

MEN, MASCULINITY, MUSIC AND EMOTIONS

SAM DE BOISE

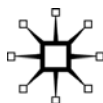


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Introduction

The importance of gender and emotions

Every year I lectured in sociology departments at both Leeds and York I asked the same question: as a quick poll, how many people have ever been accused of getting 'too' emotional? Sociology courses up and down the United Kingdom are (quantitatively) skewed toward young women, the entirety of whom put their hands up alongside a handful of their male peers. When I followed this up with: 'and who has ever had this linked to their hormones?' the sea of hands became exclusively women. This happened every year for five years. Of course, it's a well-documented medical fact that only women can suffer from PMT and this leads to 'irrational' mood swings, right? Male brains and bodies are just wired differently that's all.

Well, no. The idea that emotions are things that happen to us and drive our actions because of shifts in individual hormones or neural wiring, and which cloud our capability to make 'rational' judgments, does not have a very long history in the West (Barbalet 2001; Dixon 2005). From the more philosophical idea of the 'passions', attached to religious conceptions of the soul, through to the 'humours' and then the medico-psychological category of emotions, there has been a shifting assumption that emotions must be understood as residing within individual physiologies. At the same time, changes in medical knowledge have undoubtedly helped to privilege the idea that emotions are the exact antithesis of rational action. It is becoming increasingly clear, however, that such a sharp distinction between emotions and rational behaviour, as well as emotional hardwiring, is increasingly untenable. Nevertheless, what the anecdotal story above indicates is that the assumption that men are naturally less emotional is still alive and well.

When exploring class and ethnicity in relation to gender, the way in which certain social groups (and medical knowledge about different bodies) have, historically, been deemed as more or less susceptible to their emotions has also helped to enforce social inequalities. The presumption that, by virtue of different biologies *some* men are more naturally aggressive or that some women are generally less rational than others, has been an effective strategy of exclusion and social control. Because rational thought has been seen to be more objective, because of its presumed detachment from subjective bodily experience, this has historically provided the cornerstone of political legitimacy in Western societies (Marcus 2002). 'Rational' individuals have often used the language of emotions to assume superiority over supposedly 'irrational' ones.

The pervasiveness of this particular idea of rationality has extended far beyond the actions of individuals within the confines of the borders of 'Western' nation states. As others have demonstrated, so-called 'civilised' men have asserted moral superiority over 'savage' societies using the a priori justification of reason – characterised as the absence of emotion – over 'animalistic' feelings. This helped to support colonial rule and the domination over indigenous populations by tacit consent, or provided the justification to use brute force in the name of 'civilisation' (Federici 2004; Forth 2008). As this book will show, the idea that emotions exist independently of the way we think about them, as an effect of observable physiology, is a specific historic product of gendered and racialised power relations.

Understanding what emotions are, how the study of emotions developed, whether or not they really are distinct from rationality, how they come to be experienced by individuals and whether or not social factors really lead to different capacities for emotional experience and expression are important. They are important not just for the implications they carry for thinking about individual actions but for exploring how power, institutions, social inequalities and embodied experience become intertwined.

Everybody hurts?

Work which touches on gender and emotions has, either explicitly or implicitly, divided into several distinct camps. As outlined in Chapter 1, biological arguments have tended to stress hardwired sex differences, whereas social psychological arguments have tended to stress developmental gender differences as a result of socialisation. Sociological

arguments, in contrast, have often explained emotional differences in terms of performance and display but not necessarily individual feeling.

As explained in Chapter 2 there is also the presumption that, as a consequence of the gains made by feminist, LGBT and civil rights groups from the 1960s onward, there has been a move towards men 'getting in touch' with their emotions, leading to more emotionally open, equal and personally fulfilling relationships. At the same time, alongside these arguments, we have also witnessed what Faludi (1992) famously referred to as a 'backlash' against feminism due to a perceived erosion of male power. This has manifest itself in the 'white-man-as-victim' complex, found in the promotional material of groups like the Promise Keepers (Donovan 1998), the Mythopoetic men's movement in the USA (see Kimmel 1995), the crisis of masculinity proponents (see Benatar 2012; Horrocks 1994; McDowell 2000; Rosin 2012) and, more recently, a virulent resurgence in Men's Rights Activism (MRA). Many, if not all of these positions, hinge on the idea that the emotional insecurities that individual men feel in their daily lives, emerge as a direct result of shifting economic and social relations. Paradoxically, MRAs often also long for some mythical golden age where gender roles were clearly defined, men were unfeeling stoic breadwinners and everyone was content with their allotted chances in life.

No matter what the political perspective, one commonality that they all share is a base presumption of fundamental *difference* and a particular view of emotions as concerning physiology. Despite debates around gender difference, however, rarely have researchers looked empirically at how men understand their own emotional experiences (for exceptions see Chapter 2). The presumption in much literature seems to be a foregone conclusion that men have always been incompetent emotional articulators or had an uneasy relationship with their own feelings. Therefore any perceived change in this state of affairs is often taken as evidence of definitive shifts in gender relations with little substantive engagement in how emotions are understood.

This book intends to demonstrate, however, that by seeing emotions *only* as bodily states, discursive judgments around the authenticity of emotions, how beliefs about which bodies are deemed to be 'more' or 'less' emotional are formed and how masculinity is actually historically compatible with emotions, are ignored. The state of emotions in relation to gender is infinitely more complex than a language of 'difference' allows for. The book therefore makes several claims that contradict the prevailing view that men are either naturally less emotional or that they are better at hiding their emotions.

I want to make clear that I am not locating this book within the MRA framework of claiming men as victims of a modern age. Undoubtedly there has been a lot of talk about a so-called ‘crisis of masculinity’ in the last few years, particularly in relation to the 2007–2008 economic recession (Kimmel 2013a, 2013b). Economic stagnation, rising unemployment and deindustrialisation has been at the heart of these debates and there is a pervasive belief that the impact of these things on men’s psyches are historically novel. However, as I am going to suggest throughout, these arguments are not particularly new. Regardless of the fact that they are almost exclusively focussed on specific men (white, Anglophone, heterosexual, working class) these perspectives demonstrate an ahistorical idea of what has historically constituted dominant ideas around masculinity; a notion premised largely on white, middle class, Western male bodies (Petersen 1998). Stressing that emotional openness and personal insecurity is new for all men, therefore, has the curious effect of both blaming and portraying feminist gains as a completed project. This undermines certain historical continuities around men’s emotional lives (see Chapter 2).

On the other hand, men’s insecurities, anxieties and emotional experiences *should* be accounted for. There has been a distinct lack of literature and empirical research which actually looks at how men understand and express emotions and, as explored later, engaging with emotions and affective practice is crucial in any move toward gender equality. The tradition in left-wing, feminist-allied, men’s consciousness-raising groups, in finding new ways to relate to each other, for example, is important (see Chapter 2). What I want to suggest, however, is that far from being antithetical to historic constructions of masculinity, emotions have often been *integral* to gendered frameworks of power, both interpersonally and structurally. What this book therefore seeks to avoid is the idea that men ‘getting in touch’ with their emotions is de facto progressive in challenging gender inequalities, because this proceeds from the assumption that many emotions are inherently feminine (see Fischer 1993). As I intend to demonstrate, this is simply untrue and may actually help to reproduce rather than rework certain symbolic and material inequalities.

So... why men and music?

As with most research on men and masculinity, the danger is that in shifting the focus ‘back to men’ we lose sight of the ethical, critical aspects of work on men and masculinities (Hearn 2004; O’Neill 2014).

In naming men as subjects in their own right in relation to emotions there may be a temptation to show that: 'hey look! Men are emotional too' (see Chapters 2 and 6) or to belabour the point about men's role in already-patriarchal histories. To reiterate: I am not claiming that men are victims of contemporary society. As noted, this book aims to demonstrate that arguments around emotions as being progressive for gender relations relies on a cultural history which paints emotions simply as discrete, uncontrolled physiological states which are inherently feminine properties. This ignores how emotions can and *have* supported masculinity in various ways (see Chapter 2) as well as the frameworks through which emotions and an ethnocentric vision of masculinity have been defined (Chapter 1).

Exposing both the so-called 'crisis of masculinity' thesis, as well as arguments about men's natural capacity for emotional suppression, are nowhere more apparent than in explaining the relationship between music, men and emotions; given that it is one that has been debated since at least the 9th century in Britain (Leach 2009) and the 4th century BCE in other parts of the world (see Budd 1985). Yet seldom, if at all, has this particularly gendered history of emotions been made explicit in music or gender theory (for exceptions see Chapter 3).

As Chapters 3, 4 and 5 demonstrate, there have been concerns around how men, specifically, listen to and use music. What these concerns usually hinge on is the idea of music's capacity to act as a transformative force, something which changes the individual. These concerns are often directed largely at boys and young men and this has shaped academic interest in subcultures (Cohen 1972a, 1972b; Hebdige 1979) and approaches which suggest preference is linked to personality traits (Chamorro-Premuzic and Furnham 2007; Lewis 1991; Miranda and Claes 2008; North, Desborough and Skarstein 2005; Pearson and Dollinger 2004; Rentfrow and Gosling 2003).

Such media-led moral panics have so often (implicitly) focussed on the effect of a diverse range of music genres on young men's emotions. Yet concerns about the effects that listening to certain types of music can have on young men are not modern. The belief that certain sonic structures or 'genres' cause men to act in particular ways has a long tradition. What is remarkable, however, is that, even today, similar discursive strategies are invoked in the media to condemn certain music forms *as if* they are somehow new.

Other authors have focussed on other aspects of consumption and mass culture, such as sport, in relation to masculinity to highlight how rationality intersects with bodies (Bridges 2009; Connell 1995; Majors

2001; see Messner 1990; Robertson 2003; Schact 1996; Thorpe 2010; Wheaton 2003). The question is, then, what a gender-specific, sociological focus on music has to offer over musicological, social psychological and physiological accounts of music or gendered accounts of other consumption practices.

I want to suggest that given the longevity of a belief in music's capacity to transform the body (see Chapter 3), that music more than anything can help to firmly undermine the idea that emotions are simply 'more' hardwired into some bodies than others. Music listening and consumption are ubiquitous and occupy a privileged place in social consciousness, in Western capitalist societies at least, because music is considered 'the cultural material, *par excellence* of emotion' (DeNora 2000: 46). 'Subjective' emotional experiences, presented as aesthetic choice, are not specific to any one genre and are commercially lucrative (Adorno 1945, 1975, 1976, 2004; Adorno and Horkheimer 1997 [1947]; Illouz 2007). Belief in music's emotional qualities is one of the primary reasons for the success of the music industries in contemporary society (see Chapters 3 and 4) and, as this book will show, amongst individual men in particular because it is often believed to provide a 'safe space' for the expression of certain emotions.

The traditional approach to musical sociology focuses predominantly on music's (homo)social function (see DeNora 2003a; Frith 2002). As Bourdieu (1984) noted in *Distinction*, cultural participation and taste aids the reproduction of social inequalities because shared tastes function as a form of social and cultural capital. This helps to shape interactions between similar groups, creating distinctions between them. As observed in Chapter 3, men continue to dominate the music industries and patterns of consumption are heavily gendered. To look at music in this way, however, means that it becomes merely tokenistic. Bourdieusian inspired approaches to music lack methodological nuance (Prior 2011: 126–127), ignore how aesthetic experience is actively negotiated as well as received and we miss the fact that listening practices are diverse, context-specific and thoroughly embodied experiences. Music's aesthetic and affective experience cannot be explained only with reference to social reproduction (see Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6). Instead, looking at music can tell us something about the state of gender relations, expose certain inherent contradictions and, through this, ultimately help to change them.

On the other hand, queer and subcultural approaches to music and gender have frequently tended to overemphasise the role of performative style as the key to transforming gender relations. Often, style

does little to challenge the overall exploitative structure of the culture industry (Moore 2005) and it is worth noting that gender-exclusionary practices still exist despite music's portrayal as a 'democratic' space for emotional expression. Male punks and goths may have dressed up in gender subversive clothing but this did not necessarily translate to gender equal practices within these music scenes (Downes 2012a; Miles 1997; O'Brien 1999; Reddington 2007).

This book, whilst retaining an implicit notion of music attachments (Hennion 2010) as a form of habitus (Bourdieu 2001; McNay 1999, 2004; Moi 1991), draws inspiration heavily from the work of Theodor Adorno as a means of conceptualising emotions through *listening* rather than simply through consumption practices (DeNora 2003a: 151). Adorno's method, combining aspects of sociology, musicology, philosophy, psychoanalysis and psychology surpasses discipline-centric critiques. His focus on the necessity of historical analysis, without succumbing entirely to historicism, is particularly important for understanding emotions and music critically (see Chapter 3). Through such an approach it is possible to avoid championing the 'genius' of men's creativity as a result of some repressed primeval *id* whilst still taking emotions seriously as a force for both reproduction and change.

Music presents an important area of enquiry with regards to an exploration of masculinity, embodiment and emotions for several reasons. Firstly, music is actively engaged with and consumed because it focuses overtly on emotional experience. This is obviously at odds with the 'rationality-as-emotional-repression' position and challenges the notion that masculinity is necessarily based on the disavowal of emotional experience (see Chapter 2). The physiological reactions evoked in relation to music listening are indicative of emotions experienced in everyday life. Looking at music can, therefore, help to illustrate something about the nature of physiological experience more generally (see Juslin and Sloboda 2012; Thompson and Biddle 2013).

Secondly, music is a means of getting men to talk about emotions without making the focus explicitly *about* emotions. Seeing only the ability to articulate specific emotions as indicative of emotional development is, as noted in Chapters 1 and 2, part of a cultural legacy that portrays emotions, and particular vocabularies for talking about emotions, as 'feminine'. This has led to the view that men are simply 'less emotional' because of a refusal/inability to discuss emotions in certain predefined ways. A much more sociologically nuanced view of embodiment and language needs to be adopted in order to look at gender and emotion.

Thirdly, music is a multi-billion pound industry which, according to Bennett et al.'s (2009: 46) research, is *the* most differentiating aspect of cultural participation and taste. It evokes a range of different attitudes and strong feelings which helps to emphasise the relational nature of beliefs, practices and embodied experiences. As explored in Chapter 5, looking at judgments about music *distaste* help to reveal the colonial and patriarchal dimensions of emotions, as well as how judgments about emotions are expressed through affective reactions *against* particular bodies. Finally, musical aesthetic experience is always shaped and interpreted by gendered performers and audiences. It is therefore indicative of gendered practice and also biography. Thus, an exploration of music as social and experiential enables us to locate structural and discursive influence within individual life histories, helping to theorise fluidity and change (see Chapter 6).

Unnatural bodies

Males, men, masculinity

It is necessary at this point to clarify the conceptual terminology used throughout. The notion of sexual differences (male/female) has often rested on the idea that hormonal, genital, neurological or more general physiological differences have always existed in two complementary, but mutually exclusive, bodies. As demonstrated in Chapter 1, these analyses tend to look for natural 'hardwired' differences based on a presumption that men and women are destined to have fundamentally different capabilities from birth. These perspectives tend to believe either explicitly or implicitly, that such biological differences account for differences in temperament, behaviour and, ultimately, emotions. They see such differences as emerging independently of social interaction but ultimately influencing it; these views are deeply flawed in many ways (see Chapter 1).

'First' and 'Second Wave' feminist perspectives have traditionally pointed to adult males' (men's) social privilege as something which is achieved by men as a social class ideologically suppressing women as a social class (Firestone 1979 [1970]; Friedan 1979 [1963]). Like biological theorists, these perspectives tended to treat women as a group based on shared organic characteristics. Where they differed, was that they saw patriarchy (rule by the father) as an outcome of men's ideological suppression of women, rather than women's behaviour and life-chances being largely determined by their ovaries (see Walby 1990).

Insights from feminist psychology and anthropology led to the development of an important distinction between sex (male/female) and gender (masculinity/femininity) when theorising men's privilege. This was offered as a means of overcoming overly deterministic notions of patriarchy while attempting to explain how gender inequalities persisted. As Rubin (1975) suggested in her infamous treatise on the role of women's sexuality and reproductive labour:

any society will have some systematic ways to deal with sex, gender and babies. Such a system may be sexually egalitarian, at least in theory, or it may be 'gender stratified' ... it is important – even in the face of a depressing history – to maintain a distinction between the human capacity and the necessity to create a sexual world, and the empirically oppressive ways in which sexual worlds have been organized. Patriarchy subsumes both meanings into the same term. Sex/gender system, on the other hand, is a neutral term which refers to the domain and indicates that oppression is not inevitable in that domain, but it is the product of the specific social relations which organize it.

The significance of this distinction was that it clearly separated a discussion of females and males as biologically constituted subjects, from the development of socially expectant behaviour produced at contextually specific times and places by groups of *women* and *men*. Whilst structural imbalances are enforced along the lines of 'natural' difference, it is therefore not necessarily 'males' as such who are problematic. It is how social expectations about sex are enforced through belief in 'universal' sexual difference which is at fault (see Alcoff 1988 for a discussion of these debates).

Masculinity/masculinities

Importantly, if 'hardwired' biology does not determine practice, then this has implications for thinking about the extent to which men are capable of experiencing emotions as well as changing their attitude to emotions. Critical studies on men and masculinities (CSMM), emerging out of feminist and Marxist traditions, have generally tended to start from the premise that gendered practices are fluid, gender performances are socialised and retained a strong gender equality focus. Using feminist literature to look at men and boys as gendered subjects in their own right, they have attempted to illuminate and deconstruct strategies of men's privilege.

Whilst 'men' and 'masculinity' are frequently (and mistakenly) treated as synonymous (see Halberstam 1998), what is understood by men's 'normal', societal role has differed enormously from culture to culture, by historical epochs within the same nation state¹ and by intersectional, demographic factors in any given, contemporary society (Aboim 2010; Coles 2009; Connell 1995; Howson 2006). These interventions have made it both increasingly clear that there are qualitatively different experiences of individuals and groups by intersections of class, race, ethnicity, sexuality and gender (Collins 2000; Combahee River Collective 1978; Crenshaw 1989, 1991), and increasingly unclear as to what constitutes a coherent gendered identity.

As already indicated, in order to look at emotions we have to understand that *some* men have 'traditionally' been understood as capable of a greater exercise of emotional control than others. It is important, therefore, to think of gender as multi-dimensional rather than a twofold, psychological predisposition toward either masculinity or femininity. Separating out the behaviour, practices and beliefs of certain groups of men, meant that it was possible to accommodate the idea of masculinity as a social problem not irrevocably tied to the male sex.

The concept of 'hegemonic masculinity' (Carrigan, Connell and Lee 1985; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Connell 1987; Connell 1995; Messerschmidt 2012) emerged precisely as a means of explaining how some *groups* of men maintained social power not only over women, but also other men. The concept itself is still highly influential in studies of men and masculinities (Messerschmidt 2012) in Anglophone countries (though in non-Anglophone countries there have been longer traditions of theorising on men; see Hearn et al. 2012).

'Hegemonic masculinity' (see Chapter 2), drawing inspiration from Gramsci (1971) and significantly indebted to Rubin's work, suggested that hierarchies of privilege exist between different groups of men on the basis of socialisation, performativity, cultural representations and institutional privilege (see Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Gender inequalities, in line with other authors, Connell suggested, were *naturalised* but are not natural as such. Therefore cultural representations of different social groups of men – in 'lads mags', newspapers, films, TV and music for example – when they correspond to institutional power, help to make widespread economic, political and social inequalities seem normal or legitimate.

Connell observed that it has been white, heterosexual, middle-class men in Western societies² who have historically assumed these privileges in relation to 'other' men as well as women. This is something which

has been supported by cultural representations of socially powerful men as overwhelmingly white, middle class and heterosexual.³ For example, if we think about how male CEOs or politicians in the media are portrayed as possessing competitive ‘instincts’ and rational (i.e. calculating and unemotional) judgment, this helps to perpetuate the idea that those perceived to ‘normally’ embody these attributes (often white, middle-class men) are better suited to these positions. These positions, of course, just so happen to be extremely well remunerated and usually carry a great deal of power. This is what separates masculinity, as a specific historic construct based on the belief that *some* men exercise better emotional control, from ideas around ‘natural’ male behaviour or ‘objective’ psychological measures of masculinity (see Chapter 2).

Connell’s concept has been reformulated over the past few years (Aboim 2010; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Hearn 2004; Hearn et al. 2012; Messerschmidt 2012). Nevertheless, the core thread of hegemonic masculinity remains that certain forms of masculinity, positioned in relation to ‘others’, are made to appear natural and are produced and reproduced through interaction, institutional power, performance and culture. In this way, hegemonic masculinity is not a type of individual or psychological state (de Boise 2014b; Hearn 2004), but provides support for a systemic patriarchy (or kyriarchy), through cultural representations. This divides men from women, but also men from men (see also Hearn 1987).

Where ‘masculinity’ is referred to in the singular, then, it is used to refer to an imaginary ideal which contemporary or historical discourses cling to in order to articulate idealised visions about how the most powerful men in any given society *should* be. Central to this vision, in much of the CSMM literature is the idea that some groups of men either naturally have better control of their emotions (as already outlined above) or that they need to exercise emotional restraint in order to perform a culturally powerful idea of masculine behaviour (Seidler 1994, 2006a, 2007). Nevertheless, as I intend to demonstrate ‘masculinity’ is never a coherent, fixed set of attributes and has always encompassed multiple, seemingly contradictory practices and performances.

Beyond sex/gender

The growing attention paid to the study of men, males, ‘masculinity’ and masculinities in Western societies over the last 40 years, has been indebted to theoretical, economic, social, cultural and political changes, questioning the naturalness of men’s behaviour. Edwards (2006), with reference to how feminism has been characterised, has delineated a

three wave approach in theorising men and masculinities. The first wave he notes, was concerned with sex roles or the reproduction of sexually differentiated behaviour through socialisation – or sex roles. The second, encompassing Connell's work, focussed on how power was produced, reproduced and maintained by certain groups of men. The third, taking cues from poststructuralism, appeared more focussed on questions of 'normativity, performativity and sexuality' (Edwards 2006: 2) and, I would add, how discursive knowledge around certain bodies and practices is produced (MacInnes 1998; Petersen 1998, 2004).

On this last point, Connell's work has faced criticism, both for her insistence on a singular, fixed male body (Beasley 2008, 2012) and on the uncritical identification of all men's bodies with notions of emotional stoicism (discussed in Chapter 2). If the purpose of CSMM is to theorise inequalities in order to, ultimately, effect change, then it is important to think not just about how gender may be subject to change but how sexed bodies themselves are artefacts of power relations. This is especially the case when looking at experiences of bodily reactions, the ways in which experience is articulated and the processes by which different men learn to experience their bodies as gendered.

The fabrication of an idealised, natural male sex has been secured at the exclusion of particular bodies (Petersen 1998) and helped to shape how emotions have been framed as simply objectively documentable, biological impulses. It is therefore important to treat sexual 'difference' itself as performative, not just in order to recognise that there are those who do not fit into 'normal' gender binaries (Davy 2011; Deogracias et al. 2007; Halberstam 2012b; Hines 2013; Kessler 1990) but also to highlight that when we talk about *the* male body we are often referring to a history of particular men's bodies.

As Butler (2008: 19) noted in her treatment of essentialist feminism:

Feminist critique ought to explore the totalizing claims of a masculinist signifying economy, but also remain self-critical with respect to the totalizing gestures of feminism. The effort to identify the enemy as singular in form is a reverse-discourse that uncritically mimics the strategy of the oppressor instead of articulating a different set of terms.

A feminism based on essentialist, homogenous categories of women and men, therefore risks re-inscribing the very basis of gender inequality in Western societies, through the insistence on biological classifications as operating independently of knowledge. In short, the way in which we

have studied men and women was developed by men who helped to construct an idea of 'woman's' natural inferiority with reference to her reproductive capacities. Language and discourse have therefore had an impact on the belief that women are simply more emotional or that emotions are inextricably tied to particular bodies (see Chapter 2). In the same respect, any analysis of *the* male body ignores the strategies by which a 'normal' man's body has come to be defined through patriarchal, colonialist ideas about what constitutes biological normality.

Connell's work was vital for thinking about how the systemic privileges of some groups of men are perpetuated and maintained through cultural representations. Nevertheless it has some limitations for thinking about emotions, men and masculinity. Whilst others have recently suggested thinking in terms of multiple, dominant forms of masculinity in any given society (Aboim 2010; Anderson 2009; Coles 2009) or different 'types' of masculinity, the problem of these equally taxonomic approaches is that they fix certain value judgments as psychological identities. As Connell (1995: 79) herself has noted, it is possible that no one person may fulfil all the requirements to live up to hegemonic ideals. The question, then, is to what extent reductive categories of different types of men or masculinities are even useful in describing experience and theorising fluidity or change (something taken up further in Chapter 6).

In much existing literature which implicitly outlines how men, masculinity and emotions intersect, there is a tendency toward looking at different types of men. However, as also discussed in Chapter 2, ideas about the 'New Man', the 'Crisis of Masculinity' or 'inclusive masculinity' (Anderson 2009) rely on some of the same misleading propositions that this book aims to contest: that men who show emotions are progressive because emotions are 'feminised'; that men communicating 'emotional experience' openly is new; and that less overtly chauvinistic behaviour necessarily correlates with a more egalitarian approach to relationships and interaction (see de Boise 2014a). I would suggest that the implicit class bias in seeing men who moisturise, talk about their feelings, cry at sad movies and pick their kids up from school as the pinnacle of contemporary gender equality needs to be seriously examined. The problem is that any insistence on 'homogenizing typologies' (Beasley 2012) invariably fails to capture the complexity of individual experience, embodiment and social privilege necessary for looking at gender and emotion.

It is for this particular reason that this book avoids categorising different 'types' of men in terms of shared, distinct 'personality traits' or using the concept of mutually exclusive masculinities. These often

become synonymic with ‘othered’ bodies which, as we shall see in Chapter 5, can reinforce certain gendered and racist discourses. No doubt the slightly ‘additive approach’ to intersectionality (Yuval-Davis 2006) offered throughout (you will often find lists like this: Western, heterosexual, white, middle-class men) will at times be too essentialist for poststructuralists, too specific for structuralists and too deterministic for liberals and queers alike. However I have tried my best to critically reconcile individual experience with structuring discourses about men’s *bodies* rather than *the* male body. In view of these debates, this book understands ‘men’ as a discursive construction but recognises that the embodied experience of identifying as a man is inseparable from the language which is used to describe these categories.

Outline of the book

Aims and empirical data

Based on the issues outlined above, this book looks to address the following questions:

- What are the ways in which emotions and gender inequalities have been understood?
- How have emotions historically supported some men’s social privileges?
- How have emotions in music been characterised in relation to men’s bodies?
- How are understandings of ‘emotionality’ and emotional experience reflected in men’s contemporary uses of music?
- How can we use music to understand masculinity, rationality and emotions as inseparable and both discursive and affective?

In addition to a historical analysis (see Chapters 1, 2 and 3), mixed methods research was employed to illustrate inconsistencies and differences in contemporary uses and perceptions of music, in relation to gender and emotions. Mixed-methods research, as arguably a distinctive paradigm in and of itself (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004), involves adopting a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches (Collins, Onwuegbuzie and Jiao 2007; Tashakkori and Creswell 2007; Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009) in order to provide a better understanding than if quantitative or qualitative methodologies are used as standalone methods (Creswell and Plano Clark 2007: 7). Empirical data were therefore obtained from 914 respondents who filled in a self-completion,

online survey and 6 musical life history case studies were carried out with individuals who completed the survey, contacted after preliminary analysis.

The purpose of the first stage was to look inductively at broad data trends. This included exploring how emotions connected with experience, whether or not certain musical ‘attachments’ (Hennion 2010) or dispreferences were related to certain emotions, and what influence demographic trends had on the data. The second stage of the empirical project was a series of six life history case studies with respondents who had completed the survey and given prior consent to be contacted. The sample was structured based on initial quantitative analysis and because differences emerged most strongly around age and life events (see Chapter 4), this stage was predominantly focused on how people’s life histories affected the way in which music connected to embodied experience (see Chapter 6).

Survey data

The online survey was run from October 2010 to February 2011 and included 22 questions. In an attempt to generate a robust number of responses from people from diverse backgrounds, an email link containing the survey was sent to a range of UK-based organisations, including businesses, local councils, universities, music magazines, football clubs, diverse mailing lists, snowballed via Facebook society pages and BME and LGBT groups. The survey covered seven different areas: demographics; gendered practices; significant music, reasons for listening and emotions connected to preference; where and with whom respondents listened to music; when music was most significant; current musical participation; and reasons for disliking music.

In addition to reducing recording and reporting errors (Chang and Krosnick 2009; DiNitto et al. 2008; Fricker et al. 2005; Reddy et al. 2006), there were a number of reasons for using an online quantitative method. Firstly it was a way to minimise selection bias through often arbitrary qualitative sampling strategies (Onwuegbuzie and Leech 2007). By generating a sample and seeing where there were broad regularities (see Kemp and Holmwood 2003), this enabled me to see what the most important overall trends were and develop these issues at the qualitative stage. This is fundamentally different from assuming a positivist notion of ‘underlying’ natural realities or social laws about emotions and gender.

Secondly, quantitative methods are not incompatible with generating qualitative data (Howe 1988). As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, to divide

individuals into categories of 'more' or 'less' emotional, as quantitative analysis tends toward, is conceptually flawed. What is more important are how emotions are articulated rather than trying to measure an 'objective reality'. Therefore a total of five open-ended questions, requiring three responses each, were used to look at different ways of framing emotions, musical attachments, distaste and life-events. Open-ended questions preceded fixed-response questions, looking at the same issue, in order to 'double check' fixed-response trends and to minimise the 'imposition of meaning' on respondents (Pawson 1989). Imposing genre categories on music, for instance, particularly overlooks how a diverse range of different styles may be important for different reasons, how musical attachments intersect with specific pieces and how researchers' own implicit biases may generate misleading findings (see Chapter 5).

Finally, the purpose of using an online survey with a good deal of open ended questions was that people could write about their feelings and difficult experiences in a way that they may not have been able to articulate face-to-face. In this respect, the distance that online methods afford, also arguably leads to more honest and open responses when discussing sensitive issues (see also Chang and Krosnick 2009; Fricker et al. 2005; Kwak and Radler 2002). This is a particular concern when talking to men about their feelings publicly, as it may reinforce the fallacy that because they cannot talk about it in a certain way that they are 'less emotional' (see Chapter 2). The rich insights into private grief and trauma which many of the men gave (see Chapters 4 and 6) attest to the usefulness of this method here.

Survey analysis and sample

At the fixed-response questions which asked for a range (between 1–7), response items were grouped into high (5–7), medium (4) and low (1–3). Relationships between variables were first explored using χ^2 analysis followed by multinomial logistic regression to ascertain which variables were the best predictors of response. The inclusion of open-response questions arguably leads to increased 'measurement error' (Gorard 2004: 104); however, where statistical analysis was conducted on these, every attempt was made to group terms on the basis of commonalities in language between respondents, using text analytics, rather than simply applying pre-existing labels manually.

Whilst efforts were made to ascertain a diverse sample, the final sample (914 respondents) largely identified as white British (80 per cent) and either worked in 'white collar' occupations (41.1 per cent), or were students in full time education (52.8 per cent). Within the sample, 83.7

per cent identified as heterosexual, though the sample spanned a range of ages from 16 to 64. Three hundred and sixteen respondents identified as men and 553 identified as women. Both samples were demographically similar, though amongst those who identified as women there were significantly more 20–24 year olds ($w=34.9$ per cent; $m=28$ per cent). However this did not have an impact on the overall trends and there were no significant differences in formal music education ($w=21.3$ per cent; $m=26.3$ per cent).

The gender question arguably causes problems for those who do not identify with binary gender categories. This was a particular practical consideration in choosing this method as other studies have demonstrated that multiple gender categories in surveys can have the effect of confusing respondents or being deliberately mis-chosen. As already argued, however, my intention is not to treat ‘men’ as a biologically deterministic category but show how the notion of looking for emotional differences in both stable sex *and* gender categories, ignores the complexity of embodied experience.

Life histories

The case studies were all men, who were firstly chosen for their typicality in relation to observed quantitative trends in their age category. They were, secondly, selected based on the insight and depth of their answers in the survey and whether they had listed particularly unique life events (for details on each see Appendix 2). Using respondents’ answers at the open-response survey questions around their musical attachments, what music they had talked about avoiding, as well as when music had been important, allowed me to connect their ideas to broader quantitative data but also to go back to the survey and observe whether similar discourses had been employed in the open-ended responses.

Case studies offer a tool for *apt illustration*, in order to ‘illustrate specific customs, principles of organization, social relationships etc.’ (Gluckman 2006: 16). Therefore as Blaikie (2010: 190) highlights, they allow for ‘a more complex collection of connected events that occur within a limited time span, and which demonstrate the operation of general principles of social organization’. This enables researchers to connect individual to group experience (Neuman 2003: 33), though whilst findings drawn from case studies can be *typical* of populations they need not necessarily be *generalizable*, in the positivist sense, to every given case (Denzin 1983; Mason 2002; Stake 1978).

Life histories, as a specific type of case study, are not only useful as detailed expositions of particular biographies, but also as a useful tool

for connecting concrete examples around how emotions and affective experience could be mapped in relation to broader discourses about emotions. Spacing the survey apart from the interviews also meant that respondents in the case studies were forced to reflect on their choices during the interview. They were often surprised and, more often than not, visibly embarrassed by what they had written prior to the event. This was particularly interesting with regard to how they demonstrated clearly affective responses in the interview.

There are obvious limits to this data. However I would like to stress that I am not talking about providing representative experience of all men everywhere. As noted throughout, we should be wary of such totalizing claims to universal representation. This book is critical of the idea of men as a coherent biological category and also of attempts to segment men into discrete 'personality' types. Yet it does retain the idea that those who have similar demographic backgrounds (in this case white, middle-class men) will have *similar* experiences, privileges and outlooks. What this book therefore intends to demonstrate is that a particular reading of rationality and masculinity, based predominantly on white, middle-class men's bodies, ignores the way in which emotions can and has actually supported gender inequalities *through* the actions of those who occupy these categories.

Chapter outline

The proceeding chapters are structured in such a way as to reflect how the three, usually separate, areas of enquiry outlined above (gender, music and emotion) can offer potentially new means of studying men and masculinity, with a focus on gender inequalities. In order to think through how reconceptualising emotions in relation to music can help to understand such inequalities, it is necessary first to outline how emotions themselves have been characterised. Whilst this book is focused on music, masculinity and emotions specifically, a fuller discussion of music has been left until Chapter 3. This is to foreground a thorough analysis of different perspectives on both emotions and emotions in relation to masculinity. The framing of these debates will help us to see how music's location at the intersections between physiology, experience, memory and discursive power relations, enables a more complex understanding of emotions, gender and inequality.

Chapter 1 begins by looking at how the idea of natural sex differences in emotions developed. It discusses how emotions have come to be studied as observable physiological responses which occur in the