lights would go on in the driveway and all the kids would scatter. The father in question would find all the children, line them up and bash them. This appears to be one of the legacies left to him after many years in the army. Other males or fathers sexually abused children, as another of my interviewees points out. This information is not available about the 1930s: common sense says the problem existed. Such problems were usually not spoken of, and some men carried their misdemeanours into their graves.

AUSTRALIA IN THE 1970S: THE FEMINIST REVOLUTION CHANGES RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

The feminist revolution began in the 1960s. I believe it began for all practical purposes in 1963 with Betty Friedan's book *The Feminist Mystique*. And like many others, I encountered this book in the early 1960s and began listening as women talked about this exciting movement that was transforming the way they saw the world. Little did we know: it would transform the way all of us saw the world. As the 60s became the 70s, first Friedan and then a whole range of other women began to look at the way the world was set up. Men could do anything; women were restricted from an early age and rarely given very much say at all about the way things were. Women began to challenge those

restrictions, just as we began to challenge the idea that 18 year old males should go and fight in Vietnam.

Part of this movement was one to set free the hearts and minds of girls. Schools became places where girls could now do more than home science and needlework. As the 1970s became the 1980s, careful attention was given to encouraging girls in maths and science. The same happened right around the western world. Girls' marks began to improve. Women championed the cause of girls, seeing them as people who would have more opportunities than they had themselves. Progressive people supported feminism and to oppose it was the mark of a redneck or cave-dweller of some kind. And nobody wants to be called a troglodyte.

AUSTRALIA IN 1999

It's always easy to look back into the past - as someone said, hindsight has perfect vision. Let's start looking at some aspects of gender in Australia in the present moment. All the above trends have intensified.

FATHERS

First, the position of fathers has been further eroded. People were so keen to assist mothers that they kind of didn't get around to fathers. We have to be sensible about this and not get our pants in a knot over it. But it is disappointing. In a review of materials on parents and literacy published in 1994, Nichols observed that

'parent' in this literature usually refers to 'mother'...Those [studies] that specifically target fathers are even rarer. It is more common to find studies nominally about parents in which none or few men are included in the sample. When considering issues relating to parents there is rarely any acknowledgement that the interests of men and women in their roles as parents may be different. (1994: 301-2).

Again, here is the importance of including fathers when we examine issues like literacy that involve parents. Nichols' discussion goes on to emphasise that if we are to see family literacy as literacy for the whole family, then we need to address barriers to men's participation in certain kinds of literacies. It is the way men interpret (or construct) their own masculinity that leads to the inclusion or exclusion of behaviours relevant to their children.

One Federal Government Report displayed a variation on this pattern of not specifically including men when conceptualising parenting. This was *Pathways to Prevention*, an attempt to do research on early intervention approaches to crime prevention. The Summary Volume of this Report said that you are at risk of becoming a criminal if you have the following (- I am using the Report's own wording):

father absence

rejection of child

family violence and disharmony

lack of warmth and affection

You are less likely to be a criminal if you had

supportive caring parents

family harmony

secure and stable family

Perhaps I have missed something here. However, it appears that the Report talks positively about caring parents, but only negatively about fathers. Fathers do bad things: doesn't any father ever get it right? As we saw in Nichols' comments, there is too little direction given to men who want to be good fathers. In past eras, such as nineteenth and early twentieth century USA (Griswold 1993: 10ff) fathers were seen as central to a child's life. Today fathers are the ghosts of the family. They are seen as missing in action from family life, to use a phrase from a report on African-American fathers . And there is a danger that this will become a self-fulfilling prophecy, as the same researchers warn (Lue *et al.*, 1998:301).

For the Year of the Family, the Australian Bureau of Statistics created a profile of families in New South Wales. It estimated that 84% of lone families were female (an estimate which could possibly be revised to 88 or 90 per cent). This publication's index has eight separate listings for 'women and family responsibilities' but none for 'men and family responsibilities'. Again, Walsh (1999) found that while much has been written about parents and communication about sex, fathers' experience on the subject is virtually unexplored (1999:23). Too often in social science research, men have become figures in the background in families. Hugh Mackay's popular book *Reinventing Australia* has a woman and her children on the front cover, together with a woman at an ATM. Men are nowhere to be seen. I join my voice with that of Ruth Sidel, a New York sociologist: we hear constantly of families. single mothers, and children of various kinds. *But where are the men?* (Sidel, 1992: 500). There is a necessary distinction to make here: are men really not present in families, or is it that social researchers underplay their roles? Perhaps there is truth in both of these statements.

Fatherhood is a connexion between two people. We see motherhood as a lifelong connexion - 'Mary mothers her children'. But in the 1990s we see fatherhood as much less. In contemporary discourse about parenting, (see for example a recent New South Wales report on better parenting, 1999) **fatherhood has ceased to be a lifelong connexion, central to the life of a son or a daughter, and become more-or-less the exchange of bodily fluids, with some incidental contributions intermittently as the child grows up.** Such notions fall back on traditional notions of motherhood

and fatherhood. But to understand fatherhood requires a solid grounding in the nature and the history of what it has meant to be a father.

To study fatherhood, as Griswold argues in a landmark study of fathering in the USA, means to understand what men have shared and how men have differed (1993:2). It also means to understand that in some ways, men and women share human hopes, fears, and dreams about their children.

In the process fathers feel a bit as if they are just walking bank accounts. Rex Stoessiger in Hobart asked a boy

"What about your father? What does he read? What does he write?"

The boy replied "Cheques".

MEN, WORK AND FAMILY

I have argued that three important aspects of a man's life are to perform, to protect and to provide (1996a:45-50). Men often seem to see their lives as a performance: as in acting masculine. For instance, see Mike McIvor's comments on acting masculine in the school yard by acting cool and following the urge to play football (1996: 20); or for a contrary view, Hans van der Witt, who kept to his Dutch Calvinist upbringing and decided not to perform as a typical? ? beer-drinking Australian male. Men also see the need to protect their loved ones (see for example Chris Crowhurst* (1996a: 128-9, although not all men protect: Chris was a policeman and had to deal with violence within families.) Finally, most men appear to see the need to provide, as Brian Boland says*:

Do you have any problem being a male?

No, I don't think so. But when you're married for a while and you have children you become the main breadwinner. And there are times when I said to my wife, 'Things are so stressful I wish I wasn't this and wasn't that' (1996a:49)

The contradiction here is interesting: the need to talk about difficulties in being a breadwinner, balanced against the need to keep the feelings in and not to complain. And indeed, the need not to be seen as having problems because many men seem to feel it's not permitted to have problems. All the men who identified as heterosexual in the Penrith study conformed to this pattern.

Griswold argues that despite many differences across race, culture and class, breadwinning is one unifying element in men's lives. The balance between differences and similarities is significant. He says that the obligations shape men's sense of self, manhood, and gender. He argues 'Supported by law, affirmed by history, sanctioned by every element in society, male breadwinning has been synonymous with maturity, respectability, and masculinity' (1993:2). And he cites Robert Weiss - 'Children, for men, are a commitment, an investment, an obligation, a hope. They are men's chief contribution to the world and justification for their lives'. (1993:2).

There are negative and positive ways of saying that fathers are important. A violent father will lead a child into feelings of negativity, and lack of self-worth; or the child may turn the violence outward, lashing out at others (as Olweus' analysis of school bullies shows, 1993).

We can express this in another way. Children raised without fathers are more likely to drop out of school, end up in the juvenile justice system, and contribute to high rates of teenage suicide and pregnancy (Lue *et al.*, 1998, leaning on research by Caldwell et al and Holland). Children do better in schools when fathers are closely involved in their education (Lue et al., citing research by Thomas, 1997). But African-American fathers feel unsure of what to do, argue Lue *et al.* They feel the weight of stereotypes - that black men are shiftless, or lazy, and consequently, bad fathers. Just doing the right thing is difficult, say Lue *et al* (1998). 'The model for black male development is broken, and we must fix it', according to Bridges, 1988, cited in Lue *et al.* (1998). This might be a common finding among researchers. The question is what can be done.

THE PRESENT MOMENT IN GENDER ISSUES

And what about the present day?

WORK

As we saw earlier, men historically have had lives that revolved around work. The main exception is that when wars occurred, it was men who were expected to fight. But in the 1990s, work is increasingly problematic. BHP is selling off its steelworks in Newcastle. Both Newcastle and Wollongong were the industrial heartland of Eastern Australia. Men left school, got a good job at the steelworks and stayed there. That was their life. Now working-class men are facing an uncertain future. Work is increasingly based on skill, adaptability, readiness to change, ability to use computers and similar technical equipment. It's not surprising that the US Bureau of Labour found in 1996 that the five jobs declining fastest around the world were all men's jobs: leatherwork, ship building, heavy industry. The five jobs growing fastest were mainly female jobs: childminding, data processing, service industries. The future for ALL men is not bleak but the future for working-class men stuck in hard masculinity is very bleak. No doubt this has a lot of application to the La Trobe Valley here in Victoria. The standard of behaviour applied is one suited to women: we can see this in schools that appear designed for girls (teachers default to a girl-friendly style, and many schools are very concerned that schools don't hinder girls). Is the same true of workplaces that cater to people who can communicate, share, learn constantly and fit in?

The gender debate in Australia has changed in the last 7 or 8 years. When I was writing *Fathers, Sons and Lovers* in the mid 90s people were scornful of anyone even THINKING of writing a book about men. Why would you want to do that? Or we'd say "Hey we're having a men's festival next week". The reply from some quarters was "Every week is a men's festival!" We heard women expressing their sense of discovering their freedom, and much of it seemed directed against men. But that's changed. The rhetoric about backlash is old stuff now. We have listened to Helen Garner's thoughtful writings about men and women, and now we have Susan Faludi's new book. There seems to be a coming together again, a readiness for men and women to recognise that we have to live together in one way or another. People are more prepared to talk about men's issues : men's health, suicide for young men and older men, prostate cancer. We can nearly accept that men and women are different people with different kinds of lives, as Whissel argues in a most interesting article.

BOYS

It fascinates me that the debate which is still stuck fast and not moving ahead is boys' education. That's not true either in the USA or in the UK. In the UK the Blair Government has admitted that it has a problem with male underachievement and has set about solving it through research and a study of best practice. In the USA two bestselling books are Bill Pollack's *Real Boys* and another called *Raising Cain*. Here in Australia educated opinion still won't admit that boys are trailing behind girls in most subjects, on average, apart from a group of high-achieving boys. Boys are leading the way in all kinds of problems in school and in society from learning impairment to suicide. Education Departments still encourage schools to give special treatment to girls, but not to boys. Yet as we said, most boys face a difficult and uncertain future. The last thing they need is to feel that other people are special - but they are just boys. Nobody seems game to speak up for boys. Boys education is a heresy. To advocate the IDEA of helping boys turn away from hard masculinity has become a heresy, as Szasz terms it, of educational thought. In a world in which educators swim in schools, and they all swim in the same direction, as Robert Hughes points out, anyone who swims alone IS a heretic (this discussion of Szasz is cited in Hargreaves 1994:122). Well I am a heretic, but I still think if we want a better more humane society we have to show boys that humanity is not created on the football field. Here I stand, I have to say this; I can do no other. I know this is heresy in Australia where men have been enslaved by the great God Sport. Perhaps Robert Dessaix and Ita Buttrose can help us lead a rethink of this matter, with their insistence that we do need to show boys that there is a life for them in literature and in writing and that their education should not enslave them to a leather ball.

MEN AND WOMEN

You'll be glad to hear that we are drawing to a close.

What is the state of men and women today? Well it seems really uneven to me. Of course a minority of men is doing very well, and has always done so. And we can hardly say women as a whole are doing well or poorly when so many women are married to men: I think a lot of these generalisations

become nonsensical unless you locate them in families and suburbs, richer or poorer. But the lot of men in Australia (or elsewhere for that matter) hardly seems anything to be happy about. Men are going down the difficult road of dissatisfaction with their bodies. They are self-destructing on the road to such an extent that friends with sons under 25 tell me that these young men can hardly get insurance. We know that men are suiciding in Australia with peaks around 15-25 and 45-55. Men interviewed by *The Melbourne Age* in November 1997 felt that it was far better to be a man in earlier times than it is today. My research supports that idea. Susan Faludi says unquestionably, men have lost the standing they once had: a useful role in public, a way of earning a decent living, respect from the media and churches and others in the community (1999: 55). All that is a world we have lost. What we now have is a world of shining pecs, tight abs and shaved armpits, and males who think that Leonardo is some kid in Hollywood. Or as my doctor recently said, a world in which men want to shave their back, their sack and their crack. Our fathers would be horrified.

Where are we as men today? Who are our friends? Who are our enemies?

When we hear that the Howard Government has taken away funding from the Womens Electoral Lobby, do you applaud? Does it make you happy that the same Government is giving funding to the Lone Fathers Association? For my part, I feel uncomfortable. I know there is a lot of pain that men have felt after divorce. The Lone Fathers Association seems well meaning but they take their model from the Lone Ranger. It's Hi Ho Silver! and off they ride into the sunset, angry and nursing their wounds and not staying around to work it out. So whatever the alleged rationale for this policy, it looks like we are lurching back to the fifties. Events like this will force us as men to take a stand. Where do we stand in relation to our fellow men who are not straight like us or not gay like us, as the case may be? Are we so afraid of each other that we can't work together? Should we work with women in boys' education for example, to improve learning for boys? Why not? What are we afraid of? We can't live on a rock - we can't be an island, as John Donne says. I won't make myself popular by saying this, but I think we in the men's movement have been a bit too self-indulgent at times. We can't stay in there and keep fighting; we have too often retreated to our cave to lick our wounds.

Women have succeeded in constructing an identity for women. Can we work together as men, as women have done, or are we forever distrustful and suspicious of each other? Women have spokesgroups, organisations, helplines. It seems very difficult for men to get these things going. We can easily find lots of people to blame for this. But let's look at ourselves. Can we really work together as men? Is it still true - as I argued in *Fathers Sons and Lovers*, leaning on Stephanie Dowrick - that a man is someone who is likely to

go into himself when things get bad

do his block or get on the piss when he doesn't get his own way

feel uncared for when he is alone
mistrust women
find it difficult to be open with other men
blame others
put more effort into work than relationships
find it difficult to describe his feelings (West 1996: 138-9)

I find this a painful list. I don't mind lies: it's truth that hurts. Is this you out there, the men who are listening? Is it your father or your son? Then we are all in trouble.

We can set out any number of plans and policies. But what is more important is really much more difficult. We need to reassess who we are and where we are going. We have to revise many of the current assumptions about men, based as they are on fading notions of masculinity and femininity. The separate, gendered spheres of men and women that still were strong in the 1930s have gone for most Australians and will probably never return. The ideas of our fathers won't work any more. Let's forget *Iron John*, with all its seductive appeal of a past when men were men - and sheep were nervous. We have to reshape our thinking about men and about boys and about women and girls too for a world in which women are moving into workplaces and competing successfully with men. We have to raise boys to understand that they will be in relationships. And one of the main relationships for a man is to be a father or mentor for a younger person.

What can men do to improve their lives? Most of all, men have to stop sitting with their head in their hands and take some initiative. Betty Friedan writes movingly of men who refuse to work 60 and 80 hours a week, with the consequent neglect of their loved ones. She applauds men who make more time for their families. (Daniel Petre has recently made the same point in *Father Time*.) Friedan argues that men have much to gain from talking out their dilemmas, instead of retreating into a kind of masculine silence. She argues that this is the new frontier for men - to work out, for the sake of their partners and kids, what it means to be a man - as part of a second stage of gender roles.

There is a new American frontier, a new adventure for men, in the struggle for wholeness, for openness to feeling, for living and sharing life on equal terms with women. But it is a new frontier where both men's and women's needs converge.

The dialogue has gone on too long in terms of women alone. Let men join women in the center of the second stage.

(1992: 579)

As Susan Faludi says in her great book, men are not to blame all the time. Men don't have all the power. Nor is it true that women are to blame for men's troubles. Truth is slipping between the cracks when this kind of rhetoric is thrown around. (Faludi, 1999: 51) My nephew Declan says 'My mum is a feminist; you are for men so you must be a mennonist'. Well, Declan I hope that you grow up in a world in which there are no feminists, and no mennonists, just people who support humanity. But it will be a while before that happens.

What are we going to do on National Family Day this coming Sunday? Will we celebrate as men who are part of families, (whatever those families may be) and not just walking chequebooks? Will men and boys be closely related again? Are we men going to ride off into the sunset like the Lone Ranger and nurse our wounds? Or work with other men and the women in our lives, even when we don't entirely see things their way? We can make our own lives as men solitary, nasty, brutish and short, as Hobbes suggested; or throw in our lot with John Donne and choose to be involved with other men and women. Let's put the past behind us at this conference and find our way forward.

.....

NOTES

1. The men in the Penrith project were given fictional names. Names were changed to protect confidentiality, and some identifying details were deliberately obscured.
2. Of course Hobbes and Donne wrote 'men' but conceived of human beings. I choose to deliberately emphasise the male part of humanity in my 1990s interpretation of their writings.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aaltio-Marjosola, I. and Lehtinen, J., (1998) 'Male Managers as Fathers? Contrasting Management, Fatherhood and Masculinity', *Human Relations* vol.51 no.2, February.

Australian Government, *Pathways to Prevention: Developmental and Early Intervention Approaches to Crime in Australia*. National Crime Prevention Unit, Canberra.

Anon (1996) "Tomorrow's Second Sex ". Editorial and article, *The Economist*, 28 September.

Burnside, Sydney [an agency of the Uniting church] "Kids Need Dads". Pamphlet.

Buttrose, Ita (1998) *A Passionate Life*. Sydney: Penguin Books.

Crawford, David (1997) 'Troubled Love: Fathers and Sons', *Sydney's Child*, October.

Crowell, Nancy and Ethel Leeper (eds.) (1994) *America's Fathers and Public Policy: Report of a Workshop*. National Research Council and Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington DC: National Academy Press.

De Beauvoir, Simone, (1977) *All Said and Done*, trans. by Patrick O'Brian. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

Dessaix, Robert (1999) 'Do You Mind Speaking English?' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 October.

Dowrick, Stephanie (1991) *Intimacy and Solitude*. Melbourne: Mandarin.

De Lucie, M. (1966) 'Mothers: Influential Agents in Father-Child relations', *Genetic, Social and General Psychology Monographs*, 122 (3) August, 285-308.

Dye, Philip (1998) *The Fatherlode*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.

Gillis, John (1995) 'Bringing up Father: British Paternal Identities, 1700 to Present', *masculinities* [New York], vol.3 no.3 Fall.

Hall, Stephen (1999) 'The Bully in the Mirror: The Troubled Life of Boys'. *New York Times Magazine*, 22 August.

Homer (1987) *The Iliad*, translated by Martin Hammond. Middlesex: Penguin.

Faludi, Susan (1999) 'The Betrayal of the American Man', extracts from *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man*, in *Newsweek*, 13 September (us Edition).

Franklin, Miles (1990) *Some Everyday Folk and Dawn*. London: Virago.

Friedan, Betty (1992) 'Their Turn'. in M. Kimmel and M. Messner, eds., *Men's Lives*. New York: Macmillan.

Griswold, Robert L. (1993) *Fatherhood in America: A History*. New York: Basic Books.

Hargreaves, Andy (1994) *Changing Teachers, Changing Times*. London: Cassell.

Johnson, Rachel (1998) 'Putting Family First', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 April.

Lue, Martha S., Sheila Smalley, Barbara Smith and Greg Seaton, (1998) 'African-American Fathers with Their Preschool Children', *The Educational Forum*, 62 (4) Summer, 300-305.

Olweus, Dan (1993) *Bullying in School: What We Know and What We Can Do*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Research Group on Men and Families - website www.nepean.uws.edu.au/users/pwest

Roberts, P. 'Fathers' Time' (1996) *Psychology Today*, vol. 29, no.3, May-June.

Rosenfeld, Megan (1998) article in *Washington Post*, cited in Rod Kefford, "Principal's Diary", *Education Review* [Sydney], May.

Rotundo, E. Anthony (1993) *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era*. Basic Books. New York: HarperCollins.

Schnack, Dieter and Neutzling, Rainer (1990) *Kleine Helden in Not: Junge auf der Suche nach Mannlichkeit*. Trans. by Dr Michael Kindler as *Small Heroes in Need: Boys in Search of Their Masculinity*. Hamburg: Rowolt Verlag.

Sidel, Ruth "But Where Are the Men?" in M. Kimmel and M. Messner, eds., *Men's Lives*. New York: Macmillan.

Smith, Babette (1998) Talk for a Forum - Hunks, Heroes, Hormones: Creating Better Men. Sydney, 16 May.

Tiedje, L. and Darling-Fisher, C. (1996) 'Fatherhood Reconsidered', *Research in Nursing and Health*, vol. 19 no.6, December.

Walsh, Anthony (1999) How Am I Gonna Answer This One? A Critical Discourse Analysis of Fathers' Accounts of Communication about Sexuality with Their Sons. Master of Health Science Report. Queensland University of Technology.

West, Peter (1994a) 'Do Men Make the Rules or do the Rules Make Men? Growing up in an Australian Country Town', *masculinities* [USA] vol.2 no.3, Fall.

West, Peter (1994b) "What does it Mean to be a Man?". Paper for the Men in Families Conference, October, Kobnhavn, Denmark.

West, Peter (1996a) *Fathers, Sons and Lovers: Men Talk about Their Lives from the 1930s to Today*. Sydney: Finch.

West, Peter (1996b)'Sons of the Empire: How Men Became Boys in One Australian Town, 1900-1920', in Chris Gittings, ed. *Imperialism and Gender: Constructions of Masculinity*. London: Dangaroo.

West, Peter (1999) "What Does Research Say About Helping Boys Achieve?". *Working Paper No 1*, Research Group on Men and Families, University of Western Sydney Nepean.

Wherrett, P. and Wherrett, R. (1997) *Desirelines: An Unusual Family Memoir*. Sydney: Hodder Headline/Sceptre.

Whissell, Cynthia M. (1996) 'Predicting the Size and Direction of Sex Differences in Measures of Emotion and Personality'. *Genetic, Social and General Psychology Monographs*, 122 (3) August, 253-284.



* Dr Peter West is Head of the Research Group on Men and Families at the University of Western Sydney, Sydney, Australia. He can be contacted at p.west@uws.edu.au