AG AboutGender
International Journal of Gender Studies

Thematic article

“Interrupted Mycelia”. An analysis of masculinities, mental health, emotions, and the potential of transformative justice

AG AboutGender
2025, 14(27), 184-209

Nicoletta Guglielmelli
University of Genoa, Italy

Abstract

This article critically examines the relationship between masculinity, emotions and mental health, challenging cis-hetero-patriarchal and neoliberal narratives that shape how men are socialised to experience and represent their distress. Drawing on theoretical approaches from queer theory, critical phenomenology, transformative justice and critiques of capitalist realism, this work reflects on the systemic dynamics that root male suffering in a context of privilege and emotional repression. Transformative justice is proposed as a radical approach to addressing and deconstructing the processes through which violence — both to others and to oneself — is embedded in male socialisation. The article highlights the importance of rethinking vulnerability and emotion as political tools that offer possibilities for building new relationships and forms of solidarity. This perspective seeks to dismantle cis-hetero-patriarchal hierarchies by inviting a transformation not (only) of individual behaviours, but also of the social structures that sustain them.

Keywords: masculinities, mental health, emotions, transformative justice.

Introduction. *Invisible Spores* — Hidden Connections and Possibilities for Care

This work investigates the intricate connections between cisgender men's mental health, the construction of masculinity, and the ways in which heterosexual matrix (Butler, 1990) inform the

Corresponding Author: Nicoletta Guglielmelli, nicoletta.guglielmelli@edu.unige.it.
DOI: 10.15167/2279-5057/AG2025.14.27.2466

suffering lived experiences and the violence answers to suffering, distress, and recovery. I propose that the transfeminist practices of transformative justice (Morris, 1990; brown, 2020; Kaba, 2021; Mingus, 2022) can serve as emancipatory, community-based tools to dismantle gender-based violence in all its forms and, in the context of this work, to break the cycle of education and socialisation into embodied masculine violence both to others and to oneself. In this sense, and for the purposes of this article, transformative justice is understood as a radical approach to addressing and deconstructing the processes through which violence is embedded in male socialisation. Through a critical engagement with queer phenomenology (Ahmed, 2006), critical mental health studies (Brossard and Chandler, 2022), and transformative justice (Kaba, 2021; Mingus, 2022), I explore how masculinity is performed, how it enforces normative violence, and how it might be reimagined through collective and relational practices of care and accountability.

As odd as it may sound, a generative starting point for reflecting on the experiences of men who find themselves in states of discomfort (characterised by emotions such as suffering, frustration, and distress) can be found in the field of mycology. As brown (2020) reminds us, indeed, fungi offer a potent image for understanding the complex and interconnected nature of violence in our society. The mycelium[1] — the subterranean network that sustains mushrooms — demonstrates that what is visible (the mushroom itself) is only a small part of a much larger, intricate system developing below the surface.

This invisible ecosystem, which interweaves in ways that are often overlooked, provides a powerful tool for exploring how gendered, class-based, racial, and masculine violence are not isolated events, but rather manifestations of a complex network of interconnected relationships. Similarly, the mycelium connects various forms of life. In a similar manner, hetero-cis-patriarchal violence and male violence, though often invisible, are rooted in social, political, and economic structures that perpetuate inequalities. These structures are hidden from view but omnipresent in shaping both individual and collective experiences. As brown (2017) proposes, it is essential to consider the underlying factors that may not be immediately apparent, emphasising that every instance of gender-based violence is embedded in a complex network of interconnections.

This awareness, within my field of study — positioned at the intersection of gender studies and critical mental health studies[2] — has required a comprehensive examination of the complex

[1] Mycelium represents the vegetative component of fungi, comprising a network of thin, branching filaments, known as hyphae. This structure typically develops in soil or organic substrates, absorbing nutrients and water from the surrounding environment. The mycelium plays a pivotal role in ecosystems, contributing to the decomposition of organic matter and facilitating nutrient absorption in plants through symbiotic associations known as mycorrhizae.

[2] In particular, my doctoral work seeks to explore the entangled relationship between cisgender men and mental health within digital spaces. Drawing on a feminist and post-structuralist approach, I focus on how mental states are not only communicated but also projected, embodied, and made intelligible through gendered performances, digital practices, and algorithmic framings.

interrelationships between these elements. It has necessitated a challenge to the dominant and mainstream perspective on the interplay between men, emotions, and mental well-being, which often simplistically reduces the issue to a framework of repression and denial (Connell 2005; hooks 2004). Furthermore, it has necessitated, and continues to necessitate, the opening up to the potential of exploring alternative paths and tools that not only confront and interrogate (male) suffering but also transform it into an opportunity to reimagine relationships, both with oneself and others (Ahmed 2017).

In accordance with brown's mycelium metaphor (2017), this work is an investigation of the underlying factors that influence distress and the potential for addressing it. It is imperative to recognise that the relationship between men and mental health is not merely an individual concern. This represents a vital stage in the process of achieving transformative justice, which entails acknowledging and redirecting the interconnections between subjectivities, systems and cultures (Lugones 2008). This represents an opportunity to identify new tools and move forward collectively towards a form of care that is both collective and radically inclusive (CMSP 2021).

This article, therefore, offers a proposal to chart a new path — based on listening to, recognising and naming alternatives emerging from the margins (hooks 1984) — along the long and often arduous journey towards ending masculine and heteropatriarchal violence in all its forms, including those that are more or less consciously self-inflicted.

In this sense, feminisms from racialised communities (Lorde, 1984; hooks, 2000; Lugones, 2008; Davis, 2003; Kaba, 2021), queer theory (Butler, 1990; Ahmed, 2006), and abolitionist and anti-prison feminisms (Davis, 2003; Kaba, 2021) provide invaluable tools for envisioning a transformative justice, where recognising the interrelations of multiple dimensions of oppression can pave the way for new forms of care and connection[3] (brown 2017; Davis 2003). The following paragraphs are organised, as will become clear, to guide the reader through the key theoretical and analytical stages that structure this inquiry.

Specifically, the second paragraph retraces the theoretical debate on hegemonic masculinity, examining its origins and transformations to show how this concept remains central to the analysis of gender hierarchies while continually adapting to social changes. It reviews the main theoretical trajectories — from caring masculinity to hybrid and inclusive forms — highlighting both the limitations and potential of each perspective. This discussion clarifies why it is crucial to

[3] The themes addressed and the tools employed in this article are intertwined — and cannot but be (Ahmed, 2014) — with embodied and lived experiences of heteropatriarchal, sexual, and psychological violence, which deeply influence and situate my gaze and my production of knowledge. I have chosen to inhabit a transfeminist space and to use it as a methodological approach, conceiving my positionality as a continuous process of thought, experience, and struggle — refusing coherence as an absolute value and instead embracing contradiction as a critical possibility (while remaining aware that the variables I inhabit condition the ways in which I can access, name, and narrate pain and violence). This awareness is not a point of arrival, but rather a continuous commitment to dislocation, to making space, and to being traversed by knowledges emerging from other positionalities. From this perspective, liminal spaces can, I believe, become fertile sites of interruption: proximal spaces in which to recognise that critical knowledge is born from the margins, from tensions and failures — and not from epistemic neutrality.

integrate queer theory and transformative justice practices in order to envision truly alternative scenarios beyond the reproduction of patriarchy.

Building on this, the third paragraph explores how the performativity of masculinity shapes discourses and practices related to the mental health of individuals socialised as men, revealing how these dynamics are deeply entangled with the neoliberal production of mental health.

To gain insight into how men learn to experience and express emotions, it is necessary to move beyond the simplistic rhetoric that men do not cry, which oversimplifies these dynamics as mere emotional repression or loss of control. Such a narrative serves to obfuscate the intricate ways in which male violence is cultivated and perpetuated across public and private domains, thereby sustaining generational cycles of oppression (Connell 2005; hooks 2004). It is imperative to subject these processes to rigorous scrutiny if we are to disrupt the socialisation of violence and create avenues for alternative relational possibilities that are grounded in care and accountability (Ahmed 2006). The fourth paragraph delves into how the incorporation and reproduction of emotions in cisgender men, far from being natural or inherent phenomena, are the result of socio-political socialisation into gender binarism and heteronormativity, demonstrating how the costs of masculine privilege become evident in an emotional education shaped by violence.

In drawing on Ahmed's critical phenomenology (2006), the fifth paragraph will argue that male suffering can be understood as an abrupt interruption — an unexpected halt — in the biographical trajectory of subjects who are accustomed to navigating spaces that afford them privilege. In this framework, male discomfort becomes visible not because it challenges the social order, but precisely as a direct consequence of it. It is a moment when the normative framework falters, revealing its inherent limitations. It is therefore erroneous to reduce male violence to an individual pathology; rather, it should be viewed as a symptom of a broader system that fails to equip men to engage with the unpredictability of pain, their own vulnerability, and forms of visibility that diverge from normative expectations and roles, which are often deemed inappropriate (Butler, 1990; Ahmed, 2017). The final two paragraphs are dedicated to exploring transformative justice and its potential applications for deconstructing and dismantling masculinity within the care of mental health and the embodied experiences of suffering.

The sixth paragraph offers a deeper analysis of transformative justice as a concrete, community-based practice of unlearning privilege, violence, and the distortions imposed and sustained by the cis-hetero-patriarchal order.

Finally, the seventh paragraph reflects on how these transformative practices can tangibly reshape masculinity as a product of cis-hetero-patriarchal dominance. Discussing the interrelationship between mental health, emotions, and masculinity is not only possible but also

essential to understanding how violence, rooted in male socialisation, intertwines with the ways men relate to their own suffering.

Mental health is an inherently political matter (Rose, 2007, Fisher, 2010), rooted in neoliberal logics, class inequalities, processes of racialisation, and the governmentality of the cisheteropatriarchy. The aim of this work is to understand how the entanglement between this governmentality and mental well-being is reproduced through the injunction to masculinity, and how this, in turn, shapes the construction and embodiment of emotions and mental states themselves.

Fomes Hegemonicus: The Ramifications and Transformations of Hegemonic Masculinity

The concept of hegemonic masculinity, initially proposed by Connell (1995) and subsequently expanded upon by Messerschmidt (2005), provides a vital analytical framework for examining gender hierarchies and their impact on relationships between men, as well as on men themselves. Hegemonic masculinity, as a concept rooted in Gramscian thought[4], functions as a dominant normative model that governs subordinate masculinities and marginalises non-conforming gender identities. When applied to the study of masculinities, the concept of hegemony highlights the existence of a cultural and idealised model of masculinity which, by positioning itself as a normative reference point for subjectivities, legitimises specific hierarchical relations both within and across genders.

In particular, the creation of an internal hierarchy among different constructions of masculinity serves to consolidate male authority within gender relations. Hegemonic masculinity, therefore, operates as a strategy deemed effective for the defence of patriarchy (Connell, 1995). What makes a form of masculinity hegemonic is precisely its ability, within a given historical and social context, to legitimise and reproduce patriarchal dynamics. Hegemonic masculinity functions as a regulatory ideal and a cultural model that men refer to in the construction of their own masculinity (Connell, 1995; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005).

This model functions through a balance of coercion and consent, rendering its dynamics both pervasive and often invisible. However, as with any form of hegemony, it is not static; rather, it is fluid and adapts continually to social and cultural shifts in order to maintain its dominance. More recently, a growing body of work within Critical Studies on Men and Masculinities (CSMM) has

[4] Coutinho (2006) offers a valuable contribution for further exploring Gramsci's concept of hegemony.

focused on the transformations of masculinity[5]. In particular, there has been an expansion of scholarship around the concept of caring masculinity, coined by Elliott (2016), which is framed as a form of male identity that rejects hegemonic and hierarchical models of gender by integrating values associated with the sphere of care — such as positive emotions, interdependence, and relationality. Caring masculinity is presented as a critical form of men's engagement with gender equality, insofar as it requires men to adopt practices that oppose hegemonic masculinity[6] (Elliott, 2020; Cannito and Mercuri, 2022; Liu and Lin, 2023; Wojnicka and Kubisa, 2024).

Other scholars have instead turned to the concept of hybrid masculinity (Bridges and Pascoe 2014). These hybrid forms represent adaptations of the hegemonic model, incorporating elements of subordinate masculinities in a manner that reinforces patriarchal dominance in historically novel forms. This critique serves to illustrate the continued adaptability of hegemonic masculinity in maintaining systemic power structures (Bridges and Pascoe, 2014; Eisen and Yamashita, 2017; Woźny, 2025; Çetin-Ayşe, 2025).

A third body of work has drawn on the idea of inclusive masculinity. This perspective suggests that contemporary masculinities are becoming less constrained by traditional roles, allowing for greater emotional expression and vulnerability in certain contexts (Anderson, 2009; de Boise, 2014; Anderson and McCormack, 2018; O'Neill, 2014). Overall, I would argue that there has also been a shift — on the part of researchers themselves — towards recognising the need to make the concept of hegemonic masculinity dialogue with other theoretical frameworks[7].

Even these ostensibly subversive manifestations, expressions of male vulnerability or of male participation in caregiving practices, can serve to perpetuate existing power structures. As De Boise and Hearn (2017) posit, the social context and power dynamics within which these practices emerge are pivotal in determining whether they genuinely disrupt the cis-hetero-patriarchal order or merely represent its reformulation. The ongoing debate around the transformations of masculinity is of vital importance, but it must move beyond a binary framing of symbolic changes versus structural subversions. Instead, it is necessary to address the interplay between the two. It is imperative that the discourse be opened up to include perspectives that not only analyse power dynamics but also actively envisage possibilities for transformation. The fields of queer theory (Butler, 1995, Kosofsky Sedgwich, 1985, Ahmed, 2006), abolitionist feminism (Davis, 2003) and transformative justice practices (brown, 2020) provide valuable frameworks for rethinking

[5] As Wojnicka and de Boise (2025) note, since 2016, the theoretical frameworks receiving the most attention in journals dedicated to men and masculinities — after the concept of hegemonic masculinity — are, in order, that of inclusive masculinity and the more recent concept of caring masculinity.

[6] More recently,Wojnicka and de Boise (2025) have pointed to the ambiguities and limitations of the concept, showing how caring masculinity is often framed as an identity trait rather than a situated practice, which risks obscuring power relations, structural inequalities, and the material conditions that enable — or prevent — men's access to care.

[7] Among others, the following works attempt to bring the concept of hegemonic masculinity into dialogue with — and at times move beyond — it through engagements with queer theory (Allan, 2020), post-humanism (Mellström, 2020), and postcolonial studies (Farahani and Thapar-Björkert, 2020).

masculinity in ways that challenge its normative underpinnings. These approaches extend beyond mere critique; they seek to construct alternative practices, offering pathways for cultivating care and responsibility that resist the logics of domination. It is also essential to examine the circumstances in which these transformations are already occurring, even if only partially or imperfectly, in order to gain a deeper understanding of their potential and limitations. Community-based initiatives, such as accountability circles and transformative justice projects, demonstrate that it is possible to create spaces where men can confront both their privileges and their pain, thereby transforming these experiences into opportunities for change. Transformative justice projects and accountability circles refer specifically to community-based responses to harm that aim to foster responsibility, healing, and collective transformation without resorting to punishment or state intervention. These practices often involve structured and long-term processes in which the person who has caused harm is supported in taking responsibility and rebuilding trust through dialogue and relational repair. These processes typically involve facilitated dialogues, emotional accountability, and agreements for concrete actions of repair and transformation, always shaped by the needs and boundaries of those who have been harmed[8]. These practices provide concrete examples of how masculinity can be subverted and reconstructed in ways that promote more equitable and inclusive relationships. At this juncture in the discourse, I align myself with the call for tangible transformation, underscoring the imperative to examine men and masculinities as intricate, yet malleable, phenomena. It is my conviction that the time has come to adopt a more proactive stance towards the study of masculinities. Rather than viewing them as a mere subject for critique, it is imperative that we recognise their potential for transformation. bell hooks' (2004) insights serve to emphasise that change is not a mere ideal, but rather a necessity that demands collective responsibility and action. The study of men must encompass not only the deconstruction of the systems that privilege them, but also the exploration of how they can actively contribute to the transformation of these systems, thereby fostering more equitable and inclusive frameworks for relationality. Any rethinking of masculinity must entail a questioning of the structures that support it. However, it is also vital to provide support and encouragement to those practices that are already challenging the hegemonic norms associated with it. The following reflection is positioned within the aforementioned debate and proposes a critical yet propositional analysis. The objective of this work is to facilitate the establishment of these foundations. It is not possible to reimagine masculinity without critically interrogating the structures that sustain it. However, it is also vital to support and expand the practices that are already challenging its

[8] A powerful example of this approach is recorded in the documentary named Hollow Water and direted by Bonnie Dickie (2000), which explores the response of an Indigenous community to sexual abuse through transformative processes grounded in collective accountability.

hegemonic norms. The following reflection aims to make a contribution to this debate by offering a critical yet constructive analysis. Indeed, the study of masculinities is not merely an academic pursuit; it is a political act that can facilitate and inspire new ways of envisioning relationships, identities, and communities liberated from normative constraints and cycles of violence. The objective of this work is to make a contribution towards establishing those foundations.

Subterranean Mycelia: Gender as the Root of Mental Health

The study of mental health has been a central focus of the social sciences for a considerable period of time. Although writing from distinct theoretical and historical backgrounds, the foundational works of Durkheim (1897), Fanon (1952), Foucault (1963, 1973), and Goffman (1961, 1963) have laid important foundations for understanding the relationship between mental health and society. Durkheim's classical analysis of suicide as a social fact (1897) frames mental suffering within a broader reflection on social integration and moral regulation. Fanon's work introduced a critical understanding of how processes of racialisation, embodied experience, and colonial psychiatric regimes shaped mental suffering. Foucault's thought introduces a critical genealogy of psychiatric power (1973), tracing how madness has been historically constructed and governed through disciplinary and biopolitical logics (1961). Goffman, by contrast, shifts the focus to the micro-level, exploring the lived experience of institutionalisation and the social processes of stigmatisation (1963). Despite their differences, these contributions offer invaluable insights into how mental health is shaped by social structures, discourses, and everyday interactions. At the present time, a number of studies[9] are beginning to identify a transformative shift in the discourse surrounding mental health. This shift is evidenced by the proliferation of classifications related to mental disorders by both professionals and non-professionals, the renewed emphasis on the social and political management of these issues (Brossard and Chandler 2022), the increasing public and global focus on the need for foundational literacy regarding mental suffering, and, notably, what has been termed the emotional or psychological turn in Western societies (Rose, 2018).

Nevertheless, this shift does not indicate a decline in the influence of discourses that medicalise emotions and behaviours deemed 'pathological' or 'unhealthy'. These discourses continue to exert a significant impact on individuals and their biographies. Furthermore, this does not diminish the influence of biomedical and psychiatric forms of political control

[9] See, for instance, Brossard and Chandler (2022), as well as Busfield (2017), Brossard et al. (2020), Speed, Moncrieff and Rapley (2014), Tyler (2020).

(Alder-Bolton and Vierkant, 2022). Conversely, this signifies an acknowledgement that mental disorders cannot be regarded as an incidental issue affecting solely a (more or less limited) minority of society. Instead, the experience of mental suffering or distress over the course of one's life is becoming increasingly prevalent, affecting a growing number of individuals (Rose 2018; Brossard and Chandler 2022).

Over the past two decades, one area of focus in sociological research on mental health has been the role of gender (Hirshbein, 2009; Ussher, 2011; Cover, 2012; Jaworski, 2014; Barker, 2016; Apesoa-Varano et al., 2018; Robertson and Baker, 2022; Oliffe et al., 2021; Cleary and Brannick, 2021). Durkheim (1897) himself, though misinterpreting the phenomenon, attempted to address the disproportionate rates of male suicide by attributing them to a presumed intellectual and moral superiority of men, alongside a supposed 'immunity to suicide' in women due to their 'instinctual' and 'natural' caregiving capacities. Within this framework, female suicide was conceptualised as an individual act, whereas male suicide was framed as a societal phenomenon, perceived as an indicator of a country's economic well-being and social cohesion.

In seeking to apply a critical and feminist lens to the social construction of gender, both academic (Connell, 1995; Kimmel, 1994; Messerschmidt, 2018) and activist (Flood 2011) circles have examined the ways in which heteropatriarchy operates upon men. While it confers systemic privileges and an often fluid, unhindered positionality, it simultaneously enforces a form of education rooted in repression and physical as well as emotional oppression. This oppression is directed both towards others and towards oneself and one's own emotions. In order to gain a full understanding of how the enactment of physical, psychological and emotional violence operates as a process, both externally and internally, it is essential to examine the neoliberal and heteropatriarchal dynamics that perpetuate and sustain these patterns of violence.

As Mark Fisher (2010) notes, contemporary capitalism presents psychological distress as a private issue, thereby excluding the systemic violence that underlies it from public discourse. All subjects within or affected by advanced capitalism and Western neoliberalism are, to varying degrees — and here I refer to the intersectional dynamics of class, ability, race, gender, and sexual orientation — subjected to the privatisation and individualisation of their mental well-being. To complexy the discussion, I believe it is interesting to consider that, according to global epidemiological data (WHO, 2019, 2021, 2022), the category of men appears to be significantly more prone to suicide. We should seek to interpret these data through a critical and queer lens (Chandler, 2019a; Petersen, 2004; McDowell, 2000) — avoiding falling into reflections that fall into gender binarism (Butler, 2024) and into a biomedical vision (Chalder, 2013, 2016, 2019a, 2019b; Brossard and Chandler, 2022; McDermott and Roen, 2016) — to understand how the neoliberal narrative intertwines with cisheteropatriarchal of men socialisation, which encourages those socialised as men to reject vulnerability, suppress the need for support, and internalise

failure as personal shame, rather than recognising it as the product of a system that alienates them from their emotions and relational ties (Petersen, 2004; Jordan and Chandler, 2018). Moreover, several studies[10] have shown that dominant masculinities are tightly linked to ideals of emotional stoicism, autonomy, and control, which not only constrain men's mental health but also intensify the stigma associated with seeking help[11]. This results in a damaging paradox: men are encouraged to assert power and control as fundamental aspects of their identity, yet they are left to cope with the distress caused by this very power in isolation. This dynamic not only intensifies individual suffering but also perpetuates cycles of interpersonal and structural violence.

Amanita Phalloides: The Cost of Privilege

"The will to change begins with the acceptance that our lives are shaped by the choices we make. Imagining new possibilities creates 'the foundation for transformation'" (hooks 2020, p.144). The corpus of bell hooks' work encourages reflection on the ways in which an ostensibly immutable hegemonic ideal is, in fact, the outcome of cultural impositions and collective choices that can — and indeed must — be subjected to scrutiny. Hegemonic masculinity (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005) is not merely a privilege; rather, it is an ideal that exacts a significant cost in terms of personal and social consequences. A significant proportion of men internalise the costs associated with hegemonic masculinity, manifesting as silence and suffering. Conversely, some men externalise these costs, thereby transferring the burden to those in their immediate vicinity.

As Hearn and De Boise (2017) observe, an uncritical approach to the analysis of male mental health may result in misinterpretations, given that emotions are never neutral or detached from their social context. The ways in which men experience and express emotions are not merely a private matter; they also have profound implications for the mechanisms of patriarchal power (Ciccone 2013).

The emotional experiences of men are frequently situated within the context of structural privileges, which, rather than undermining these experiences, serve to reinforce them. The performance of emotions such as anger, frustration, or even vulnerability by men does not merely represent an emotional state; rather, it acquires specific meanings within the context of power relations. It is insufficient to merely acknowledge that men express emotions; rather, it is imperative to examine how these emotions are shaped by the social context and how they

[10] E.g., Seidler et al. (2020); Oliffe et al. (2012); Rice et al. (2021) andMcKenzie (2017).

[11] See also Ridge and Ziebland (2006); Cleary (2005); Coen et al. (2013); Oliffe et al. (2022); Wirback (2018); Roy, Tremblay, and Robertson (2014); Fisher et al. (2022).

contribute to maintaining the status quo. This necessitates an investigation into the manner in which these emotions are cultivated, expressed, and intertwined with the social, situational, and historical structures within which they are enacted (De Boise and Hearn 2017). It is thus imperative to critically question the assumption that emotions such as vulnerability or empathy are inherently transformative or progressive. This perspective, however, highlights that emotions are inextricably linked with cis-hetero-patriarchal power dynamics, particularly for those socialised as men. This ultimately serves to perpetuate male privilege. This necessitates a shift in perspective: rather than viewing emotions as purely personal or natural phenomena, it is essential to recognise their political dimension and their role in constructing and reproducing social hierarchies. In order to gain a full understanding of male emotions, it is not sufficient to merely analyse the language used to describe them. It is also necessary to examine how they circulate between bodies, how they shape relationships and whether they serve to sustain or subvert patriarchal power structures.

Help-seeking remains a central issue in men's mental health, where dominant gender norms continue to constrain emotional openness, vulnerability, and access to care (Rice et al., 2021; Seidler et al., 2020; WHO, 2021). This difficulty extends beyond mere limitations in emotional expression; it reflects a structural tension that places men's mental health in a precarious state. The pressure to appear invulnerable can result in emotional isolation, which not only impedes access to resources and supportive relationships but also reinforces the myth of male self-sufficiency as a defining virtue. Such isolation is frequently misinterpreted as a personal trait, yet it is in fact the result of a system that compels men to repress and conceal their distress. In extreme cases, this dynamic can result in suicide[12], which represents the catastrophic outcome of a social mechanism that isolates men with their pain, frequently until it is too late (Canetto and Cleary 2012; Scourfield 2005; WHO 2019, 2021).

The question is not whether men should become more emotionally expressive, but rather how to conceptualise emotions as tools that, rather than reinforcing hierarchies of power, can facilitate the formation of new forms of support, connection, and relationships.

As Petersen (2004) proposes, rethinking the costs of masculinity necessitates an emotional literacy that not only encourages men to express more emotions but also critically examines the gendered codes that dictate which emotions are deemed legitimate and which must be suppressed. It is a fallacy to assume that emotions are neutral; they are, in fact, structured by patriarchal logics that dictate who is permitted to feel what, and in what manner. A radical

[12] According to WHO data (2019, 2021, 2022), globally men are more than twice as likely as women to die by suicide, with male suicide rates exceeding female rates by more than three times in some regions, such as Europe and the Americas (WHO, 2021). While these statistics are significant, it is essential to critically reflect on how gendered suicide data often rely on binary classifications and overlook the intersecting roles of race, class, age, and other structural conditions. Suicidality must be understood not as an individual outcome, but as a phenomenon shaped by systems of privilege, marginalisation, and normative expectations.

critique of these logics is essential to create space for an alternative model of masculinity that recognises vulnerability as a legitimate and essential aspect of the human experience, rather than as a weakness.

The creation of spaces for a deconstructed masculinity necessitates a reconceptualisation of mental health as a reflection of a system that enforces rigid and oppressive norms. A genuinely collective approach to care must recognise discomfort as a consequence of a social order that isolates, represses and disciplines. It is only by addressing these systemic roots that we can envisage a transformation that is not merely individual but deeply political — one that redefines the possibilities of care and relationships for all.

Masculinity cannot be fully understood outside the heterosexual matrix (Butler, 1990) that both produces and sustains it, positioning men within a system of normative expectations regarding desire, identity, and relationality (Rich 1980; Wittig 1992; Kosofsky Sedgwick 1990; Zappino 2021, 2024). It is not the “fact” of sexual difference that produces us as men and women, but rather the heterosexual matrix that imposes rigid, binary, and pathologising juridical and medical pathways on anyone who transgresses normative gender boundaries (Zappino 2024). Patriarchal oppression can only manifest after the heterosexual matrix has already done its work — producing subjects who are rendered intelligible as men and women. Sexual difference, then, is not a natural given but a specific production: it generates cisgender men and women, that is, masculine and feminine genders that conform to the heterosexual matrix. In reflecting on the process of deconstructing masculinity as a construct of the heterosexual regime, it is essential to engage with insights from queer theory (De Lauretis, 1991; Rich, 1980; Butler, 1990; Kosofsky Sedgwick, 1990). The objective is not merely to quantify the harm caused by the attempt to conform to normative expectations; rather, it is to critically interrogate the ways in which masculinity is performed and rendered intelligible within a system that rigidly defines and enforces gender.

In this regard, the insights of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1985, 1990) are particularly illuminating. She argues that emotional repression and adherence to masculine ideals are deeply intertwined with the imperative to uphold a strictly normalised heterosexuality. This avoidance of vulnerability is perceived as a manifestation of the 'costs' of masculinity, which are not merely individual or psychological concerns. Rather, they are manifestations of a heteronormative order that governs both bodies and emotions. The costs of masculinity, therefore, extend beyond individual or psychological concerns to encompass manifestations of a heteronormative order that governs both bodies and emotions.

Broken Rhizomorphae: Emotions and Interrupted Trajectories

> *"Men cannot love unless they are taught the art of loving [...] To know love, men must be able to renounce the will to dominate. They must be able to choose life over death. They must be willing to change" (hooks 2020, p. 9).*

A crucial aspect of comprehending the connection between men and violence is to examine the processes of emotional incorporation. As Chandler (2019a) notes, critical phenomenology (Ahmed 2006, 2007) can facilitate a more profound understanding of even those bodies that are invisible and privileged, particularly when they are compelled to cease and disrupt their typical trajectories as a result of experiences of despondency and distress. The intelligibility and legitimacy of our bodies, as well as the spaces they inhabit, are shaped by social variables.

Sara Ahmed (2006, 2007) mobilises phenomenology as a tool to analyse experiences of marginality and otherness, particularly those experienced by bodies that do not inhabit the norms — gendered, racialised, and otherwise.

Drawing on Fanon's (1952) notion of habitual knowledge, she argues that bodies progressively acquire a deep familiarity with the spaces they move through, until these spaces are felt as extensions of the body itself. Space, in this frame, becomes incorporated through repetition, shaping and being shaped by the bodies that orient within it. Some bodies — white, male, able, cisgender, normatives — are more easily assumed to belong in these spaces, their trajectories unimpeded, their access to social and material objects smooth and uninterrupted (Ahmed 2006).

But this spatial familiarity is not distributed equally. For racialised or non-normative bodies, space can become a site of friction. Movement becomes visible. Questions such as "Who are you?" or "Why are you here?" interrupt bodily trajectories and function as social stop-signs. Ahmed (2006) calls this experience being halted — to be stopped, blocked, obstructed, or rendered illegible. These interruptions are not just physical but affective and political, exposing how space is built to facilitate some lives while obstructing others.

In this perspective, when male privilege encounters an interruption in the typically linear trajectory prescribed by the heterosexual regime — which is expected for cis men to be free of obstacles, contingencies, or contradictions — a fracture emerges. By linear trajectory (Ahmed 2006) I refer to the normative life path structured by the heterosexual matrix: a path that demands coherence, continuity, and predictability, moving seamlessly from childhood to heterosexual reproduction and social fulfilment. As Ahmed (2006) suggests, this linearity is not merely a personal expectation but a spatial and affective arrangement that materialises norms, orienting bodies, desires, and futures along paths that are made to feel smooth, familiar, and attainable. Masculinity is deeply invested in this trajectory, which naturalises progress, success,

and emotional control as signs of proper alignment. A disruption — whether through emotional crisis, mental health struggles, or other forms of vulnerability — interrupts this linearity, making visible the normative forces that usually remain concealed. Such interruptions can produce moments of disorientation, revealing how the very intelligibility of masculinity depends on staying "in line" with normative expectations.

When applied to the analysis of cisgender male mental health, this framework allows us to see how emotional crisis or suicidality may not simply represent internal turmoil but rather the moment when the world ceases to function as a seamless extension of the male body. As Chandler (2019a) shows in her research on working-class white men in UK who attempted suicide, these subjects confront a world that was "meant" for them yet no longer delivers on its promises — of stable employment, intimate relationships, or social belonging.

From this perspective, the concept of being halted as discussed by Ahmed (2006), is particularly useful for our purposes. The visibility of men's emotions, whether overt or otherwise, is contingent upon their expression being 'interrupted' by social norms. The challenge of expressing vulnerability, pain, or suffering is not solely a matter of internal repression; it is also an external disruption, an interruption that arises from the socio-cultural expectations governing gender. This cessation, rather than being the result of an isolated phenomenon, is the outcome of a multifaceted power structure that establishes the inviolability of the male body and, consequently, the fear of any potential threat to this presumed integrity[13].

Suicide, in this reading, can be understood as a violent assertion of control in a world that no longer feels navigable. It becomes an act not simply of despair but of spatial intervention — a refusal to continue moving through a world that no longer makes sense, that no longer receives the male subject as invisible and unimpeded. It is both a symptom of and a response to the affective and structural limits of cis-hetero-patriarchal privilege.

Understanding this dynamic allows us to reframe male suffering not as a failure of individual resilience but as the affective cost of a system that both privileges and constrains. Masculinity is not simply lived through domination of others; it also requires the internalisation of emotional control and stoicism. When the trajectory breaks, when the script fails, the result is not just confusion — it is crisis. And this crisis becomes legible only when we attend to how bodies are made to move — or stopped — within space.

From this point of view, transformative justice (Ruth Morris 1990; Kaba, 2021; Mingus, 2022) creates a new space at the intersection of suffering and privilege. This space is created through

[13] While this analysis is not intended to be limited solely to the costs of masculinity, it is nevertheless necessary to highlight how also privileged bodies can be bodies in pain, living under a constant regime of terror. These bodies, however, are equipped with the 'right tools' (provided by heterosexuality) to influence social space, rendering their emotional and physical expressions comprehensible to themselves.

an attempt to rethink harm[14] not as an inevitable fate, but as an opportunity to forge new relationships and imagine possibilities beyond the norm. Transformative justice is not a perfect system and does not provide an immediate solution to harm. Rather, it is a process that requires patience and experimentation. It is a practice that necessitates the conceptualisation of a world in which conflict and violence are addressed not through the mechanisms of exclusion and punishment, but through the processes of collective empowerment and systemic transformation. It is not a system that originates in courtrooms or prison walls; rather, it is a process that emerges from the margins of society, in communities that have experienced systemic violence and have never had the option of delegating justice to a prison system that perpetuates oppression[15]. This approach is based on the experiences of individuals who have been subjected to both interpersonal and structural violence. It seeks to identify strategies for interrupting the cycle of suffering and fostering the development of new relationships that are grounded in responsibility and care.

In order to comprehend the potential of transformative justice in the study of men's emotions and mental health, it is imperative to commence with a fundamental assumption: emotions are neither innate nor universal. The anger exhibited by men, as with their silence, is not a natural phenomenon; rather, it is the result of a system that teaches them to perceive vulnerability as a threat and strength as the only acceptable response to pain.

Regenerative Mycelium: Collective Care and Transformative Justice

> *«[…] a Transformative Justice process within my own family during the period of time in which my grandfather caused harm to me would have to navigate the high proportion of individuals within the kinship network who were manifesting behaviours recognisable as Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (CPTSD)»*[16]

Transformative Justice represents a radical, community-based approach to the resolution of conflict, violence and harm. This approach diverges from traditional punitive responses by rejecting the delegation of responsibility to state systems, such as the police or the prison

[14] The concept of 'harm' is central to transformative justice, as it displaces the narrow legal framing of 'crime' and invites a broader, relational understanding of violence and conflict. It centres the lived experiences and needs of those affected, including the emotional, structural, and often unspoken dimensions of harm — such as disconnection, micro-aggressions, and power imbalances. This shift opens up space for forms of accountability that are not punitive but rooted in care, recognition, and collective repair.

[15] Transformative justice has emerged from Indigenous, Black, queer, and (trans)feminist community practices that respond to violence outside of state and carceral logics. Pioneering examples include GenerationFIVE, focused on ending child sexual abuse, and the Challenging Male Supremacy Project (CMSP), which addressed gender-based violence and male accountability within activist spaces.

[16] D. Hunter 2020, p.43.

service[17], which perpetuate the same oppressive dynamics that they aim to resolve. In contrast, it prioritises comprehensive, structural transformation, encompassing both individual and collective levels. This approach aims to not only address the immediate consequences of harm but also to transform the underlying causes that perpetuate such harm. Transformative responses to systemic violence and the harms it produces at the individual and collective levels entail the construction of solidarity, responsibility, and community, as opposed to the perpetuation of isolation, exclusion, and further violence (Morris, 1995; Kaba, 2021; Mingus, 2022; brown, 2017). One notable example of transformative justice in practice is the Challenging Male Supremacy Project (CMSP). The CMSP provided a forum for men to confront the harm they had caused through accountability circles. Rather than employing punitive measures, the project cultivated a sense of responsibility embedded in connection and care. These circles prompted participants to examine the ways in which patriarchal socialisation influenced their behaviours, particularly emotions such as anger and shame, which were frequently misdirected as instruments of control rather than expressions of vulnerability. The process was not merely about acknowledging harm; it was also about reimagining relationships, both with others and with oneself, as potential sites of transformation (Hunter 2020).

One participant, for instance, revealed that his aggressive conduct had been profoundly influenced by unresolved traumatic experiences that he had previously failed to acknowledge. In the context of the accountability circle, emotions such as frustration and vulnerability were reframed. Rather than being viewed as weaknesses, these emotions were recognised as integral parts of a broader process of healing and self-redefinition. This enabled him to reconcile with those he had harmed, while also challenging his internalised narratives about masculinity (CMSP 2015). Although the process is neither simple nor linear, it demonstrates the capacity of transformative justice to disrupt the deeply ingrained cycles of violence and isolation that are a consequence of male socialisation (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Integrating these practices into discourses on mental health is not merely a pragmatic measure; it signifies a profound rethinking of the processes through which men are socialised to experience and express emotions. Accountability circles, as exemplified by those pioneered by the CMSP, demonstrate how collective spaces can facilitate engagement with distressing experiences without the compulsion to dominate or retreat into isolation. These spaces, much like the mycelium itself, foster connections that are often invisible yet profoundly transformative, offering new relational frameworks that challenge systems of harm while nurturing possibilities for collective healing (Hunter 2020).

[17] This is particularly evident in the context of the prison-industrial complex, where state responses to violence are characterised by the pervasive influence of racism, sexism and economic inequalities.

Transformative justice is predicated on a set of core principles developed by abolitionist and feminist collectives over the past two decades, especially in the foundational work of GenerationFIVE (2007) and in the writings of Mia Mingus (2022). These principles can be articulated as follows:

1. Responsibility without punishment: rather than relying on punitive measures, transformative justice centres the need for those who have caused harm to acknowledge their actions, understand their impact, and commit to a process of personal and collective transformation;
2. The centrality of those affected: survivors and those impacted by harm are placed at the centre of the process, with their needs, boundaries, and visions guiding the paths of accountability and repair;
3. Systemic analysis of harm: harm is not viewed in isolation, but as the product of broader structures such as patriarchy, racism, capitalism and heteronormativity. Addressing harm thus requires engaging with its systemic roots;
4. Collective transformation: transformation is never purely individual; it must involve the wider community to interrupt cycles of harm and build relational practices capable of sustaining accountability and healing over time. This collective dimension is not only crucial to prevent further harm, but also to weave a social fabric capable of supporting future responsibility and repair. Transformative justice, therefore, inherently eschews expedient or simplistic solutions, acknowledging that change requires time, relational effort, and sustained commitment.

In the context of masculinity and emotions, transformative justice provides a framework for examining the patriarchal roots of male violence, offering men a space to engage with their trauma, recognize their privilege, and transform their relationships. Despite its inherent complexity, this practice is of great necessity in the present era, which is characterised by a multitude of crises, including those of a social, economic, climatic and relational nature. This vision represents not only a response to the challenges of the present but also a promise for the future.

How might the process of emotion production and reproduction, as well as the mechanisms of repression and self-silencing of emotions, be understood and interpreted by those socialised as men using the tools of transformative justice? The heterosexual regime gives rise to a specific form of masculinity that distorts a range of emotions, including fear, sadness, shame, and frustration. This distortion makes it challenging for men to recognise and accept these emotions, while simultaneously normalising and accepting anger, aggression, and violence. Such emotions are, in fact, regarded as part of the 'norm' within heterosexuality, which contributes to the

suppression of male mental health by trapping it between unrealistic expectations and the absence of safe spaces and tools to explore discomfort.

The phenomenon of gender violence and the issue of emotional repression can be considered two sides of the same coin. The socialisation process undergone by men within a patriarchal system instils in them a sense of control over themselves and others, both in homosocial dynamics (Connell 1995; Sedgwick 1985) and within intergender interactions. This socialisation process teaches men that the path to being accepted, respected and desired is through the exertion of power. In other words, as demonstrated by the research of Ahmed (2006), patriarchy does not merely suppress emotions; rather, it directs them in a manner that perpetuates power structures.

Mycorrhizae forests: Masculinities and new roots

> *"[…]men, you must learn to be responsible for your own feelings and actions. and it's difficult for a number of reasons — most of which add up to codependence training. most men expect to be mothered by women they get involved with" (brown 2020, p.37).*

The examination of the interrelationship between the construction of masculinity and mental health is a multifaceted endeavour, encompassing an investigation of the intricate web of relationships, communities, and the broader societal context. It is essential to acknowledge that mental health is a contested space where the influences of heteropatriarchy, neoliberalism, and struggles for liberation converge and interact.

Transformative justice represents an efficacious approach to addressing the aforementioned complexity, as it extends beyond the mere healing of wounds to encompass a radical transformation of the dynamics that generate them. The mycelium metaphor offers a conceptual lens through which to understand how transformative justice practices can emerge from relational networks that sustain change within communities. These networks are often unnoticed, yet they are the foundation upon which transformative justice can be built. The metaphor extends beyond illustrating the interconnectedness of harm; it also offers a conceptual lens for understanding how transformative justice practices can emerge from relational networks, often unnoticed, that sustain change within communities. Similarly, transformative justice employs a mycelial logic, which emphasises interdependence, invisibility, and resilience, to identify and cultivate the underlying relational foundations of accountability and care. These roots, while often obscured, possess the potential to disrupt cycles of harm and foster radically inclusive

spaces for healing and connection. Embracing this metaphor enables the conceptualisation of transformative justice as an organic, evolving process, responsive to the structural conditions within which harm is embedded.

This perspective encourages a reimagining of accountability and care as collective practices, situated within a relational framework of interdependence rather than within a framework of punitive logic. The metaphor emphasises that addressing the systemic roots of male violence necessitates the recognition of the invisible networks of power and privilege that sustain it, as well as the potential for alternative relational frameworks to emerge from these same networks. These practices are not peripheral; rather, they represent the foundation for a transformative response to harm. Such a response prioritises responsibility, connection, and the radical reimagining of relationships. Furthermore, dismantling the patriarchal construction of emotions is not merely an act of critique; it is a transformative opportunity to build collective frameworks of care and accountability. This can facilitate the flourishing of male mental health, which has been constrained by patriarchal structures.

By dismantling the patriarchal construction of emotions and fostering spaces that prioritize accountability and care, it becomes conceivable to envision a future in which male mental health is no longer constrained by patriarchal structures but becomes an integral part of a collective process of care (Piepzna-Samarasinha 2018).

Transformative justice offers a means of dismantling the processes that give rise to emotions experienced through hetero-cis-patriarchal dynamics. It encourages the pursuit of pathways that facilitate men's engagement with their pain, their accountability, and the potential for transformation, while eschewing solutions predicated on blame or retribution. This confrontation implies the recognition that male violence is not merely the result of individual failures, but rather the outcome of a system that socialises men into emotional disconnection and repression.

One illustrative example is that of the *accountability circles* which were developed and constructed from the ground up within the context of CMSP experiences (2015). These circles serve as a forum wherein those who have perpetrated harm can receive support as they embark on a process of transformation. In contrast to conventional punitive measures, which tend to alienate and condemn, these circles seek to foster a sense of value and ‘maintain’ relationships, particularly those of the perpetrators in a constructive dialogue aimed at fostering understanding and transformation of the harm itself. It must be acknowledged that this approach is neither simple nor linear. However, it has the potential to facilitate intervention not only with those who have caused harm but also with the collective dynamics that made the harm possible. As evidenced by the CMSP, many instances of male violence and harmful behaviour originate from an inability to confront one's own traumatic experiences or to recognise the privilege that isolates men from vulnerability. It is evident that transformation cannot occur in isolation; it cannot be

solely entrusted to those who have caused harm. As emphasised by members of CMSP, it is a complex process that necessitates the involvement of the entire community, both as a support network and as a space in which to examine the power dynamics that perpetuate violence.

Furthermore, I argue hat transformative justice represents an invaluable instrument for discerning radically novel and, albeit tautological, transformative strategies that permit us to rethink the nexus between masculinity, emotions, and their incorporation, with a view to anticipating the harm itself. Although it does not guarantee any specific outcomes, transformative justice represents an act of radical imagination, a practice that rejects the punitive paradigm and embraces the complexity of human change. In the context of masculinity and emotions, it encourages us to consider alternative ways of conceptualising culpability and distress. Rather than perpetuating the notion that male distress must be repressed or transformed into violence, it proposes that we can embrace it as an integral part of a journey towards collective liberation.

Conclusions. *Spore of changes*

Male violence is an insidious phenomenon that spreads like an invisible mycelium, a silent network of connections that traverses generations, institutions, and bodies. This is not just an act, a figure, or a moment. It is a language, a performative habit learned and transmitted. It is rooted in systems of power intertwining gender, race, class, and colonialism. Hunter (2017) elucidates that the dynamics of violence manifest at both collective and intimate levels. To ignore the complexity of these dynamics is to perpetuate them. Oppression is rooted in the everyday and operates through its invisibility, embedding itself in gestures, silences, and expectations. The metaphor of mycelium is powerful here: it is invisible to the eye yet ‘essential’ for visible life. The subterranean connections of cis-heteropatriarchal violence are nourished by gender norms and hierarchies that ensure their perpetuation. We must shift the focus from individual blame to shared responsibility. This cannot emerge without a critical analysis of male socialisation. Heteropatriarchy teaches men that pain is a weakness to repress, a wound to conceal. Emotions, which could serve as tools for connection and transformation, are instead channeled into forms of violence, isolation, and domination. This mechanism is not only harmful to those who endure it but also costly for those who perpetuate it. It interrupts the possibility for genuine connection and erodes the capacity to inhabit one's vulnerability.

Transformative justice offers a radical alternative. It is not about repairing harm to restore the previous order. It is about imagining an entirely new one. Hunter (2017) is clear that

transformation does not come from denying pain but from embracing it and working through it collectively. Accountability circles are a prime example of this. They are communal spaces where conflict is neither avoided nor delegated. Instead, it is addressed as an opportunity to reframe relationships and dismantle cycles of oppression. Community and care are essential for transformation. Relationships are the foundation of change, just as intertwined roots strengthen one another.

This vision is particularly urgent in the context of male mental health. Sara Ahmed (2006) is clear in her concept of being halted that male suffering does not challenge the system but is a direct product of it — a fissure exposing its contradictions. We must go further than simply encouraging men to express their emotions. We need spaces that enable authentic engagement with distress, spaces not governed by the logics of neoliberalism or heteropatriarchy. Male mental health is not just an individual issue. It is a political terrain where the pressures of patriarchy clash with the possibilities of a collective ethics of care.

We must rethink male socialisation through transformative justice. This means building a mycelium of new relationships, rooted in shared responsibility and vulnerability. This process is neither linear nor simple. It requires time and a sustained commitment to dismantling punitive logics that separate and isolate. Yet it is precisely in navigating these complexities that we create the space to transform conflict into possibility.

Transformative justice is not just a practice; it is a promise. It is the promise of a future where care is not an isolated act, but a fabric connecting people, communities, and systems. Look beyond the confines of patriarchy and imagine new forms of relationship. Pain is not a mark of weakness. It is a foundation for building solidarity. Like mycelium, the networks of care and responsibility grow beneath the surface, invisible yet powerful, ready to sustain change that will repair the past, transform the present and imagine the future. We must cultivate these networks. They are relational spaces that reject violence and embrace possibility. They replace domination with solidarity and repression with vulnerability. This process is imperfect, but it is an act of radical imagination. It is a way of inhabiting the world that recognises the complexity of human experiences and transforms it into a source of collective strength. Transformative justice finds its ground in relationships that challenge patriarchy and build a future that is more just, more human, and more alive.

References

Ahmed, S. (2006). *Queer phenomenology: Orientations, objects, others*. Duke University Press.

Ahmed, S. (2007). A phenomenology of whiteness. *Feminist Theory, 8*(2), 149–168. https://doi.org/10.1177/1464700107078139

Ahmed, S. (2014, August 25). Selfcare as warfare. *Feminist Killjoys*. https://feministkilljoys.com/2014/08/25/selfcare-as-warfare/.

Ahmed, S. (2017). *Living a feminist life*. Duke University Press.

Alder-Bolton, B., & Vierkant, A. (2022). *Health communism: A surplus manifesto*. Repeater Books.

Allan, J. A., Herron, R. V., Ahmadu, M. E., Waddell, C., & Roger, K. (2020). "I never wanted my children to see their father the way I've seen mine": Caring masculinities and fathering on the Prairies. *NORMA, 16*(1), 23–37.

Anderson, E., & McCormack, M. (2016). Inclusive Masculinity Theory: overview, reflection and refinement. Journal of Gender Studies, 27(5), 547–561. https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2016.1245605

Anderson, E. (2009). *Inclusive masculinity: The changing nature of masculinities*. Routledge.

Apesoa-Varano, E. C., Barker, J. C., & Hinton, L. (2018). 'If you were like me, you would consider it too': Suicide, older men, and masculinity. *Society and Mental Health, 8*(2), 157–173.

Barker, M. (2016). *Queer: A graphic history*. Icon Books.

National Film Board of Canada. (2000). *Hollow Water* [Film].

Bridges, T. S., & Pascoe, C. J. (2014). Hybrid masculinities: New directions in the sociology of men and masculinities. *Sociology Compass, 8*(3), 246–258.

Brossard, B., & Chandler, A. (2022). *Explaining mental illness: Sociological perspectives*. Bristol University Press.

Brossard, B., Cruwys, T., Zhou, H., & Helleren-Simpson, G. (2020). What do we mean by "social" in mental health research? *Social Science & Medicine, 261*, 113233. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2020.113233

brown, a. m. (2017). *Emergent strategy: Shaping change, changing worlds*. AK Press.

brown, a. m. (2020). *We will not cancel us: And other dreams of transformative justice*. AK Press.

Busfield, J. (2017). The concept of medicalisation reassessed. *Sociology of Health & Illness, 39*(5), 759–774.

Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. Routledge.

Canetto, S. S., & Cleary, A. (2012). Men, masculinities and suicidal behavior. *Social Science & Medicine, 74*(4), 503–511.

Cannito, M., & Mercuri, E. (2022). Caring masculinities in prison? Social workers and programs dealing with incarcerated fatherhood. *Gender, Work & Organization, 31*(6), 1707–1722.

Çetin-Ayşe, Ç. (2025). "Can I call myself a feminist?" Interpretations of feminism among diverse young men who support gender equality in Turkey. *Men and Masculinities, 0*(0). Advance online publication.

Challenging Male Supremacy Project (CMSP). (2015). *Challenging male supremacy in practice: A resource for organizing and education*. https://transformharm.org/tj_resource/challenging-men-changing-communities-reflections-on-male-supremacy-and-transformative-justice/

Chandler, A. (2013). Inviting pain? Pain, dualism and embodiment in narratives of self-injury. *Sociology of Health & Illness, 35*(5), 716–730.

Chandler, A. (2016). *Self-injury, medicine and society: Authentic bodies*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Chandler, A. (2019a). Boys don't cry? Critical phenomenology, self-harm and suicide. *The Sociological Review, 67*(6), 1350–1366.

Chandler, A. (2019b). Socioeconomic inequalities of suicide: Sociological and psychological interventions. *European Journal of Social Theory.* Advance online publication. 10.1177/1368431018804154

Ciccone, S. (2009). *Essere maschi. Tra potere e libertà*. Rosenberg & Sellier.

Ciccone, S. (2013). Come affrontare la violenza maschile. In F. Fanelli (Ed.), *La violenza sulle donne. Riconoscerla, contrastarla, prevenirla*. Morlacchi Editore.

Ciccone, S. (2019). *Maschi in crisi? Oltre la frustrazione e il rancore*. Rosenberg & Sellier.

Cleary, A., & Brannick, T. (2007). Men's mental health: What do we know and what do we need to know? *Sociology of Health & Illness, 43*(4), 745–759.

Cleary, A. (2005). Death rather than disclosure: Struggling to be a real man. *Irish Journal of Sociology, 14*(2), 155–176.

Cleary, A. (2012). Suicidal action, emotional expression, and the performance of masculinities. *Social Science & Medicine, 74*(4), 498–505.

Coen, S. E., Oliffe, J. L., Johnson, J. L., & Kelly, M. T. (2013). Looking for Mr. PG: Masculinities and men's depression in a northern resource-based Canadian community. *Health & Place, 21*, 94–101.

Connell, R. W., & Messerschmidt, J. W. (2005). Hegemonic masculinity: Rethinking the concept. *Gender & Society, 19*(6), 829–859.

Connell, R. W. (1995). *Masculinities*. University of California Press.

Coutinho, C. N. (2006). *Il pensiero politico di Gramsci*. Unicopli.

Cover, R. (2012). *Queer youth suicide, culture and identity: Unlivable lives?* Routledge.

Davis, A. (2003). *Are prisons obsolete?* Seven Stories Press.

De Boise, S., & Hearn, J. (2017). Are men getting more emotional? Critical sociological perspectives on emotional reflexivity and masculinity. *Sociology, 51*(6), 1106–1122.

de Boise, S. (2015). I'm not homophobic, "I've got gay friends": Evaluating the validity of inclusive masculinity. *Men and Masculinities, 18*(3), 318–339.

De Lauretis, T. (1991). Queer theory: Lesbian and gay sexualities. *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies, 3*(2), iii–xviii.

Durkheim, E. (1897). *Le suicide: Étude de sociologie*. Félix Alcan.

Eisen, D. B., & Yamashita, L. (2019). Borrowing from femininity: The caring man, hybrid masculinities, and maintaining male dominance. *Men and Masculinities, 22*(5), 801–820.

Elliott, K. (2016). Caring masculinities. *Men and Masculinities, 19*(3), 240–259.

Elliott, K. (2020). *Young men navigating contemporary masculinities*. Springer.

Fanon, F. (1952). *Peau noire, masques blancs*. Éditions du Seuil.

Farahani, F., & Thapar-Björkert, S. (2019). Postcolonial masculinities: Diverse, shifting and in flux. In L. Gottzén, U. Mellström, & T. Shefer (Eds.), *Routledge international handbook of masculinity studies* (pp. 92–102). Routledge.

Fisher, K., Seidler, Z.E., King, K. et al. Men's anxiety, why it matters, and what is needed to limit its risk for male suicide. *Discov Psychol* 2, 18 (2022).

Fisher, M. (2010). *Capitalist realism: Is there no alternative?* Zero Books.

Flood, M. (2011). Involving men in efforts to end violence against women. *Men and Masculinities, 14*(3), 358–377.

Foucault, M. (1961). *Folie et déraison: Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*. Plon.

Foucault, M. (1973). *Naissance de la clinique: Une archéologie du regard médical*. Presses Universitaires de France.

Goffman, E. (1961). *Asylums: Essays on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates*. Doubleday Anchor.

Goffman, E. (1963). *Stigma: Notes on the management of spoiled identity*. Prentice-Hall.

Guenther, L. (2013). *Solitary confinement: Social death and its afterlives*. University of Minnesota Press.

Hirshbein, L. (2009). *American melancholia and psychiatry: Strategies of medicalization*. Rutgers University Press.

hooks, b. (1984). *Feminist theory: From margin to center*. South End Press.

hooks, b. (2000). *All about love: New visions*. William Morrow Paperbacks.

hooks, b. (2004). *The will to change: Men, masculinity, and love*. Atria Books.

hooks, b. (2020). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*. Routledge.

Hunter, D. (2017). Challenging the legacies of racial resentment: A transformative justice approach. In G. Jashnani, R. Maccani, & A. Greig (Eds.), *Challenging men, changing communities: Reflections on male supremacy and transformative justice* (pp. 45–60). Common Justice Press.

Hunter, D. (2020). *Tracksuits, traumas and class traitors*. Lumpen Publishing.

Jaworski, K. (2014). *The gender of suicide*. Ashgate.

Jordan, A., & Chandler, A. (2019). Crisis, what crisis? A feminist analysis of discourse on masculinities and suicide. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 28(4), 462–474.

Kaba, M. (2021). *We do this 'til we free us: Abolitionist organizing and transforming justice*. Haymarket Books.

Kimmel, M. (1994). Masculinity as homophobia: Fear, shame, and silence in the construction of gender identity. In H. Brod & M. Kaufman (Eds.), *Theorizing masculinities* (pp. 119–141). SAGE Publications.

Liu, T., & Lin, Z. (2023). Caring masculinity as caring capital in the field of marriage: Chinese rural migrant men's engagement with digital dating. *Information, Communication & Society, 26*(8), 1637–1652.

Lorde, A. (1984). *Sister outsider: Essays and speeches*. Crossing Press.

Lugones, M. (2008). Coloniality and gender. *Worlds & Knowledges Otherwise, 2*(2), 1–17.

McDermott, E., & Roen, K. (2016). *Queer youth, suicide and self-harm: Troubled subjects, troubling norms*. Palgrave Macmillan.

McDowell, L. (2000). Learning to serve? Employment aspirations and attitudes of young working-class men in an era of labour market restructuring. *Gender, Place & Culture, 7*(4), 389–416.

McKenzie, S. (2017). *Understanding men's mental health: Gender relations and mental well-being*. University of Otago.

Mellström, U. (2019). Masculinity studies and posthumanism. In L. Gottzén, U. Mellström, & T. Shefer (Eds.), *Routledge international handbook of masculinity studies* (1st ed., pp. 112–121). Routledge.

Men's anxiety: A systematic review. *Journal of Affective Disorders, 295*, 688–702.

Messerschmidt, J. W. (2018). *Hegemonic masculinity: Formulation, reformulation, and amplification*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Oliffe, J. L., Han, C. S., Lohan, M., & Creighton, G. (2021). Men's mental health research: Developing a roadmap for the field. *American Journal of Men's Health, 15*(1), 1–9.

Oliffe, J. L., Kelly, M. T., Montaner, G. G., Seidler, Z. E., & Rice, S. M. (2022). Men building better relationships: A scoping review. *Health Promotion Journal of Australia, 33*(1), 126–137.

Oliffe, J. L., Ogrodniczuk, J. S., Bottorff, J. L., Johnson, J. L., & Hoyak, K. (2012). "You feel like you can't live anymore": Suicide from the perspectives of Canadian men who experience depression. *Social Science & Medicine, 74*(4), 506–514.

O'Neill, R. (2015). Whither critical masculinity studies? Notes on inclusive masculinity theory, postfeminism, and sexual politics. *Men and Masculinities, 18*(1), 100–120.

Petersen, A. (2004). Research on men and masculinities: Some implications of recent theory for future work. *Men and Masculinities, 6*(1), 54–69.

Piepzna-Samarasinha, L. L. (2018). *Care work: Dreaming disability justice*. Arsenal Pulp Press.

Rice, S. M., Kealy, D., Seidler, Z. E., Oliffe, J. L., & Ogrodniczuk, J. S. (2021). Male-type depression symptoms in young men with a history of childhood sexual abuse and current hazardous alcohol use. *Psychiatry Research, 304*, 114110.

Rich, A. (1980). Compulsory heterosexuality and lesbian existence. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 5*(4), 631–660.

Ridge, D., & Ziebland, S. (2006). "The old me could never have done that": How people give meaning to recovery following depression. *Qualitative Health Research, 16*(8), 1038–1053.

Robertson, S., & Baker, P. (2022). Men and mental health: A biopsychosocial critique. *International Journal of Men's Social and Community Health, 5*(1), e25–e37.

Rose, N. (2007). *The politics of life itself: Biomedicine, power, and subjectivity in the twenty-first century*. Princeton University Press.

Rose, N. (2018). *Our psychiatric future*. Polity Press.

Roy, P., Tremblay, G., & Robertson, S. (2014). Help-seeking among male farmers. *Sociologia Ruralis, 54*(4), 460–476.

Scourfield, J. (2005). Suicidal masculinities. *Sociology of Health & Illness, 27*(7), 501–507.

Sedgwick, E. K. (1985). *Between men: English literature and male homosocial desire*. Columbia University Press.

Sedgwick, E. K. (1990). *Epistemology of the closet*. University of California Press.

Seidler, Z. E., Rice, S. M., Kealy, D., Oliffe, J. L., & Ogrodniczuk, J. S. (2020). Once bitten, twice shy: Dissatisfaction with previous therapy and its implication for future help-seeking among men. *The International Journal of Psychiatry in Medicine, 55*(4), 255–263.

Speed, E., Moncrieff, J., & Rapley, M. (Eds.). (2014). *De-medicalizing misery II: Society, politics and the mental health industry*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Tyler, I. (2020). *Stigma: The machinery of inequality*. Zed Books.

Ussher, J. M. (2011). *The madness of women: Myth and experience*. Routledge.

Wirback, T., Möller, J., Larsson, J.-O., & Engström, K. (2018). Experiences of depression and help-seeking described by young Swedish men. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity, 19*(3), 407–417.

Wojnicka, K., & de Boise, S. (2025). Caring masculinities: Rethinking the concept. *Men and Masculinities*. Advance online publication.

World Health Organization. (2019). *Special initiative for mental health (2019-2023): Universal health coverage for mental health*. World Health Organization. https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241516458

World Health Organization. (2021). *WHO mental health forum 2021 report: Time to act - Transforming mental health systems, doing more and better*. World Health Organization. https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240034984

World Health Organization. (2022). *World mental health report: Transforming mental health for all*. World Health Organization. https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240049339

Woźny, A. (2025). Domesticating the salaryman: Marriage promotion, hybrid masculinity, and the resignification of reproduction in Japan. *Men and Masculinities, Advance online publication*.

Zappino, F. (2021). *Comunismo queer*. Meltemi Editore.

Zappino, F. (2024). *Materialismo queer: Note critiche sulla performatività*. Mimesis Edizioni.