



Centre for Adult Social Care Research
Canolfan Ymchwil Gofal Cymdeithasol i Oedolion

More than Toxic:

Masculinity, Inequality and Social Change

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Overview

- Crisis of masculinity, the manosphere and toxic masculinity; findings from my research; and concluding with some broader reflections
- **Take-home message:** while harmful expressions of masculinity exist, they cannot be understood in isolation from wider social and economic contexts. Equally, we should not overlook the positive and progressive forms of masculinity that can emerge even among groups frequently portrayed as regressive



The Crisis of Masculinity?

- Economic change
- Gender role change
- Anti-feminism
- Andrew Tate
- ‘King of Toxic Masculinity’



Masculinities

- Socially constructed
- Tough, stoic, unemotional, self-reliant and independent
- Toxic when taken to extremes
- Delayed transitions to adulthood



The Study

- Protest masculinity
- Homophobia, sexism, violence and crime
- Systematic people-watching
- Nine young men
- South Wales Valleys



Physical Affection

- **Tommy:** Best friends.
- **Me:** You hug each other because you're best friends?
- **Tommy:** Yeah, besties for life! Nah, cos we're all gay together!
- **Me:** You're all gay?
- **Stan:** I'm a homosexual, you dull c**t!
- **Tommy:** Nah, joking. To say hello, init. We don't do it the old-fashioned way, do we, Stan?



Egalitarian Views

- **Dan:** “If girls do plumbing, it shows an example and makes others feel more comfortable doing it. There's nothing bad if you're a girl or a boy. A boy can be a ballerina or a dancer, there's nothing wrong with it. It's what you're into, init. I don't care or think anything of it. It's them, init. As long as it's not bothering anyone, let them do what they want. No difference between a man and a woman is there. If anyone thinks there is, it's just sexist, init.”



Empathy and Compassion

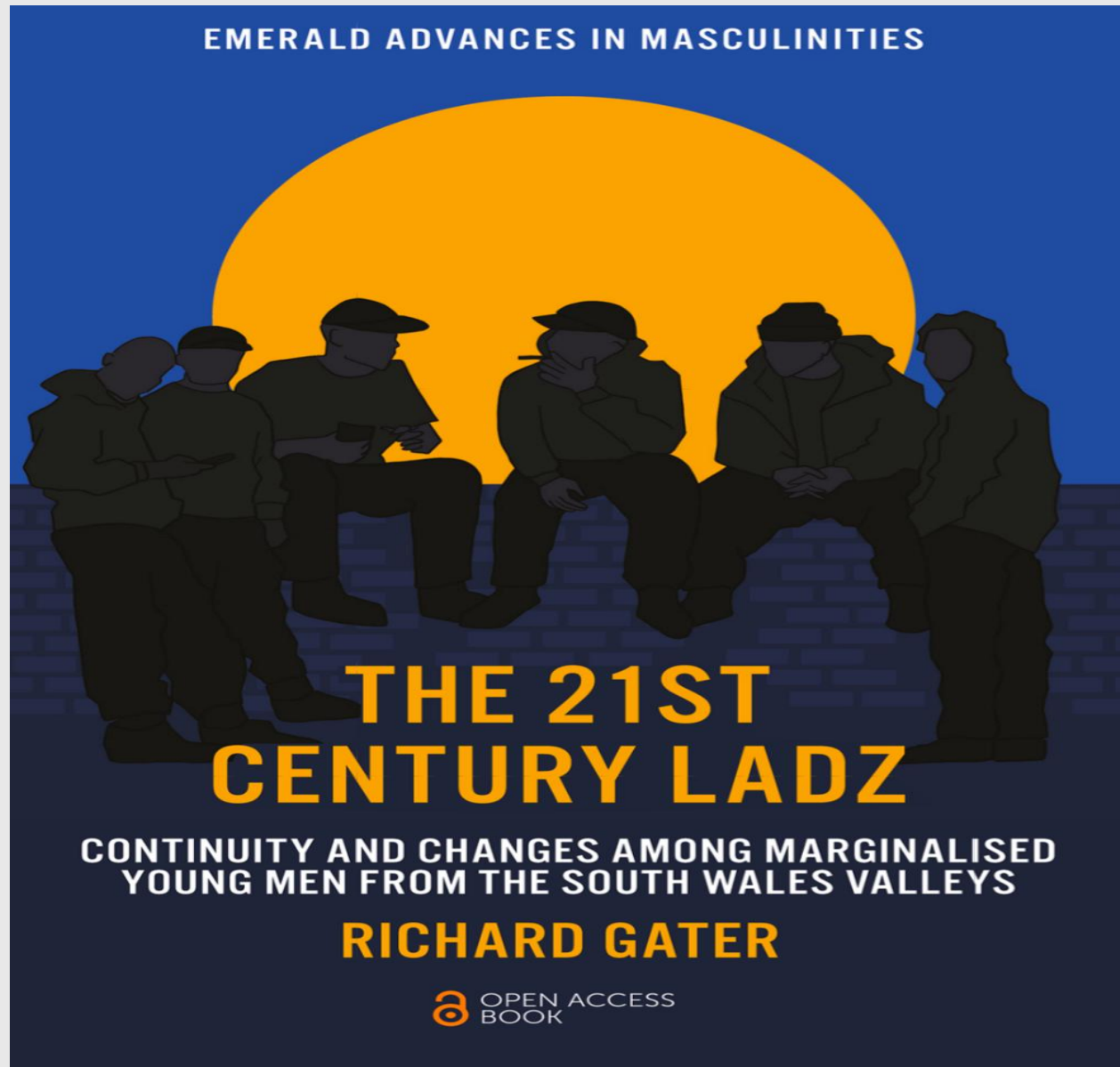
- **Ian:** "Nurse. Underpaid! Sooooo underpaid. They're saving your life, and football players get paid a quarter of a million just for playing football on a football pitch. They're saving your life, and they get paid pennies. It's just horrible! If I had the brains, I would love to do the job. It is something...just helping people."



Looking Forward

- If we want to challenge harmful forms of masculinity, we must give as much attention to understanding and fostering positive masculinities as we do to identifying harmful ones.





Thank You

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