Against Me(n): Accounting for Oneself as a Male Victim of Intimate Partner Abuse in a discrediting context.

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discrediting context.

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Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of PhD is entirely my own work, that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and does not to the best of my knowledge breach any law of copyright, and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

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IPA – Intimate Partner Abuse

Amen – Amen Support Services

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Abstract

Men who experience intimate partner abuse have been described as 'marginalised' (Migliaccio, 2001), 'unbelievable' (Corbally, 2011) and 'unmanly' (Morgan and Wells, 2016). Men's experience of intimate partner abuse has increasingly received attention in recent years but, while it is recognised that men can be the victims of intimate partner abuse, men often report that their accounts of abuse are met with disbelief (Hines et al, 2007). This study examined both the verbal and written accounts of male victims of intimate partner abuse to identify how they account for the abuse that they have experienced, in this context. There is a paucity of research examining the accounts of men who have experienced intimate partner abuse and this study should go some way toward filling this gap in the literature. 9 narrative interviews were carried out with male self-identified victims of intimate partner abuse. Further, 64 written accounts from male victims of intimate partner abuse were collected. A theoretical perspective informed by the work of Judith Butler (1993; 1999) was adopted and Riessman's (2008) dialogic narrative analytic technique was deployed to guide the analysis of these narratives.

As a result of this analysis it was found that (1) there are a variety of lives that may be lived, and told, by men experiencing intimate partner abuse. (2) The participants were performatively produced as male victims of IPA (Butler, 1999), through the deployment of narrative resources that positioned them within dominant discourses of masculinity and positioned their abusive female partners as deviating from acceptable femininity. (3) There was limited language available to the men to talk about abuse, with similar norms of gendered behaviour cited across the sample. (4) The narratives highlighted the variety of IPA experienced by the men, ranging from severe violence to more subtle but all-encompassing control. Finally, (5) the written and spoken narratives were similar in terms of their content, as they both deployed the same narrative resources, despite differing markedly in terms of length.

These cases illustrate the impact of the constitution of IPA against men as 'unbelievable' (Corbally, 2011) and 'unmanly' (Morgan and Wells, 2016), leading to a situation wherein there are limited narrative resources available to the men through which they may be rendered recognisable as victims of IPA. Identifying these narrative resources may offer ways to talk about intimate partner abuse with men, but the nature of these narrative resources comes with the danger of the perpetuation of gendered norms which deny women's agency. It is hoped that this study prompts further consideration of men's ways of accounting for IPA.

Introduction

In this thesis I suggest that the canonical narrative (Bruner, 2004) of IPA has been one involving male perpetrators and female victims. As such, abused men are constituted in research, public policy and in common sense understandings as a rarity and thus not requiring sustained attention, and as unlikely to suffer adverse consequences through a failure to consider men's gendered experience of IPA, and a related assumption that men should be able to defend themselves from women, who are deemed to be more vulnerable. Intimate Partner Abuse is a significant social and health issue (Krug et al, 2002) and the impact of intimate partner abuse on the women who are its recipients is acknowledged by most states and institutions concerned with such issues. The impact of intimate partner abuse on men who are its recipients, by contrast, does not often receive the attention it should. Women bear the overwhelming burden of intimate partner abuse (Kearns et al, 2008) and are rightly the focus of much research on the issue of intimate partner abuse. However, there is a lack of knowledge surrounding how men talk and write about their experience of intimate partner abuse from their female partners. In this thesis I seek to examine how men account for such abuse, with the acknowledgement that men (and women) live in a context in which abused men are constituted as 'rare'.

In Chapter one I outline the theoretical considerations which inform and guide this thesis. The theoretical underpinning for the thesis is established in this chapter. How masculinity theory has been applied to the issue of IPA is discussed and critiqued. The theory of gender performativity outlined by Butler (1993; 1999) is proposed as a way of considering how men account for IPA and produce a valued masculine identity in the context of their accounts. The deployment of this theoretical perspective is novel in this

context, and the focus on the performative nature of men's utterances highlights how men are not simply acted upon by masculine discourses, rather they are constituted by them and, in acting, they may repeat them differently. This theory offers potential for men to participate in the alteration of these norms, through subversion (Butler, 1999).

In Chapter two I review the available literature on intimate partner abuse. I provide a short overview of the development of the field before discussing definitions and terminology and outlining those selected for the current study. There is a focus specifically in these sections on how men who have experienced IPA are included or excluded in these definitions. I then discuss further some theoretical approaches to the study of IPA and how such theories constitute IPA and account for men who have experienced IPA. I then attempt to account for the support services available to men who experience IPA, as well as the treatment of men in various institutional bodies. I consider the public perception of men who have experienced IPA to highlight those discourses which abound regarding men who experience IPA and other crimes. Finally, I consider men's accounts of their experiences of IPA. Throughout I will show how men who experience IPA are predominantly excluded from sustained consideration as victims of IPA, through the deployment of discourses that position them as impermeable.

Chapter three outlines the methodology adopted in this study. This study adopted a social constructionist methodology, deploying Dialogic/Performance Narrative analytic techniques to analyse the data. It provides a general overview of narrative research and theory before going on to discuss the specific approach applied in this thesis. The blending of Judith Butler's (1993; 1999) gender theory with Riessman's (2008) Dialogic/Performance narrative analysis is an original aspect of this research, and

yielded new insights. Further, this will be the first study to analyse both written and spoken narratives of IPA. I sought to examine similarities and differences between men's accounts of IPA across the two types of data.

In Chapter four I present the in-depth analysis of 3 face to face interviews in the form of Aidan, Robert, and Alex's cases, and two letters in the form of Paddy and Niall's cases. Findings and discussion are presented together in this chapter, in keeping with the practices of Riessman (2003), whose work this study follows. In this chapter I highlighted the performative production of masculinity and of the men as male victims of IPA across their entire accounts. This was achieved through the deployment of dominant discourses of masculinity. These cases also served to highlight the variety of lives which may be affected by IPA..

Chapter five is a cross case analysis of the five cases outlined in detail in chapter four along with the remaining interviews and letters from the sample. Four narrative resources[1] were identified as common across this dataset. These narrative resources were the 'Good Husband', the 'Good Father', the 'Mad Woman', and the 'Schemer'. These narrative resources positioned the men within dominant discourses of masculinity, as well as portraying their female partners as transgressing feminine norms.

In Chapter six I present a detailed discussion of the findings generated in this study in light of the theoretical perspective that was adopted. The findings of both the case based narrative analysis and the cross case analysis are presented here with recommendations for theory, research, future work with abused men and policy. In describing these findings I outline the variety of forms of abuse experienced by men,

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[1] The term 'narrative resource' is used to refer to a theme deployed in the account to support and justify the version of events presented. It is essentially a tool used in the telling of the story.

while discussing the limited language available to them to frame their experience of IPA.

Chapter One – Theorising Gender in Men's accounts of IPA

1.0 - Introduction

Men form a significant minority of those who experience intimate partner abuse (Watson and Parsons, 2005) but their accounts of this IPA have received little attention in the research literature dealing with IPA. This situation has improved of late, with a burgeoning qualitative literature exploring men's experiences and accounts of IPA in various contexts (Allen-Collinson, 2009; Zverina et al, 2011; Corbally, 2011; 2014; Morgan and Wells, 2016). The current study adds to the literature examining men's accounts of the experience of IPA. In the current study I analysed both written and spoken accounts of men who experienced intimate partner abuse, the first study to do so. I deployed Riessman's (2008) Dialogic/Performance narrative analytic technique, in conjunction with Butler's (1993; 1999) theory of gender performativity, in the analysis.

The central research question in this study is:

- How do men account for their experiences of IPA in both written and spoken narratives?

Answering this question involved asking men to account for abuse in a social context in which the accounts of male victims of IPA are constituted as 'unbelievable' (Corbally, 2011). The close relationship between victimisation and gender results in a situation in which 'victim' and 'masculinity' are construed as incompatible (Sundaram et al, 2004). As a result, men are presented with a dilemma that they must attempt to manage, that of how they account for themselves as having experienced intimate partner abuse in the face of such disbelief. This involves managing both social expectations regarding gender, specifically masculinity, and social expectations regarding victimisation.

There are several approaches to the theorisation of gender that could have been deployed in this study in order to make sense of men's gendered experiences of IPA. Below, I present a discussion of Connell's (2005) theory of hegemonic masculinity in order to highlight the limitations of this theory for the study of men's experiences of IPA. This is followed by an account of Butler's (1993; 1999) approach to the theorisation of gender. This theoretical perspective was chosen because the concept of performativity draws attention to the productive capacities of language, suggesting that men do not simply describe or express their identities in their accounts, they produce these identities for a particular audience and achieve particular effects. Further, Butler (1999), in her discussion of the concept of performativity, suggests that one effect of accounts is that they may trouble gender. Thus, through telling their stories, abused men may trouble gender and expand or unsettle conventional definitions of intimate partner abuse victims. How men expand normative gendered expectations in order to incorporate the experience of IPA will be explored in this study.

Finally, the section on 'managing accountability' deals with issues inherent in the process of accounting for oneself and highlights the interconnected nature of the personal account and social expectations.

1.1 – Gendered aspects of Men's experience of IPA

The current study is also concerned with how IPA, experienced by men, is gendered. Much research that explores men's experiences of IPA has adopted the position that intimate partner abuse should be treated as a human issue rather than a gendered issue (Hines et al, 2007), but this stance is rejected in the current research. Focussing on intimate partner abuse as a human issue neglects how IPA may be interpreted, experienced, or enacted in gendered ways. For example, Hines et al (2007) reported that

several of the men, in their study, claimed that their female partners focused on the groin area when engaging in physical violence. This may be interpreted as an effort to take advantage of an area of sensitivity by a (potentially) physically weaker attacker. However, at the same time, it is possible to offer a gendered interpretation and view this in light of masculinity theory as an attack on masculine identity. There are other sensitive areas on the body, such as face, eyes, ears, neck that could also be the subject of attack but the male genitals are a culturally salient symbol of masculinity.

Another gendered aspect of IPA is the suggestion, in a literature review conducted by Holtzworth-Munroe, Smultzer, and Bates (1997) that men consistently report less fear in response to female violence than women in response to male violence. As stated by Holtzworth-Munroe (2005a) this finding is poorly understood; men could be socialised to refrain from displaying fear of women or it may be that they may simply have less to fear from a woman who is likely to be smaller in size. This requires further exploration but the finding that men report less fear may be of significance for a gendered conceptualisation of IPA. Perhaps fear is not a useful indicator of IPA for men, at the current time, and should not be taken as an indication of the lesser importance of IPA for men, as is the case in Pence and Paymar (1993).

Hines and Douglas (2009) suggest that men may view sustaining IPA from a woman and labelling it as a crime as emasculating. In this way they position discourses of masculinity as constraining, preventing men from reporting abuse, and here perhaps invoke a gendered perspective that they profess to resist. The above indicates the relevance of a gender-based analysis of the abuse of men. Intimate partner abuse is not neutrally 'human' in its targets and effects and it is possible that the focus on it as such would lead to the continued neglect of issues of importance to the study of men, as well as women. IPA is enacted and experienced in gendered ways (Allen-Collinson, 2008; 2009;

2016; Corbally, 2011; 2014), with the accounts provided by male victims in the qualitative literature on IPA serving to support this contention. These qualitative studies will be discussed in greater detail in section 2.8.

Gendered stereotypes and academic positions in the wider culture provide men with limited options to present themselves as having experienced IPA (Durfee, 2011). It has been suggested that, such are the associations between victimisation and femininity, for a man to claim victim status is to suggest that one is not a real man (Migliaccio, 2001) In this sense, the men whose texts were analysed for this thesis faced an 'ideological dilemma' (Billig et al, 1988) or a 'gender paradox' (Durfee, 2011) in which they attempted to account for themselves as having experienced intimate partner abuse and account for themselves as recognisable male subjects, thus attempting a negotiation between two ostensibly contradictory positions. Wetherell and Edley (1999) suggest that men can position themselves in multiple ways, depending on the context, allowing them to seem both 'hegemonic' and 'non-hegemonic' at the same time.

1.2 – Masculinity Theory

The way in which masculinity is theorised and constituted has implications for how IPA may be approached as gendered. Much intimate partner abuse (IPA) research discusses the concept of masculinity and how this may be used to explain IPA engaged in by men, how masculinity impedes men's reporting of IPA, as well as how men who do report IPA may be 'marginalised' as a result (Migliaccio, 2001).

Prior to the work of Connell (2005) and other theorists, such as Mac an Ghaill (1996) and Hearn (1992), masculinity was treated as a rather monolithic concept. Mac an Ghaill (1996) suggests that patriarchy was regarded as an unproblematically stable notion by many feminists, although some, such as Elshtain (1981), were critical of the potential for

the concept to imply that male oppression over women was a fixed state. In any case little effort was invested in examining masculinity in studies on gender relations (This can be seen in the failure to theorise gender in instances of female to male IPA, mentioned below). A more complex picture of gender relations was called for by social theorists (Carrigan, Connell, and Lee, 1985; Hearn, 1992) and the different forms that male power can take were emphasised. The focus on masculinity theory that has developed over the last number of years may be said to have arisen, in part at least, from a dissatisfaction with portrayals of masculinity in sex-role research[2] as well as the concept of patriarchy in feminist research (Whitehead, 2002). Sex-role theory may be argued to reify the concept of masculinity, arbitrarily designating particular behaviours and attributes as masculine. It also ignored issues relating to power, treating behaviours as equivalent regardless of who engages in them.

Connell's (2005) influential theory of 'hegemonic masculinity' developed, in part, as a result of such criticisms, with this theory emphasising the notion that masculinity is more appropriately referred to in the multiple, as masculinities. Masculinities are 'configurations of practice that are accomplished in social interaction' (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p.836). There is a privileged version of masculinity, an ideal type to which men may aspire, 'Hegemonic masculinity', but this is not the only form. Hegemonic masculinity is the configuration of practice or set of qualities that are in the ascendancy and which are used to support the dominant position of men and the subordination of women, as well as the subordination of marginalised forms of masculinity (Connell, 2005). Masculinities and femininities thus exist in relation to each

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[2] A branch of social science research in which masculinity and femininity are conceptualised as internalised sex roles, which are learned through socialisation (Connell, 2005).

other.

Despite her characterisation of the concept as a 'configuration of practice' Connell (2005) seems to contradict this through her suggestion that 'hegemonic masculinities can be constructed that do not correspond closely to the lives of any actual men' (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). While this last point is made in the context of an explanation of how it is that an idealised version of masculinity may be constituted in social processes, it seems at odds with the notion of hegemonic masculinity as a 'configuration of practice'. However, it would appear as if Connell (2005) views the constitution of 'hegemonic masculinity' as finding its origin in the practices of individual men in relation to the current gender order in a particular location. As such, these statements appear contradictory – how can masculinity be a configuration of practice that does not 'correspond to the lives of any actual men'?

The theoretical perspective adopted in this study differed from that of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005) in terms of its focus on power. According to Connell (2005), masculinities are hierarchically organised, with some subordinated to others. Not all men wield the same power and this power is suggested to be related to the gender order in a given society. In this theory power is held by those who adopt particular positions in societal institutions (Connell, 2005). Power is a feature of the 'gender order' a "…historically constructed pattern of power relations between men and women…" (Connell, 1987, p.99). This 'gender order' is the result of the acts of violence and oppression engaged in by heterosexual men towards women and others (Connell, 1987). However, this perspective differs from that adopted in the current study in which power is viewed as productive (Butler, 1999). Rather than something that is held and exercised it is that which constitutes the subject, in this case the subject of the male victim of

intimate partner abuse. In this conceptualisation power is not possessed by an individual or individuals, rather it inheres in language which calls subjects into being. In this way individuals who are born into a linguistic world which precedes them are subject to the linguistic terms of this world, and necessarily reiterate them in order to render themselves socially intelligible. Thus individuals are dependent on this power for social recognition, but this power is also vulnerable as it is dependent on reiteration for its continued existence, meaning that there is scope for gender to be reiterated differently.

This issue of power is important as 'Hegemonic masculinity' implies that certain men enacting certain masculinities have power over others. Connell (2005) suggests that a masculinity theory worth having must account for change. However, it is difficult to see how this theory would account for change. For instance, change in the social organisation of masculinities would seem to involve resistance to 'hegemonic masculinity', the dominant or ascendant form of masculinity, so that this may be supplanted and replaced with another form of masculinity. However, who decides what is the masculinity in the ascendancy? Or what masculinity is being resisted? Is that the job of the context sensitive researcher or the participant involved in the research? Hegemonic masculinity has been suggested to differ depending on the location, which seems to suggest that hegemonic masculinity is context specific. As such it may require context specific means of resistance. It also seems possible that individuals working in. different organisations or coming from different social backgrounds in the same location may have different ideas regarding what is constituted as hegemonic masculinity. This fluidity or context specificity of hegemonic masculinity means hegemonic masculinity seems difficult to challenge (Whitehead, 2002). If this cannot be challenged it is difficult to imagine how those who experience IPA can move from a situation in which they are

'marginalised' (Migliaccio, 2001). It effectively renders resistance impossible as a result of the fact that hegemonic masculinity could be any collection of practices and thus can never be overturned.

Connell (2005) suggests that masculinities may be 'carefully crafted' to take advantage of a 'patriarchal dividend', such that men are motivated to achieve the benefits of hegemonic masculinity. However, it does not explain why this may be the case (Whitehead, 2002). Why are some men motivated to dominate women? Why are they motivated to obtain the patriarchal dividend? These things are asserted but are not explained. However, it seems to me as if they are important questions, particularly in the context of the current study. Studies, such as that of Dobash and Dobash (2004) seem to propose a similar 'innate drive' as the explanation for men's motivation to dominate women. This is reductive but also seems to offer limited scope to address such behaviour. Further, it positions men as constantly looking for opportunities to obtain greater power and does not seem to be able to explain how men may be abused.

Most important, however, is Connell's (2005) writing on the discursive critiques of his theory. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) characterise discursive perspectives as taking the position that masculinities may be taken up and discarded at will in a strategic fashion by men engaged in interaction. This characterisation would seem to position discursive perspectives as offering an overly agentic view of masculinities, positioning men as engaged in self-interested presentations of themselves and ignoring the sedimentation of norms to which Butler (1999) draws attention.

However, despite the above criticism, hegemonic masculinity makes a valuable contribution to the study of masculinity in the form of the notion of multiple masculinities, as well as privileged and subordinated forms of masculinity. The

conceptualisation of masculinity as multiple, introduced above, has led some researchers to suggest that men who articulate narratives of their experience of intimate partner abuse perform a 'marginalised' or 'subordinated' masculinity, in relation to hegemonic masculinity (Migliaccio, 2001). They lack the dominance associated with hegemonic masculinity and may face derision at the hands of others. Such men have been suggested to avoid claiming the status of "victim,"(Migliaccio, 2002; Allen-Collinson, 2009; Corbally, 2011). However, men may attempt to avoid this marginalisation and the negative connotations of 'victim' by orienting towards masculine norms in a variety of ways in their accounts, as will be demonstrated in section 2.8.2 below.

Adopting a discursive approach to the study of men and masculinities (Edley and Wetherell, 1997; Wetherell and Edley, 1999) avoids some of the weaknesses of 'hegemonic masculinity'. This perspective views masculinity as an interactional achievement, it does not stand outside of discourse, rather it is constructed 'in' and 'through' discourse (Edley, and Wetherell, 1995; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Masculinity is sustained and renegotiated in discourse and masculine identities are constructed and deployed in different contexts or settings. Instead of masculinity being a fixed identity, it is an interactional position (Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998) or it is an effect of discourse (Butler, 1999). This leads to an impression of a fluid and context dependent masculine identity, although not necessarily one in which masculine performance can be selected at will, unless one takes the view that speaking subjects are 'masters' of discourse (Riessman, 2008). The focus is on the action orientation of discourse, what it achieves in the context of an interaction. This is important for the current study of how men account for themselves as victims of intimate partner abuse.

1.3- Performatively Producing Oneself as a Male Victim

The literature review in the following chapter should go some way towards highlighting the discourses and theoretical perspectives that play a role in establishing the 'conditions of possibility' for male victims of intimate partner abuse. In discourses of intimate partner abuse men are:

- positioned as universally privileged and driven to maintain this privilege

- the subject of contentious debate regarding the extent of their existence

- popularly conceived as able to protect themselves from violence and abuse due to stereotypical assumptions surrounding their size

In light of these assumptions how do men account for themselves as having experienced intimate partner abuse? These are discussed in turn. The small amount of qualitative literature which examines how men account for themselves in the context of intimate partner abuse propose that men do so in ways that fall in line with dominant gendered discourses. As mentioned, men draw on masculine discourses when accounting for intimate partner abuse, which may be surprising given that such discourses may conflict with their position as a victim of IPA, one may undermine the other (Sundaram et al, 2004). However, the significance attributed to the ways in which men account for themselves differs depending on the perspective of the study. Durfee (2011), in her discourse analysis of men's written accounts of the experience of IPA in applications for protection orders for example, suggested that the accounts analysed in her study may have been part of an effort by the men to enact further control over their partners. Further, Corbally's (2011; 2014) narrative study of abused men found that men use 'narrative strategies' of 'fatherhood' and 'being a 'Good Husband'' to express their accounts of the abuse to which they were subjected because the social construction of

masculinity is such that it has a prohibitive effect on the revelation of intimate partner abuse victimisation. By contrast, Eckstein (2010) suggested that men account for their intimate partner abuse in strategic ways that confer them with the advantages of masculine privilege. These studies will be discussed in further detail in chapter two.

In each case, it is possible to consider a dramaturgical metaphor (similar to Goffman's seminal work (Goffman, 1959)) in which men perform particular identities or use particular strategies to achieve an effect on their audience. There is a 'backstage' (private element) to the performances that take place for abused men 'onstage' (in public). This may be to simply tell about the abuse they have experienced in a way that does not undermine their masculinity, or to perform a particular identity in order to be conferred with social advantage. In each instance, this is an intentional, voluntary act in which the subject precedes the narrative.

Considering this view, the theoretical perspective of Judith Butler (1993; 1999; 2005) is adopted in this thesis. Instead of a subject who provides a particular account of oneself but precedes and is separate from this account, Butler proposes that the subject is produced by the narrative that they relate. The discourses that circulate regarding male victims of intimate partner abuse serve as the conditions of possibility for such men, the ground upon which their accounts are constructed, rather than a constraint that must be overcome, according to a Butlerian perspective.

1.4 - Performing Gender: The Butlerian Perspective

Butler's (1999) text 'Gender Trouble' is one of the most widely cited feminist texts of the past thirty years. It has had a significant impact on the theorisation of gender and similarly on research conducted on gender-related issues. Butler (1999) offers a

comprehensive overview of her perspective in 'Gender Trouble', outlining where her own theorisation diverges from and converges with the various theoretical perspectives that she reviews. These include the perspectives of Monique Wittig, Luce Irigaray, Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan and Julia Kristeva. She has been criticised for her syncretic approach and lack of concern (and argument) for the compatibility of the theories from which she draws, however Butler identifies a shared focus on 'liberation' in the writings of each of these theorists. What Butler (1999) rejects in each of these perspectives is the effort to 'overcome' the constraints of gender through reference to something which they suggest precedes gender, or escapes cultural constraints, and which may serve as the ground or foundation from which liberation may take place.

Liberation is subordinated in Butler's (1999) theory because it conflicts with her conceptualisation, drawn from Foucault, of power as distributed and present in all relations. Power is not simply to be found in the repressive impact that laws may have on behaviour. Laws do not simply prohibit behaviour, they also codify and establish the prohibited behaviour as a possible but undesirable alternative to established patterns of behaviour. This is the basis for Butler's (1999) suggestion that power is productive, as well as repressive. It is not simply the case that one can 'liberate' women from male domination, as liberation implies freedom from constraint. Instead, for Butler (1999), women (or anyone) cannot be freed from constraints, one power regime may simply be exchanged for another. This is similar to the critique of the 'narrative of sex-neutrality' (Elshtain, 1987) in which sex is proposed as a neutral/ natural ground which pre-exists gender, which is culturally imposed. This culturally imposed gender has a restrictive effect, forcing individuals to behave in line with a culturally prescribed gender role. There is an imagined time 'before' the imposition of gender to which it is hoped we can

return so that we can escape the constraints of gender. However, Butler (1990) raises the question of how it is that sex may be placed outside language, as unconstructed, and thus a foundation from which we can rebuild after we dismantle gender? The narrative is constructed within the law and cannot know what takes place outside itself (Butler, 1999). At the heart of Butler's (1999) theory, therefore, is a rejection of the notion of an 'outside' to social construction or language, whatever form this may take. We cannot peek over the wall to freedom from cultural constraints as what we see over the wall is simply another 'fabrication'. In fact, there cannot even be a 'seeing over the wall' that is not already conceptualised in language. Instead of liberation Butler proposes a gradual, iterative remaking of gendered norms. In this way I suggest that men who identify themselves as having experienced intimate partner abuse, and tell their stories of abuse, do not reveal a truth of IPA that has been concealed or ignored. Instead, through telling their stories of IPA, men who have experienced IPA contribute to the remaking of gendered norms and the remaking of the narrative of IPA. However, they do not do so through liberation, by directly challenging the discourses which exclude men from consideration as victims of intimate partner abuse. Instead, normative discourses of masculinity and normative discourses of deviant femininity are deployed with the effect that the men are performatively produced as having experienced intimate partner abuse.

This gradual iterative remaking of gendered norms comes in the form of Butler's (1999) theory of performativity which suggests that gender is not something one *is,* rather it is something one *does.* However, in line with the opposition to the notion that gender has some sort of ontological priority, Butler suggests that this 'doing' is that which calls the 'doer' into existence. The 'doer' does not pre-exist the deed, rather the gendered

individual only comes into existence, is rendered recognisable, through their 'doing' of gender. This is 'performativity'. The 'doing' is not playing a 'role' in a dramaturgical sense, it is performing an action which has the effect of bringing the individual into being as gendered. In the current study it is proposed that the men's written and spoken narratives of intimate partner abuse bring them into being as gendered and as victims of IPA.

The distinction between 'performance' and 'performativity' is important in this case. In the former, the dramaturgical metaphor would seem to imply the pre-existence of an individual, a 'doer', who adopts a role in order to achieve a particular effect, in this case the performance of a gender, or the privileges of masculinity (Eckstein, 2010). In the latter, there is a recognition of the historical context in which one exists, the norms that precede the individual and form the basis, or the conditions of possibility, for what they may become. Butler elaborates on this distinction in *Bodies that Matter* (Butler, 1993, p. 234):

> "…performance as bounded 'act' is distinguished from performativity insofar as the latter consists in a reiteration of norms which precede, constrain and exceed the performer and in that sense cannot be taken as the fabrication of the performer's 'will' or 'choice'. The reduction of performativity to performance would be a mistake." (p.234)

The focus on norms which 'precede, constrain and exceed', and thus form the possibilities for action that make subjects possible, draws attention to the fact that one is not the 'master' of one's performance. One does not simply choose to perform a masculine identity or gender, as the notion of 'choice' assumes a 'one' who precedes this choice. Instead, the citation of the gender norm makes it possible to become a 'one' (Butler, 1993).

This 'performativity' is conceived as the 'repeated stylisation of the body' (Butler, 1999).

This emphasis on repetition is central to Butler's proposal for a political challenge to gender norms, or 'gender trouble'. The repetition of cultural norms serves to reinforce them. In fact, she proposes that 'performatives' would not be effective if it were not for the fact that they echoed prior actions which may be seen as holding some authority (Butler, 1993). However, when acts are repeated they are not necessarily repeated identically and this slippage allows for the possibility of 'gender trouble', while at the same time indicating the iterative nature of gender and the slow pace of change. In *Gender Trouble,* Butler (1999) invoked the notion of drag in order to propose a means by which this repetition could lead to change. The 'resignification' of terms and practices may lead to the alteration of gender norms, with drag constituting one form of resignification. Norms are redeployed by subjects and have particular effects. It is not the case that 'anything' is possible, rather the possibilities for political change are modest and derive from existing norms, and their subversion, rather than their radical overthrow. In the current study it is proposed that the citation of masculine norms in a narrative in which it is proposed that men experience intimate partner abuse is one such means of subversion.

The textual metaphor of 'citation' is frequently made use of by Butler, with this being central to understanding the historical dimension of performativity. In *Bodies that Matter,* Butler (1993) gives the example of the judge who cites legal precedent, suggesting that the decision made by the judge is given power not by his personal authority or his 'force of will' but by the 'invocation of convention'. The fact that his decision is tied to earlier legal decisions, through his citation of them, renders his action viable and supportable. However, citationality also contains the seed of performative subversion as texts may be cited in ways or contexts which deploy these things

differently. Thus, according to Butler (1999) subversion must occur 'within the terms of the law', with this subversion leading to unexpected permutations of the law, which proliferates cultural possibilities. This entails a conceptualisation of power in which it is conceived as constraining and productive, rather than repressive. Rather than volition being required to overcome repressive power, as it seems to be in some feminist research where the focus is on structural inequalities that must be transcended, power is understood as constituting the possibilities of volition, according to Butler (1999). This means '…power can neither be withdrawn nor refused, but only redeployed' (Butler, 1999, p.124). By invoking masculine norms in their accounts of intimate partner abuse men engage in subversion 'within the terms of the law'.

1.5 – Butler and Intimate Partner Abuse

Male victims of intimate partner abuse have been suggested to occupy a subordinated masculinity (Migliaccio, 2001), they have described the belief that they are perceived as 'unmanly' (Morgan and Wells, 2016), and their accounts have been positioned as 'unbelievable' by those to whom they are related (Corbally, 2011). Further, the notion that men rarely experience intimate partner abuse can be found in a variety of academic and lay discourses. Butler's (1999) theoretical perspective may offer a way in which to conceptualise male victims in a discrediting context, as well as to undermine the discourses which sustain this context, through 'Gender Trouble'. She suggests that 'gender norms' establish both that which is considered real as well as that which is considered unreal and positions the task of her book *Gender Trouble* as extending legitimacy to those bodies that are cast as unreal:

> "To the extent the gender norms ……establish what will and will not be intelligibly human, what will and will not be considered to be 'real', they establish the ontological field in which bodies may be given legitimate expression. If there is a

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positive normative task in *Gender Trouble,* it is to insist upon the extension of this legitimacy to bodies that have been regarded as false, unreal and unintelligible. (page xxiv-xxv)."

This thesis is concerned with how self-identified male victims of intimate partner abuse are produced both as men and as victims of IPA in the context of written and spoken narratives.

The notion of performativity highlights the unstable, iterative and evolving nature of gender. Instead of gender being a performance of an already existing role, it is the citation and re-citation of discourses that constitute the seminal text of gender. Performativity draws attention to how, by citing these discourses in different contexts or in different ways, gender may be produced differently. It is argued here that the intimate partner abuse of males constitutes a site of 'gender trouble' wherein men's accounts have the effect of explaining how they, contrary to social and biological expectations, have been abused by their female partners.

This study proposes that, through both written and verbal accounts, men do not simply align themselves with, or distance themselves from, particular forms of masculinity. Through the adoption of a theoretical perspective informed by Butler's (1993; 1999) work on gender it is suggested that they are performatively produced as masculine subjects (Butler, 1999) and in their accounts they may cause 'gender trouble'. They potentially redefine masculinity as they deploy it in their accounts (Edley and Wetherell, 1995). Participants make use of common notions of masculinity, but also negotiate with and redeploy these in their accounts, serving to provide new definitions of masculinity in the process. This also avoids the criticism of hegemonic masculinity, that it seeks to find a place for all masculine performances in some taxonomy of gender (Moller, 2007).

1.6 - Managing Accountability – The Butlerian perspective

One issue raised by a perspective informed by Butler (1999) is the issue of 'accountability'. Individuals are positioned as victims through their use of available narrative resources (Blomberg and Borjesson, 2013). I hold that the accounts proffered by the participants in my study do not simply recount the abuse to which they are subjected, they also perform social actions, serving to present the men in particular ways (Butler, 2005). When the men in this study are positioned as 'Good Fathers', for example, it may be argued that they are portrayed as good, innocent men ('ideal victims' (Holstein and Miller, 1990)) and distanced from a suggestion that they may have somehow precipitated the abuse.

Such a focus on responsibility and accountability in accounts from victims of abuse or bullying echoes the findings from studies involving those who have experienced workplace bullying (Blomberg and Borjesson, 2013). Victims of bullying are motivated to manage their accountability in their narrative accounts of bullying as a result of the fact that it is a sensitive subject. Further, Blomberg (2010) claims that the management of responsibility is a central aspect of bullying narratives, particularly in relation to the way in which narrators account for their liability for the bullying they have received. There may be some corollary between bullying narratives and intimate partner abuse narratives, given that both involve patterns of abusive behaviour.

Blame has been identified as a salient issue for male victims of intimate partner abuse (Corbally, 2011) as well as for male victims of sexual abuse (Javaid, 2017a; Javaid, 2017b), and other crimes (Burkar and Akerstrom, 2009). Men fear being blamed for the abuse that they receive (Corbally, 2011; Zverina et al, 2011), for their own experience of rape (Javaid, 2017a; 2017b) or for the crimes committed against them (Burkar and

Akerstrom, 2009). In such cases men may be asked why they didn't protect themselves, fight off their attackers, or run away (Anderson and Doherty, 2008). They may be asked what they did to invite the abuse or violence (Zverina et al, 2011; Javaid, 2017a, 2017b).

1.7 - Summary

This chapter aimed to give an overview of the theoretical perspective adopted for this study. This included a consideration of masculinity and masculine norms that may relate to the account of intimate partner abuse that may be produced by a male victim. It also focused on the approach of Butler (1993; 1999), specifically the concepts of 'performativity' and 'citationality', as well as Butler's orientation to power and ontology. Finally, accountability was discussed in order to consider how individuals are accountable to the demands of the wider language community when they narrate their accounts of intimate partner abuse. The following chapter deals with academic and institutional literature relating to intimate partner abuse, specifically that relating to men who have experienced intimate partner abuse, and highlights the ways in which men are excluded from consideration in such literature.

Chapter Two – Abused Men: Neglect and Controversy

In this study I analyse men's written and spoken accounts of the experience of IPA, examining how IPA is accounted for and how subjectivity is constituted in such narratives. In the foregoing chapter I outlined the theoretical perspective I adopted for the consideration of gender in relation to IPA for this study. The current chapter offers a brief history of the development of interest in IPA, its treatment in the Irish context from which the participants for this study are drawn, and outlines and critiques the literature relating to men who have experienced IPA. This chapter should convey the conditions of possibility within which men who experience IPA give their accounts. The discussion of how IPA is defined, the support that is provided to men, how men who have experienced IPA are perceived by others, and how IPA is conceptualised and measured should give some indication of the context in which men provide accounts of IPA. I suggest that the legislative, cultural and academic discourses which exist to account for IPA offer few subject positions to men who have experienced such IPA. In fact, men who experience such abuse and violence claim that they have been portrayed as 'asking for it' in those discourses which do exist (Zverina et al, 2011). Men face a 'gendered paradox' in which narratives about IPA are gendered feminine but men are expected to present themselves in a way that conforms to normative discourses of masculinity (Durfee, 2011).

In the preceding chapter I suggested that this chapter would discuss those discourses which form the conditions of possibility for male victims of IPA. These discourses structure this chapter. This chapter begins with an overview of the Irish context within which this study takes place. Following this, in section 2.3, I offer a discussion of the historical development of the field of IPA, which should go some way towards outlining

how men have been positioned as the traditional perpetrators of IPA due to the feminist structural conceptualisation of men as universally privileged and driven to maintain this privilege. The field of IPA has expanded to include many more theoretical perspectives than this but the feminist perspective still predominates. The discussion of the conceptualisation of IPA, section 2.4, ranging from how this concept should be defined to debates over measurement, which are closely related to definition, highlights the debate which has arisen over the existence of male victims of IPA. It is accepted by those adopting many approaches that men do experience IPA, however there is wide variation between these approaches in terms of how prevalent this is believed to be. Further, there is wide variation across approaches in terms of the level of engagement with men's experience of IPA, and little consideration of the implications, of the existence of male victims, for theory.

Section 2.7 discusses the perception of male victims of IPA and the way in which these men have been responded to by institutional sources of support is discussed in section 2.5. This conveys both the perceptions of male victims of IPA that have been identified in research and the way that these perceptions play into issues such as help-seeking.

Following the consideration of the conditions of possibility for male victims of IPA I move on to the consideration of that literature dealing with men's accounts of IPA and how men have accounted for themselves and their experience of IPA in such research. Such research reveals how the conditions of possibility for male victims of IPA figure into their own accounts of IPA, as they tell about situations in which it is not believed that men can be the victims of IPA from women, it is believed that men must have done something to instigate the abuse (Hines et al, 2007), men are encouraged to simply protect themselves (Anderson and Doherty, 2008), they negotiate positions for themselves as

victims which lead to their victimisation being questioned (Durfee, 2011) and they position women as not responsible for the abuse (Entilli and Cipoletta, 2017).

This chapter begins with an overview of the Irish Context in relation to IPA.

2.1 - Literature Search

An extensive search of the available literature was carried out at the beginning of this project in October 2013, with further searches carried out on a quarterly basis in order to supplement the literature. The following databases were searched: Web of Knowledge, CINAHL, JSTOR, PsycINFO, PubMed, and ASSIA. The key words that were made use of included: violence, domestic violence, intimate partner violence, intimate partner abuse, domestic abuse, male victims, men, female perpetrators and women. A general search of the internet was also conducted using these terms in order to locate relevant open source literature such as policy documentation or reports published by support groups. Further, the libraries in DCU and Trinity College Dublin were also searched for relevant literature. This extensive search of the available sources resulted in the following literature review, in which the resources deemed most relevant are presented. A table outlining a number of the searches conducted can be found in Appendix A attached to this document.

2.2 – The Irish Context

An estimated 88,000 men in Ireland have experienced severe intimate partner abuse at some point in their lives, according to the most recent statistical data (Watson and Parsons, 2005). Despite this, there is only one dedicated telephone support service[3]

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[3] Amen Support Services in Navan, Co. Meath offer a telephone support service and also provide support through text, e-mail and in face-to-face situations. They also offer counselling services to abused men and legal information and support.

available to men (heterosexual, homosexual, transgendered individuals) in the Republic of Ireland by comparison to 28 intimate partner abuse support services for women (Cosc, 2011). Further, there are 19 refuges available to women but no similar refuges for men (Cosc, 2011). There are 2.5 times the number of female victims of intimate partner abuse but 28 times the number of support services available to them (The situation is worse for LGBT individuals as there are no dedicated support agencies. However, Amen Support Services offer support to people identifying as any gender or sexuality). As such, it is possible to speak of a neglect of men who experience IPA in Ireland. There are few available services which make the position 'male victim of IPA' available to them. The situation in the UK is similar to that in Ireland, in which there are few dedicated organisations for male victims of intimate partner abuse. There are 19 services that offer refuge to male victims of intimate partner abuse, equating to 78 spaces. However, only 20 of these are dedicated to male victims of intimate partner abuse (Brooks, 2016). There are a number of organisations in the UK that provide services to both male and female victims of intimate partner abuse.

Further, men receive little attention in government publications relating to intimate partner abuse, such as the HSE[4] Policy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence (2010), or the Report of the Task Force on Violence Against Women (1997). None of these Irish policy documents and reports deal with men who have experienced IPA in any great detail. Men receive passing reference in such documents where the primary focus is on women who have experienced IPA. Such documents uphold dominant discourses of IPA in which women are the victims and men are the perpetrators, while male victims receive little attention. The HSE report, for example, presents the finding

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[4] The HSE is the Health Service Executive, the Irish health service body.

from Watson and Parsons' (2005) study, that 15% of women and 6% of men experience intimate partner abuse. They present these figures in a table, and go on to discuss IPA that women experience in greater detail. The male figure, however, receives no further discussion. There is no consideration of how men may be impacted by IPA, while in Appendix C, under the gender-neutral title: 'Prevalence of Domestic Violence and/or Sexual Violence in Ireland', there is a lengthy discussion of the impact of such issues on women. A picture of the female victim of IPA is developed, in HSE (2010), as someone who experiences physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, is likely to experience depression, and may not show any visible signs of the abuse. Further, such abuse is widespread and most likely to be carried out by men (HSE, 2010). This document makes available a public discourse of IPA directed as women, but through its silence seems to position IPA experienced by men as 'unsayable', it fails to make a subject position available to abused men. Men are knowable in HSE (2010) only as perpetrators.

My aim here is simply to highlight the neglect of the issues facing men, and, by extension, other groups, not to undermine the positive and necessary work done to address and consider the impact on women who have experienced IPA. This neglect has improved in recent years through the work of COSC, the National Office for Domestic, Sexual and Gender based violence. Their 'what would you do' campaign (COSC, 2018) broadened the representation of IPA to include male victims. Further, the website associated with this campaign makes explicit that men experience such abuse and are entitled to the same protection as women. As such, men who experience IPA are constituted on this website through reference to their 'sameness' to women who experience IPA, in terms of the rights available to them and the acts experienced. However, importantly this sameness does not extend to the harm experienced as a

result of IPA, according to (Cosc, 2018). The construction of a hierarchical relationship between the IPA experienced by men and that experienced by women serves to uphold normative discourses of IPA, even as such discourses are rejected.

2.2.1 - Prevalence in an Irish context

Estimating the prevalence of IPA is a complex process, influenced by the definition of IPA and the way this definition is applied in research, issues that will be discussed in section 2.4. Little is known about the prevalence of IPA in Ireland, especially the extent to which it is experienced by those less commonly associated with IPA, such as LGBT individuals and heterosexual men. Watson and Parsons (2005) definition, outlined below, formed the basis for the measurement of IPA in a ground-breaking large-scale survey of IPA conducted in Ireland. This survey entitled 'Domestic Abuse of Women and Men in Ireland' involved administering 3,077 surveys to randomly selected participants, using telephone interviews (Watson and Parsons, 2005). This study found that intimate partner abuse affects 15% of women and 6% of men in Ireland (Watson and Parsons, 2005) and estimated that 213,000 women and 88,000 men in Ireland have experienced severe abuse at the hands of their partners at some point in their lives. This was the first study in Ireland to present data indicating that men experience intimate partner abuse. This nationally representative survey adopted an acts-based approach but established a distinction between 'severe' and 'minor' forms of abuse, allowing it to avoid treating all experiences of intimate partner abuse as if they were equivalent, regardless of consequences. Such consequences were a central concern of Watson and Parsons (2005) definition. The 'consequences' of abuse were deemed negative if they resulted in physical injury or high levels of fear and distress. Further, 'severe' abuse was identified

as that which formed a pattern (more than one incident of violence or abuse), unless it was a single act that resulted in physical injury.

2.3 – The Historical Constitution of the 'Canonical Narrative' of IPA

Feminist theoretical perspectives have dominated the conceptualisation of IPA, with the result that the figures of the 'male perpetrator' and 'female victim' have become the central characters in the 'canonical narrative' (Bruner, 2004) of IPA, where 'canonical narratives' are the culturally expected forms a narrative will take. As such, male victims of IPA constitute a canonical breach (Bruner, 2004), a deviation from the canonical narrative of male perpetrators and female victims. I suggest that the neglect of male victims of IPA in this canonical narrative has an impact on the 'conditions of possibility' for men who experience violence and abuse from their female partners such that these men construct this narrative as 'against men', in the sense that they recognise themselves as disadvantaged by this narrative.

The canonical narrative of intimate partner abuse as a social problem and criminal issue primarily involving men's violence and abuse of their female partners emerged in the 1970's as a result of women's rights activism (Carney, Buttell and Dutton, 2007). Prior to this, the violence that occurred in family homes was often positioned as the business of the family concerned (Hamel and Nicholls, 2007). Women's shelters, and other supportive organisations, were set up to assist the victims of these crimes (Pizzey, 1977).The experience of activists and victims, in conjunction with research conducted regarding intimate partner abuse, which made use of samples taken from these shelters, are suggested to have led to a view of intimate partner abuse as a problem involving male perpetrators and female victims (Dutton and Nicholls, 2005). Feminist perspectives consider IPA to be the result of societal gender inequality and use qualitative and

quantitative methods to study its effects and prevalence (Dobash and Dobash, 2004; Yllo and Bograd, 1988). This research is discussed in greater detail in section 2.4.5 – Measuring IPA. In Ireland it may be suggested that the privilege and dominance of men was enshrined in a constitution which still states:

> "The State shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home."(Bunreacht na hEireann, 1937, p. 164)

Thus the Irish constitution renders male privilege visible through its identification of women's duties in the home as of paramount importance. Further, until 1973 women were required by law to leave their jobs in the public service or banks, when they were married. Thus, it was perhaps not surprising that the initial focus was on women, given their subordinated status in the Irish state, at least. The patriarchal organisation of society, which asserted that men were dominant and women were submissive, was viewed as having sanctioned this behaviour through the social institutions of family and marriage (Yllo and Bograd, 1988; Pence and Paymar, 1993). IPA was positioned as an effort by husbands to exert control and dominance over their wives through the use of violence, psychological aggression and control of household finances (Yllo and Bograd, 1988). As such, intimate partner abuse was conceptualised as a problem which was social in origin, rather than one simply between a husband and wife. Women's shelters, and other supportive organisations, were set up to assist the victims of these crimes. The experience of activists and victims, in conjunction with research conducted regarding intimate partner abuse, which made use of samples taken from these shelters, are suggested to have led to a view of intimate partner abuse as a problem involving male perpetrators and female victims (Dutton and Nicholls, 2005).

While this perspective put a focus on the social and gendered nature of intimate partner abuse it unfortunately left little room to account for heterosexual relationships which

did not conform to the male-perpetrator and female-victim format or non-heterosexual relationships. The focus on the patriarchal organisation of society, and its resultant inequality, means that it is difficult to account for a situation in which men (who are conceptualised as socially more powerful) may be victims of abuse and so these situations are often treated as anomalous, receiving little further consideration. Further, several scholars propose that average differences in physical size likely mean that the consequences of violent acts are less damaging for men than for women who had received them (Dobash and Dobash, 2004). So these anomalous situations, on the rare occasions that they did occur, were of lesser significance. This perspective thus constitutes IPA as a problem affecting women primarily and supports this by privileging injury inducing physical abuse, and subordinates forms of IPA, such as psychological abuse that are less likely to cause injury but are no less damaging. It seems to me that the adherence to a structural theory which adopts quite a deterministic perspective to masculinity and femininity contributes to a climate of disbelief surrounding male victims of IPA.

The theoretical assumptions of a family violence perspective (a perspective which viewed violence in terms of 'acts' (Steinmetz 1977a; 1980) discussed further in section 2.4.6) differed from traditional perspectives regarding the meaning and perpetration of IPV (Kimmel, 2011; Yllo and Bograd, 1988). The family violence perspective of Murray Straus (2009) and his colleagues, for example, conceptualises IPA as a interpersonal issue, resulting from inappropriate conflict management strategies, as opposed to a societal issue. This, coupled with the focus on acts of violence as opposed to criminal behaviour, seemed to have the result that men reported much more IPA. Thus in this perspective men were considered as victims.

Finally, there are research studies influenced by poststructuralism and intersectionality which consider the multiple ways in which IPA may be experienced and constructed, in various cultures and by various genders, ethnicities, sexualities (Guadalupe-Diaz and Jasinski, 2017). As well as this there are various legal definitions which have implications for, and are themselves the result of, cultural conceptualisations of IPA. These also have a material impact on IPA and its extraneous consequences (Basile, 2005). All of the above form part of the complex conceptual landscape of IPA which, I assert, establishes the 'conditions of possibility' for men who attempt to account for themselves as having experienced IPA. The appearance of men who reported experiences of IPA was problematic for feminist conceptualisations of IPA and was either dismissed as unlikely, or characterised as rare to the extent that it could be ignored. Researchers set about establishing a hierarchy of victims of IPA, with this hierarchy predicated on the harm that resulted from IPA and with measures of harm focused on physical IPA.

2.4 - Conceptualising and Measuring IPA

There are multiple definitions of IPA. Different definitions constitute IPA differently with this often having direct implications for the measurement of IPA and the prevalence estimates that result (Krug et al, 2002) and whether men are seen as a group who are affected by IPA to a greater or lesser extent. There are numerous disagreements over how broad or narrow the definition of IPA should be, whether political considerations should be taken into account or just acts of violence (Walby et al, 2017), whether patterning is always necessary or a single act of severe violence can institute an abusive context (Johnson, 2008). The 'broadness' and 'narrowness' of IPA have direct implications for men as broader definitions, such as those employed in Family Violence theories (outlined in greater detail in section 2.4.6), find high prevalence of IPA

experienced by men but are the subject of significant controversy due to their conceptualisation of IPA as a 'tactic' in a family dispute. Thus definitions and terminology, and their implications for the construction of IPA are considered here. These form part of the 'conditions of possibility' for male victims of IPA (Butler, 1999).

2.4.1 – Defining IPA

I provide a definition here not for the purposes of drawing boundaries around the issues that should be considered constitutive of IPA for now and for all time, but as a starting point for the study, so that there may be some understanding of how I currently construct IPA. Taking into account the historical development of the field(s) which offer constructions of IPA, as well as the various legal and institutional definitions in use in Ireland and internationally, a definition was developed for the purposes of this study. I decided that a broad definition of abuse should be adopted as the working definition for the purposes of this research, aware that previous research had found that prior definitions were insufficiently broad to account for the way in which IPA was constructed by men (Corbally, 2011). The term 'Intimate Partner Abuse' was used to refer to the phenomenon under study, following Corbally (2011), as the focus was on men who had experienced IPA from female wives, girlfriends and partners. Further 'abuse' seemed to cover both violent and non-violent acts. Intimate Partner Abuse was defined for this thesis as:

> "the intentional use of power manifested by a pattern of behaviour within a current or past intimate relationship that causes, or has the capacity to cause psychological, physical or sexual harm. This abuse may be experienced by any individual regardless of gender, race, or sexuality. Such behaviour includes but is not limited to:
> - Psychological abuse, such as intimidation, humiliation and threats etc.
> - Physical abuse, such as hitting, kicking, beating, slapping etc.

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- Sexual abuse, such as forced intercourse and sexual coercion.

- Controlling behaviour, such as restrictions or isolation from supports, which may take the form of family, friends, information, assistance or money. This behaviour may also include controlling the movement of victims.

- Stalking

- Neglectful behaviour which may result in physical or psychological harm to others"

This definition of IPA followed Corbally's (2011, p. 33-34) definition but with the addition of more specific reference to gender, sexuality and race. This comprehensive definition accounts for abuse in past relationships as well as present relationships. It also positions as abusive actions which may not cause harm but can be identified as possessing this capacity. This is included in order to allow for the possibility that men may not identify the abusive behaviours of their partners as harmful (Corbally, 2011). This confers the researcher with significant responsibility for identifying that which has the 'capacity' to be harmful, which may present a challenge to the agency of those men who participate. However, the close attention to context which is characteristic of the narrative research approach adopted in this study should mitigate this. Hughes et al (2014) argue that the larger historical and social context in which the relationship is embedded must be understood by the researcher in order to interpret the meaning of these behaviours. Thus, the identification of behaviours that have the potential to cause harm is a highly interpretive exercise which requires engagement with the context in which the participant provides their account. Further, it seems to make explicit the role others play in the constitution of IPA for those who experience, a point highlighted by Loseke's (2001) focus on formula stories.

This definition of IPA provides only the starting point for research, not its end (Hughes, Corbally and Chau, 2014). It is not simply a matter of identifying acts of violence to which

the men have been subjected and ticking them off a list. All definitions are partial, with the work of Corbally (2011; 2014) and Allen-Collinson (2009), among others, conveying how the phenomenon of intimate partner abuse may expand beyond conventional definitional boundaries through a focus on men's narrative accounts of IPA.

However, the arguments surrounding how IPA should be defined are of material interest to this study, which has as its focus how IPA is constituted in discourse for men who experience it.

2.4.2 – Terminology

I have decided to make use of the term Intimate Partner Abuse to refer to the experience of violence and abuse in heterosexual relationships, for this study. There are multiple terms used to refer to IPA but this term was selected for a variety of reasons. 'Domestic violence' and 'Domestic abuse', for example were deemed to restrict the focus to the domestic sphere, thus ignoring the abuse committed by ex-partners or current partners, outside the home (Mahoney, 1991; Kurz, 1996). Given Corbally's (2011) finding that IPA continued even after her participants had left the family home, with this abuse often enacted through the manipulation of children or the restriction of access to children, this seemed relevant. The term 'intimate partner' can be thought of as avoiding such criticisms by focusing on the perpetrator of the abuse, rather than the putative location.

However, I also believed that the term intimate had further resonance that extended beyond the representational. Beyond consideration of the reference that the concepts 'intimacy' and 'domestic' make to the relationship and location in which intimate partner abuse occurs there is often little further engagement with the terms in the IPA literature. For example, there has been little consideration of intimacy, which has been conferred with epistemological significance by Plummer (2003), in his book *Intimate*

Citizenship, describing it as a special way of knowing, loving and being close to another person. It implies a privileged knowledge of the other person. He brought this further in his consideration of Stanko's (1985) book *Intimate Intrusions* as the relation of a different kind of intimacy, an 'inmost violation' of the body. I would suggest that much of the IPA recounted by men seems to take a similar form. While not necessarily an embodied violation, the men in several studies of IPA recounted a violation of intimacy, rather than an intimate violation (Migliaccio, 2001; Allen-Collinson, 2009; Corbally, 2011; Zverina et al, 2011). They suggested that their female partners made use of their intimate knowledge of them, and what they valued, to harm them. One example of this was the disruption of contact with their children (Corbally, 2014; Morgan and Wells, 2016). Thus, in this case, 'intimate' does much more than simply indicate a close relationship, it indicates the tools used to abuse.

Further, terminology may be implicitly exclusionary. Of interest to the current study is the failure to explicitly include heterosexual men. The cultural association of domestic abuse with heterosexual women may result in a situation in which men fail to see themselves as having experienced intimate partner abuse. As well as this, the term 'violence' may provide an example of such exclusion. The word 'violence' recalls physically aggressive actions primarily (Walby et al, 2017), even where it is used to refer to more than physical aggression. 'Abuse' seems to avoid obscuring those abusive actions, such as psychological abuse, financial abuse, and restriction of access to children which are also recognised as part of IPA (Walby et al, 2017).

2.4.3 – Constricting the Conceptualisation of a 'victim' of IPA

Developing a definition involves making a decision about what constitutes violence and abuse for the purposes of the definition. What may be considered violence is socially

constructed, has varied over time and is still a source of contention (Muehlenhard and Kimes, 1999). How IPA is conceptualised is closely related to *who* decides what counts as victimisation and *who* defines its seriousness and meaning. Definitions delineate what acts and circumstances constitute intimate partner abuse. Who constitutes an exemplar of the category 'victim of intimate partner abuse', who occupies a more peripheral position within the category, and who falls outside the category, is given by the definition adopted. However, developing a definition is not simply a neutral matter of identifying those acts that may be deemed abusive or those contexts that transform seemingly innocuous acts into abuse, through empirical observation. There are important questions of epistemology and ontological commitment that have an impact on what comes to be seen as abuse. There is no 'true' or universal definition of intimate partner abuse, each definition simply constitutes the phenomenon differently. The definition becomes a site of power implicated in the creation of the conditions of possibility for particular subjects (Butler, 1999). How people label and explain their experiences is affected by how these terms are defined (Muehlenhard et al, 1992), an important consideration for this study as it has been noted that men have difficulty identifying their experiences as abusive (Corbally, 2011; Zverina et al, 2011).

Due to the historical role of feminist perspectives in the development of the current conceptualisation of IPA, as outlined in section 2.3, heterosexual women who have experienced such abuse may be considered the exemplars of the category (Billig, 1989). Various experiences of physical or psychological abuse may be considered manifestations of 'power and control' in the relationship, with this 'power and control' the central concept in feminist discourses of IPA which construct the subject position of the victim of IPA. Crucially, power and control in feminist perspectives on IPA is

considered a micro-manifestation of male institutional power, or patriarchy. As such the subordination of women in society in general is the founding assumption of feminist perspectives, with IPA being one example of this. This can be seen in the original 'Duluth Power and Control Wheel', where the use of male privilege is one form of abuse (Pence and Paymar, 1993). There are variations across feminist perspectives in terms of the way in which patriarchy is conceptualised but the subordination of women to men is present in different forms in all such perspectives (Weedon, 1987). This is important because such feminist conceptualisations effectively construct IPA as a phenomenon exclusive to women. Where subordination to patriarchy is considered the exclusive preserve of women, and is a necessary aspect of the category of IPA it is difficult to imagine how men may become members of this category.

Several efforts to make sense of IPA against heterosexual men have drawn on comparisons to the experience of women (Migliaccio, 2002; Allen-Collinson, 2009) and those who are sceptical of men's claims to have experienced IPA refer to differences between men's presentations of themselves as abused and women's (Anderson and Umberson, 2001). It would seem to be the case that women are the exemplars against which the experiences of others are measured, when IPA is conceptualised as such. This has had the result of unsatisfactorily accounting for the abuse of those who are deemed peripheral to the category of victim of IPA (Billig, 1987), including heterosexual men. The failure of this conceptualisation to account for all victims is acknowledged by Renzetti (1996) when she suggests that gender neutral definitions are necessary for the inclusion of lesbians. She thus suggests that the essence of the category be changed from one based on institutional power and control predicated on a gender binary to one in which this binary is irrelevant. These are essentially disagreements about the 'reality' of the

subject of IPA, which have implications for how they are constituted through discourse (Butler, 1999). The discourses deployed are forms of knowledge which essentially produce the victims of IPA.

Gender neutral definitions, as proposed by Renzetti (1996) and others, abound in legal definitions of IPA. For example, the 'Report of the Task Force on Violence against Women' provides the following definition of 'domestic violence':

> "the use of physical or emotional force or threat of physical force, including sexual violence, in close adult relationships. This includes violence perpetrated by spouse, partner, son, daughter or any other person who is a close blood relation to the victim" (Report of the Task Force on Violence against Women, 1997: 27).

This definition is dated, at over 20 years old but is a well-used definition in Ireland. It explicitly classifies psychological and emotional force or the threat of physical force as violence, thus offering a broad and inclusive definition of IPA. However, despite being gender neutral it could be suggested that victims who may not be commonly associated with the phenomenon of domestic violence may fail to recognise themselves in this definition. Adopting a gender neutral definition, while not explicitly excluding anyone from consideration, has the effect of rendering gender irrelevant to IPA. It ignores the gendered nature of the experience of IPA. As observed by MacKinnon (1990):

> "Gender neutrality means that you cannot take gender into account...neutrality enforces a non-neutral status quo (MacKinnon, 1990, p.12)."

In the case of the definition from the 'Task Force' above the gender neutral definition may serve to support a status quo that the government sponsored 'Task Force' is implicated in. The above makes no mention of the patriarchal social context found in feminist conceptualisations. Intimate partner abuse is not seen as a social issue to be addressed through tackling gender inequality, rather it is a crime which may be dealt

with in an individualised fashion (Howe, 2008). Gender neutral definitions are not politically neutral as they move away from a strict definition of intimate partner abuse in terms of patriarchal or structural power. The failure to recognise the roles played by gendered norms means that they disappear from view. While Migliaccio (2002) suggests that IPA is a human issue first and one of gender second, I would take the view that IPA is both gendered and human simultaneously, not sequentially. The way in which IPA is experienced, enacted and addressed is gendered. A broader consideration of the role of gender is desirable, not its exclusion. Given the ridicule and disbelief reported by male victims of IPA (Corbally, 2011; Zverina et al, 2011) I suggest that the gendered nature of IPA be considered and this has been taken into account in the definition outlined in section 2.4.1 above. However, identifying IPA as gendered does not involve the deterministic assumption that men's experience of IPA can be read off their gender. Instead efforts will be made to avoid unitary conceptualisations of 'men', and acknowledge the multitude of ways in which men's accounts may be gendered.

Aside from gender neutrality there are other ways in which definitions may constitute abuse that may have implications for men. Watson and Parsons (2005) seminal study of 'domestic abuse' provided the first prevalence estimates of IPA in Ireland. This large scale study framed 'domestic abuse' using the following definition:

> "a pattern of physical, emotional, or sexual behaviour between partners in an intimate relationship that causes or risks causing, significant negative consequences for the person affected." (Watson and Parsons, 2005, p.38).

The definition makes specific reference to the consequences of abuse as an indicator of whether or not what has occurred is abusive. However, 'significant negative consequences' were defined as those that necessitated the assistance of institutional forces, such as the legal or criminal justice system, or require the use of the support

services such as 'Women's Aid' or 'Amen Support Services'. However, given that there is only one support service for men in Ireland there are fewer opportunities for men to position themselves as abused. Further, men are less likely to seek help (Addis and Mahalik, 2003), possibly further restricting this population.

Deciding how to define IPA is inextricably related to politics and power. It is a complex issue that involves more than simply deciding which behaviours may be listed under the heading of IPA.

2.4.5 - Measuring IPA

Numerous approaches have been taken to the measurement of IPA, with each approach conceptualising IPA differently and finding different rates of IPA as a result. An entire PhD could be conducted examining the different methods of measurement of IPA. It is beyond the scope of this study to provide a comprehensive review of these. In this section I critique some of the available methods and explain how the measurement of IPA is relevant to the study of men's narratives of IPA. It is my contention in this section that the measured prevalence of IPA may have some impact on how IPA against men is constituted in discourse.

The most prominent approaches to the measurement of prevalence, and those which will be focused on here are the 'Family Violence' perspective, the 'Violence against Women' perspective, and crime surveys, which fall somewhere in between. These perspectives will be outlined in turn, by reference to their central assumptions, and the reasons for their divergence will be explored. These perspectives diverge significantly in terms of the prevalence rates that they find for men and women who have experienced and enacted IPA. While the Family Violence perspective finds that men and women experience IPA at roughly equal rates the limitations of this acts-based approach

contributes to the disbelief surrounding findings generated by such studies. Violence against Women studies conceptualise IPA as the result of male structural dominance and suggest that intimate partner abuse against men is rare (Dobash and Dobash, 2004).

Crime surveys form another source of data, conceptualising IPA as a crime but making use of acts based measures to record information about IPA.

The divergent prevalence statistics for IPA are related to some degree at least, to the way in which IPA is conceptualised by the studies concerned, as this influences how IPA is measured. By conceptualising IPA differently each of these approaches constitutes male victims of IPA differently, as rare, as victims of crime or as likely to use violence to resolve a family conflict as they are to experience it.

2.4.6 - Family Violence

There are several 'Family Violence' theories but the one which I focus on is that associated with the work of Murray Straus, which conceptualises intimate partner abuse as a tactic employed in an effort to manage an argument or family disagreement (Straus, 2009). The rate at which such tactics are deployed is measured using the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS), a self-report scale recording acts of violence or abuse enacted or experienced by the respondent. The CTS asks respondents what happens "when they disagree, get annoyed with the other person, or just have spats or fights because they're just in a bad mood or tired or for some other reason" (Straus, 1979, p.87). Studies using this scale typically make use of representative samples and find that IPA occurs at roughly the same rates for both men and women (Straus, 1997, 2009; Archer, 2000; Dutton et al, 2005; Desmarais et al, 2012), with the National Family Violence Survey, conducted by Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz (1980), serving as a prominent early example. This study found that 12.1% (3.8% severe) husbands abused their wives, while

11.6% of wives abused their husbands (4.6% severe abuse) (Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, 1980). There was no statistically significant difference between the prevalence rates calculated for these two groups. Such findings have been replicated many times, with a meta-analysis conducted by Archer (2000) finding that IPA perpetration and victimisation was almost equal between men and women.

As the CTS frames IPA as a 'conflict tactic' to be used in quotidian disputes it has been suggested that this scale trivialises or normalises intimate partner abuse (Dobash et al, 1992; Kimmel, 2002). This measure does not record if an act was experienced as abusive, making it difficult to separate the trivial from the abusive. This has resulted in the validity of the CTS being called into question, with the suggestion that its prevalence estimates result from the incorrect classification of innocuous incidents as abusive, such as a 'playful kick' (Dobash et al, 1992). In response to criticisms such as this, the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale was developed (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy and Sugarman, 1996). This addressed some of the criticisms surrounding the original CTS by including a scale of sexual aggression, and clarifying some items. For example, they changed the item 'Threw something at him/her' to 'Threw something at my partner that could hurt', in this way indicating that the focus was on behaviours that could cause harm, as opposed to innocuous behaviours like 'pillow-fights' (Hamby, 2017). However, Hamby (2017) has been critical of the way the changes to this scale were made, suggesting that the distinction between 'severe' and 'minor' acts on the 'Physical Assault' scale was made on the basis of 'general perceptions about the likely seriousness' and not based on any scientific evidence regarding physical or other harm. As a result it may be suggested that, paraphrasing Walby et al (2017), the CTS and CTS2 are scales that fail to make an adequate distinctions between 'abuse' and 'not-abuse'.

Despite such criticism, the broad definition adopted by the CTS allows men (and

women), who do not see the acts of violence perpetrated against them as criminal or even as intimate partner abuse, to indicate that they have experienced such acts (Straus, 2011). As men do not often view their experience as abuse this may explain, at least in part, why those studies which simply count acts of violence and abuse demonstrated higher rates overall, particularly among men (Hines and Malley-Morrison, 2001). It would seem that men report experiencing more violence because there is less stigma attached when it is not identified as criminal.

The CTS has been criticised for failing to consider the power dynamics at play in a relationship (Dobash and Dobash, 2004), treating all similar abusive acts as equivalent. There is little acknowledgement of the social construction of gender and the impact that this may have on the experience of intimate partner abuse for both men and women (Anderson, 2007). Further, a slap by an individual who has been on the receiving end of regular violence may be treated as equivalent to a slap by the individual engaging in regular violence towards that individual. It does not seem possible to identify whether violence was defensive or otherwise, on the basis of the CTS, a point that is acknowledged by Straus (2009). Further, as men are, on average, larger than women it has been suggested that this size advantage mitigates the violence and abuse experienced by men, meaning that men are better able to protect themselves (Pagelow, 1985). Studies finding 'gender symmetry' challenge public knowledge that intimate partner abuse involves a male perpetrator and a female victim.

2.4.7 - Violence Against Women

By contrast, the 'Violence against Women' perspective conceptualises intimate partner abuse as abuse engaged in by men in order to exert dominance over women in intimate relationships (Yllo and Bograd, 1988; Johnson and Leone, 2005). The patriarchy (Walby,

1990), a structure supportive of male dominance, is the basis for such control and thus the root of IPA (Kurz, 1993). Violence by women is presumed to be defensive or pre-emptive as a result of the influence of patriarchal power in the relationship. Those adopting a 'Violence against Women' perspective suggest that men engage in much more abuse towards their female partners than vice versa (Dobash and Dobash, 2004; Larsen and Hamberger, 2015). Dobash and Dobash (2004), for example, have suggested that there is little evidence that men experience intimate partner abuse that resembles that encountered by women.

Within the 'Violence against Women' perspective there is a focus on the 'constellation of abuse', which is all acts of control and aggression within the context of the intimate relationship that often accompany 'men's violence' (Dobash and Dobash, 2004). Dobash and Dobash (2004) and Dobash et al (1992) criticise acts-based approaches, such as the CTS for failing to consider this wider context, which they believe will offer more complete explanations of the abuse than can be offered by the CTS and allow the identification of the aggressive partner. The CTS identifies the aggressive partner by simply asking who initiated the violence.

The 'Violence against Women' perspective foregrounds gender as a political category implicated in societal institutions. Violence and abuse is more closely related to propping up societal institutions such as marriage, and maintaining masculinist power, as opposed to a family conflict between equal partners. Researchers in the 'Violence against Women' tradition make use of samples derived from support services or contacted through hospitals or the criminal justice system (Johnson, 2008).

While the validity of the CTS and Family Violence approaches has been called into question for conceptualising IPA too broadly, the VAW approach may be accused of conceptualising IPA too narrowly and of using the experience of women as a benchmark.

The types of IPA reported by men and the outcomes they experience may be subordinated to that of women (Dobash and Dobash, 2004), as being less serious. By contrast, Dobash and Dobash (2004) in a study which conducted 190 interviews with 95 couples in an effort to compare the violence of men and women, found that the problem was mainly one of men's violence against women. They further suggested that men's violence was not comparable to women's (Dobash and Dobash, 2004). Female intimate partner violence has been acknowledged by some feminist inclined researchers (Walker, 1984; Saunders, 1988) but these scholars often suggest that this violence is defensive or pre-emptive, while men's injuries have been suggested to be the result of mutual violence (Johnson, 2008). The finding that men may experience intimate partner abuse has also been explained as the result of an invalid measure by some researchers (Dobash, Dobash, Wilson, & Daly, 1992; Kurz, 1993; Walby et al, 2017).

The scepticism surrounding men's receipt of violence and abuse is often supported through reference to the asymmetry in size and strength between men and women, in general. These differences are suggested to be such that the violence of men is much more injurious to women than vice versa (Pagelow, 1985; Phelan et al, 2005). When individuals were unarmed men were much more likely to injure women than vice versa (Felson, 1996), even as a result of low level violence, such as pushing or slapping (Frieze, 2005). I suggest that the above offers support to a discourse which discredits or undermines the abuse to which men are subjected. It relies upon broad generalisations about sex-based differences in size. These generalisations may be justified but it is my contention that the focus on these as sex-based differences obscures the fact that the differences are related to size as opposed to sex (Felson, 2002). Gender differences in injury were reduced when size and strength were controlled and such differences were unimportant when weapons were involved (Felson, 1996). By presenting this as a male-

female distinction the authors contribute to the myth that men are invulnerable to the violence of women.

2.4.8 - Crime Surveys

Crime surveys typically find lower rates of violence and abuse than nationally representative surveys (Kimmel, 2002; Desmarais et al, 2012). In their examination of data from the Violence against Women survey, Gartner and Macmillan (1995) found that violence by known others is less likely to come to the attention of the police. This has typically been identified as related to the fact that such surveys conceptualise violence and abuse as crimes, and participants are typically less likely to report intimate partner abuse when it is conceptualised as such (McCarrick et al, 2015). Crime surveys also find greater differences in prevalence between the abuse and violence experienced by men and women than nationally representative surveys (Rennison and Welchans, 2000; Archer, 2000). According to the Crime Survey in England and Wales (ONS.gov.uk, 2015), which asked 35,248 adults about crimes they have experienced, 8% of the female population and 5% of the male population were affected by intimate partner abuse. Further, 1640 women by comparison to 700 men were murdered by an intimate partner in 2007, so females were killed by intimate partners at twice the rate of men (Catalano et al, 2009) and 39% of all women murdered in the US in 2010 (Catalano, 2013) were murdered by intimate partners. In the latter case, the corresponding figure for men murdered by an intimate partner was 3% (Catalano, 2013). Hospital emergency care facilities, and other facilities, such as shelters are also predominantly populated by women (Pence and Paymar, 1993; Kimmel, 2002; Hamberger and Larsen, 2015). Such findings would seem to indicate that the intimate partner abuse experienced by men does not have similar damaging outcomes to that experienced by women. This relates

to Walby et al's (2017) contention that the measurement of intimate partner abuse must take account of harm or it will find misleading results.

2.4.9 – Controversy over 'Gender Symmetry'

As mentioned, there are broad differences between 'Violence Against Women' approach and the 'Family Violence' approach in terms of how they conceptualise and frame intimate partner abuse, with this having implications for the rates of violence that they find.

The findings of studies adopting the CTS or similar scales have been used to suggest that gender is not a salient factor in IPA, as a result of the consistent finding that men and women perpetrate and experience intimate partner abuse at roughly equivalent rates (Archer, 2000; Hines et al, 2007). Rather, they suggest that IPA should be seen as a 'human issue' as gender-based interpretations are not supported by empirical data (Dutton and Nicholls, 2005; Hines et al, 2007; Graham-Kevan, 2007).

It is important to note that women experience IPA in greater numbers than men, for the purposes of policy and planning the use of scarce government resources. However, the controversy over prevalence findings may contribute to a cultural context in which the IPA experience of men becomes the subject of debate. If IPA against men is portrayed as a rarity it may then be up to the men to explain how it is that they are a member of this rare group, to justify their position as victims of IPA.

The 'Gender Symmetry' controversy, as the dispute over appropriate sampling, methodology, and measured prevalence has come to be known, is of relevance to the current study due to the way in which IPA against men may be constituted in discourse as a result of such findings and the impact on the context facing abused men as they account for themselves as having experienced intimate partner abuse. Each of the

perspectives outlined above allow for the possibility that men may experience intimate partner abuse, but they differ substantially in terms of how widespread and serious they believe this issue to be. Such divergent positions abound in the literature on intimate partner abuse and the controversy continues. The question raised here is how do men account for themselves as having experienced intimate partner abuse in such a polarised context? While individual men and women may be quite distant from the academic context in which such debates occur, the findings of such studies influence practice in many institutions with which they come in contact. Further, newspaper articles often make use of various sources in their reporting relating to IPA and modern technology often allows readers to comment on such pieces. A glance at such comment threads gives an indication of the polarised nature of the debate even outside the academy and the reach of work such as that outlined above. This controversy forms part of the theoretical landscape facing men when they account for themselves as victims of intimate partner abuse and forms part of the 'conditions of possibility' for such men (Butler, 1999). The disagreement over prevalence, contributes to a discourse in which men are forced to justify their victimisation, as it deviates from the 'canonical narrative' (Bruner, 2004) of intimate partner abuse offered by such studies.

2.5 - Men's help-seeking experiences

While the support services available to men, in Ireland and elsewhere, are limited, which may in itself have implications for how IPA is constituted, there is also the issue of how men seek help and their experiences with various services. Men are often reluctant to seek help (Courtenay, 2000; Migliaccio, 2001; Addis and Mahalik, 2003) due to societal expectations surrounding masculinity.

Men are far less likely to contact the Gardaí (Irish police) as a result of severe abuse than

women. Only 5% of men in Ireland contact the police as a result of severe abuse, by comparison to 29% of women (Watson and Parsons, 2005), according to the most recent statistics. Drijber et al (2013) found that less than 15% of men reported abuse to the police. The men in this survey based study, conducted in the Netherlands, were more likely to call the police following a physical assault. Perhaps this is because there may be some physical evidence that an assault has taken place, and thus some support for their account. However, when men make contact with police, they report negative experiences, with this found by both quantitative (Hines et al, 2007; Douglas and Hines, 2011) and qualitative (Migliaccio, 2001; Corbally, 2011) research, both in Ireland and internationally. Only 44% of men who contacted the police, in Douglas and Hines (2011) study, found them helpful. Men report experiencing ridicule and disbelief when disclosing abuse to the police (Corbally, 2011; Machado et al, 2017), even if these revelations are coupled with an admission of guilt from the perpetrator (Migliaccio, 2001). Men report being disbelieved by the police and, in some cases, are believed to be the abusers themselves (Hines et al, 2007; Corbally, 2011). The police reportedly fail to take men's claims seriously (Buzawa and Austin, 1993; Drijber et al, 2013), or sometimes fail to respond to calls for assistance (Douglas et al, 2012; Machado et al, 2017). Some men believe that there is little the police can do to help their situation (Drijber et al, 2013;). By contrast, women report finding the police helpful in such situations (Watson and Parsons, 2005; Johnson, 2007). It seems that men in Ireland and elsewhere construct the police as unhelpful to male victims of IPA, and some police, through their handling of these men position them as falling outside the category of victim of IPA. For example, in Machado et al (2017), a qualitative study conducted in Portugal, one participant reported that police refused to treat their situation as intimate partner abuse.

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As well as negative reactions from police, Hines, Brown and Dunning (2007) found that men were turned away from the available intimate partner abuse services. In the absence of sufficient services dealing with male victims of abuse, some men have attempted to make use of the services traditionally established to serve the needs of women (Hines et al, 2007). Hines et al's (2007) study interviewed 246 callers to a domestic abuse hotline for men (DAHM), finding that men reported that they had been re-victimised by services that existed to assist female victims of intimate partner abuse. Some of the men reported being laughed at, accused of being the batterer, or even referred to batterers' programmes by intimate partner abuse agencies (Douglas et al, 2012). There are over two thousand intimate partner abuse agencies that women can access for assistance, in the United States, but these are often reluctant to provide support for men (Hines and Douglas, 2011). 67% of 302 male participants reported that these services were not at all helpful (Douglas and Hines, 2011), while 25% reported that they were connected with helpful sources of support as a result of their contact with DV hotlines. The willingness of IPA services to assist men appears to differ from state to state in the USA, with Hines and Douglas (2011) suggesting that this is related to political affiliation. They found that services in the more politically conservative states were more likely to provide services to men (Hines and Douglas, 2011). This finding may have important implications for the social construction of IPA, highlighting that more conservative states may deploy discourses which are more likely to constitute IPA as a phenomenon that affects men. Or perhaps more conservative states are hostile to those feminist discourses which traditionally account for IPA. By contrast, however, in Machado et al's (2017) qualitative study of men's hep-seeking experiences in Portugal, men reported finding DV agencies helpful. It would seem that jurisdiction and perhaps the social construction of IPA in different locations can have an impact on men's

experience of help-seeking.

Men prefer the support of family and friends (Watson and Parsons, 2005; Douglas and Hines, 2011; Machado et al, 2017) and mental health and medical professionals (Douglas and Hines, 2011). Douglas and Hines (2011) propose that these individuals and professionals took the participants and their concerns seriously, while traditional intimate partner abuse support services did not always do so.

The positive and negative help-seeking experiences reported by men reportedly have an impact on the behaviour and mental health of the men in question (Douglas and Hines, 2011). Positive help-seeking experiences are suggested to 'act as a protective factor against mental health problems', while negative experiences have been reported to lead to further traumatisation (Douglas and Hines, 2011). Men's risk of reaching the cut-off for PTSD[5] increased with each negative experience they had, and the likelihood of men abusing alcohol decreased with every positive experience they had (Douglas and Hines, 2011).These claims highlight the importance of ensuring that men's interactions with service providers are positive.

Men's reluctance to seek help (Addis and Mahalik, 2003) has been explained through recourse to the social construction of masculinities. Helpline staff from IPA agencies in the United States, in Tsui et al's (2010) study which examined men's use of intimate partner abuse services, suggested that men's reluctance to seek help was related to the societal expectation that men should be able to repel abuse and resolve the issues that they face. Tsui et al's (2010) study further suggested that abused men refrain from engaging in help-seeking as a result of a perception that existing services would not cater

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[5] This corresponded to a score of 45 on the PTSD Check List (Weathers, Litz, Herman, Huska, and Keane, 1993). Reaching the clinical cut-off score of 45 was accepted as an indication of the presence of PTSD.

to them, shame and embarrassment about seeking help, stigmatization or the perception that no one views abused men as victims, fear, and denial. The fear and denial reported by the participants was centred on issues relating to masculinity. Support workers in Tsui et al's (2010) study believed that abused men feared 'losing male identity' or 'being labelled as feminine', while denial was positioned as a form of 'self-defence', helping to preserve their masculinity. Thus, the participants in Tsui et al's (2010) study proposed that the social construction of masculinity established the conditions of possibility within which men experience their abuse and seek help. Masculinity and the experience of IPA were constructed as incompatible by those support workers who assist men. Given such constructions, however, one may wonder how those men who do access support services constitute themselves as victims of IPA. O'Brien, Hunt and Hart's (2005) finding that men who construct their help-seeking, in an illness context, as a move towards a more valued masculinity are more likely to seek help, may offer some explanation for this. These men approached help-seeking in a way that supported masculinity rather than challenged it, extending normative discourses of masculinity so that help-seeking was included within them. Male help-seeking seemed to be achieved through the citation of discourses (Butler, 1999) associated with masculinity as opposed to embracing victimisation.

2.6 - Men and the Courts

The legislative context is another source of constitutive discourses of IPA in Ireland. The legal mechanisms which exist to deal with intimate partner abuse in Ireland are gender neutral and outlined by the Domestic Violence Act (1996). These legal mechanisms include barring orders, interim barring orders, protection orders and safety orders. This act was the first piece of legislation to directly address intimate partner abuse in Ireland,

with The Family Law Act 1976 and 1981 previously being used to address IPA.[6] Despite the gender neutrality of this legislation, it has been reported anecdotally that men find it difficult to obtain the above orders and that, when they are obtained, they are not enforced (Amen, 2012). While the Courts Service release information on the numbers of such orders granted (Courts Service, 2016), these are not broken down by gender. However, support for this suggestion, albeit from a very different judicial context, was found by Basile (2005). In a study examining the awarding of Abuse Protection orders in Massachusetts's courts, Basile (2005) found that female applicants were awarded these orders more frequently than male applicants. Despite laws that make use of neutral language and similar IPA experiences[7], male and female plaintiffs were afforded different protections by the court (Basile, 2005). Perhaps, men are considered capable of 'protecting' themselves, by the courts, and so are not in need of protection orders or safety orders. This is speculation, however. Irrespective of whether this is factually accurate or not, it is interesting that men experience this as the case. However, it is unclear if the men in question fully understand the entitlements they receive under these orders or the limitations of these orders.

The ease with which women can obtain Abuse Protection Orders can then have further implications for male victims of abuse in later child custody disputes (Basile, 2005). Anyone who has demonstrated a 'pattern of abuse' is prevented from gaining custody of their children and protection orders are often used as evidence of a 'pattern of abuse', according to Basile (2005). He claimed that this was especially controversial as a result

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[6] The 1976 act introduced Barring orders and the 1981 act extended the length of such orders from 3 months to 12 months, as well as allowing protection orders to take immediate effect. The Domestic Violence (amendment) Act 2002 amended the 1996 act to disallow Barring Orders issued when the respondent was not present or notified of the action. Protection orders were allowed in such circumstances, however.

[7] He had previously examined the content of these applications for protection and found that the violence experienced by both men and women was similar (Basile, 2004)

of the presence of a 'placing one in fear' provision[8], and that false allegations of abuse are sometimes made in order to secure custody of children. He thus positions abusive female partners as making strategic use of the court system in order to separate men from their children (Basile, 2005). The interaction of men, in abusive situations, with the courts system can serve to augment the abuse that they encounter, as they may lose access to their children (Corbally, 2011). Basile (2005) makes the suggestion that, in some instances, their abusive partner may misuse the court system in order to separate them from their children.

However, is such gender bias identified by men in their own accounts of their experiences with institutional supports? When men are asked about their experiences with institutional supports in the context of intimate partner abuse, they seem to affirm the notion that such supports are gender biased or 'against men' in a similar way to Basile (2005). In Ireland a study of the service users' views of the Irish child protection system (Buckley, Whelan and Carr, 2011) found that men, in the context of IPA or an acrimonious separation, believed that they were being discriminated against by workers from child protection services. Some men in Buckley et al's (2011) study reported that they were not kept informed about the progress of investigations into their children's wellbeing, while another reported the failure of child protection services to act on his allegation of child abuse against his wife (Buckley et al, 2011). These men constructed their experience as gender based, with one man suggesting that his wife's false allegation against him was believed despite her mental health issues. Seeming to believe that mental health issues should have invalidated her account, he suggested that it was

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[8] This provision allows an individual to include being placed in fear of their life as part of a pattern of abuse.

simply easier to believe that men were the aggressors. This seems to support Ferguson and Hogan's (2004) findings that fathers are often excluded by workers, because of personal beliefs surrounding gender and parenting, as well as institutional conventions.

By contrast, a discourse analysis of District Court judges justifications for their decisions regarding access arrangements (Naughton et al, 2015) found that a pro-access philosophy was espoused by these judges. Even where intimate partner abuse was present, the judges were inclined to award access to fathers who had abused their female partners. This was justified by minimising the abuse that took place and constructing it as an issue that was separate to the IPA. While, this study specifically focused on male perpetrators of IPA, it would seem as if a pro-access philosophy would also extend to male victims. Thus, it would seem to be the case that there are conflicting discourses surrounding the treatment of men by the courts and other institutional supports in Ireland and elsewhere.

2.7 – 'Others' perceptions of men who experience IPA

The public perception of men who have experienced IPA and their own beliefs regarding how they are perceived, have been linked to multiple outcomes for such men. Several research studies have linked the infrequent reporting of IPA among men who have experienced IPA to the belief that they will not be believed or that they will be ridiculed (Migliaccio, 2002; Hines et al, 2007; Allen-Collinson, 2008; 2016; Corbally, 2011; 2014). Some men have reported such negative experiences, as well as the suggestion, by those to whom they reported the abuse, that they were somehow deserving of their treatment (Migliaccio, 2001; Zverina et al, 2011; Corbally, 2011; 2014). Attaining insight into how victims of intimate partner abuse are perceived may help us understand how victims are likely to be treated by those with whom they come in contact (Williams et

al, 2012), or how intimate partner abuse is constituted in discourse by such people. As this study is concerned with how men account for themselves as having experienced IPA in a context of doubt and debate, studies which give some indication of how abused men are perceived can provide insight into this context. Myths and stereotypes surrounding intimate partner abuse may have implications for the support that such abuse victims receive and the way their accounts are responded to (Willis et al, 1996). The narratives that abound regarding intimate partner abuse may have an impact on the way in which abuse is interpreted, with this having implications for all victims.

Intimate partner abuse victims, both male and female, are often perceived in ways that attribute culpability to victims or absolve perpetrators of guilt on the basis of limited information about the relationship in which abuse occurs, and limited information about specific abusive incidents (Willis, Hallinan and Melby, 1996). Those studies analysing the public perception of victims and abusers draw on a variety of factors as potentially illuminating, such as marital status (Willis, Hallinan and Melby, 1996; Langhinrichsen-Rohling, Schlien-Dellinger, Huss, and Kramer, 2004), ethnicity (Willis et al, 1996), and gender (Hammock et al, 2015; Hammock et al, 2016) as well as the type of abuse engaged in (Williams et al, 2012).

Intimate partner abuse by men against women is judged more harshly than that by women against men (Seelau, Seelau and Poorman, 2003; Hammock et al, 2015). In Hammock et al's (2015) study, in which 251 participants read scenarios involving psychological or physical aggression between 2 males, 2 females, or a male and a female all perpetrators in Hammock et al's (2015) study were judged more negatively when the victim was female. This supported a previous finding by Harris (1991) that abusive acts are judged more negatively when directed against women rather than men. Further,

Sorenson and Taylor (2005) suggest that their participants viewed female-to-male aggression as less illegal and less likely to require intervention than male-to-female aggression. Such judgements were not restricted to lay populations, with Follingstad et al (2004) reporting that psychologists viewed husbands' behaviours as more psychologically abusive than wives' use of the same actions. Each of these findings would appear to indicate that IPA directed against men, by women, is not perceived as being as serious or negative as that directed against women. While such findings are based on comparisons between men and women and thus do not indicate that IPA against men is not treated seriously, they do indicate a hierarchy of victimisation in terms of how IPA is perceived. It would seem as if IPA against men is discursively constituted as a lesser form of IPA.

Broadening the focus to include victims of other violent crimes, a discourse analytic study of how male rape is accounted for in conversational dyads, put participants who were approached in the street into male-female dyads to discuss a newspaper article detailing a rape of a man (Anderson and Doherty, 2008). This study examined how mundane social practices served to 'produce or resist a 'rape supportive' social order in relation to the sexual victimisation of men' (Anderson and Doherty, 2008, p. 88). Importantly for the current research the focus was on the 'production' or, in the language of the current research 'constitution' of a particular context for rape victims. While it did not examine intimate partner abuse, it provided some insight into the discourses deployed to interpret violence against men and positions this within the wider context of a 'rape-supportive' culture.

The participants in Anderson and Doherty's (2008) study drew on social constructions of hegemonic (heterosexual) masculinity (Connell, 2005) to suggest that rape would

cause more suffering for men than women as it was perceived as something that is difficult for men to talk about (Anderson and Doherty, 2008). This echoes the suggestions of several qualitative research studies into the experiences of male victims of IPA that abused men would find it difficult to talk about intimate partner abuse because it posed a threat to their masculinity (Migliaccio, 2001).The participants assumed that men would have difficulty talking about rape because it may threaten their sexuality, suggesting that heterosexual men would not be accustomed to penetrative sex in the same way that women and homosexual men would (Anderson and Doherty, 2008). As such, a hierarchy of suffering is established by the participants in which heterosexual males suffer most and homosexual males, as well as women, suffer to a lesser extent. By contrast, men were less likely to receive sympathy if they were raped by a woman (Smith et al, 1988). In this case, the rape is considered as falling in line with conventional heterosexuality and thus deemed less harmful, drawing on the myth that rape is a sexual, rather than violent act (Brownmiller, 1975). This discriminatory discourse ignores the violence of rape and may contribute to the persistence of rape myths which undermine the experience of rape for women. However, by the same token, this discourse facilitated the acknowledgement of the suffering of heterosexual male rape victims, albeit in an undesirable fashion, through the suggestion that rape induced suffering in heterosexual males because it involved a sexual act commonly associated with gay men. Thus while men may be constituted as rape victims by this discourse, such a justification may be deemed unacceptable according to certain standards.

Further, participants also suggest that men should be able to 'fight back' against attackers (Anderson and Doherty, 2008). If men do not successfully do so it may be

suggested that they were willing to acquiesce to the rape (Anderson and Doherty, 2008). Such men were deemed to violate the norms of masculinity and received little sympathy (Migliaccio, 2001; Connell, 2005). Men's bodies appear to be drawn on here to undermine their experience of violence and abuse.

While the above study does not deal directly with male victims of intimate partner abuse, it can serve to highlight the impact of discourses of masculinity, heterosexuality, and the male body on the way in which male victims of crime may be conceptualised by those who observe, but are not involved in the situation.

The studies referred to and outlined above would seem to indicate that a 'discrediting context' does exist regarding men's experience of IPA. A hierarchy of suffering appears to exist, in which men who receive IPA from women are subordinated.

2.8 - Men's Experiences of IPA

There is a small but growing body of qualitative research exploring the narrative accounts of heterosexual men's experiences of intimate partner abuse although to date no study has undertaken a narrative analysis of both the spoken and written accounts of the experiences of heterosexual male victims of IPA. The current study will be the first to do so.

While there is a paucity of qualitative research examining men's experience of IPA, that research which exists gives some indication of the type of IPA to which men are subjected, their experience of these acts, as well as how they interpret and ascribe meaning to this IPA. This research draws attention to and contextualises the abuse experienced by heterosexual men at the hands of women. It helps to undermine the suggestions, in some quarters, that heterosexual men receive abuse from women only

in self-defence (Dobash and Dobash, 2004). Further, it has highlighted how the abuse received by men may diverge from or converge with that received by women (Migliaccio, 2002; Allen-Collinson, 2008; 2009; 2016; Corbally, 2011). Qualitative research in the area of men's experience of IPA has been very limited but has focused on a variety of issues, ranging from work which sought to examine men's narratives of IPA (Allen-Collinson, 2009; Corbally, 2014), an examination of men's applications for legal orders (Durfee, 2011), a discourse analysis of a group psychotherapy session (Zverina et al, 2011) and an examination of men's constructions of masculinity in their accounts of IPA (Eckstein, 2010).

Men who have experienced IPA relate regular and significant physical violence, such as attacks carried out with objects, fear of the abusive partner (Allen-Collinson, 2009, 2016; Corbally, 2011), and financial abuse (Zverina et al, 2011). Further, men talk about 'deserving' the abuse (Eckstein, 2010), fearing future attacks (Allen-Collinson, 2008) and the normalisation of abuse (Allen-Collinson, 2009). In relation to normalisation, Allen-Collinson's participant suggested that his wife normalised the abuse, downplaying her violence by portraying it as 'tickling' when talking to the children. Further, men who have experienced IPA have reported negative experiences with police, such as failing to intervene in, or deal satisfactorily with, domestic situations, in several studies (Migliaccio, 2002; Corbally, 2011). Further, Allen-Collinson (2008), in her symbolic-interactionist influenced study, found that violation of privacy, destruction of personal property, restriction of access to his home, forced physical contact and disruption of sleep were experienced by her case-study participant. While it was not the focus of such qualitative studies to offer a topography of the IPA experienced by men, these issues came through in the narrative accounts of the men.

Much of the available qualitative research spends some time considering the similarities

and differences between the IPA experiences of heterosexual men and women. The male aggressor and female victim model has been identified as 'gender paradigmatic' by Malinen (2014), in her work on woman-to-woman sexual assault. This is because it conforms to cultural stereotypes of men as perpetrators of violence and women as victims. Allen-Collinson (2016), referring to Malinen's (2014) work, suggests, by contrast, that the woman as aggressor model can be deemed 'gender transgressive'. However, despite this the available qualitative research on male victims of intimate partner abuse seems to indicate that men experience similar levels of severe abuse (or, perhaps 'intimate terrorism' (Johnson, 2008)) as women (Migliaccio, 2002; Allen-Collinson, 2008). Migliaccio's (2002) study takes the consideration of the similarities and differences as an explicit focus. While this study does not directly compare the accounts of such experiences, it makes extensive use of the literature on women who have experienced IPA to attempt such a comparison. In his work, Migliaccio (2002) compared the narratives produced by the 12 men he interviewed about their IPA experiences with previous studies of IPA against women. Adopting a narrative approach, which treated the respondents' accounts as faithful retellings of their perceptions of events, he attempted to establish commonalities amongst male and female heterosexual victims of IPA. Men reported that their wives had power over them, they believed they deserved the abuse, they feared future attacks and they feared for their lives, all of which are suggested to be reported in studies focusing on female victims of abuse (Migliaccio, 2002). By contrast to the accounts of women who had experienced IPA, there was little evidence of structural disadvantage in men's accounts, with this made evident by the fact that men did not report economic disadvantage as a barrier to their leaving the family home, something which is often identified in women's accounts.

However, as mentioned, Migliaccio (2002) approached the narratives of his participants

in a realist fashion, as a faithful retelling of events as they occurred. The focus on the content, and the comparison of the content of the narratives with findings regarding women in the wider literature meant that many questions could not be answered. For example how was IPA constructed in their accounts? Do these acts have similar meaning for each of the men? Do they have a similar meaning for the women? How do they construct identities in light of these experiences and is this similar for women and men? Further, as the study involved only the interview of male participants one may question how easy it is to make such comparisons given that the conditions under which the studies were conducted are not the same, although this is acknowledged within the study.

There is also the further, and broader, criticism of the focus on the similarities between the accounts of men and women, which is that it may position the experiences of women as a standard against which the experiences of men are measured. This arguably positions the validity of men's experience of abuse as contingent on its similarity to women's experience.

It is common for men (Allen-Collinson, 2008; Zverina et al, 2011; Corbally, 2011), and women (Watson and Parsons, 2005; FRA, 2014), to claim that psychological abuse is worse than physical abuse. Even when multiple incidents of severe violence and injury are reported, psychological abuse is identified as the worst aspect of IPA (Watson and Parsons, 2005; Allen-Collinson, 2009). This would seem to undermine the notion the men are less likely to be impacted by abuse, due to their superior size and strength (Pagelow, 1985), a point made by Migliaccio (2002) in his study.

The available qualitative literature thus indicates the kinds of acts of IPA to which men are subjected, suggesting in many cases that these acts of IPA are quite similar to those experienced by women. However, there are also indications that the experience of IPA

is a gendered experience for men. This will be outlined in the following section.

2.8.1 - The gendered nature of IPA for men

While studies such as Migliaccio's (2002) have looked for similarities between the IPA experiences of men and women, some qualitative studies indicate significant divergences between their experiences. Following Butler (1999), the sedimented discourses and practices that structure how gender is performed may contribute to a differential experience of intimate partner abuse.

It has been widely reported in qualitative studies that men face stigma when reporting intimate partner abuse, as a result of gendered expectations regarding masculine behaviour, and often refrain from doing so because of this (Migliaccio, 2002; Allen-Collinson, 2008; Zverina et al, 2011; Corbally, 2011; Entilli and Cipoletta, 2017). The participants in Morgan and Wells' (2016) interpretive phenomenological analysis, for example, suggest that the experience of IPA is 'deemed unmanly'. This may be one issue which highlights the gendered nature of IPA for men. While women undoubtedly face stigma when they report IPA, for a variety of reasons, this stigma is likely to differ from that faced by men as a result of expectation that men will conform to normative masculine discourses. Such discourses seem to set up an opposition between masculinity and victimisation (Sundaram et al, 2004).

Numerous strategies may be employed to avoid this stigma, for example, concealing their injuries (Allen-Collinson, 2008), lying about the source of these injuries (Migliaccio, 2002; Allen-Collinson, 2008), refraining from reporting the abuse (Allen-Collinson, 2009). Allen-Collinson (2009), in her analysis of a 'realist tale' of IPA from a single participant, suggested that masculine pressures may have influenced her participant's decision to refrain from reporting the abuse. Similarly, some male victims in McCarrick

et al's (2015) study were reluctant to come forward because they believed that society was unwilling to accept that men could be victims of intimate partner abuse or assumed that the police or other organisations would not be sympathetic to them. These men identified an unfriendly cultural discourse, with this having major implications for how they addressed the abuse that they received. Some men reported feeling isolated as a result of their perception that they had nowhere to turn for assistance (McCarrick et al, 2015). As such, the men seemed to construct the climate in which they faced IPA as 'Against men'.

As well as having an influence on reporting IPA, it has been suggested that self-defence by a man who has experienced IPA is stigmatised (Allen-Collinson, 2009). Men report that female perpetrators goad or otherwise attempt to provoke them in an effort to take advantage of this stigma (Gadd, Farrall, Dallimore and Lombard, 2003; Entilli and Cipoletta, 2017). Such stigma would seem to be related to the social construction of masculinity and the notion that 'real men' do not hit women (Connell, 2005).

The above-mentioned stigma may be related to the challenge posed to conventional masculine performances by men who have experienced intimate partner abuse (Corbally, 2011). By punishing those who deviate from conventional masculine performances individuals may be interpreted as upholding gendered norms (Butler, 1999). This punishment, or resistance to the notion that men can be victims of intimate partner abuse, is captured in the concept of 'Second wave abuse' proposed by Corbally (2011) in her narrative study of the way in which men narrate their experience of intimate partner abuse. Corbally (2011) identified 'second wave abuse' as that which was initiated by the intimate partner but not exercised by her. This may include malicious allegations made by the female abuser to others, such as the police, which may make use of prevailing assumptions regarding masculine behaviour or intimate

partner abuse. Men in McCarrick et al's (2015) study reported a concerted effort on the part of their partners to deliberately engage third parties, such as the police or other members of the criminal justice system, in order to enact abuse. McCarrick et al's (2015) interpretative phenomenological analysis of abused men's experiences of the criminal justice system, highlighted the disbelief or disregard with which men were treated by those working within the Criminal Justice System (CJS). This disbelief was taken advantage of by their abusive partners to gain advantage in their interactions with the court. One man reported that the police failed to investigate his account of events, seeming to thus accept the account provided by his wife and implicitly casting him as the perpetrator (McCarrick et al, 2015). Such disbelief was a common finding, with one participant in Zverina et al's (2011) discourse analysis of how men manage a victim identity in a group psychotherapy session, reporting that his therapist attempted to 'turn the tables' on him by accusing him of being the perpetrator in the relationship. Similar experiences were reported by participants in other qualitative studies of men's experiences of IPA (Migliaccio, 2001; Morgan and Wells, 2016), with Entilli and Cipoletta (2017) terming this 'indirect violence'.

As well as the above, another gendered aspect of the men's experiences of IPA appeared to be the way in which the abuse was framed in ways consistent with dominant discourses of masculinity, as within their power to control. Several of Migliaccio's (2002) participants rationalised the abuse as beyond the abuser's control, with one suggesting instead that he 'allowed' his wife to control him, and another reporting that he was able to restrain her. Similarly Morgan and Wells (2016), in their study, suggested that some of their participants portrayed themselves as able to control aspects of the IPA, suggesting that they could choose not to respond to their wives' provocation, and thus did not feel controlled. Participants in Entilli and Cipoletta (2017) also reported

exercising self-control in the face of aggression, but in this instance the control was positioned as required as opposed to volitional as a result of the likelihood that the police would misidentify them as the abusers. Non-reaction was portrayed as self-control by these participants who characterised their abusive partners as weak (Entilli and Cippoletta, 2017).

Relatedly, some men reported that the IPA engaged in by their female partner was beyond her control, with one participant in Entilli and Cipoletta's (2017), qualitative study, framing the aggression of his female partner as 'requests for help'. Entilli and Cipoletta (2017) also suggested that participants in their study distanced the female perpetrator from responsibility for the abuse that they enacted, through reference to the female partner's jealousy, sense of inferiority, or psychopathology, through reference to gendered factors such as pregnancy or menstruation or trauma, external factors such as a violent family environment. They also highlighted how the absence of institutional support for abused men facilitated the abusive behaviour of female partners, allowing them to misuse services. These were ways in which the men spoke about and understood IPA enacted by their female partners, with Entilli and Cipoletta (2017) suggesting that the men, in this way absolved their partners of responsibility for the IPA, as in each instance they lacked agency. Crucially for the current study, Entilli and Cipoletta's (2017) study suggested that, despite their 'condition as victims', the men in their study deployed discourses in which the men assumed an active and protective stance. In fact, some of the men in Entilli and Cipoletta's (2017) study provided accounts that echoed Corbally's (2011) 'Good Husband' as they spoke about caring for their wives, even in the midst of receiving abuse from them.

A further gendered aspect of men's experiential accounts of IPA is the focus on children

and the reported use of children in IPA directed towards men (Corbally, 2011; Morgan and Wells, 2016; Entilli and Cipoletta, 2017). Men expressed concern over the safety of their children and reported instances in which their children were targeted as part of the IPA enacted against the men (Morgan and Wells, 2016). Others reported feeling as if they could not leave the relationship because they believed they had to protect the children (Corbally, 2011; Morgan and Wells, 2016). Men have been accused of sexually abusing their children (Entilli and Cipoletta, 2017). As well as this many of the men in such studies reported their fears that they would be separated from their children as a result of such abuse, with some fearing that they would be mistaken for the perpetrator by institutional authorities, who they believed would employ gendered assumptions (Corbally, 2011; Entilli and Cipoletta, 2017). In this way men were further controlled by their wives, through the children (Corbally, 2011; Morgan and Wells, 2016).

Men adopted positions as 'heroic' figures in their accounts of intimate partner abuse, suggesting that they restrained their abusive partners or managed to protect their children (Eckstein, 2010) and in this way aligned themselves with the 'conventional masculine' ideal of man as 'courageous, physically tough and yet able to keep his cool' (Wetherell and Edley, 1999). By emphasising their efforts to protect weaker others in their accounts, and subordinating the abuse they experienced, these men were suggested to adopt a 'complicit' masculinity. They acknowledged their victimisation but sought to acquire some of the advantages of hegemonic masculinity through reference to their role of protector of the weak. Such 'complicit' identities may allow men to avoid some of the stigma associated with intimate partner abuse (Eckstein, 2010).

2.8.2 - Men's relationship with the term victim

Victimisation has been described as the antithesis of masculinity (Sundaram, 2004),

presenting difficulties for those men who experience crime, especially violent or abusive crime from a female partner. How can one present oneself as having experienced such crimes and still perform a valued masculine identity? The uneasy relationship of masculinity and victimisation is often balanced, according to Akerstrom, Burcar and Wasterfors (2011) who suggest that men emphasise the preferred identity but continue to refer to the other identity in more subtle terms.

Research involving male victims of IPA generally addresses this question to some degree, accounting for how men orient themselves towards the concept of 'victim', even if only to suggest that men refrain from making use of this term (Allen-Collinson, 2008; Corbally, 2011, 2015). This would appear to indicate that this term is of some significance to intimate partner abuse research and how it is used, or the failure to use it, is worthy of comment in this context. This is discussed below.

It has been suggested that identifying as a victim is problematic for men (Zverina et al, 2011; Dunn, 2012; Andersen, 2013) and that stigma may be greater for victimised men (Mezey and King, 1992) because they are expected to be self-sufficient and thus able to defend themselves. Men who do not manage to defend themselves report that they feel emasculated as a result (Coxell and King, 2002). However, men's experience of abuse from their wives and girlfriends has eluded serious examination for the most part because of a reluctance to believe that men can be abused by women (Zverina et al, 2011).

In much of the work examining men's experiences of IPA it would appear to be suggested that men resist the notion that they are victims and emphasise the preferred masculine self. This may occur through minimisation of the IPA (Allen-Collinson, 2008). Allen-Collinson's (2008) participant disregarded the IPA he experienced by 'laughing off' the violence to which he was subjected. Other studies suggest that men have difficulty

talking about the abuse to which they have been subjected (Corbally, 2014). Corbally (2014) conducted a narrative analysis of three men's accounts of intimate partner abuse and suggested that varying narrative strategies were adopted by the men when talking about intimate partner abuse from their female partners. As a result of the devaluation of male victimisation in current conceptualisations of masculinity Corbally (2014) suggests that men are more likely to provide narrative accounts that accentuate positive, valued masculine identities, and by implication resist victim identity. Through these accounts of the 'Good Father', the 'Good Husband' and the 'Abuse narrative' they make known the abuse that they have experienced. Corbally (2014) reports that the men did not use the term victim in their accounts. Thus it would appear that this term either did not occur to them or was eschewed as a result of the stigma associated with it for men. Perhaps, in Butler's (1999) terms, the concept of a male victim is 'unthinkable' due to the absence of a language allowing it to be thought. This absence of language may be circumvented in some way, with these narrative strategies offering one possibility.

Zverina et al (2011) conducted a discourse analysis of men's efforts to manage their accountability for the abuse to which they were subjected, in a group psychotherapy context. Victim identities were conceptualised as an interactional achievement and how the men constructed these identities in interaction was analysed. Victim identity was constructed as something that was not immediately obvious to the men, upon their receipt of violence and abuse. As part of the group psychotherapy sessions they learned that they were victims through exposure to discourses which suggested that men could be victims of abuse (Zverina et al, 2011). Part of the effort to construct oneself as a victim of abuse involved resistance to the perceived dominant discourse that 'abuse means physical violence'. The men expended effort to resist this interpretation and position

emotional and psychological abuse as more harmful than such violence, thus bolstering their claim to victim status.

Further, they resisted the construction of 'men as perpetrators', suggesting that they faced efforts on the part of third parties to 'turn the tables' and construe them as abusers. Zverina et al (2011) suggest that they attempted to discursively work out the dilemma that their narratives directly contradicted the 'lived ideology' of IPA, which was that men were abusers but not victims. They were aware of this antipathy and incorporated it into their accounts in order to negate it. This recalls Shotter's (1989) suggestion that one is accountable to the demands of the broader language community. This was held to be a significantly gendered aspect of the accounts as Zverina et al (2011) claimed that this was unlikely to be a feature of women's accounts of abuse. Zverina et al's (2011) study focused on the action orientation of the text and how victimisation was worked up, through reference to available discursive resources. This approach differed from that of Corbally (2011) who instead considered what strategies were used to report the type and nature of abuse experienced by the men. However, the context of the studies is likely important here. In Zverina et al's (2011) study the men participate in psychotherapy sessions in which an effort is made to encourage the use of a therapeutic language which emphasises 'resistance'. Rather than viewing their own violence as mutual battering, the men are encouraged to see it as resistance. No such demands to make use of a particular language are made in Corbally's (2011) study.

As well as having difficulty talking about the abuse to which they have been subjected, it has been reported that men have difficulty conceptualising themselves as victims of intimate partner abuse if they have engaged in defensive violence (Dunn, 2012). Dunn's (2012) study of gay male victims of intimate partner abuse, suggested that participants considered the term victim to be incompatible with instances in which they engaged in

violence. They created a hierarchy of victimisation in which passivity was feminine and thus undesirable, while fighting back challenged the notion of victimisation and helped to preserve masculinity. While the context may differ to that in the current thesis, as the participants in Dunn's (2012) study were gay men, it may be suggested that the situation may be similar for heterosexual men who defend themselves, as was found in Zverina et al (2011). In fact, the situation may be exacerbated by commonly held beliefs surrounding the advantage conferred on men by their size (Pagelow, 1985).

For some men, however, a victim identity served a particular purpose, with one participant in Dunn's (2012) study suggesting that it indicated that he had come to terms with his victimisation to some degree. It was indication of movement toward a 'survivor' identity (Zverina et al, 2011; Dunn, 2012). Other men have reported finding the term useful because it highlighted that they were not responsible for the abuse, they received it but it did not originate with them (Zverina et al, 2011; Dunn, 2012).

However, while some male and female abuse victims have suggested that 'fighting back' undermined their victim status (Dunn, 2012; Schalkwyk et al, 2015), the failure to 'fight back' was suggested to result in shame for some men (Dunn, 2012; Andersen, 2013). Some participants in Dunn's (2012) study suggested that 'real men' fight back. This would appear to leave little room for men as victims of abuse, as masculinity is held to be undermined by a failure to defend oneself, while their identity as abuse victims is undermined by acting in self-defence.

Male victims were also found to account for their own roles in the abusive relationship in ways that took account of gendered stereotypes. In a narrative analysis of men's written applications for protection orders, in the United States, Durfee (2011) found that men presented themselves within dominant conceptions of masculinity, while applying for legal protection as a victim of intimate partner abuse. The men presented

themselves as victims even as they suggested that they were in control of the abusive situation (Durfee, 2011), in a similar fashion to those in Entilli and Cipoletta's (2017) study. Durfee (2011) suggests that those in her study must adopt the label victim, to some extent, in order to make their application for a protection order and, in doing so, negotiate space for themselves as both victimised and falling within hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005). In a similar fashion to Zverina et al's (2011) study, Durfee's (2011) study may be suggested to present men in the act of demonstrating their victim-worthiness. This gendered victimisation is one that is active, not passive, emphasising the agency of the victim. It is thus proposed that men face a 'gender paradox', as Durfee (2011) terms it, in which they must balance their performance of victimisation in their narratives, with their gendered performance.

The men in McCarrick et al's (2015) study undermined the notion that men were stronger than women by suggesting that their abusive partners would become so enraged that they would be possessed of abnormal strength. Some of the men in McCarrick et al's (2015) study, acknowledged that they were stronger and larger than their abusive partners but suggested that their partners were possessed of abnormal strength, when abusing them. Rather than challenging the discourse that men should be able to defend themselves from their smaller abusive wives, this discourse was circumvented by presenting the wife as a deviation from the norm.

Three main themes were identified in the men's narratives in Durfee's (2011) study. The men were suggested to present themselves as being 'In control of the situation', as refusing the suggestion that they were the abuser in the relationship, and as refraining from claiming they were fearful of their assailant, with these constituting the themes with which the study was concerned. The men faced a difficult situation in that to conform to stereotypes about victimhood they must emphasise their powerlessness but

to maintain their masculine identity they must emphasise the control they exerted over the situation (Durfee, 2011). The fact that men refrained from reporting fear was suggested to have differentiated them from female applicants for protection orders, amongst whom fear was prevalent (Durfee, 2011). As well as positioning themselves as being able to manage the abusive situations that they found themselves in, the men in Durfee's (2011) study are reported to have made an effort to distance themselves from the suggestion that they may have been abusers themselves. In their efforts to do so the participants emphasise the defensive nature of their actions or the care they took to ensure their response did not cause harm. In this way they balance contradictory identities as Akerstrom, Burcar, and Wasterfors (2011) suggest.

Intimate partner abuse and the notion of victim are social constructions that are worked up in talk and interaction (Zverina et al, 2011). That is not to say that an individual can label anything as abuse and indicate that anyone is a victim. In Butler's (1999) terms these may be thought of as discourses to be 'cited' but which may slowly bend. Abused men account for their abuse in ways which allow them to bolster their status as victims, 'bending' citations so that they can preserve their masculine identities but still present themselves as victims (Zverina et al, 2011).

2.8.3 - Summary

Qualitative research on men who have experienced IPA is limited but provides insights into the kinds of abuse that men experience and how they conceptualise this abuse in light of stigma. As the social construction of masculinity revolves around discourses that accentuate strength and control, there is limited language available for men to talk about experiencing IPA. The qualitative literature on IPA highlights difficulties that men have in conceptualising themselves as having experienced, or as 'victims' of, IPA, with

some research conveying the ways in which men balance victim identities and masculine identities.

The following chapter outlines the particular narrative methodology adopted for this study and the theoretical perspective informing this approach.

Chapter Three - Methodology

3.1 - Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the methods made use of in this research and the methodology guiding these methods. A narrative methodology has been adopted for the study of men's accounts of intimate partner abuse, with Catherine Kohler Riessman's (2008) Dialogic/Performance analysis approach adopted specifically for the analysis of the texts. This approach called for the use of particular methods to analyse the performance engaged in by the participant in the text, with these methods informed by the theoretical background of the approach and the epistemological assumptions underlying it.

This research project was concerned with analysing the accounts of male victims of intimate partner abuse, with a view to broadening the understanding of this area. Two forms of data, written and verbal narratives, were analysed for this purpose. Narrative analysis was used for the purpose of analysing the data. Narrative analysis was selected as a result of the fact that it enabled me to examine how these men constructed an account of the abuse that they experienced. The current study made use of a perspective informed by the work of Catherine Kohler Riessman (2003; 2008). Riessman has worked with narratives in a variety of ways in her own research but the current study will adopt and adapt her 'Performance/Dialogic' analytic approach.

The aims of this research were

1. To examine the ways in which men narrate their experiences of intimate partner abuse in written and verbal accounts.

2. To examine the commonalities between these accounts while attempting to preserve the diverse and unique qualities of particular narratives.

3.2 - Dialogic/Performance Analysis

Riessman (2008) outlined a suite of approaches to the analysis of narrative data, with each differentiated by their focus on particular aspects of narratives. These are 'Thematic Narrative Analysis', 'Structural Narrative Analysis', and 'Dialogic/Performance Analysis'. Broadly speaking, 'Thematic Narrative Analysis' focuses on the content of speech or 'what' is said, to a greater extent than either 'Structural Narrative Analysis' or 'Dialogic Performance Analysis'. 'Structural Narrative Analysis', by contrast, involves a focus on 'how' a narrative is told in a way which enables a speaker to achieve their strategic aims. Riessman (2008) identified Dialogic/Performance Analysis as a departure from the more detailed 'Thematic' or 'Structural' analytic techniques. It is broader than the other two approaches and combines elements of both as well as adding further dimensions. There is a focus on 'who', 'when' and 'why' a story is told, rather than 'what' is said and 'how' it is said (Riessman, 2008). Of course, all of these elements are present in each of the approaches outlined by Riessman (2008), but different approaches emphasise different elements. While the adoption of 'Thematic' and 'Structural' analytic techniques tends to involve the detailed analysis of narrative accounts, the adoption of 'Dialogic/Performance' analysis involves the taking of a broader perspective, taking context and interaction into account to a greater extent. Riessman (2008) suggests that microanalysis of accounts can occur in this analytic approach, however it must include both the participant and the interviewer. It would seem, however, that such microanalysis is more of a possibility than an inevitability. Further, while Riessman emphasises the interviewer-interviewee relationship she makes room for the

consideration of dialogicality beyond this relationship, the consideration of the individual's accountability to other potential readers and absent presences. Her focus on the theory of Bakhtin makes this apparent. Thus, it would seem to be a suitable approach for this study. Further, Riessman (2008), presents a variety of texts that she suggests adopt a dialogical approach, as she conceives it. She thus appears to allow for quite a bit of flexibility in the deployment of this approach. While, the account she presents in her book makes use of a selected segment of text that functions as the bounded narrative for analysis, she presents other accounts which do not present or analyse their narratives in this way. The dialogical approach seems to be defined by the attendance to other voices in the text, and the notion that meaning is distributed and uncertain. These seem to be the central considerations, as opposed to any formal analytic structure.

I attended to my own voice in the analysis of the narratives, through reference to my thoughts regarding some of the statements made and a consideration of the narrative as a co-construction between myself and the interviewee. However, Riessman (2008) also draws attention to the many voices that are present in any text, the 'hidden internal politics, historical discourses and ambiguities'. It is this sense of the dialogical that will be focused on in this study, given my own theoretical interests in the work of Judith Butler (1999) who emphasises the way in which an individual is immersed in a world of meaning which precedes them and her focus on the constitutive capacity of language. Further, Riessman (2008) suggests that a word is saturated with meaning from previous usages. This is further underlined by Riessman's (2008) suggestion that the focus on the performative does not suggest that identities are inauthentic, rather it is an acknowledgement that such identities are situated and accomplished with audience in

mind. This does not simply refer to the immediate audience of the interviewer but also the wider audience of the reader of the text, the language community who may be potential readers of the text. Viewed in this way, one may see parallels between Riessman's (2008) perspective and that of Butler who emphasises the way in which an individual is held to account for their gendered performance by the community at large.

Riessman (2008) identifies Dialogic/Performance analysis as growing out of theoretical approaches that emphasise the importance of interaction, namely symbolic interactionism and conversation analysis. Both of these perspectives conceptualise social reality as constructed through interaction, with this interaction consisting of verbal communication as well as non-verbal communication (Riessman, 2008). These theoretical approaches view the 'taken for granted' meanings, that are shared by those in a culture, as the products of local interactional exchanges (Plummer, 2001). These exchanges help to establish understandings, as well as communicate those that circulate in the wider cultural context. Such a theoretical perspective is valuable in the current study as it enables the researcher to consider the wider social context of intimate partner abuse through reference to the understandings related in a personal narrative.

3.3 - The Social Construction of Reality

This study took the epistemological stance that understandings developed in personal narrative are social constructions. In *'The Social Construction of Reality',* Berger and Luckmann (1966, p.15) suggest that all 'knowledge is developed, transmitted and maintained in social situations'?. This then congeals into a 'taken-for-granted' reality. All descriptions of reality are held to be socially constructed in this perspective, while acknowledging that this does not necessarily entail the ontological claim that 'reality' is socially constructed. It is taken that reality cannot be known outside of the discourse or

narrative. I can engage in doubt about its reality, but I must suspend this in order to engage in everyday life (Berger and Luckmann, 1966).

This study adopts the ontological position that there is no social world that exists independently of social construction. There may be a material world but the way in which this is measured and interpreted is dependent on the way in which it is socially constructed. The meaning of the material world, even its designation as material, is dependent upon the prior existence of a language to describe it.

Thus constructionism holds that meaning is constructed rather than discovered, with the research context being the location in which this construction takes place, in this instance, rather than meaning pre-existing the research context and merely recounted and analysed here. Acknowledging the active nature of the research context also makes it necessary to examine the role of the researcher in the development of meaning.

In making use of the term performance the Dialogic/Performance approach draws on the work of Erving Goffman (1959) who extended the purview of symbolic interactionism so that it included performance. This involved the notion that we all perform our stories in interactions in order to create a desired impression or identity. Individuals engaged in performance take account of the audience and social context in the construction of a credible narrative. He also suggests, however, that the performances that are produced may be either intentional or unintentional and so it is not necessarily the case that performances are self-serving.

Owing to the discursive construction of a gender binary (Butler, 1999) in research concerned with intimate partner abuse (for example, Pence and Paymar, 1993; Dobash and Dobash, 2004) and circulating discourses which abound regarding the appropriate

or inappropriate behaviour of men and women it may be suggested that the men in this study make use of particular narrative or discursive resources when constructing accounts of IPA that they have encountered. Thus gendered accounts are produced. It may also be supposed that gendered accounts will be constructed by men in abusive contexts as a result of the legal situation in the Republic of Ireland and the availability of support services to male victims.

3.4 - The Analysis of Narratives in Research

The background of narrative research will be briefly introduced here before going on to give a more explicit account of the approach adopted in the current study. The history of narrative research is often traced back to the work of the American Pragmatists operating out of the University of Chicago in the 1920's (Plummer, 2001), with the famous study of the Polish Peasant by Thomas and Znaniecki (1927) serving as an example. These researchers made use of the accounts they collected in an unproblematic naturalistic way, treating them as raw accounts of everyday life. This approach, however, came under criticism for a number of reasons, one of which was that it neglected the gendered and ethnically organised character of the social context in which the narratives were generated (Czarniawska, 2004). Others, such as those in the fields of discourse analysis and conversation analysis, claim that the researchers involved in these studies did not direct analytic attention towards the way in which the understandings developed were linguistically mediated (Silverman, 2004).

Other researchers adopted a structural approach to the analysis of narratives, with Labov and Waletzky (1997) focusing their efforts on the formal structural properties of narratives. They drew on the formalism of figures such as Vladimir Propp to analyse how narratives were related and meaning was constructed. They deployed a strict definition

of the term narrative and asserted that narratives adopted a specific structure characterised by common elements.

By the 1970's there were a large number of academics working in the area of narrative, including Jerome Bruner (1990) and Donald Polkinghorne (1988) in psychology and Ken Plummer (1995) in sociology, among others. Many of these researchers adopted a more constructionist focus in their work, viewing the accounts that were analysed as situated and contingent.

3.5 - Canonical Breach and Normalisation

Bamberg (2012) suggests the following as a provisional definition of narrative:

> "When narrators tell a story, they give 'narrative form' to experience. They position characters in space and time and, in a very broad sense, give order to and make sense of what happened or what is imagined to have happened. Thus, it can be argued, that narratives attempt to *explain* or *normalize* what has occurred". (p.3)

Polkinghorne (1988) confers narrative with similar characteristics with his suggestion that the 'plot' or temporal ordering of events and the suggested connection between them constitutes a narrative. He further claims that narrative allows events to be brought together into a meaningful whole. Thus these authors position narrative as a way of ordering events, with an underlying rhetorical impetus to make the events that are related understandable. They draw attention to an effort to explain, to make the events that have occurred seem as if they fit within the normal way of things. In line with this, Bruner (1990) suggests that narratives are constructed with reference to a cultural frame of sorts, proposing the existence of 'canonical cultural forms', which it is the job of the narrative construction to fit within. He claims that individuals are motivated to construct narratives when events deviate from the culturally expected pattern in an effort to bring these events in line with these 'canonical' forms. Thus personal narratives must be understood as situated constructions that rely on cultural conventions for their

construction and for the 'sense' that is brought to bear on personal events (Plummer, 1995). In relation to the focus of this study, it has been suggested by a number of studies, that examined narratives of IPA directed against men, that masculinity may be undermined by the experience of IPA. However, men have been found to make use of conventionally masculine discourses in the construction of narratives of IPA and thus may be seen as making efforts to 'normalise' these events by placing them within masculine discourses (Durfee, 2011). Based on Bamberg's (2012) definition it may be suggested that narrative is used by individuals to make the strange familiar, to some extent at least. The job of the narrative researcher is to account for the implications of this practice. Thus while narratives may be suggested to enact social change they would appear to do so in quite a conservative manner, attempting to reconcile difference with the narrative resources that already exist.

The focus on an individual life thus does not preclude a consideration of social structures, norms and constraints Lieblich et al (1998). As Plummer has persuasively argued, '..studying an individual biography does not bring with it the isolated individual, but rather an awareness of the individual in society' (Plummer, 1995, p.20). In line with this, Atkinson (2005) suggests that it cannot be assumed that an individual will provide an objective or totally truthful account, rather the story reflects the interpretations and values of the individual. The social and cultural understandings made use of by the participant allow inferences to be drawn and interpretations made regarding the social context in which the individual exists (Atkinson, 2005).

3.6 - Narrative as Construction

The constructed nature of narrative is highlighted by researchers, for example Stanley (1992) who suggests that life stories must be seen as artful enterprises, claiming that no

life is lived as represented in a biography. Stanley (1992) claims that biography ties together events that are only linked in narrative accounts, not in life as it is lived. These accounts are interpretations within cultural forms as opposed to descriptions of actual lives. Thus, lives that appear in narrative are told lives not necessarily lived lives (Bruner, 1990). Naive realism regarding narrative cannot be justified, according to Bruner (1990). Narratives must be approached as constructions, not true representations of events. In line with this, it is proposed that in the current study the men produce accounts of intimate partner abuse in which they manage their accountability for the abuse which they encounter, with this allowing them to increase their credibility as victims of abuse. These accounts are produced within a context in which men struggle to be believed when claiming to be victims of IPA.

While it is suggested above that narratives allow individuals to normalise events by linking them to cultural forms, and Stanley (1992) suggests that narratives are 'artful', this must not be taken to mean that narratives are the result of the will of an agentic subject. Wengraf (2006) suggests that narrative is never completely under the control of the speaker, and, as a result it may reveal assumptions of the individual and cultural group. Culture provides possibilities and limitations for the ways in which we may tell about this life, according to Bruner (1990). In line with this, Schutz (1973), highlights the situated nature of narrative, how it is a complex combination of both individual agency and social structure, suggesting that it is necessary to understand the settings in which intentions take place in order to understand the intentions themselves and that this understanding is necessary in order to facilitate the understanding of human action.

3.7 - Why choose Narrative for this study?

Narrative was chosen in order to analyse the data from this study as a result of the fact

that it has been identified as central to the lives of human beings, often given a privileged position in human interaction. Theorists abound proclaiming the centrality of narrative to human life. It has been variously claimed, for example, that social life is a narrative (MacIntyre, 1981), that narrative is "the primary form by which human experience is made meaningful" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p.1), and that stories are central to the lives of people and 'enable them to be who they are' (Frank, 2010). Thus many individuals confer narratives with great importance.

Bamberg (2012) suggests that narrative analysts may privilege narrative 'means' or the experiences related in the narratives, however in an ideal world it should be the case that learning more about how the narrative is constructed should improve the analysts understanding of what the narrative is used for (Bamberg, 2012). This perspective has influenced the selection of an approach to the analysis of narratives in the current study as Riessman's (2003; 2008) 'Performance/Dialogic' approach was selected for the reason that it allowed both the structural features of the narrative and its content to be analysed, as Bamberg (2012) suggests, through his reference to narrative 'means' and 'experience'.

Atkinson (2005) maintains that there is no single narrative method, only a multitude of ways in which researchers can engage with the narratives that they identify in their data. Riessman (2008) outlines a typology of approaches but is careful to set very loose boundaries for these, asserting that they bleed into one another. Atkinson (2005) claims that researchers may be interested in narrative for three reasons; the actual events that are recounted in the narrative, the structure or form of the narrative, the performance of narratives. This supports the format followed by Riessman (2008) as her typology maps directly onto the distinctions Atkinson (2005) discerns. Riessman's (2003; 2008) 'Performance/Dialogic' approach attends to all three to some extent, it does not treat content as primary but accounts for content, while referring to structure. It also focuses

on the interactional and institutional context in which the narrative is produced (Atkinson, 2005).

Narrative is implicated in power, with Czarniawska (2004) postulating that people or institutions concoct stories for others without including them in the conversation. Those others may be constituted by the stories of such people and institutions, however, they still have the capacity to tell stories that challenge those which have become conventional or institutionalised (Stanley, 2013). Plummer (1995), for example, claims that stories may challenge authorities, citing the experience of 'gays' and 'lesbians' who succeeded in challenging the stories of pathology told about them by scientific authority, by telling their own stories. Male victims of intimate partner abuse similarly tell stories which conflict with, or are insufficiently accounted for by, the stories told by researchers (e.g. Dobash and Dobash, 2004), as well as some segments of the public.

3.8 - Data Collection

As mentioned earlier, two different forms of data were collected for analysis in this research project; written narratives (in the form of letters written to Amen Support Services) and oral narratives (obtained through interview). All materials made use of in this project were obtained or developed through contact with Amen Support Services. As outlined in Chapter 2, Amen Support Services is the only agency which provides support specifically to men in the Republic of Ireland. Based in Navan in Co. Meath, it provides a national helpline service, counselling, and face-to-face support and advice. Amen Support Services allowed me to place an advertisement on their website, as well as their various social media accounts in order to recruit interview participants. As well as this, each of the letters analysed for the purposes of this study were gleaned from

two publications of men's accounts of intimate partner abuse compiled by Amen Support Services (Cleary, 2004; Amen, 2012).

3.9 - Letters

The written narratives to be analysed for the purposes of this study were drawn from the two books of letters published by Amen support services; 'Letters to Amen: volume 1' (Cleary, 2004) and 'Letters to Amen: volume 2' (Amen, 2012). There were 104 letters in total, which included the accounts of men who had experienced intimate partner abuse at the hands of their female partners but also letters written by friends and relatives of abused men and a number of letters from men who had received abuse at the hands of other female family members, such as their mothers. Only those letters presented as having been written by men who had experienced intimate partner abuse were included in this study, with all others deemed to be outside the scope of the study and were not transcribed as a result. After excluding non-relevant letters there were 64 remaining. Each of these letters were analysed individually before selecting two for presentation here.

These letters were submitted, at the request of Amen, by male victims of intimate partner abuse who had been in contact with the service. When these men made contact (by phone, e-mail, or face to face) they were invited to submit their story for publication. These letters were anonymised and, in some cases, annotated by the staff working in Amen Support Services before being published. Riessman (1993) has highlighted the importance of the data collection process for the interpretation of data. Bearing this in mind it should be recognised that I did not have any interaction with the writers of the letters in the course of data collection. This marked a difference between the letters and interviews that is discussed further in section 3.13.2. All of the men were made aware

of the purposes for which their letters were being obtained.

3.10 - Interview recruitment

Ten semi-structured interviews were carried out with men who self-identified as having encountered intimate partner abuse (9 were included for analysis while 1 withdrew following interview). Thus these men constituted a self-selected sample of volunteer participants who were recruited through the use of advertisements that were placed on the Amen website, Amen Facebook page, Amen Twitter feed, and in the offices of the men's intimate partner abuse support group Amen. Each of the men who were interviewed made initial contact with the primary researcher, making use of the contact information provided in the advertisement in order to do so. Both an e-mail address and phone number were provided by the researcher.

It was decided to interview self-identified abuse victims as a result of the fact that there are multiple definitions of intimate partner abuse (Watson and Parsons, 2005; Kearns et al, 2008), as well as a multiplicity of behaviours that are identified as abusive by researchers, and a variety of ways of interpreting those behaviours (depending on the stance of the researcher). By allowing participants to self-identify, the range of possible abusive behaviours is not restricted in advance.

The advertisement that was made use of in recruitment contained both an e-mail address and a mobile phone number, allowing the participants to make contact in whichever way they preferred. Three made initial contact by text message, two called by telephone, and five e-mailed to express their interest. In all cases I responded to the men through the same medium that they contacted me, unless otherwise requested by the men. This was done in order to ensure the safety of the men involved as at the point of initial contact it was not always clear whether or not the men were still living with their

abusive partner. Where further contact was necessary the participant was treated as an expert regarding their own situation in the sense that it was held that if they were making contact in a particular way it was because it was safe for them to make contact in this way, unless otherwise stated. Two of the men who responded to the advertisement via text message requested a phone call to arrange the interview. In all other cases the same mode of contact was used for all communication.

In the case of men who made contact by telephone it was possible to schedule an interview during the initial contact. The researcher briefly outlined the research and explained what would be required of them if they decided to participate, after which some men decided not to go any further, while others arranged a time and date for interview.

Those who made contact by text message or e-mail informed the researcher of their interest in participating and gave instructions for further contact. Some requested phone calls in order to arrange an interview, while others were happy to continue contact through text message or e-mail.

Thus it can be claimed that there was no standardised procedure through which contact was made with participants as control was handed to participants regarding how they wished to make contact and what was the best or safest medium for them to do that. Further contact was necessary with some participants in order to redress imbalances that existed regarding their familiarity with the interview locations.

3.10.1 - Interview Location

The participant and interviewer shared control (Plummer, 2001) over the environment in which the interview took place. As a result of the recommendations of the Research Ethics Committee, which held that the topic was particularly sensitive, it was deemed

necessary to have therapeutic services on site if the participant became distressed by the interview. This prompted the decision to restrict the sites at which interviews were conducted to the offices at Amen and the researcher's own office in DCU. It may be suggested that, while these locations were equivalent in terms of the therapeutic services that they offered, there may have been an imbalance in the power differentials (Kvale, 2009) at play in the two locations. As a result of the fact that the researcher was more familiar with the interview location in DCU it may be suggested that there was a failure on the part of the researcher to meet participants 'on their own turf', as Plummer (2001) advises. Thus participants may not have been as comfortable being interviewed at DCU despite having chosen this location. A number of participants requested to be interviewed at home but these requests were refused due to concerns regarding the safety of the participants and the interviewer, given the subject matter. I believed that I may risk exposing participants to further abuse by interviewing them in the home. While this approach likely limited the agency of the participants, an important consideration in a narrative research project, I decided that their safety and my own safety was of greater importance in this case. It may be argued that participants selected a 'least worst' option, in some instances, in being interviewed in DCU as it was often the case that this location suited them merely because of the practical consideration that it was closer to home than Amen's offices in Navan, with the same also being the case for some of the interviews conducted at Amen's offices. Most of the participants that chose to be interviewed at Amen's offices in Navan were very familiar with the location, a fact that was referred to by each of the men.

3.11 - Interview Process

Interview research is suggested to focus on the knowledge constructed in the interaction between the interviewer and interviewee:

> "Interviews are conversations in which both participants – teller and listener/questioner – develop meaning together.." (Riessman, 1993, p.55).

I subscribe to this view in the current study, conceptualising the account produced in the interview as a co-construction. The present study aims to examine how individuals account for the intimate partner abuse that they have encountered, with this account facilitated and actively supported by the interviewer.

This study takes the view that the interview is not a natural or casual conversation (with natural and casual conversations in this instance conceptualised as those which are not contrived for a specific purpose), in line with Kvale (2009) who suggests that "an interview is a conversation that has a structure and a purpose" (p.6), which "goes beyond the spontaneous exchange of views in everyday conversations, and becomes a careful questioning and listening approach, with the purpose of obtaining carefully tested knowledge" (Kvale, 2009, p. 3). The interviews in this research had minimal structure but are identified as 'semi-structured'. This is because no interview is fully unstructured as all interviews employ guiding principles which confer some form of structure on the process (Riessman, 2008). The current interviews, further, lack the crutch that structured interviews are suggested to provide (Plummer, 2001), lacking as they do a list of questions which may serve as support for the interviewer. They are more open and less technical, demanding that the participant take the lead in the interview. However, while they may limit the 'field of inquiry' (Fontana and Frey, 1994) less than structured interviews, it is still the case that some structure was imposed. For example, in the interviews conducted in this study the following initial statement was made:

"In your own time, and starting and finishing wherever you deem fit, please tell me your story of your experience of intimate partner abuse"

The interviewee did not simply offer their narratives in an unprompted and unmediated fashion, I (as the interviewer) necessarily had a foundational role in the construction of the narrative, through advertising for participants or through asking for elaboration on particular topics. I defined the terms of the interview, and so it cannot be held that the research interview is a conversation between equal partners. This interview attempted to address some of the issues associated with power by adopting an interview strategy in which structure was lessened, with the aim of giving greater control to the respondent to direct the course of the interview than may be permitted in interviews with tightly controlled lists of questions (Mishler, 1991; Riessman, 1993).

The interviewee was prompted to organise the events of the intimate partner abuse they encountered into a story through the use of the aforementioned opening statement. The word 'tell' served as an injunction, possibly reminiscent of story. Narration, according to Riessman (2008), depends on expectations, with the suggestion being that when "extended accounts are welcomed, some participants and interviewers collaboratively develop them…" (Riessman, 2008, p. 26). Where shorter answers are expected respondents may learn to keep their responses brief. The initial question asked at the beginning of the interviews in this study aimed to indicate that extended accounts were welcome. I asked for a particular type of data, thus structuring the responses of the participants. Further, I restricted the participant to the topic of intimate partner abuse. Following this a narrative of the abuse encountered by the interviewee was constructed between the interviewee and I. Beyond the initial question my responses consisted primarily of encouragement through the use of non-lexicals, such as 'Mmm', as well as through nodding or other bodily cues. I also interjected at times to seek clarification, to

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encourage further development of particular topics or if there was an extended lull in the interview. I restricted my comments to requests for elaboration about issues raised by the interviewee. My theoretical interests and my knowledge of the literature relating to IPA influenced my requests for elaboration, as they sensitised me to particular areas of interest as they arose in the course of the interviews. The implications of this for the findings of the research will be addressed in the course of analysis.

Ellis and Berger (2002) claim that interviews evolve their own norms and rules and this was the case in this study as, for example, participants made various appeals for engagement from the interviewer. One participant allowed sentences to hang in the air until they were completed by the researcher, possibly ensuring that the researcher was paying attention, or attempting to discern whether or not what was being said was understood. These exchanges were negotiated between the interviewer and interviewee in the course of the interview exchange and are not immediately identifiable in the interview transcript (Ellis and Berger, 2002). They helped assure the interviewee that the interviewer was attending to their narrative and encouraged them to continue, as the interviewer was required to be knowledgeable regarding the context of the interview in order to be able to comment. This may be said to resemble Plummer's (2001) notion of learning the language of the interviewee, in which Plummer (2001) proposes the utility of making use of similar language to the interviewee in order to facilitate the narrative. While that which occurred in the interview mentioned above is not identical to this concept it may be argued that the close attendance to the context of the interview and the arguments being pursued by the participant resemble the form of 'active listening' that Plummer (2001) advocates as necessary when learning the language of the interviewee.

For the most part, however, the interviews proceeded with little input from the

researcher, except in the form of supportive responses (Mishler, 1991; Kvale, 2009). This was done in an effort to give up control in the interview, which Riessman (2008) identifies as required to create possibilities for extended narration. Once they had completed their narrative the interviewees may have been asked to elaborate on a number of issues that the interviewer deemed to have been left underdeveloped or which it was believed could have been elaborated upon to a greater extent (Riessman, 2008). Again, this may be related to narration's dependence upon the expectation of an extended account (Riessman, 2008). The end of the narrative was judged to have been reached as a result of the respondent uttering 'exit talk' (Riessman, 2002) such as "that's about it" or some variation on this. In a number of cases the respondents themselves invited questions at this point. The questions asked by the interviewer took the following form in most cases:

"You mentioned X earlier, would you mind telling me more about that?"

"When you said X earlier, what did you mean?"

"You mentioned that your partner could be X. Do any specific events come to mind?"

"Do you mind elaborating on that point for me?"

"Is there anything else you can tell me about X?"

"We have reached the end of our interview. Before we finish, is there anything else you would like to add?"

The interviewee's responses to these questions often took the form of further narratives, which may have prompted further elaboration, as outlined above.

Following the interview the participant was thanked for their participation, asked how they found the interview process, and reminded that they could withdraw from the study at any stage (Kvale, 2009).

One interview was ended at the request of the interviewee, however this was due to fatigue from talking at such length. I ended the interview at his request and the

debriefing began.

A safety protocol was drawn up in the event that any participants became distressed in the course of the interview or following the interview. This is included in Appendix E. This became necessary in the case of one participant who became distressed during the interview and was put in touch with a counsellor as a result.

In all cases the men were highly motivated to participate and only one expressed any reservations about their interview data being used in the research. This man subsequently withdrew from the research. He was still living with his wife at the time of the interview and the intimate partner abuse had ceased. He believed that this abuse was situational and instigated by the stress of issues they were having with their child at the time. He decided to withdraw due to his fears that his wife may recognise his story in the report and resume the intimate partner abuse.

The interview data generated in this way was then transcribed according to the transcription process outlined below. Transcription is an important part of the interpretive process (Riessman, 1993).

3.12 - Transcription Process

The transcription of the interviews in this study was carried out while remaining cognisant of the fact that the transcription process is an interpretive act in itself (Riessman, 2008). The way in which the interview was represented in text is not necessarily an unproblematic presentation of the interview as it happened (Poland, 2002). The interview may be transcribed in different ways depending upon the focus of the study. As this study is a narrative analysis of how men talk about intimate partner abuse there was a focus on both the content of the interview and the linguistic features of this presentation. This made it necessary for the researcher to represent pauses,

interruptions, overlapping speech, emphasis, and other features that would not be evident in a simple transcription of content. Further, as the approach adopted is dialogic/performance analysis it was necessary to account for the role of researcher in the text and thus all utterances were transcribed, including non-lexical utterances such as 'Mmmm'.

The interviews were transcribed in a simple fashion initially, for scanning by the researcher, with more complex transcripts produced once I had decided which sections to include in analysis. While I have adopted Riessman's (2008) Dialogic/Performance analytic approach I do not follow the transcription conventions that she described in her 2008 work. In this text Riessman (2008) recommended the numbering of 'phrases' and the organising of the text into 'stanzas'. Instead of this I followed Riessman's (2003) work in presenting the narrative excerpts without numbering. Riessman's (2003) article also deployed Dialogic/Performance analysis and so this is not a major deviation from her approach.

I transcribed the interviews verbatim, making use of Poland's (2002) simplified and abbreviated transcription conventions. These are contained in the Appendix F. This technique adapts the instructions of Conversation Analysis (hereafter CA), producing a transcription strategy that 'calls for less detail' (Poland, 2002, p.640). The approach used in CA measures the length of pauses in tenths of a second, a level of detail that seemed unnecessary for this research project. Observations were made about pauses in the course of analysis but this was not the primary focus of analysis. How the story was told was of central concern and pauses will be relevant to the analysis to the extent that useful insights may be generated from them in the context of a particular narrative. However, no insights regarding the specific length of pauses will be generated as a

microanalysis of story construction is not the aim of this study. Riessman (2008) identifies Dialogic/Performance analysis as a broader approach. By this Riessman (2008) means that there is less forensic focus on the structure of the narrative, although she does suggest that microanalysis can still occur if relevant to the topic (Riessman, 2008). Pauses may play a role in the interpretation of the narrative of intimate partner abuse that is constructed by the researcher but it is sufficient to state whether these pauses are long or short. Greater specificity will not lend itself to more interesting or valid analyses in this study.

The insights that can be gained from a transcript are influenced by the conventions adopted in the transcription process (Riessman, 2008). Taking this into consideration, it was important that the transcripts constructed from the interview recordings did more than simply reproduce the content of the interview. It was necessary for the Performance/dialogic approach that was adopted that the transcripts were able to represent the way in which words were spoken or the use of non-lexicals or pauses. These gave information relating to the local context of the interview. This is not to say that transcription should reflect realist concerns with accuracy (Poland, 2002), with the idea that the more accurate the text, the better the representation of what 'really' happened in the interview. Rather, it is held that the transcription of pauses and other features serves a purpose in the context of the analytic approach adopted. Transcribing these features adds to the rigour of the study.

3.13 - Analytic Process

The analytic process made use of in the current study closely followed that of Riessman (2003) in her work examining the performance of identities in illness narratives. This study deployed Riessman's (2008) Dialogic/Performance analysis and so was useful for

the current research which also deployed this technique. However, Riessman's (2003) work was also favoured over her other work due to its structure and presentation. The current study followed Riessman's (2003) analysis of both individual cases and the consideration of similarities between those cases. Consistent with the narrative focus on the study of the particular (Riessman, 1993) the individual cases were analysed in detail first, followed by a consideration of their shared features.

The notion of narrative as performance has been explored in several writings by Riessman (2002; 2003; 2008). One reason for the focus on Riessman's 2003 article is the manner in which the narratives are presented. Riessman (2002; 2008) deploys a strict definition of narrative which relates to a 'bounded' segment of text, whose boundaries may be indicated by entrance and exit talk (Riessman, 2002). In Riessman (2003), however, she would appear to implicitly deploy a definition of the narrative as relating to the entire interview. She did not present a bounded interview segment but instead interpreted the performance of masculinity throughout her interviews with two men. The data in Riessman's (2003) study was approached as an interaction between the interviewer and interviewee and she was careful to account for the context of the interview and the role played by the researcher in the construction of the narrative. Further, the individual cases were presented initially, following which their accounts were compared (Riessman, 2003). Riessman's (2008) 'Dialogic/Performance Analysis' focused on:

- Language used in the narrative

- Context of the narrative

- Temporality of the narrative

- The work that the narrative does.

The current study followed Riessman's (2003) article with its broader focus on the entire interview, while retaining the detailed analysis of interview excerpts to illustrate the interpretive work being done.

Riessman (2008) suggests that this analytic approach draws on the theoretical traditions of symbolic interactionism and conversation analysis as a result of its focus on the construction of social reality through interaction. Riessman (2008) explicitly acknowledges the role of Erving Goffman's (1959) work in the development of this approach, suggesting that he extended symbolic interactionist theory to include performance. As mentioned earlier, this approach takes the view that individuals are constantly engaged in efforts to project a 'definition of who we are'. This indicates that when engaged in conversation, or other behaviour, individuals attempt to convince others of the authenticity of their identity. Thus the 'other' is central in this approach, as all narratives are told to someone. This is further extended in 'Dialogic/Performance analysis' to highlight the way in which all language is dialogic as, following Bakhtin it is suggested to be multivoiced, meaning that language carries the traces of prior usage. This would seem to indicate the suitability of 'Dialogic/Performance analysis' for the current study as a central concern is the context in which men relate their narratives, which is deemed to be discrediting.

The practical steps taken in the analysis of the 9 interviews and 64 letters used in the current study are outlined below.

3.13.1 - Case-based analysis

Each of the narratives were analysed individually initially in order to explore the particular arguments made in the narratives and the ways in which intimate partner abuse was constructed in the narrative (Riessman, 2003).

Work was begun on the letters initially due to the practical consideration that they were available before the interviews were completed. These were read and letters were excluded based on the inclusion criteria, which are mentioned above. The remaining letters were then transcribed as they appeared in the 'Letters to Amen' (Cleary, 2004; Amen, 2012) books. Once the interviews were completed they were also transcribed and initial notes were made on these. When both letters and interviews were available they were analysed concurrently using the same analytic approach. While Riessman's (2002; 2003; 2008) work focuses on oral texts there does not seem to be any obstacle to her approach being applied to written texts. The points of convergence and divergence are discussed in the next section.

3.13.2 - Differences between the analysis of written and oral narratives

While the same analytic approach was adopted for the analysis of both the written and oral narratives the differences between these two media meant that there were differences in terms of the way insights were generated. The written and oral narratives in this study differed in several ways:

- Temporality – All of the men who participated in the interviews had moved on from their abusive relationships, and viewed the abuse as somehow past (even though in some cases aspects of the abuse were still ongoing), while in the letters there was a greater diversity in terms of the point at which the men presented the relationship, with some of the letters presented as being written at the very point at which the abuse was occurring. This had implications for how such letters were analysed in terms of the 'work' that the narrative does.

- The letters and interviews differed significantly in terms of the length of the texts produced. The interviews were several thousand words in each case, with the

longest 24,229 words and the shortest 11,235 words. By contrast the letters were often only several hundred words each, with the longest 1,597 words and the shortest 245 words. This vast difference in word count meant that the labour involved in analysis was different. In the case of the interviews the transcripts would be trawled through and an effort made to understand the central concern of the interview. This was illustrated with several exemplary vignettes. In the case of the letters it was often possible to present the entire body of the letter.

- Riessman (1993) highlights the interpretive nature of narrative and the necessity to leave such interpretations open, rather than reducing interpretation to a single understanding. Part of this involves making the narratives visible to readers to decide if your interpretations are plausible. In this way the letters are more accessible as they have already been reproduced in books and so any reader can judge the interpretations made in the current study. By contrast the full transcripts of the interviews will not be made available for reasons of confidentiality and so greater trust is asked of the reader in this instance.

- The audience – In the interviews the interaction is quite clearly between the interviewer and the interviewee, with the interviewee taking the interviewer into account as the audience for their narrative. As well as this the interviewee in this study may have considered the audience external to the interview context. This was directly acknowledged by some of the men who suggested that they hoped their story would be of some benefit to other men suffering in a similar fashion to them. Again the letters displayed greater diversity in terms of the audience to whom they were directed. It seems likely that the men who submitted the letters were aware that they may be viewed by a general external audience and perhaps this influenced their composition. However, they also addressed their letters to a wider

diversity of individuals than simply the interviewer. Some were addressed to Amen, some to the former manager of Amen, and in at least one case a third party was addressed, in the form of a statement made to Gardaí.

- All of the interviews were co-constructed in the same manner in the sense that the interviewer requested a story from the interviewee regarding their experience, a classic dialogue (Riessman, 2008). In the letters, however, the accounts were not all co-constructed in the same way. Some letters simply provided the story of abuse in a similar, although shorter, way to the interviews, while others provided the story but requested assistance with their situation, others hoped that their story would provide solace to, or act as a cautionary tale for other men, some identified their letters as written in response to a radio show they heard or tv programme that they watched, some presenting a polemic on the plight of abused men in Ireland, and others offering a statement which served as a record of the abuse to which they were subjected. The letters to Amen seemed to offer narrators more opportunities than the interviews. This multiplicity does not undermine the fact that the bulk of these letters still offered a narrative of the abuse to which they were subjected, however their orientation to time and audience differed in each instance. How this played into the way the story was told was explored in the analysis of each letter.

While there are differences and similarities between the letters and interviews in terms of the data that they make available to be analysed, the Dialogic/Performance analytic approach would seem to offer sufficient tools to analyse both types of data. The differences between the two are not so great that they necessitate a different approach for analysis. Further, as 'Dialogic/Performance analysis' is a broader approach in which the focus is on 'when and why' as opposed to 'how' and 'what', the two types of data

may simply be seen as offering broadly different means by which performance may take place or different dialogical contexts. These different media were simply another factor to consider in analysis, rather than any obstacle to using this approach.

I want to finish on the point that ultimately transcription results in the transformation of an oral narrative into a written one and that analysis then proceeds as normal. However, obviously there are conventions designed to represent aspects of speech and the analysis will take these into account.

3.13.3 - Initial orientation to the text

When orienting towards an interview transcript initially I listened to the recording and made initial notes. I took note of issues, such as tone of voice (e.g. emphasis (Poland, 2002)) and proposed possible ways in which this may have been relevant to what was being said. Not all of these initial ideas were pursued when it came to further analysis but they were considered to be worth noting in the event that they were of further relevance. This attendance to tone of voice, and other issues identifiable on the recording, served as information regarding the local context of the interview, which could then be fed into later readings of the transcripts of the interview. These would be used in conjunction with the notes taken during the interview process, a further source of information regarding context.

When orienting towards the letters the process was slightly different. As these were written texts the focus was on textual rather than aural features. There was no face to face interview at which I would meet the author and from which I could glean extra contextual information. As mentioned, general contextual information was gleaned from Amen Support Services regarding how men were approached to participate and what they were asked to provide. However, in the case of particular letters I took note

of how the letter was framed (was it a statement or a letter of testimonial) and who it was addressed to. I also attended to textual features, such as the use of punctuation, the organisation of the text into paragraphs, as well as the content of the text. These provided information about the organisation of ideas and the importance that was conferred on certain aspects of the texts. In selecting those letters to include in the final thesis I referred to Riessman's (2008) definition of narrative and excluded those letters which did not fit this definition.

Those letters and interviews which were ultimately selected for case-by-case analysis were selected because of their narrative depth.

After taking notes on the interview recordings and letters the transcripts were examined line by line. This was done using a hard copy of the transcript and notes were made in the margins or using post-it notes. Sections that were deemed interesting, in terms of Riessman's (2008) 'Dialogic/Performance analysis' whose foci of interest (termed 'phases' here) are outlined below, were highlighted. By this it is meant that sections of the text that adhered to a storied format and made use of language in particularly notable ways (such as those indicated in the sections below), or contained interesting content, or drew on context in a notable way were highlighted for further investigation. In speaking of 'storied format', Riessman's (2008) loose definition of narrative as:

> "…a speaker connects events into a sequence that is consequential for later action and for the meanings that the speaker wants listeners to take away from the story. Events perceived by the speaker as important are selected, organised, connected, and evaluated as meaningful for a particular audience" (p. 3).

This sequential organisation, followed by an evaluation, were taken as loose guiding principles for the selection of narratives to be analysed in this study.

Following this initial orientation towards the interview, the transcript of the interview was analysed according to Riessman's (2008) dialogic/performance approach. While the outline below presents the issues that were focused on in terms of distinct 'phases', in practice they informed each other and they were made use of concurrently in analysis. It was not the case that the interview was thought about in terms of language first, then context and then content, they inevitably occurred at the same time. Riessman (2008) also does not present these focal issues as distinct phases of the analytic process but this has been done here for clarity and ease of presentation. Further, Riessman (2008) throughout her work, highlights the importance of these issues but suggests that certain aspects may be accentuated by researchers according to their theoretical commitments. This was the case in the current study, with the focus being on the 'work that the narrative does', in line with the performative approach in which the enactment of identities in dialogical narratives was of central importance. This is made evident by Riessman's (2008) suggestion that the dialogic/performance approach focuses on the questions 'who', 'when', and 'why'.

3.13.4 - Phase One – Attend to context –

In her use of this form of analysis Riessman (2008) introduces the narrative by providing context for the text. She gives details of the scene in which the interview took place and how she made initial contact with the participant, as well as reflecting on her own initial impressions of the participant and their mode of storytelling. She incudes herself in the analysis, as well as selling the story to the reader as interesting. She prefaces her own narrative of the interview encounter, that forms the analysis, with an evaluation of the encounter that serves as a justification for providing the account that she provides (Mildorf, 2009).

When the transcript was approached initially I attended to and accounted for the context in which it was produced in a similar fashion to that of Riessman (2003). This applied to both the 'Letters to Amen' and the transcriptions of the interviews. The way in which these narratives were constructed had implications for the extent to which context could be accounted for. For example, in the case of the interviews the interactional context could be accounted for to a greater extent as I had access to the exchange between myself and the participant.

Context was attended to in two ways in this study, following Riessman (2003), who attends to both the interactional context of the interview and the broader social context in which the interaction took place. These are outlined in greater detail below.

3.13.5 - Interactional context –

Riessman (2008) claims that this approach to narrative analysis "interrogates how talk among speakers is interactively (dialogically) produced and performed as narrative" (p. 105). The emphasis in this quote on narrative as interaction, dialogue and the use of the plural speakers highlights that the approach focuses on the local context of the interview. This focus requires the researcher to account for his role in the production of the text, to acknowledge the fact that the participant is not simply the receptacle in which the narrative is stored, only for it to be released in the context of the interview. This reflects the perspective held regarding the interview in this study, in which it is viewed according to Kvale's (2009) traveller metaphor as opposed to the miner metaphor. The researcher plays an active role in the construction of the information produced in the interview, he does not 'discover' information and play no role in its construction, with Riessman's (2008) dialogic/performance analysis approach acknowledging this.

In the case of the 'Letters to Amen' I did not have direct contact with the respondents in the way that I did in the interviews. However, this does not undermine the view of narratives as co-constructed. The 'Letters' were collected and compiled into books by Amen. They did this by asking men, who contacted them by phone and who came in to the service for support, if they would be willing to submit a written account of their experience of intimate partner abuse. It was a completely voluntary activity in the sense that men received nothing in return for their participation and their use of the service was not contingent on the supply of this narrative. The men could submit their narrative to the service by post or by e-mail. The narratives were thus written by men with whom the service had had contact and this may have had an impact on the narratives produced by the participants. Perhaps they produced their narrative with the specific audience of the Amen staff in mind. Further, as they were aware of the purpose of the effort to collect the letters it is likely that they wrote the narratives with the future online/print audience in mind, the 'ghostly audience' to which Riessman (2008) refers. This aspect of context was attended to in the course of narrative analysis.

In the case of the 'Letters to Amen', little can be said about the men who wrote the letters as these were submitted to Amen and posted online, so I did not have contact with the individual who produced the document. I only had access to the text, and some background information about the letters, provided by a third party. All that can be said about those who submitted these letters is that they were literate, they were able to successfully construct a text. Of course there are limitations to this claim also as it cannot be said with certainty that the text was produced by one individual or more. It may be the case that the letter was co-constructed by a number of individuals before being sent in to Amen, who then published them on their website.

Riessman (2003) attempts to account for her role in the interview and the way in which the participant orients towards her. One example of this is her discussion of her concern that the participant was attempting to position her as a temporary female companion, commenting on his efforts to include her in a common world of meaning. Meaning in the dialogic approach does not reside in a speaker's narrative but in the dialogue between speaker and listener, investigator, transcript, text and reader, according to Riessman (2008).

In the case of the interviews I had direct access to the context in which the interviews took place and can provide information regarding the demeanour of the participant, as well as physical characteristics and other impressions. Further, the recordings upon which the transcripts are based can be used to provide information beyond the words that were used by the participant, such as tone of voice, pauses and other items of interest. These were all included during transcription, however the recording will be referred back to in order to allow me to further attend to such details.

It may be argued that the participants who submitted the 'Letters to Amen' could engage in impression management to a greater extent than those who were interviewed. Those who wrote letters had the opportunity to revise their accounts to an extent that those who were interviewed could not. This was taken into account in analysis.

I also kept extensive notes in the form of narratives of the interviews themselves. In these notes I tell the story of the interview from initial contact through to the beginning of the interview and on to the departure of the participant. These notes do not detail the content of the interview specifically, instead they map my impressions at various stages of the process, noting my responses to various items raised by the participant or

behaviours engaged in by the participant. This was found to be a useful approach. Irrespective of the merits of this note-taking style, these notes provided a good source of context for analysis.

3.13.6 - Broader social context

Riessman's (2008) concern regarding context does not narrowly focus on the local context of the interview to the exclusion of the wider social context as Riessman (2008) claims that a strength of the 'Dialogic/Performance approach' is that it attends to the context beyond the interview situation. Riessman (2008) claims that it requires 'close reading' of the 'setting' and 'social circumstances'. This focus is reflected in Riessman's (2003) work in which she acknowledges the presence of broader discourses of masculinity in the narratives that she analyses, while also accounting for the social circumstances of the participant. For example, she notes that the company in which one participant previously worked had closed down. This observation fed into her interpretation of the performance of the participant concerned, as she interpreted his claim that he was going back to work in light of this information. This interpretation underscores the room that is made in Riessman's (2003; 2008) approach for insights drawn from the wider social context in which a participant finds himself.

As well as knowledge about the social context being used to generate insights about narratives, Riessman's (2003; 2008) approach also takes the view that narratives are 'social artefacts' that can tell us a lot about a person or group, claiming that: "Stories are social artefacts, telling us as much about society and culture as they do about a person or group" (p.105). In the context of this study and Riessman's (2008) dialogic/performance approach to narrative more generally it is taken that "social reality is constructed through interaction…..What we as members of a culture take to be

'true'….are actually produced in face to face exchanges every day" (p.106). In this way the social context could be analysed through the narratives produced in interview and the narratives in the 'Letters' through reference to the unquestioned assumptions produced in co-constructed narratives.

Riessman (2008) draws on Bakhtin to suggest that the interviewee/researcher/analyst does not have sole authority over meaning. There are always multiple voices at play in a narrative, such as historical discourses beyond the author's voice, and thus the authority over meaning is dispersed and embedded. This complicates any common-sense notions that language/discourse/narrative has a unitary meaning. All discourses and narratives carry the baggage of previous uses of language with them and so they can be interpreted in multiple ways, according to the other historical uses of the discourse or narrative. A word cannot be interpreted from a 'pure' or neutral position where its meaning can be stated simply, it can be interrogated according to the traces it carries of other utterances (Riessman, 2008).

I attended to the broader social context through reference to issues relating to temporality, issues that indicated that the stories were told in a particular time and place, such as references to legal orders that no longer exist or that exist in other jurisdictions. These things date a story and provide important information about the social context in which it occurred.

Further, social context was evident in the taken for granted meanings. These were made evident throughout the text through reference to implicit or explicit assumptions regarding the appropriate behaviour of men and women. Theory and familiarity with the IPA literature assisted in sensitising me to such issues.

3.13.7 - Phase two - Language

Riessman (2008) asserts that her approach does not take language at face value. I interrogated the words and styles selected by narrators in the construction of their narrative. In discussing an encounter with a male sufferer of MS Riessman (2008) indicates how verb tense may be put to some analytic use.

Attending to the language used by participants was an important focus for analysis in both the 'Letters to Amen' and the interview transcripts. In both instances this focus allowed me to comment on issues such as the use of pronouns in the text (a la Hyden, 2005), the use of tenses (Riessman, 2008), and the use of direct speech by the participant (Riessman, 2008). This is by no means an exhaustive list but it does provide an initial introduction into the types of things attended to in the text. Attending to such things allowed the researcher to comment on the effect these had in the text. For example, Hyden's (2005) focus on the shift in pronouns in her study allowed her to make claims that the participant performed a resistant self.

3.13.8 - Phase three - The 'work' that the narrative does

In this phase I attempted to account for the meaning of the narrative and the reason(s) the participant recounts this particular narrative.

When it is said that the current approach focuses on 'the work that the narrative does' what is meant is that it focuses on what the effect of the narrative is. What does it achieve? The participant is not simply telling a story or communicating information, they are doing something, presenting themselves and their world in some way. In the context of Riessman's (2003) article this referred to the 'identity work' of the narrative. She articulated how the participant performed his masculine identity in the course of this narrative. This was achieved through commenting on the narrative resources, such as

plot, setting and characters, made use of by the participant in the course of the text. She claims that his deployment of these devices facilitates his performance of the identity of 'man who wants to be a working man'. The language and context of the narrative also feed into the description of the work the narrative is doing. As mentioned, the use of pronouns and the claims that Riessman makes about this allows her to make an argument about the participant's performance of a masculine identity.

3.13.9 - Phase four - Temporality

Finally, temporality is discussed in relation to the work that the narrative is doing. When discussing the performance that the participant engages in Riessman (2003) comments on the temporal ordering of the narrative, suggesting that it is organised in scenes. These mark the chronological development of the narrative.

When the transcript had been analysed in terms of the phases outlined above the insights had to be brought together and written up in narrative form. This involved selecting a focus for the analysis from the issues that had been identified and constructing a narrative with this central focus. That is not to say that this focus was treated as the only way in which the narrative was analysed. A sceptical and critical demeanour was adopted in the analysis and multiple possibilities were entertained and their merits were considered. One interpretation was not presented as a singular 'truth', although a preferred interpretation was proffered.

3.13.10 – Selection of Cases for further analysis

Once all of the written and spoken narratives had been analysed in the manner outlined above, it became necessary to select a number of these narratives for presentation in the final thesis. The aim of this study was to examine how men who have experienced IPA account for such abuse in written and spoken narratives. As a result of the depth of

analysis required it would not be possible to include all written and spoken narratives in a single study. This meant that it was necessary to focus on a sub-sample of the narratives collected for this study.

Narrowing down and selecting the narratives to focus on was a difficult process both ethically and practically. From an ethical perspective I was keen to include as many accounts as possible as I believed that I had an obligation to those who had participated to include their narrative in some way. Many of the interview participants expressed a desire to share their story for political reasons, to draw attention to an issue they believed was underserved. To exclude them from the study was to deny them this opportunity.

From a practical perspective, it was difficult to narrow down the narratives for analysis as I had collected a lot of rich data. It was difficult to choose between them. In order to make my selection I drew on the concept of 'Narrative depth'. This refers to the number of narrative incidents related, the level of detail in the narratives, as well as the richness of description.

Further, the analysis of all individual cases had been undertaken when I was making this decision. As a result, I had identified certain themes in the narratives, relating to how men account for IPA they have experienced. The narratives were selected so that the most prominent themes could be explored in more detail. Five narratives were selected for presentation in this thesis, two written accounts and three verbal accounts. As this study was concerned with both written and spoken narratives an effort was made to balance the presentation of written and spoken narratives. As a result, a written and spoken narrative was selected to speak to each of the prominent themes.

3.13.11 - Cross Case Analysis

Following the individual analysis of the narratives, outlined above, the narratives were compared in order to determine what they had in common.

The various accounts were read and thought about, without looking at the earlier analysis. Notes were taken and tentative narrative resources were identified and developed at this time. The texts were then re-read, further notes were taken, and these narrative resources were further considered. Both sets of notes were compared with each other, as well as with the earlier individual analysis (Plummer, 2001). As a result of this analysis a table was compiled listing the letters and interviews made use of in this study, as well as the narrative resources that were drawn on in these texts.

I compiled a collection of extracts from the interviews and letters for each theme and I wrote up what I found. The writing up served as another stage of analysis and these themes were developed further, while some were discarded as a result of their similarity to others. For example, many of the men drew on the fact that they were fathers in discussing the abuse to which they were subjected. The various ways in which the men drew on this narrative resource were discussed, along with what this achieved in the context of the narrative.

3.14 – The Death of the Author

The analysis in this research diverges from that of Riessman (2003, 2008) in the sense that Riessman (2008) proposes that a narrative takes a particular form as a result of choices made by the participant to present themselves and their narrative in a particular way. They choose among many different potential ways in which a story may be told, in

order to achieve a particular self-presentation. In this sense the presentation of a narrative account is a strategic accomplishment undertaken by an individual.

By contrast the current study, following Butler (1993; 1999), takes the view that there is no 'doer behind the deed', no intending author who attempts to present a particular 'self'. For Butler (1993; 1999) the subject does not precede language, the subject is performatively produced through the citation of particular normative discourses. As such, it is through the provision of their account of IPA that the participant is produced as a subject. Performative refers to the performing of an action and this action has particular effects, with the effect in this instance being the performative production of the subject. The subject is a performative 'effect' of the narrative that they produce.

This difference in the conceptualization of narrative is acknowledged by Riessman (2003) in the notes attached to her work:

> "One difference between Butler's view and mine concerns intentionality. I believe personal narratives are intentional products and strategic – produced for particular purposes and audiences." (Riessman, 2003, p.27).

Such a conceptualisation may be suggested to provide narrators with significant agency, positioning them as quite aware of the effect that their narrative may have. The narrative produced is the 'expression' of the individual providing the narrative and their attempt to make sense of their position in the world, through the language available to them. Importantly though there is a separation between them and the language they use. This is not the case in Butler's (1993; 1999) perspective in which to use language is to perform actions, to be performatively produced in a particular way.

In Riessman's (2003; 2008) approach the narrator is conferred with significant responsibility for the meaning generated in the text, as they strategise and respond to the audience. However, they are also bound by the 'taken for granted' aspects of knowledge and construct their accounts in conjunction with the audience, by

participating in a dialogue. Thus they are neither master nor slave of language, with a dialectic seeming to operate between the individual and the available language. Butler (1999) would criticise this approach, however, on the basis of its assumption of an individual who precedes language in some way, see chapter 1.

In 'The Death of the Author' (Barthes, 1977), Roland Barthes displaces the notion that the author is the master of meaning in a text. He suggests that this is the site at which the subject slips away. "…the voice loses its origin, the author enters into his own death, writing begins" (p.143). He criticises the practice in literary criticism of focusing on the author when seeking an explanation for the text. For Barthes, in a similar way to Butler (1993; 1999), it is language that speaks, not the author. By refraining from privileging the perspective of the author the reader is foregrounded, and we can begin to speak of the 'effects' of the text for the reader, as opposed to the 'intent' of the text for the author.

Rather than the author being the source of writing, they are the point of convergence. Barthes (1977) suggests that language in general is used much the same as the word 'I' is used. 'I', for Barthes is just the person saying 'I', they do not have any long-lasting claim over the word beyond its use in this context, it is simply a position they hold. Barthes appears to conceptualise the author as simply the point of convergence for language, suggesting that the subject 'suffices to make language 'hold together''(p.145). In a similar way to Butler (1999), for whom the gendered subject is performatively produced in the process of the reiteration of norms of gender, Barthes suggests that the 'modern scriptor is born simultaneously with the text' (p.145). He rejects the notion of an Author who may be conceived of as the 'past of his own book' (p.145). He also explicitly designates writing a 'performative' and suggests that texts are composed of 'quotations from the innumerable centres of culture' (p.146). In this way Barthes seems

to echo Butler's (1999) claim that discourses are cited and redeployed, not created. This is significant for the current study and the focus on performative effects.

Barthes (1977) privileges the text, suggesting that an individual relies on discourses, texts, stories in order to live, in a similar way to Frank (2010), rather than the individual being the source of life that is wholly original. When personal narrative is considered in terms of the intentions of the speakers, what they are trying to do with the words that they deploy, we similarly impose a limit on the text. Further, this may be suggested to have a political dimension that can be observed in the work of Durfee (2011) for example. As mentioned Durfee (2011) proposes that the men in her study may construct their narratives in particular ways in order to achieve a particular outcome with the court. Their action in putting together the narrative is strategic. This interpretation is not inevitable but is tied to a notion of the narrative as an intentional production, the result of conscious, deliberative choice. The 'Death of the Author' allows for the examination of the 'performative effects' of talk or writing, unmoored from the burden of authorial intention. In the case of the current study it also allows me to avoid imputing undue responsibility onto the men for their accounts, men whose accounts are often doubted and who are accused of constructing their accounts to achieve particular nefarious ends.

3.15 - Ethics

The processes and procedures that were followed in order to secure ethical approval, the methods used to recruit participants, as well as the measures that were taken to protect the anonymity of participants are detailed in the following sections.

3.15.1 - Ethical Approval

This study received approval from the Research Ethics Committee of DCU.

3.15.2 - Informed Consent

Informed consent is a significant ethical concern for all research and narrative research presents unique challenges for informed consent. Informed consent refers to respondents in research knowing that they are taking part in research, as well as knowing what the research is about (Plummer, 2001). As well as this, informed consent refers to respondents being reasonably aware of the risks involved in research. It may be suggested that narrative research, concerned as it is with respondents' stories and with keeping these stories intact to a greater degree than other research methods (Riessman, 1993), could undermine respondents' anonymity. It was therefore important that this was explicitly addressed when informing respondents about the research.

With respect to this study, it was the case that those participants whose materials were drawn on for the analysis of letters had not provided consent for their documents of life to be used in this way. However, it was also the case that these letters had already been published or had been made publicly available on the internet. As such, the current study did not expose the participants to any more risk than was already the case (Blackstone et al, 2008). Further, as the participants had been informed at the time of sending in the letters they were not exposed to any greater extent than was already the case.

All interview participants were informed that the research aimed to analyse how men talked about and constructed intimate partner abuse. They were informed regarding what I planned to do with the interview recordings and transcripts following the interview. This was done both at initial contact, as well as prior to the interview when discussing the informed consent form (Appendix C) and Plain Language Statement (Appendix D).

All participants read the Plain Language Statement and Informed Consent Form prior to commencing the interview. These documents provided the participants with information regarding the aims of the study and what their participation would involve. They were informed regarding the limitations to confidentiality in research involving narratives, as well as the fact that their interviews would be audio-recorded. The participants were also provided with this information when initial contact was made. The fact that the interviews were to be audio-recorded proved to be a stumbling block for a number of potential participants and they withdrew their interest following initial contact.

I made sure to ask if the participants had any questions about the process or about the information that they were provided with once they had read these documents. When I was satisfied that they understood what the study was concerned with and what they were being asked to do I requested that they sign the informed consent form. Following this I set up the audio-recorder and the interview began.

3.15.3 - Protection of anonymity

Confidentiality can be difficult to address in narrative research, with Plummer (2001) suggesting that: "With many life documents the issue of confidentiality is an acute one: stories of lives by their very nature usually render their authors recognisable." (p.217). In recognition of the limitations involved in protecting the confidentiality of participants, all respondents were informed that confidentiality could not be guaranteed. They were made aware of the difficulties involved in protecting anonymity in such research. This was stated in the plain language statement. It was also emphasised to participants before all interviews take place. Every effort was made to ensure participants were aware of this possibility.

However, I made use of a number of strategies to limit the risks to the participants' anonymity:

- Each individual was given a pseudonym that has been used in place of their name at all times throughout the text.
- Any details referring to place of residence, workplace or other locations were removed from the transcripts. Place names and the names of places of work were replaced with the letter X.
- Family members' names and the names of friends were removed from the transcript. Family members' names were replaced with the name of their relationship to the person (i.e. sister) and friends' names were replaced with the word (friend).

An excerpt from the text will appear as follows:

"I worked at X and one day (sister) came to visit".

There is still a risk, however, that participants may be recognisable as a result of the incident that they related in the course of their interview. The use of pseudonyms and the concealment of place names may not be sufficient to ensure anonymity. Narrative research projects require participants to relay personal accounts in storied format which may mean that, even if such details are changed, the story itself may be recognisable.

Being a study concerned with the analysis of men's accounts of intimate partner abuse, confidentiality was of further importance due to the sensitive nature of the issues discussed and so efforts were made to protect the participant's identity prior to their participation in the research, as well as following initial contact:

- As mentioned, participants were self-selected which gave them the freedom to apply to participate in the research if it was safe for them to do so. Participants were taken to be experts regarding their own situation in this regard.

- Participants were only contacted using the medium that they preferred following their initial contact. If I was not made aware of a preferred medium he made contact by the same means as the participant, assuming that this was a safe method by which to make contact as a result of the participant's use of it.

In the case of the letters that were used in this study, there was no need to protect the anonymity of these respondents as the letters were already in the public domain and I was informed by the manager of Amen Support Services that the participants were aware that it was to be put into the public domain (Blackstone et al, 2008).

3.16 - Reflexivity

Riessman (2008), Plummer (2001) and others encourage a reflexive approach to research, one which acknowledges the role of the researcher in the project throughout the research. Plummer (2001) claims that: "The social researcher is not a mere medium through which knowledge is discovered; he or she can also be seen as the 'constructor' of 'knowledge'. We need to look at how the researcher's personal and social worlds lead to these constructions, and how such constructions are subsequently used in the social world" (Plummer, 2001, p.206). This will be the perspective adopted by the researcher throughout this project and is required by the 'Performance/Dialogic' approach elaborated by Riessman (2008). In Riessman's (2003) own research she couples her claims about the data with her reflections on her own position or thoughts at that time in the interview. While Riessman (2008) encourages this practice because of the insights that it can generate, Plummer (2001) also draws attention to the ethical implications of

making claims about a text that you have helped to construct, without accounting for your role in its construction. Making these claims without adequately elaborating upon their source may be misleading for the reader and may serve to represent participants in an unfair way, attributing intentions or understandings to them without acknowledging the interpretive work that has gone into the construction of such claims. He sums this up in the following quote: "If we wish to understand a life story, then, we need also to know where both the researcher and the teller of that life are coming from, what kind of relationship they are having together, and how this fits into the wider social order" (Plummer, 2001, p. 208).

The researcher may fulfil a number of roles in their research, according to Plummer (2001), with each of these roles having different implications for the reflexivity of the researcher. One role of importance for this study is 'The Stranger Role', in which the researcher has no contact with the participants at any stage. It can be suggested that this role is of importance in this study as the letters to Amen that were made use of for analysis were gathered together without my having any contact with the individuals who produced these narrative accounts. This abstraction from the participant does not necessarily impede the practice of self-reflexivity, however it does alter the form that this reflexivity takes (Plummer, 2001). For example, one cannot reflect on the physical encounter with the individual who has composed the text, rather reflexivity may be concerned with the visceral or emotional reaction to the text that has been read.

Another role of importance for this study is the 'Acquaintance role' (Plummer, 2001) in which the researcher enters the life of the participant for an interview, or other short amount of time and then departs. In this instance a purely professional relationship is established, with this relationship lasting for the duration of the interview and then

ceasing. This was the role adopted by the researcher in the current study as, in most instances, contact was only maintained with the participants for the duration of the interview. One participant e-mailed occasionally following the interview to enquire about progress and I responded to these e-mails with some further information. However, in most cases contact ceased following the interview. This was a decision made early in the research process. This decision was made as a result of the sensitive nature of the research and the specific consideration that controlling behaviour and the controlling of communication has been identified as a common practice in IPA. It was believed that continuing communication with participants following the research may expose the interview participants to further abuse if it was the case that their partners had access to their e-mail accounts or other means of communication. Even in situations where the participant did not live in the family home it was believed that continuing communication may carry this risk as abusive partners could still have had access to e-mail accounts, for example. This had implications for the research approach adopted as it is common for transcripts or analysis to be returned to participants in narrative research. In this study, however, it was decided that this would not be done in the interest of the participants' safety.

3.17 - Problems arising during the research

One problem that arose during the research related to the analytic approach adopted. Initially I had proposed that a combination of Bruner's (1991) narrative analytic approach, deploying the Burkean Pentad[9], and Plummer's (2001) framework would be deployed. However, it soon became clear that this approach was inappropriate. It was

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[9] The Burkean Pentad is an analytic framework in which a narrative is analysed according to Scene, Act, Agent, Agency, Purpose, along with Bruner's addition of 'Trouble'.

difficult to apply and was unsuitable to the aims of the research. The terms of the pentad were unclear and tended to produce a micro-analysis that distracted from the aims of the research. This was a significant setback and led me to revisit the narrative analytic approach adopted. As the Bruner/Plummer combination transpired to be incompatible with the aims of the research an effort was made to find an approach that was better suited to achieving these aims. This did not result in any major revisions to the research design as the approach selected was still in the family of narrative analytic techniques and thus made many of the same assumptions about the data and about the approach that should be taken to the collection of data. It differed, however, in terms of how the data was analysed, allowing a broader perspective to be adopted.

3.18 – Summary

This chapter presented the Dialogic/Performance method (Riessman, 2008) of analysing personal narratives, justifying its suitability to answer research questions posed in this thesis. I outlined the theoretical commitments of narrative research, with a specific focus on Riessman's (2008) approach that was adopted for this study. On the basis of my reading of Riessman's (2002; 2003; 2008) work, and my attendance at a seminar of hers, I outlined a framework for the research based on areas of focus for Riessman (2008). Throughout this chapter I demonstrated reflexivity regarding the approach adopted and considered how the deployment of this approach in conjunction with the theoretical perspective adopted in this study (Butler's (1999) theory of performativity) remained consistent with and diverged from Riessman's (2008) perspective. The following chapter presents the first of two chapters of findings.

Chapter Four – Narrative Accounts of IPA

4.1 - Chapter Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of five narrative cases; Aidan, Paddy, Robert, Niall and Alex. Aidan, Robert and Alex participated in face to face interviews with me and Paddy and Niall submitted written accounts to Amen Support Services. The following chapter presents the findings from these case accounts, coupled with interpretive discussion of these findings. This discussion will consider how such findings converge with and diverge from the available literature.

While my voice predominates this is part of the co-construction of the narrative, the summarisation and selection of incidents and speech deemed representative of the narrative. Aidan's case account begins this presentation.

4.2 - Aidan's Narrative

I met Aidan in the offices of Amen Support Services for his interview. He seemed familiar with and comfortable there, telling me that he was a regular there over the years. I was struck by his size at the time, he was much taller than I was, as well as being broad. Aidan seemed to be comfortable in the position of storyteller, often performing parts of his narratives and regularly doing so with humour. The narrative covered a period of twenty years, telling about his early experiences in the relationship with both his wife and her parents, before moving on to the present day and his continuing problems with access which constituted the after effects of the abuse.

Aidan told me about the intimate partner abuse that he received and the disbelief with which this abuse was met by himself, initially, as well as those around him. Aidan reported being stabbed multiple times, threatened with a knife, kicked and punched. He related what may be termed, following Corbally (2011), 'second wave' abuse in which he suggested that his wife falsely accused him of, and reported him to police for, showing his teenage son pornography. He reported that his wife made frequent false allegations against him to the police, telling them that she had been put 'in fear of her life'. He portrayed this abuse as incomprehensible, with his wife's behaviour often positioned as extreme or bizarre in the context in which it occurred. Aidan told story after story, each of which recounted a time over the course of their relationship, when he was a caring husband, dedicated father or rational and sensible in the face of the IPA. There was also considerable focus on his wife as the unsympathetic character who behaved irrationally. I interpreted these stories as having the effect of performatively producing Aidan as a good man who undeservedly encountered IPA from his wife. This

was achieved through the citation of normative discourses of masculinity, in conjunction with normative discourses of female violence.

Aidan constructed an account in which his wife engaged in irrational behaviour which began during her pregnancy. Prior to this they had had a close relationship but her pregnancy prompted a sudden change, akin to flicking a switch. Following this she engaged in significant IPA towards him, verbally and physically abusing him, as well as maliciously calling the police on him on a regular basis. Throughout, however, Aidan attempted to support his wife by encouraging her to attend counselling, and tried to remain close with his children .

4.2.1 - Narrative Orientation

Aidan spoke about their initial relationship as a 'whirlwind romance', indicating that there was mutual affection but that things progressed quickly, and perhaps they were carried away by the 'whirlwind'. They married quickly, despite his family's objections, and he portrayed himself as stubborn and headstrong, laughing at his foolishness as he described how he ignored those family members. Aidan and his wife appeared united at this point, rejecting the interference of his mother-in-law in their wedding plans. They were married within a year of knowing each other. It seemed to me that he portrayed the wedding as rushed, perhaps indicating that he had limited knowledge of his wife at this point, but their relationship seemed positive.

Aidan told me about his mother-in-law, who was portrayed as controlling her husband ('what she said went'), later positioning her as providing a template for his wife, saying 'she learned from the best'. He thus drew on the notion of intergenerational transmission of IPA (Kalmuss, 1984) as a partial explanation for his wife's abusive behaviour. He suggested that she used the police as a tool to control her husband,

reportedly making frequent calls to the Gardaí and falsely claiming that Aidan's father-in-law engaged in intimate partner abuse towards her. Aidan's father-in-law '[would not] harm a fly', but Aidan suggested that the Gardaí (Irish police) were gender biased and simply assumed that Aidan's father-in-law was the aggressor, despite his smaller size. This theme of institutional gender bias, and its use as a tool to enact IPA, was returned to several times in the course of Aidan's narrative. False allegations or threats of same are a common form of IPA experienced by men (Corbally, 2011, 2014; Morgan and Wells, 2016; Entilli and Cipoletta, 2017), and men who have experienced IPA often report experiencing negative responses from police and other institutional forces as a result of their gender (Buzawa and Austin, 2003; Hines et al, 2007; Drijber et al, 2013).

Aidan did not initially believe that his wife would behave the way her mother did. However, several incidents were positioned as giving him cause for concern. One occurred on his honeymoon, when he found his wife with her arms around another man. He objected to this, they argued and eventually left the bar they were in. On their way back to their hotel room, Aidan said his wife 'went bleeding ballistic and she kicked me and she punched me and she grabbed me and I was like: "What in the name of Jaysus?". Em being honest with you, I put it down to drink….I didn't think anything of it'. With the benefit of hindsight this incident conveyed to Aidan his wife's capacity for violent abuse, 'kicking', 'punching' and 'grabbing' him, and, by writing this behaviour off as 'down to drink' he believed he missed a 'clue' regarding the IPA that awaited him. He was unable to initially identify himself as having experienced IPA (Hines et al, 2007), instead absolving his wife of responsibility for the violence by 'putting it down to drink' (Entilli and Cipoletta, 2017). For him, it seemed that this now formed part of the pattern of IPA that he experienced. Her violence was presented as unidirectional, with this underlined

by his surprise ("What in the name of Jaysus") when it took place. IPA was consistently portrayed as surprising or incomprehensible in his narrative. In a narrative in which misplaced blame (by the Gardaí against him and his father-in-law) plays a role, this emphasis on the one-sidedness of the violence seemed, to me, to have the effect of undermining those discourses which commonly cast doubt on men's accounts of IPA by suggesting that they precipitated the abuse in some way (Zverina et al, 2011; McCarrick et al, 2015).

As well as this violent incident Aidan's wife was portrayed as becoming enraged over trivial issues, things he 'couldn't give a shite about', performatively producing his wife as irrational. Aidan told me that there was 'murder', when he failed to notice ('everything looked the same to me') that she had bought new curtains. While these incidents were not violent, his wife was positioned as excessively angry. Aidan failure to notice such things was positioned as something that was beyond his control, a general characteristic possessed by all men, who were uninterested in such trivial matters. In light of this it made no sense that his wife would chastise him, he did not 'deserve' it. These smaller incidents were not initially linked together by Aidan but, with the benefit of hindsight, he believed they were indicative of what was to come. It seemed to me that framing such incidents in this way had the effect of portraying the IPA as a continuous presence in his married life, it got worse but the potential was always there.

4.2.2 - The Abuse

Soon Aidan's wife became pregnant and he was elated at the news that he was to be a father, telling me that he was 'on cloud nine'. However, this coincided with a sudden and dramatic change in his wife's behaviour as he said 'it was like someone turned on the switch for the light, she just completely changed'. This drastic change was positioned

as unbelievable. Aidan suggested that it 'doesn't even make sense when I say it', with this possibly having the effect of a 'stake inoculation' for the audience, suggesting that he shared their disbelief that such a drastic change could occur.

During her pregnancy, Aidan's wife reportedly responded negatively to everything that he did; 'it didn't matter what I said, it didn't matter what I done'. This formed part of the psychological abuse he experienced, constant criticism, irrespective of his behaviour. Her behaviour was unpredictable, and he was portrayed as powerless to influence it. Aidan told me that he attempted to exert some form of control through non-response, 'If I don't say anything I can't be accused of saying the wrong.....thing'. However, this reportedly increased her aggression and she would engage in intimidation by coming close to his face and shouting at him. When he did react his response was presented as a measured objection to her irrational behaviour '"Look, do you know what? This is not on"'. He did not offer specific examples here, instead speaking generally about his objection to her behaviour. Despite his measured objection to her behaviour, Aidan reported that his wife would then call the police, escalating the situation in a way that seemed out of keeping with his response to her behaviour. She seemed to make inappropriate use of the police. Initially, Aidan expected that the police would clarify with his wife that her behaviour was inappropriate, but this was not the case in his experience, 'I remember the first few times I thought ah this is grand I'll get this sorted out now once and for all. But as soon as the Guards walked in I was told: "Sit down", I was a bully.' Here Aidan invokes the bias identified in other studies of men's accounts of IPA (Migliaccio, 2001; Corbally, 2011. 2014) that their accounts were not accepted and it was assumed that they were the violent partner, on the basis of gender. Here the

Gardaí are quite clearly portrayed as 'Against men', responding negatively to Aidan before even hearing his side of the story.

The Gardaí appeared to respond to Aidan in the same way that they responded to his father-in-law. The Gardaí were positioned as biased in their interpretation of events, unwilling to hear both sides of the incident. His wife was positioned as aware of this and Aidan described her as having 'learned from the best' and as 'using' this on a regular basis. She was positioned as making instrumental use of the Gardaí in order to abuse him in a similar way to his mother-in-law, and needed only to say she was 'put in fear of her life' for them to come to her assistance. There was a recognisable language of intimate partner abuse available to her that enabled her make claims of abuse but from which Aidan appeared to believe he was excluded.

Eventually Aidan found a member of An Garda Siochana who would allow him to tell his story. He framed his situation as one which could be understood through reference to his wife's psychological issues, in a similar way to those in Entilli and Cipoletta (2017), saying she was 'seeing a psychiatrist, medication, the whole lot'. His wife attended a psychiatrist following her first pregnancy, and was diagnosed as suffering from post-natal depression. There seemed to be a shared common-sense assumption amongst the Gardaí and Aidan that this was sufficient explanation for her behaviour and her repeated phone calls to the Gardaí:

> "It was the first time that any of the Guards had listened to me. I told him she was seeing a psychiatrist, medication, the whole lot. And he says: "But how are we meant to know if we're not told?". I said "You're meant to fucking listen". I says: "As soon as you's walk in my door, I'm told to sit down, I'm a bully". "But, but". I says: "No, there's no buts, you didn't want to know anything about me". And I said: "It has to stop"….So look they stopped coming then after that, which was great."

Aidan was positioned as a hero, a masculine presentation (Connell, 2005), standing up to those in a position of power who had previously disregarded and misrepresented him. He established himself as the powerful protagonist, cutting the police officer off when he attempted to interrupt, rejecting the police officer's interpretation that it was Aidan's responsibility to tell them about the IPA, and demanding that the Gardaí stop their role in the IPA. The Gardaí, the unsympathetic characters in this play, are defeated and leave the stage. They passively accept the situation as framed by Aidan. Instead of focusing on Aidan's reporting of IPA to the Gardaí, this becomes a narrative in which he is performatively produced as a heroic male subject who stands up to authority.

Following the birth of their baby Aidan's wife was diagnosed with post-natal depression, which was then positioned as the cause of her behaviour. This diagnosis allowed Aidan to make sense of behaviour that had seemed incomprehensible to him. The IPA was thus identified as a by-product or symptom of his wife's post-natal depression. It confirmed for him that his wife's behaviour was not 'normal', that it was a deviation, a problem that needed to be fixed. Identifying the IPA as a symptom of his wife's post-natal depression seemed to position it as a manageable issue.

Following the birth of their child, Aidan told me that his wife's constant criticism of his behaviour and her use of the police to abuse him occurred with decreasing regularity. This seemed to support the contention that there was some link between the pregnancy and the abuse. Further, when his wife became pregnant again and her behaviour was reportedly much worse, as she began hitting their son, the link between the abuse and the pregnancy was strengthened.

Aidan told me that during the second pregnancy his wife was physically violent towards their son, 'smacking' and 'slapping' him. At this point Aidan positioned himself as a

protective father, suggesting that he was more troubled by the abuse of his son than by that directed at him '"No fucking way that. Do what you want to me, couldn't care less"'. He could cope with experiencing the abuse himself but was compelled to act when it was directed at his son, saying 'Then there was one day she was after slapping Brian and I went fucking mad and I said no fucking way this is it, this no has to stop. And she held a knife up to me'. Aidan subordinated his own safety to that of his children, in the face of the threat of extreme violence, with the effect that he was positioned as a heroic father, while at the same time experiencing abuse. He drew on his identity as a father at this point and throughout the remainder of the text when discussing the abuse, as he focused on the effect of his wife's behaviour on the children and his relationship with them. In this way his account echoed those men in other qualitative studies concerned with men's experiences of IPA which drew on fatherhood (Corbally, 2011; Morgan and Wells, 2016; Entilli and Cipoletta, 2017). He suggested that his identity as a father sustained him while his wife was abusing him in the home, telling me that he could endure the abuse once his children had 'smiles on their faces'. His citation of the masculine paternalistic discourse of 'protection' had the effect of performatively producing him as a masculine subject.

While Aidan related many incidents of intimate partner abuse in the course of his account, the most serious was his stabbing at the hands of his wife:

> "……I heard the patio door open and I didn't turn around…..Next of all I felt something in the back of my ear, sticking in the back of my ear. And I says: "What in the name of jay..",….and I turned around. Now alls you could see was she was standing in front of me and….I thought she had the towel in her hand….and I actually thought she was going to give me a box in the head. And I put me hand up like that (in front of his face)….And I said: "What in the name of jaysus". This just boom, just like that (clicks fingers). "What the fuck"….And em I may as well be looking into the fan because there was nothing there. I was staring but there was nothing there…..And next of all I she she was punching me in the stomach.

That's all I took of it. [Barry: Right] And I was like: "What the fuck is going on?"……Is she waiting for me, I could turn around and give her a box, I'm in jail. Stopped…..and then I heard something in the sink. I says: "What the fuck?". She walked out as coolly, as calmly as I walked in here today. The kids were upstairs and I looked and there was a knife in the sink. I could see the blood starting to hit the, hit the kitchen floor. And I said: "What in the..". It was right there, there, there (indicating area of his torso where he had been stabbed)…..And then the first thing then she's going upstairs to the kids. Rang 999 (999 is the number emergency services in Ireland)…talking to the man…."Look there's after being something going after on", I says "Will you get me an ambulance please?"…..And he says: "Mate you, you have to get out of the house". And I says: "I'm going fucking nowhere, my two kids are upstairs. Not a hope", I says…."Pal you really need to, do you want your kids to see you like this". I says: "No"….I says I, I went outside anyway….he says "now knock in to one of your neighbours?". I says: "I will in my bollocks knock in on one of my neighbours. How are you doing? Me missus is after stabbing me",…and….first thing that pulled up was a police car and I said: "Do me a favour", I said "Please just go up and make sure the kids are alright". "Just I I couldn't give a fuck", I said "if I die….So he's ringing the doorbell. I said: "Will you go into the fucking house and see my kids. Fuck the doorbell". So next of all, in the meantime he goes in, a fire brigade pulls up and the lads are looking after me and em next of all she's standing at the doorway: "He done that himself, he done that himself".

This was a point at which many things changed for Aidan. It also brought several key issues in Aidan's account together. This narrative characterised his wife's behaviour as abnormal, and it allowed him to perform the identity of the 'Good Father'. Aidan was positioned as the central character in a 'hero narrative' in which he was a man who was the victim of a violent crime but who thought first of the safety of his children, rather than his own health. He was presented as struggling with the legitimacy of the notion of the male victim of abuse, while also performing the identity of the 'Good Father'. He refused to go into a neighbour first out of concern for his children and then out of concern for how the neighbours may respond to his account of events. Aidan's portrayal of the abuse as surprising has the effect of undermining discourses which suggest that men should be able to defend themselves from their attackers (Anderson and Doherty, 2008). He was unprepared for the actions of his wife and was unaware of the 'something' that was 'sticking' into the back of his ear. Aidan was positioned as unable

to defend himself because of the institutional sanctions he may face if he defended himself with violence; "…I'm in jail". The violence could not have been avoided by Aidan. The institutional bias, that Aidan perceived on the part of the Gardaí, was such that he believed he could not defend himself effectively without incurring sanctions, with this resonating with much qualitative literature in which men offer their accounts of IPA (Zverina et al, 2011; McCarrick et al, 2015).

As well as positioning Aidan as unable to defend himself, this account also positioned Aidan's wife as abnormal through his use of a metaphor in which he compared his wife, at that moment, to an inanimate object (a 'fan'). The stabbing could not be understood as an action undertaken in the heat of the moment, as the mundane scene, devoid of any disagreement, undermined such an interpretation. Aidan's later suggestion that she walked out 'coolly' following the attack, had the effect of underlining the calculated nature of the attack.

Within this narrative Aidan was positioned as a protective father, putting his children ahead of himself, even as he was stabbed. The use of reported speech lends his account credibility (Riessman, 2008). The performance of his interaction with both the emergency services call handler and the police had the effect of positioning him as a man who put his children before his own well-being. He only agreed to leave the house, in which his children were located, when it was presented as the best thing to do for his them and he 'couldn't give a fuck' if he died, his only concern was their welfare. The focus on fatherhood throughout this account is in keeping with other qualitative literature on IPA (Corbally, 2011, 2014; Morgan and Wells, 2016). The deployment of this discourse here helps to present Aidan as an 'ideal victim' as he is presented as 'morally good'. In the midst of this his wife accused him of causing harm to himself.

Aidan told me that his wife obtained a protection order (see glossary in Appendix G) following this incident, leaving the family home with their children and moving in with her parents. Aidan felt angry and let down that the stabbing was not investigated by the Gardaí who, he claimed, told him that there was insufficient evidence. Aidan disputed this but claimed that the Gardaí 'didn't want to know', with the result that he believed that he had nowhere to turn for assistance with this issue. He was dissatisfied with the help he received. However, Aidan told me that his wife effectively prevented him from seeing his children following this by cutting off contact with him. He was unsuccessful in efforts to obtain custody of his children, reporting that he was told by the judge dealing with his case that the children 'are better with their mother'. This seems to support Basile's (2005) finding that men are less likely to get custody and Corbally (2011).

Eventually, Aidan obtained supervised access to his children but they refused to speak to him, with Aidan suggesting that they had been manipulated by their mother. As time wore on Aidan had only sporadic contact with his children through supervised access centres. When he did so, however, his children would ignore him for the duration of his time there. He believed his wife had 'turned them against' him and he eventually discontinued this.

Aidan's narrative ended with the lament that he had not had contact with his children for years, with the reason being that they did not want to see him. There was nothing legally preventing him from seeing them. He believed that his relationship with them had been soured deliberately by his wife, who reportedly told them that 'Mammies don't tell lies, only Daddies tell lies'. He was now in another relationship but was deeply affected by his experience.

4.2.3 - Summary of Analysis

Aidan's account took the form of a tragi-comic narrative in which he was presented as shocked and laughed at the 'silliness' of the charges levelled against him by his wife but lamented the ability of his wife to cause such disruption to his life on the basis of these allegations.

Despite his portrayal throughout as a heroic figure who stood up to his wife and others, who put his children ahead of himself, and who challenged his abuser it seemed as if Aidan was ultimately powerless. His wife may not have succeeded in her legal actions against him but she reportedly managed to prevent him from seeing his children, through manipulation, something that he was unable to defend against.

Aidan's account had the effect of managing the potentially contradictory positions of 'man' and 'victim'. Through his long account of his stabbing, for example, Aidan related how he had been unaware of his wife's impending attack, and then of the scope of this attack, seeming to imply that had he been aware he would have been able to manage this situation. Similarly when he was attacked by his wife on their honeymoon the attack took place in a darkened alley and again took him by surprise. His wife was positioned as deviant (Kruttschnitt and Carbone-Lopez, 2006) through Aidan's comparison of her emotional state to that of an inanimate object, a 'fan', while in his presentation of the attack in the alleyway he suggested that her behaviour may have been down to 'drink' (alcohol). She was cool, calm and mechanical in the way she carried out the stabbing. Thus Aidan was not facing attack from a 'normal', manageable woman. His wife's deviation rendered her threatening, with this resembling the suggestion in McCarrick et al (2015) that abusive women were possessed of super human strength and thus not as easily managed as a normal woman. Finally, he was positioned as a 'Good Father' as he

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was concerned about his children ahead of his own welfare. Through these gendered positionings, and his failure to offer a visceral description of his pain he was distanced from his victimisation. Instead of a story centred on his stabbing it became a story concerned with the devious behaviour of his wife from which he could not defend himself but which he went to significant effort to defend his children from, despite the risk to his health.

4.3 - Paddy's narrative

Paddy's letter (published in 2004), detailed a lifetime of IPA directed against a man who was of pensionable age at the time he wrote the letter (Cleary 2004). His written narrative was entitled 'Statement made to Gardaí', indicating that it was the transcript of a statement he provided to the Irish police as a result of his wife's threats to make a false accusation against him. This letter was thus not simply an account of the abuse, but a document that formed part of the ongoing abusive context, written, as it was, to undermine a potential false allegation from his wife. This detailed all of the abuse to which he was subjected, and Paddy was presented as writing this account while barricaded in his room, which had a chest of drawers behind the door, and while his wife attempted to gain entry by launching an 'assault' on this door. A generalised narrative was deployed for much of this text and helped to portray the abusive behaviour of Paddy's wife as a constant feature of their relationship. Further, the temporal span of the text, covering 34 years and moving from their early marriage to Paddy's retirement, underlined this. The abuse was ever-present for the duration of his married life, even as his circumstances altered, and the abusive situation was presented as ongoing at the end of the letter.

Paddy reported experiencing physical, psychological, and financial abuse. This included his wife 'jeering' him, scraping him with her fingernails and becoming so violent that he was 'lucky to escape with his life'. She controlled the finances, taking the majority of his pension from him. He reported that she forced him out of the house during the day, and that he would not return until she was in bed. This banishment from the house echoed that of the participant in Allen-Collinson (2009). This, combined with his wife's control of the finances, meant that he often went long periods of the day without eating. When

he did cook he waited until she was in bed. However, she would attempt to thwart this also, according to Paddy, coming downstairs to 'terrify' him. Paddy did not seem to challenge this behaviour, passively accepting it or attempting to avoid it. His efforts at resistance included, 'trying to sleep with [his] eyes open' but labelled this 'stupid', seeming to indicate that such efforts were ineffective. His main means of resisting the abuse appeared to be avoidance, as he 'listened in silence' to his wife's 'jeering criticism', he called his friends from a public telephone because she would abuse them if they called the house, and he barricaded himself in his room to avoid an attack. He did, however, report restraining her when necessary. The diversity of the abuse reported by Paddy echoed that of other qualitative studies of men's experience of IPA (Migliaccio, 2001; Corbally, 2011). The abuse Paddy was subjected to was all-encompassing. It affected his relationship with his friends, children, family, even his landlord. His wife damaged these relationships either directly or indirectly. She made trouble with his landlord and landlady in his 'digs' who were simply 'helping' them out as they started their marriage. Friends stopped calling to his house because of his wife's behaviour, leaving him further isolated. His good relationship with the children reportedly became a source of jealousy for his wife and he told of how she set about 'turning the children' against him. He did not specify how she managed to sour this relationship but she seemed to be successful as the children did not speak to him until they were adults.

Paddy, instead of reporting the IPA engaged in by his wife and seeking charges against her, made a statement to protect against false allegations by his wife. His wife was positioned as an unsympathetic character who may engage in some aggressive action towards him, while his statement was defensive. Despite the abuse to which he was subjected, Paddy wrote that he was unable to bring the 'full rigour of the law' against

his wife. Paddy stated that he wrote this account, which formed his statement 'just in case my wife should at some time make a false charge against me as she has threatened to do', which I interpreted as suggesting that he hoped this statement would serve as some protection against such false charges. His fear was justified by the claim that his wife had already committed perjury by obtaining a 'safety order' against him. This safety order (see Glossary; Appendix G) could only have been obtained by committing perjury, he claimed, because he had never been violent to his wife over the course of their marriage.

4.3.1 - Narrative Orientation

Paddy's narrative opened by speculating on the origin of the abuse that he experienced, suggesting that it began 'within a week' of their marriage when his wife suffered 'severe depressions, hallucinations…'. After this his wife engaged in behaviour towards him and others that was portrayed as unusual or lacking objectively identifiable reasons. He thus related a narrative in which intimate partner abuse seemed to be related to psychological issues. I interpreted this as having the effect of positioning his wife as deviant, falling in line with conceptualisations of violent and abusive women as deviating from normative discourses of femininity (Kruttschnitt and Carbone-Lopez, 2006). The evidence for the relationship between the IPA and psychological issues was provided by the seeming disconnection between his wife's behaviour and reality:

> "All this terrible trauma began within a week of being married when she first began to suffer severe depressions, hallucinations etc. We first stayed for some months in my 'digs' and for no reason at all Maura found some reason or other to make trouble with these decent, generous people who were helping us out while waiting for our house. She even rang up the man's job to complain about him. He was a most inoffensive and quiet person."

She made trouble with their landlords, who were described as 'helping' them out and who were 'decent, generous people'. Paddy suggested that there was 'no reason' for

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her treatment of their landlord and this behaviour was taken to the extreme of calling the man's place of work to complain about him. She 'made trouble' with this landlord and landlady who were simply 'helping' them out as they started their marriage. While this incident was not an example of the abuse that Paddy experienced, it seemed to serve as an example of the behaviour that resulted from his wife's 'depressions' and 'hallucinations'. Further, this incident positioned Paddy's wife as engaging in abusive behaviour towards others, not simply himself. I interpreted this as having the effect of countering those discourses which position men as bearing some responsibility for the abuse and violence that they receive (Zverina et al, 2011). Paddy's wife made 'trouble' for people other than Paddy and did so with no reason, thus inviting the possibility that the abuse directed at Paddy also occurred for no reason. This seemed to serve as an example of the kind of unprompted aggression that his wife engaged in and raised the possibility that the aggression Paddy experienced was similarly unprompted.

Paddy's account also positioned his wife as engaging in unexplained behaviour, seemingly in response to him:

> "Sometimes, while out walking, she would start screaming if I walked beside her and once went off on her own in the dark. She later came back in a police car."

There appeared to be no reason for his wife's screams, with his report that he simply walked beside her, offering little in the way of an explanation. His account here did not force a particular interpretation on the reader and we are left to speculate on the rationale for her behaviour. Was it designed to create the impression that he had done something to harm her? Did she make a report to the police? Did the police simply bring her home for her own safety? These questions are not answered but the inclusion of this segment of text in Paddy's letter served to position her behaviour as unusual.

Paddy's wife's stories, of men making advances towards her, also appeared to position her behaviour as unusual:

> "Apparently, she had to be the centre of attention always as she was forever telling me of various men who had tried to get off with her (always either Airline Pilots, doctors or the like)."

He grouped these stories together, saying these men always seemed to be airline pilots or doctors. The occupation of these men seemed to be important, perhaps an indicator of her lack of credibility, due to their high social status. These stories were positioned as part of a social performance, an effort on her part to be the 'centre of attention'. It seemed to me as if this effort to be 'the centre of attention' again served to position his wife as deviant due to the outlandish nature of the stories she told. She was positioned as lacking credibility, telling stories for disingenuous reasons (to be the centre of attention), and doing so regularly, with this again seeming to position them as unlikely.

While none of the issues related by Paddy, at this point in his account, had any direct relationship with the abuse that he experienced, each of these issues appeared to position his wife as a person who deviated from cultural expectations for normative feminine behaviour, such as expectations to be gentle (Kruttschnitt and Carbone-Lopez, 2006) and chaste. Disparate incidents in their relationship were linked together in Paddy's narrative, seeming to offer the reader an account of how the abuse came about. A direct relationship seemed to be established in Paddy's narrative between his wife's stories about being approached by men of high social standing, her behaviour towards the landlords and her random outbursts of screaming. All of this strange behaviour could be grouped together, with her depression being the origin. He wrote that there was a 'basic' reason for her behaviour but this reason had not been revealed because his wife

refused to 'get help'. In any case, her behaviour was positioned as understandable in terms of her 'depressions' and 'hallucinations' (Kruttschnitt and Carbone-Lopez, 2006).

4.3.2 - The Abuse

Each of these instances formed the 'start' of the 'terrible trauma' to which Paddy was subjected. The abusive context facing Paddy developed from this 'start' into 'all-out war'. Thus, the strange behaviour of Paddy's wife was positioned as continuous with the abuse that he later experienced. There was progression, however, as the behaviour worsened over time and became like a 'war'.

The abuse to which he was subjected became one such inexplicable behaviour. This was made evident in his story about his visit to an insurance agent with his neighbour:

> "One evening I drove a neighbour down to an insurance agent to insure his car. On returning we had tea and a chat in his house. When I went home Maura had got so annoyed that she ripped her four fingernails across my face. I had four red wheals next day."

Paddy's description of how he helped his neighbour was innocuous. He described a mundane activity, having a cup of tea and a chat and giving his neighbour a lift. The mundanity of the events made the reported reaction of his wife more striking. Paddy's wife became so angry that she was compelled to violence. Further, this violence was presented as extreme, with his use of the word 'ripped' as opposed to 'scratched', and the added detail that she used her 'four fingernails', emphasising the violence of this act. This left him with 'four red wheals', matching the 'four' fingernails, visible evidence of violence which did not appear to fit with the mundane incident described. Paddy's wife was positioned as engaging in extreme violence here, out of keeping with the mundanity of the incident that occurred but in keeping with her unusual behaviour earlier in the text. I interpreted this account as having the effect of undermining those

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discourses which position men as responsible for the abuse to which they have been subjected (Zverina et al, 2011; Anderson and Doherty, 2008). The disjuncture between Paddy's behaviour in driving his friend to the insurance agent, and his wife's response in violently attacking him positioned him as a man who was 'wronged' without cause.

Such extreme violence was suggested to be common for Paddy, and even this statement was written while his wife attempted to gain access to his room so she could attack him.

> "…writing this report means barricading myself in the box-room where I had to move to for safety. She is almost able to burst her way through as I have no key for the door and just tonight there was been an assault lasting about half an hour at least. I have had to put a chest of drawers behind the door."

Paddy was positioned as having few options through which he could protect himself, with his lack of choice underlined by his use of language here. He 'had' to move to the box room and barricade himself in for safety and he 'had' to put a chest of drawers behind the door to avoid his wife's violence. Again this violence was presented as extreme as despite the presence of a chest of drawers blocking the door, his wife was almost able to get in to the room. She seems possessed of unusual strength, with Paddy's account perhaps indicating something similar to that in McCarrick et al's (2015) study in which abused men positioned their wives as monstrous and possessed of extraordinary strength when engaging in abuse. Again this presentation supports the earlier presentation of Paddy's wife as deviant. Further, the use of military metaphors such as 'barricading' and 'assault', together with the presentation of his wife attempting to breach these, serves to construct the abuse to which Paddy was subjected as a kind of siege, further underlining the severity of the violence.

The abuse was exacerbated by life circumstances, as the loss of his job in 1980 put extra financial pressure on the household. The psychological and physical abuse that he received worsened around this time.

> "Like a lot of people I lost a nice job in about 1980 so that didn't help and things began to get worse. For a time money was in short supply so Maura's jeering and, sad to say, her violence and bad language got worse."

When Paddy retired this change in circumstances further exposed him to abuse. His reliance on the old age pension meant he was subject to greater financial pressure, with this exacerbated by the fact that he gave most of the money to his wife. He believed that his wife was trying to starve him as he was left with little money for food and she would not buy things he would eat. This financial abuse highlighted the added pressure that age and social location could put on a man experiencing IPA. The diminished resources of this man, as a result of his retirement, meant that he was subject to further abuse.

Paddy's wife threatened him with knives to encourage him to leave the house, according to Paddy:

> "Of late Maura has stood beside me brandishing a carving knife or a poker over my head accompanied by the usual threats to "get out or else..."."

With nowhere to go, he would simply avail of free travel for pensioners until late evening. If he tried to have something to eat when he came home he suggested that his wife would try to scare him, running down the stairs as he ate. Such isolation and enforced exile was not uncommon in men's accounts of IPA, with the participant in Allen-Collinson's (2009) study, reporting similar isolation as he stayed in his car for hours on Christmas day as he had nowhere else to go.

Paddy's narrative ended on a resigned note. The situation that he had been in for 34 years showed no sign of improvement and he suggested that he wrote his account in case something happened to him. I interpret this as referring to the allegation he believed his wife may make, although it is ambiguous. There was an absence of hope for the future, with the letter having the limited aim of documenting some of the 'terrible situation' that he faced in the event that something happened to him. Similar to the earlier claim that the letter was not written to 'bring the full rigour' of the law against his wife, the letter ends with confirmation that the letter was not written in the hope of receiving help or effecting change in his circumstances, it was a passive construction, a recounting of events.

4.3.3 - Summary of Analysis

Paddy was portrayed throughout his narrative as a passive figure to whom things simply happened. Even in spite of the abuse to which he was subjected he did not want to make a formal complaint against his wife and his action was purely defensive. He hoped his action would pre-empt and defend against an accusation from his wife. While he was portrayed as acting defensively his wife was clearly positioned as the aggressor, as she obtained an order based on perjury, and had to be restrained at times.

Paddy related an account of 'enduring suffering' as he listed numerous incidents of IPA and strange behaviour to which he had been subjected over the course of his marriage. This suffering and abused went unchallenged by Paddy, who simply seemed to respond defensively to the behaviour. She was the active party throughout his narrative, doing things, while he simply responded, either in an effort to protect himself or to comply with her abuse. When he did act it seemed ineffective as his efforts to sleep with his eyes open proved fruitless. Paddy was performatively produced as powerless through

his narrative which appeared to perform 'powerlessness' due to his lack of effective action throughout.

Paddy was performatively produced as a victim of IPA through his portrayal of his wife as suffering from mental illness/psychopathology and engaging in unprompted and otherwise inexplicable behaviour throughout. As such she was positioned as deviating from established feminine norms (Morrissey, 2002). In contrast to the portrayal of his wife as aggressive and abusive Paddy was portrayed as kind, helpful and resolutely non-violent. He helped his neighbour, and did not respond with violence to any of the abuse to which he was subjected by his wife. This coupled with the portrayal of his wife as behaving aggressively with third parties, in the form of their landlords, distanced him from responsibility for the IPA and had the effect of producing Paddy as an 'ideal victim' (Holstein and Miller, 1990). He was a good man who did nothing to deserve the abuse to which he was subjected. He positioned his wife as a member of an identifiable group, which he did not specify, but her behaviour was positioned as understandable through reference to her membership of this group (Krutschnitt and Carbone-Lopez, 2006).

This account differed from all of the others in the research as, at the time of writing, Paddy was still living with his abuser. Being a pensioner put Paddy in a precarious situation. He was left with nowhere to go during the day, and thus nowhere to which he could escape. Instead he was portrayed as wandering. Further, the abuse, coupled with the passing of time, has left him with few social supports at a time when he could be suggested to be most in need of them.

4.4 - Robert's Narrative

Robert was a member of An Garda Siochana who I interviewed in the offices of Amen Support Services in Navan. As with the other participants I interviewed there, he seemed comfortable, making conversation with the staff while he waited. Robert was an articulate interviewee who told numerous stories about challenging authority, resisting abuse, and trying to maintain a relationship with his daughter. Robert experienced psychological, financial abuse, and second wave abuse, as well as separation from his daughter. He told me how his wife would demean him by removing the sheets from his bed and saying he didn't deserve them, how she would disrupt his sleep and pack his bags and leave them in the hall for him. However, the aspect of abuse that received most attention in his narrative was his wife's disruption of his contact with his daughter through false allegations and direct efforts to undermine his daughter's impression of him.

Robert's story took the form of a 'hero' narrative in which he consistently stood up for himself and took a stand against the accusations and abusive behaviour of his wife in an effort to maintain a relationship with his child. His interview ranged from his early relationship with his wife, through to their separation and up to the present (at the time of the interview) when he had recently been issued with divorce proceedings by his wife. The beginning of his narrative focused on the incidents that he believed precipitated the intimate partner abuse that he experienced. His wife was positioned as making instrumental use of him in their relationship, which he was presented as resisting. What he initially believed was a loving and mutually committed relationship transpired to be a vehicle for his wife to give a contrived performance of the role of loving wife and mother, according to Robert. Their relationship was inauthentic, allowing her to achieve

desired ends. Robert told me how he challenged her use of him, and others, to enact these desired identities. He believed that his wife was angered by his unmasking of her behaviour and set out to 'destroy' him, with this leading to the abuse that he faced. Robert's narrative of his experience of IPA was explicitly gendered. He said he was 'emasculated' by the IPA and it was only when he began to challenge the accusations and obstruction of his relationship with his daughter that this was reversed.

4.4.1 - Narrative Orientation

Robert portrayed his relationship with his wife as positive, loving, even romantic, prior to the birth of his daughter, describing their 'courtship' as 'wonderful'. He designed her engagement ring, taking care to learn her tastes. Robert was modern, eschewing the old tradition of asking his wife's parents for their permission to marry her. However, in what Robert suggested was characteristic of their interference, his wife's parents objected and he was forced to apologise. This interference and his wife's acceptance and facilitation of it was returned to several times by Robert.

Robert's in-laws were portrayed as interfering in his marriage as they encouraged his wife to have children. Robert indicated to me that the decision to have their first baby was made almost at the behest of his wife's parents. He told me that his wife became very excited by the idea of having a baby once it was suggested by her parents. This resulted in a drastic change in their sex life, moving from a 'drought to an abundance', according to Robert. The extreme nature of her behaviour was underlined by Robert's suggestion that his wife's eagerness to have a child almost inhibited her goal as she became very anxious about conception, resulting in stress and difficulty conceiving. Robert appeared to present an extreme case formulation, underlining what he identified as her 'very strange behaviour'. She was positioned as driven to have the baby to please

her parents, as opposed to for the 'right' reasons, which Robert identified as love and mutual affection. Robert told me that, after the birth of their daughter, Sarah, their sex life again became non-existent, saying 'after the child (Sarah) was born, again the glut, the famine, the drought (laughs)'. The suddenness of this change, coupled with the sudden intensity of their efforts to conceive, left Robert feeling used. He positioned her behaviour as purely instrumental, using him as a 'tool' to appease/please her parents. It was not a demonstration or expression of their shared love, as Robert believed sexual intimacy between partners in a relationship should be.

This belief was such that he rejected the suggestion that they have a second baby. Again Robert seemed to position his wife as influenced by her parents, with the immediacy of her request supporting this contention. He objected to the interference of his wife's parents and told her so:

> And eh I just, something clocked with me and I said: "What about a little brother or sister for me?". "Don't be so fucking ridiculous, that's stupid, you're"...all this kind of thing. And em she became very angry and annoyed and ranting and raving…..Em but it was sort of like I have hit a chord with her in relation to highlighting this very strange behaviour.""

In this short narrative Robert privileged the notion that it was more appropriate for her to want a baby because of their mutual affection, as opposed to influences which were external to the immediate husband-wife relationship. This, in conjunction with his use of the phrase 'ranting and raving' to describe her behaviour may be suggested to have the effect of positioning this behaviour as deviant, due to its associations with psychological problems.

This issue along with another in which there was a dispute over the care provided to Robert's mother, were identified as the "….start of all I could say is terrorism. It was like something that I had triggered in her….or shone the light on her that she didn't like to

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have to deal with…". Robert believed that his challenge of his wife's behaviour was the catalyst for the abuse to which he was subjected.

Throughout his interview Robert was portrayed as a man who was trying to defend himself against the retributive actions of his wife so that he could maintain his identity as a father. He was the subject of retribution because of his refusal to be used and because he sought to protect others who may have been used, with the result that he inadvertently undermined his wife's identity performance. Robert's wife's behaviour was portrayed as a challenge to his masculinity, it undermined his identity as a husband who was part of a loving relationship, and a devoted father.

4.4.2 - The Abuse

The abuse, or 'terrorism', that Robert related in the course of his narrative primarily surrounded restricting his access to his child, saying '…she did everything to prevent me having access to my daughter, em having anything to do with her.' He also experienced psychological and physical abuse, however, this restriction of access to his daughter became the focus of our interview.

Robert initially normalised his wife's behaviour in restricting his access to his child, suggesting that it could have been 'relationship strife that any couple could have gone through'. However, his opinion changed as his wife's behaviour became increasingly strange and he was subjected to 'bizarre' behaviour. Again Robert positioned this behaviour as intentional and retributive as he appeared to suggest that his wife behaved like this because he refused to leave the family home as she demanded:

> "And this is where I get to the point of em experiences of domestic abuse…….and eh it started then that in the middle of the night she'd come in in the late night dressed in black, black polo neck, black trousers, whatever and she'd be standing over me: "You're going to jail, you're going to hell, you're going to jail, you're

going to hell". ….. Or she would just come in and just turn on the lights, swing the door open and then leave again, you know. She would use the toilet of the...my en suite and she'd never flush it. Em she would...took out all my clothes and put them into bags and she would throw them into the hall or..em she would strip the bed of all bed linen, pillows, duvets that kind of thing…..And she says now they're not yours, they're mine. You know so I would have to sleep on coats and jumpers and that kind of thing. Then I put a lock on the door to prevent her from coming in at night and then I put a lock on the door to prevent her from going into the room while I was away."

Robert installed a lock on the door of his bedroom, in an effort to avoid some of the abuse. However, this seemed to provide his wife with another opportunity to abuse him as he told me that she alleged that he was engaging in inappropriate behaviour with their daughter, saying that he took her into his room and locked the door from the inside. She did not make any direct allegations, but Robert believed that the implications of such claims were sufficiently damaging. The association with child sexual abuse was deemed so toxic that even allusions to such behaviour were damaging. Robert thus appeared to position this as abusive, an attack on his identity as a father. Robert's wife sought protection orders and barring orders against him, based on fraudulent accusations. His position as a member of An Garda Siochana may be suggested to have left him in a privileged position to deal with such actions, as he had knowledge regarding these orders. This knowledge was made evident in the interview when he spoke about these orders, saying 'from a Garda point of view…anybody can get a protection order (see Glossary; Appendix G) because it's a precursor to applying for a barring order (Appendix G) and the barring order is way more difficult to obtain'. He undermined the significance of his wife obtaining a protection order, suggesting that 'anybody can get a protection order'. There need not be any basis for it, they are easily obtainable. Further, she later withdrew her application for a barring order with Robert suggesting that this was because there was 'no substance to it'. Hers was a vexatious claim, according to Robert. For him, the legal system provided him with protection, dismissing accusations

that could not be verified. Again his position as a member of An Garda Siochana and his resulting knowledge of the internal workings of the legal system may have been of benefit here. Few abused men, in this study, had similar opinions of the legal system. This incident also served to position his wife as a 'Schemer', maliciously making false allegations against her husband. Simultaneously, Robert positioned himself as a 'hero', standing up against these false claims.

Despite not being forced out of his house by the barring order, Robert's work gave him an opportunity to escape his wife's abuse as he was promoted and needed to relocate from Monday to Friday. This allowed him to avoid the physical and psychological abuse but one must wonder why he was happy to be separated from his daughter for five days of the week. This seemed out of keeping with his identity as a devoted father. However, perhaps he had no choice about the new role. His wife reportedly took advantage of this situation to restrict his access to his daughter. This was positioned as a deliberate and malicious act, and one that was made worse by the fact that she was keeping him from his child at such a young and impressionable age. As well as this, Robert's wife informed him that his daughter had made an accusation of sexual abuse against him:

> "And she said: "Sarah is saying that you are sexually abusing her". And that's em a pivotal point in my own personal life in that em I suppose she she took heart, soul, blood, energy, she sapped me of everything that I suppose I could identify with as being and that I could identify with as being a father, from me, it just floored me. And as a consequence to that you have to put yourself on the firing line in relation to a Garda investigation, a HSE investigation and….X which is the unit specialising in em sexual abuse of children and em a psychiatric assessment…."

His wife's allegation challenged his identity as a father and the investigative process was described as 'horrendous'. It enforced artificial interactions between father and daughter and its processes were described as invasive. However, Robert also portrayed the investigation as protective, with this transparent process allowing him to challenge

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the claims made about him. Robert's portrayal of this process as invasive and challenging, but as a process he was determined to engage with fully, twice, allows him to convey the importance of his identity as father. It was something that he was willing to fight for. He may also be seen as a 'hero' standing up to an oppressive power. I wondered if he viewed this process positively as a result of his role as a police officer and perhaps someone who was familiar with investigative procedures. This impression of the investigations and procedures as a way to clear one's name differs from the view held by many of the other men in this study, who viewed such procedures with suspicion, often suggesting that there was a gender bias in the decision making of authorities.

Robert positioned his wife as the source of the allegation and it was viewed as being part of the abusive behaviour that she has been engaging in up to this point. Again she was positioned as a intentionally and maliciously making allegations against him. The investigation took three years, during which time Robert could only have a few hours of supervised access with his daughter per week. It should have taken half this time but his wife demanded a second investigation when the first one exonerated Robert. Ultimately Robert was exonerated the second time and the investigating team suggested that perhaps Sarah had made the allegation to please her mother, due to the 'mother's hatred of the father'. Here again his wife's public identity was challenged and she was presented as responding angrily, accusing the investigative team of being paedophiles and defending one of their own.

Robert's portrayal of the supervised access allowed him to discuss his identity as father. He distanced himself from the 'McDonald's dad'. He positioned his practices as a father in opposition to what was an 'artificial' situation in his estimation. He values fulfilling

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fatherly experiences but struggles to attain those experiences in the context of supervised access, a fact that was constructed as causing him internal pain, he was 'screaming' on the inside. This all helped to present the damage that was inflicted upon him and his relationship with his daughter, by the investigation, as severe. He was unable to be the father that he wanted to be. His fatherhood was 'stolen' in a similar sense to that of the men in Corbally's (2011) study.

Following this investigation, Robert's wife moved house and changed their daughter's school but would not initially tell Robert where their home or daughter's school was. Robert, however, resisted what he perceived as her efforts to separate him from his child and discovered both of these locations. However, his wife still obstructed his access. Robert was upset and frustrated by this situation, finding it torturous to be so close to his daughter and not be able to see her. In this context, and in light of all of the abuse that he had suffered, Robert believed that he needed to leave to 'regain my sanity'. He was offered a secondment with his job and left the country for a short period. This did not seem to fit with his portrayal of the dedicated father, willing to overcome many obstacles to be near his daughter. His wife may have been obstructing his access but by remaining in Ireland he at least had some chance of seeing his daughter. Robert presented himself as powerless and the situation as hopeless. Whether he stayed or left his wife would not have granted him access.

As soon as he left he began to receive phone calls informing him that he was in breach of an access order. His wife had been obstructing his access when he was in Ireland but now reported him for failing to comply with the order. Robert highlighted this contradiction, and it appeared as if he presented her behaviour as maliciously oriented towards causing trouble for him:

"Alright so now at this stage we are one allegation of assault during access, which again filed to the DPP, no prosecution, two allegations of sexual abuse, and cleared, exonerated by the Guards, by the HSE and by any other agency because all of that has to be done before a court will sign off on it. U and then that I'm in breach of the court order and now recently you will think that it would have stopped fourteen years on, but it hasn't you know em."

This interpretation received further support in the form of the list of allegations that his wife made against him. The fact that he had been cleared of wrongdoing in each case may be suggested to support the interpretation that these allegations were not made in good faith. His list served as an illustration of a pattern of abuse through the legal system, seeming to position Robert as a victim of legal and administrative aggression (Berger et al, 2016) or 'second wave' abuse (Corbally, 2011). Robert considered these allegations as a single entity or act, referring to them together in the singular as an 'it', they all appeared to relate to the abuse, his wife's retributive action against him.

At this point I empathised with Robert given that it seemed that he had nowhere to turn, whatever decision he made seemed to provide his wife with an opportunity to abuse him. However, I also wondered why he hadn't reported his wife for breach of access. Perhaps he lost faith in a system that allowed his wife to subject him to two invasive investigations and then could not ensure that he was provided with access to his child. Perhaps he was despondent about this situation and saw no other option.

There was a brief period in which their relationship improved and Robert considered getting back together with his wife. This came about after he attended a personal development course and re-assessed his relationship with her. He affirmed her identity as a 'good mother' and she allowed him to have access. They went on several holidays as a family but their reconciliation was short lived. Robert told me that the economic downturn in 2008 had a drastic impact on his earnings, as he lost nearly a third of his income. He suggested that this lost income was the reason for the failure of this

reconciliation. Robert told me that he had been giving his wife 'money hand over fist'. As a result of the reduction in his income Robert needed to reduce the maintenance he was paying but his wife responded angrily to this. He then re-interpreted their reconciliation, positioning his wife as self-interested and money-driven, viewing their renewed contact as 'chi-ching day'.

> "And she says: "I don't give a fuck about your mortgage, I don't give a fuck about your maintenance, I don't give a fuck but you will pay me as you were ordered to pay me"…… So she goes apopleptic with rage…"

Robert's earlier interpretation of the change in their relationship as resulting from his actions was supplanted by one in which he positioned the change as the result of his wife's decision to reconnect with him for her own financial benefit. He presented her as manipulative, engaging with him for her own personal gain and making use of their child to facilitate this manipulation. She lacked concern for anything apart from ensuring that she was paid what Robert had been ordered to pay her, according to Robert.

Since his reconciliation with his wife he and Sarah had been in regular contact and she often called over to his house in the evening to see him. They had become close. However, following this incident his contact with his daughter progressively declined: "dwindling, dwindling, dwindling, stop." Robert believed that his wife had manipulated his daughter and this was positioned as the source of this decline. This was a deliberate effort by his wife to get back at him for proposing to alter the maintenance he was paying her. This abusive retribution was the thread linking his wife's behaviour throughout the text. When she was getting what she wanted everything was fine but when Robert challenged her or exposed her self-serving behaviour she took abusive action against him.

At this time I was not aware of his daughter's age and I wondered why he did not challenge his wife in court for access and pursue variation of maintenance himself. Also I wondered how useful this was as an explanation of his dwindling contact with his daughter given that the contact did not immediately stop, it was portrayed as happening over time. However, it seemed Robert had similar reservations as later in the text it became clear that Robert did not solely blame his lack of contact with his daughter on his wife's manipulation. He conferred his daughter with some agency, suggesting that she was at the age where she could choose to see him but she did not. Robert believed he had no control over this now, that his identity as a father had been taken from him and it was not in his power to retrieve it. While he could challenge the allegations of his wife he could not force his daughter to see him.

At the end of our interview Robert offered a reflection on what he had told me, a coda that tied the preceding narrative together. He listed the allegations made against him and underlined for me that these allegations were intentional abusive acts, saying 'And it is all designed to embarrass me and humiliate me and to thwart, I suppose, any level of advancement in my job, you know….'. The allegations of child sexual abuse, the restriction of access, the allegations of breach of access were all 'designed to humiliate' Robert. Their origin could be traced to his exposure of her 'bizarre' behaviour of which they were the retributive response. He destroyed her public identity through exposing her behaviour and she sought retribution by humiliating him and undermining his relationship with his daughter. He reported that his wife revealed this intent to him on recorded phone calls, reporting that she said 'I will ruin you, I will see you on the escalator to Hell, I will see you dead'. The abuse Robert experienced was thus constructed as strategic, with the ultimate goal being to 'ruin' him. She was manipulative

in the first instance and vindictive when this did not go to plan, Robert would seem to suggest.

Robert's interview indicated that this effort to 'ruin' him was primarily orientated towards undermining his masculine identity through attacks on the traditionally masculine roles of father and provider, saying 'I absolutely worship the child and then the child is just the weapon.' Robert's identity and performance as a father were particularly important to him. He suggested that restricting his access to his daughter was the only way she could 'get at him':

> "It's the only thing that impacts me the most, you know…..I only have one child, she was three when this started, she's seventeen now...(crying)….I absolutely worship the child and then the child is just the weapon."

His wife, through her disruption of his contact with his daughter, and her allegations about his behaviour towards the child has made use of this child to abuse him, according to Robert. Sarah was an instrument of abuse. However, through these allegations and his striving to remain close to his daughter Robert performed a 'hero' identity. He resisted the abuse to which his wife subjected him, putting himself on the 'guillotine' to prove his innocence. He conveyed his dedication to his daughter and his identity as father through these challenges but appeared to suggest that the fact that he cannot retrieve this lost time with his daughter further undermined his identity as a father. He emphasised the fact that he has only one daughter and that he has been deprived of a relationship with her as a result of the abuse that he has experienced, emphasising the passing years and the disconnection he now feels from her, stating that he has no 'recognition' of her now.

Ending his narrative Robert suggested that all he could do regarding his daughter, his wife and the abuse was 'let it all go'. It was up to his daughter to reconnect with him

now. He had made numerous attempts to contact her, texting, calling, attempting to connect on facebook but she had ignored all of these. While Robert's story ended positively in the sense that he identified as a 'survivor' of intimate partner abuse he lacked happiness in his life, telling me he sought the 'music' to go with his life. It seemed as if he was able to move beyond the abuse but he had not been able to build a new life for himself. He compared his separation from his daughter to the death of a loved one. However, he suggested that in the case of his daughter, the grief was a daily occurrence. He lived so close to her house that he could see the light on in her bedroom and this proximity without contact was 'torture'.

The interview was ended spontaneously by Robert, saying he was exhausted.

4.4.3 - Summary

Robert related a narrative in which he suggested that the abuse he suffered from his wife was an intentional retaliation, firstly for undermining her desired identities and secondly for suggesting that he would need to alter maintenance. As part of this plot he positioned his wife as concerned with third party perceptions of her to an extreme extent, with the result that she was abusive. She was positioned as abnormally concerned with such things, with her behaviour described as 'bizarre'. As such, she was constructed by Robert as the 'type' of woman who would engage in abusive behaviour. She was a deviation from 'normal' femininity. He offered her romance and a loving relationship and she manipulated him, using this relationship to impress her parents. His account offered a rationale for the abusive behaviour of his wife. One rationale for such behaviour may be revenge. However, this account also presented the abusive behaviour of his wife as a deviation from the norm. Her behaviour was 'bizarre' or 'very strange', she made wild accusations against third parties and she went 'ballistic'.

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Robert's narrative simultaneously made room for him as a victim of abuse. He was a romantic who had been misled by a woman who only wanted to be in a relationship for her own gain. He was in the relationship for the right reasons while his wife used it and him as a tool to please her family. The abuse related by Robert primarily surrounded fatherhood and his wife's obstruction of his contact with his daughter. His phrase "…the child is just the weapon" demonstrated how his daughter was simply a tool to be used by his wife to abuse him, both when their relationship deteriorated initially and when he was unable to pay the maintenance he had been ordered to.

Robert's narrative differed from the others in this study as he reported relatively positive interactions with institutional sources, in a similar fashion to Alex. While Robert claimed that he was investigated on the basis of false allegations, he positioned the investigation as understandable and necessary. Further, he had several successes in court settings, despite having a harsh maintenance order made against him, marking his experience out as different from several of the men in this study.

4.5 - Niall's narrative

Niall wrote about his experience of significant physical, psychological and second wave abuse. He wrote that his wife smashed his head off the wall, kicked him in the testicles, poured hot coffee over him, disrupted his sleep, and demeaned him regarding his sexual performance. This abuse was presented as oriented towards forcing him from the family home. Niall's narrative was split into two parts, one which focussed on how he was wronged by his wife and the physical and psychological abuse that he endured from her. The second part of his narrative focussed on the perceived gender bias of the legal system, the police and court-appointed psychologist. Niall wrote that he faced disbelief, disrespect, and threats from these bodies, as opposed to the support he may have expected. Further, Niall's wife was positioned as 'knowing' that she could behave the way that she did because the gender bias of these institutions meant Niall would not receive support.

Niall's written account of intimate partner abuse told a story of abuse as a 'war of attrition' whose contested territory was the family home. However, his account was one of an uneven war in which he was overwhelmed by both his wife and by the institutional forces which failed to offer him support, in keeping with the experience of men in other studies (Migliaccio, 2001; Hines et al, 2007; Corbally, 2011). He simply had to endure this abuse as there seemed to be no way for him to resist as he was thwarted at every turn. What Niall initially believed was a loving, happy relationship transpired to be one-sided as his wife had been having an affair. Niall's narrative positioned the abuse that ensued as an effort by his wife to facilitate her new relationship by removing Niall from the home.

4.5.1 - Narrative orientation

Niall described himself as happily married and said this had been the case for fourteen years. Five years before he wrote this account, however, he was approached by his wife who wanted to separate. Niall was unaware of any issues in the marriage and was surprised by this request which struck him as sudden, appearing to suggest that things changed in the space of a few days when he was away. As well as this request being sudden, Niall presented it as aggressive. His wife appeared to be in control, as she gave him a timeframe of six weeks in which to move out. There was no negotiation, she simply made demands of Niall. Niall appeared to position his wife as lacking any consideration or empathy for his situation. She was not presented as offering any indication that she was aware that this may be difficult for Niall. There was little to redeem her in his presentation:

> "This began I suppose about five years ago. I was happily married I would say, for 14 years. I had been away for a few days and I came home, my wife announced that she wanted a separation and that she wanted me to leave the house. I had six weeks, this is what she gave me, six weeks to leave the house and to leave my two children."

Initially Niall was not aware of any reason for the sudden decline in their relationship. It was a one-sided decision made by his wife. She 'announced' that she wanted the separation and accordingly he expected that she would provide a reason for this. Niall's wife appeared to have complete control over the situation, with Niall reduced to a bystander waiting for an explanation for the drastic and sudden changes in his life:

> "And she wouldn't give me a reason for this. I then found out that she was having an affair with my best friend."

Niall appeared to suggest that the decline in the relationship could be reduced to a singular reason, that of his wife's affair with his friend. He seemed to consider this an explanation for his wife's desire to remove him from the family home. Further, the

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suggestion that his wife has had an affair seems to position her as doubly guilty. Not only was she abusive she also had an affair and wanted to remove him from the family home because of this. While Niall described himself as happily married and expressed concern over the children, he appeared to position his wife as lacking concern for their marriage or their children. Niall's presented his wife as cold and heartless, as well as duplicitous as she tried to conceal her affair from him even as she ended their 14 year marriage because of it.

4.5.2 - The Abuse

Niall reported that there had been 'no violence at all' up until that day, apart from 'an isolated incident' in which his wife:

> "….grabbed me by the hair, flung me to the floor and kicked me in the testicles…"

He considered this to be a separate incident, labelling it 'isolated' and thus not part of a pattern of abuse. He restricted the pattern of abuse to the period following his wife's announcement that she wanted him to leave and that she wanted a separation. However, relating this incident conveyed that his wife had engaged in significant violence towards him before. By kicking him in the testicles she attacked a region of the body closely associated with masculinity (Connell, 2005). Several other studies of IPA have reported similar attacks (Hines et al, 2007; Allen-Collinson, 2009). Further, his minimisation of this incident may be suggested to be a masculine performance. His description of this incident conveys its violence, with the use of the words 'flung' and 'grabbed' presenting the assault as vigorous and forceful. This would appear to be a significant violent incident that may be considered abusive even on its own but couching it as isolated and suggesting that there was no violence apart from this would appear to undermine its significance and perhaps minimise it. Further, despite the likelihood that

this was a painful incident Niall says nothing about the visceral experience of being physically assaulted in this way. We are told about it in a matter of fact fashion.

When the pattern of abuse began his wife again attacked his masculine identity (Connell, 2005), undermining his sexual prowess through unfavourable comparisons to her new partner. He gendered, rather than individualised this behaviour, suggesting that it was something that all women said.

> "That very night she started to taunt me, that is how it began, she taunted me, the usual stuff that women say, that he was better in bed than I was."

Again his wife appeared callous, showing little concern for their relationship. Niall did not appear to respond to this, again presenting the situation as imbalanced. Thus while the abuse was directed against Niall, there was some sense in which this was an experience shared by men to the extent that it was identifiable as such.

Niall described some of the abuse directed towards him as a provocation, a common finding in men's accounts of IPA (Allen-Collinson, 2008: Corbally, 2011; Entilli and Cipoletta, 2016) She wanted him to respond physically to her physical abuse but he refused to do so. He appeared to suggest that his wife 'knew' she could escape punishment for the abuse that she enacted and engaged in flagrant abuse as a result.

> "One night my wife said to me, she was quite friendly, "Do you want a cup of coffee". She hadn't spoken to me in something like three weeks at this stage. I said, "Yes, that would be great". She came into the room with the cup of coffee and she threw it in my face. She laughed at me, real arrogant like, as if she knew that she could do this and get away with it."

Again Niall's wife was positioned as callous, laughing after she has inflicted what was likely a painful experience on him. She was described as 'arrogant', possessed of a sense of superiority and contempt, given by her knowledge of the relative privilege afforded her as a result of the reluctance of institutional powers to address her behaviour. In this

way institutional powers facilitated the abuse engaged in by his wife, although Niall did not absolve his wife of responsibility in a similar way to those men in Entilli and Cipoletta's (2017) study. Instead, institutional powers simply facilitated her scheme to remove him from the family home and implicitly sanctioned the abuse to which he was subjected. Interestingly, there was no discussion here of any possible options for Niall to resist his wife's abuse, institutional or otherwise. This happened and his wife could 'get away' with it. He was absent, apart from being the recipient of the abuse, with this perhaps conveying his 'powerlessness', akin to that identified in Corbally's (2011) study.

Again, as above Niall's narrative contained no information about his experience of pain. He has had a coffee thrown at him but no mention was made in this account of the visceral experience of pain. Instead, the focus was on the behaviour of his wife, having the instrumental effect of producing his wife as callous. I interpreted this as a masculine performance, an example of the absence of the body for men, but also an avoidance of vulnerability (Connell, 2005).

His wife's abuse was intentional, goal-directed and confident. Niall described her abuse as 'a war of attrition', seeming to suggest that the intention of this abuse was to wear him down. He listed the abuse that he was subjected to, highlighting the extent of this. Niall deployed a generalised narrative throughout, indicating that this abuse was regular.

> "She then started a war of attrition against me, she would play the radio all night long, she would try to keep me awake, she would knock on the door, she would taunt me."

Niall appeared desperate as he asked her to end the abuse, offering to give her everything and only asking that he be allowed to see his children in return. His wife refused to speak to him, however, and he again indicated that she believed she could

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act with impunity. Niall's wife reportedly believed that the outcome of their separation was already decided and she had no need to negotiate with Niall. Again Niall's wife was positioned here as callous and lacking any concern for the man with whom she shared her life for 15 years. She appeared to lack emotion, focusing solely on getting what she wanted to get from the relationship.

Throughout his account Niall appeared to suggest, or stated explicitly, that he did not receive a fair hearing from the agencies that should have provided him with support, again echoing other studies of men who experience IPA (Migliaccio, 2001; Corbally, 2011; Morgan and Wells, 2016). He appeared to be powerless to change his situation and suggested that he contemplated suicide.

> "I tried everything to talk to her. I said she could have the house, the car, anything – just allow me to still see my two children. She said she didn't need to negotiate with me. She was going to get it all anyway. Why did she need to negotiate with me? It was at this point that I first thought of suicide."

Niall's suggestion that he would give up everything in order to have contact with his children positioned him as a 'Good Father'. Fatherhood is a focus for men who experience IPA (Corbally, 2011; Morgan and Wells, 2016; Entilli and Cipoletta, 2017). His children were all that mattered to him, he did not express concern for himself. He appeared to present his thoughts of suicide in this instance as motivated by the belief that he would lose access to his children.

Niall reported the abuse to a doctor, following one physical attack in which his wife hit his head off a wall. This doctor was supportive, telling him about his professional experience with other men facing similar abuse and appeared to suggest that there was a common gendered response – most men did not do anything about it.

Niall also reported that he was thankful that his children did not witness the abuse he received, again positioning him as a 'Good Father', who was more concerned about his children's welfare than his own:

> "Not long afterwards, I was coming down the hallway of the home, the kids were in bed. All the abuse went on when the children were out of sight, thankfully. She got me by the back of the head and she proceeded to smash my head off the corner of the wall. At this stage I could take no more, I left the house. I went to the doctor, he was supportive and he told me that he had seen violence like this before, but very few men were willing to take it anywhere."

Again Niall said nothing about his experience of pain here, with his only response being to leave the house. This silence regarding the effect that the abuse had on him is of interest considering the focus on consequences in much IPA research and the suggestion that the consequences for men are less serious. In this narrative, Niall's silence surrounding the consequences of such extreme violence may provide implicit support to the narrative that the consequences of IPA for men are less serious.

As mentioned, Niall suggested that those who should have provided him with support were reluctant to do so. He challenged the abuse, going to court and struggling successfully to convince a judge that he required legal protection. Niall reported that the 'judge didn't really want to hear me' but 'eventually' he convinced the judge of the need for protection. Niall's eventual success in convincing the judge despite his scepticism underlined the seriousness of the abuse that he faced.

Niall reported that his wife laughed when he presented her with the protection order. She did not believe that this order would have any effect and continued with the abuse in much the same manner. Underlining the unchanged situation Niall repeated his description of the abuse as a 'war of attrition'.

> "The next day, I went to the Court and found out that I had to get a Barring Order against my wife in order to get protection. The judge didn't really want to hear me, but eventually I convinced him that I needed protection. I got the Protection

> Order; it was served on my wife. She laughed, she said, "This doesn't mean a damn thing". A few weeks later, my wife was destroying my clothing, she was putting salt in my food, she was doing just everything and anything – a war of attrition."

The portrayal of his wife as unperturbed by the protection order positioned her as determined to carry out the abuse and confident that she could not be prevented from doing so. It would appear as if she was familiar with the operation of the legal system and such domestic violence orders as she was so assured.

In what he described as the 'final incident', Niall's wife smashed a picture over his head in front of their children. This object held significant meaning for Niall, which was perhaps the reason for targeting this picture. This again appeared to position her as callous. His young son attempted to intervene on his behalf but was unsuccessful as his wife continued with the violence. She again targeted his testicles, a vulnerable point on his body, but also an area closely linked with masculinity (Connell, 2005).

> "The final thing was, I had a very special picture which I had since I was a child. My wife destroyed it in front of me. My children were there. I went to get the picture and my wife smashed it across my head. My son, five years old, jumped on my wife, proceeded to try and stop her from hitting me and she pushed me to the ground and she jumped on my testicles."

The destruction of cherished personal property has been reported in Allen-Collinson (2016), as a means of abuse oriented towards undermining personal identity.

The above would seem to conflict with his earlier claim that the children did not witness the abuse. Perhaps this was the final incident because it was witnessed by his children. This may have motivated him to leave the family home. However, through the presentation of his child attempting to protect him this may be suggested to support his position as a victim, that his child could identify him as the injured party in this instance.

The remainder of the letter was concerned with his experience with those agencies which should have provided him with support. His experiences with these organisations

married well with his portrayal of his wife's knowing confidence in her ability to abuse him with impunity. Niall's narrative presented him as lacking support and earlier presented his wife as aware that this was the case. Niall's narrative seemed to proffer a link between the lack of assistance he received and his wife's confidence in her ability to act with impunity, seeming to suggest a feedback loop of sorts.

After the above incident Niall approached the Gardaí with his protection order but was disappointed with the support that he received. Instead of arresting his wife they indicated that they would put his children into care 'if you continue with this'. Niall appeared to suggest that they were threatening him to encourage him to stop reporting his wife's abuse.

> "I went to the Gardaí with my Protection Order, thinking they would do something. They came to the house. They separated the two of us and said to me, "If you continue with this, we are going to have your children put into care". I couldn't believe it. I said, "This is my wife: if I was doing this to my wife, what would happen to me? You know, I'd be in Mountjoy tomorrow". The look on their faces was incredible. They didn't believe me. They just did not believe me. I knew at that point that nobody was going to help me"

He also appeared to indicate that they decided not to arrest his wife due to gender bias, believing that he would have been arrested if roles were reversed. Niall perceived the Gardaí as incredulous regarding his claims of abuse and in light of his accusation of gender bias he may be suggesting that they did not believe him because he was a man. It may be that dominant notions of masculinity are so closely tied to the concepts of power and domination that it is difficult to conceive of or accept the accounts of men who fall outside this. His experience with the Gardaí led him to believe that he would not receive any support. This belief was likely supported by his later experience with a court appointed psychologist who reportedly laughed when told about the abuse that Niall had experienced. In this psychologist's final report for the court he failed to

mention the violence that Niall had alleged. Niall underlined the reputation and prestige of this psychologist, calling him 'one of the leading psychologists in the country' and informing us that his opinion cost 850 pounds in cash. Despite paying a lot of money for one of the best psychologists in the country he still received substandard care and support. It appeared as if Niall positioned this as the 'official' opinion regarding intimate partner abuse in Ireland.

Niall finished his account by summing up his experience with those in authority, suggesting that 'the whole damn system was against me'. Despite this negative experience, however, Niall reported that he was 'out through the other end' and now had a positive relationship with his children. He had also begun a new relationship that he described as 'very loving'. However, I wondered how he had come out the other side? What had changed from when the 'whole damn system' was against him? How had he convinced his wife to allow him to see his children despite her earlier claim that she did not need to negotiate with him? His narrative left these questions unanswered.

4.5.3 - Summary

Niall's account was unique in its presentation of the abuse enacted by his wife. He related significant physical and psychological abuse, as well as destruction of cherished property, and suggested that this was part of a scheme to encourage him to leave the family home, within the six week timeline he had been given by his wife to leave. As well as presenting this abuse as goal-directed and rational Niall also appeared to indicate that his wife was confident that she would succeed in her efforts, presenting the outcome as a foregone conclusion whether Niall was willing to submit to her demands or not. This would appear to be an inconsistency in the narrative; if his wife was so confident that she would get the house and everything else, why did she need to abuse him? However,

Niall also suggested that the abuse was an effort to provoke him to retaliate and so perhaps he was suggesting that his wife planned to construe him as the abuser. This is not made explicit.

While many of the accounts in the dataset reflected on a life post-IPA, Niall's account differed from many others as he reported a positive outcome, and offered his story as a hopeful message to other men, as a result. Other men were less optimistic about their futures.

4.6 - Alex's Narrative

I interviewed Alex, a successful business owner in his late 40's, in my office in DCU. Alex reported significant psychological abuse and some physical abuse. The abuse reported by Alex differed from that experienced by the other men due to the specificity of this abuse, which was primarily focused on Alex's behaviour with other women. Alex experienced constant questioning regarding his behaviour with women. If he left the house he would be asked who he had seen and did he find them attractive. If he was driving he would be accused of looking at other women in his rear view mirror. If they were at dinner with his wife's family he would be accused of spending too much time talking to her sister. He refrained from hiring women and was reluctant to take on female clients because of her behaviour. Her suspicions would often lead to what Alex referred to as a 'rage', in which she would become angry and upset, shouting and screaming at Alex at length, before then explaining what he had done wrong at length and extracting an apology from him. Such behaviour formed the focus of this narrative, with the consistency and regularity of it having a coercive effect on Alex, and seeming to fit the description of coercive control (Stark, 2009). Alex's narrative was also one of few in the sample in which situational couple violence (Johnson, 2005) was evident. Alex's wife engaged in some physical violence towards him, slapping him on occasion, and for a while Alex would retaliate but this behaviour was soon discontinued, by Alex at least. This behaviour led Alex to question his status as a victim, however, instead seeing himself as a perpetrator, in a similar way to those in Zverina et al's (2011) study and Dunn's (2012) study.

Alex was keen to participate in this study, even offering to forego his anonymity. Alex believed that volunteering for this study was a way of, even indirectly, assisting Amen

Support Services in their work by drawing attention to IPA and how it affects men. He had made use of their services and was grateful for their support. Such sentiments were common among the men in this study and most identified a lack of support available for men. Alex's interview was more abstract than the other interviews, by which I mean that he did not offer story after story as the other men did. He made significant use of hypothetical narratives, telling me about what his wife *would* do in particular situations, giving the interview the appearance of a general overview but also positioning the IPA he experienced as regular and patterned. Alex engaged in explicit theorising as was the case in the other interviews, proffering an origin for the IPA in a singular incident early in his relationship with his wife. He positioned himself as a man who earnestly attempted to be a 'Good Husband' to his wife and make up for the deficiencies she perceived in his behaviour. Her demands were portrayed as increasingly difficult to meet, however, and she was positioned as manipulative and controlling.

4.6.1 - Narrative Orientation

In his interview Alex provided a general overview of how their relationship developed, suggesting that he and his wife initially had quite a loving relationship. They reached a 'turning point' 15 months into the relationship, which was positioned as the catalyst for significant psychological abuse and controlling behaviour which continued for the duration of his marriage, spanning 28 years. According to Alex the abuse originated with a conversation in which he asked his wife if he did anything that she did not like. This conversation opened the door to the abuse that he experienced. This one conversation was presented as instituting a discourse regarding Alex's behaviour that was returned to habitually by his wife:

> "…..the relationship was was good at first….Eh we, fifteen months into the relationship em we were going away on holidays for the first time together and I we we were, I felt comfortable enough to ask, just to ask her the question was there anything I did that that upset her or annoyed her. And she said to me that I I stared or I looked at other women….And em I said well ok, I took it on board but from that point on the relationship changed almost like that (clicks fingers), complete change in the relationship."

In a similar way to some of the other men, Alex identified a sudden change in his relationship, comparing it to a click of the fingers here and a light switch later in the narrative, a metaphor used in several of the other narratives in this study. This conversation was identified by Alex as the turning point. He mentioned that there were 'one or two' little warning signs but, in a similar way to Aidan, these were identified post hoc as Alex did not realise their significance at the time. This may serve as a 'stake inoculation', letting the audience know that he is aware of warning signs but explaining how such warning signs were possible to identify at a distance but not in the midst of the relationship. The notion of 'warning signs' positions intimate partner abuse as something that it is possible to predict but which these men, unfortunately failed to do. This preserves those discourses which suggest that men should be able to defend themselves (Burkar and Akerstrom, 2009), in this case by seeing the abuse coming. Instead of directly challenging this discourse he negotiates an exception. Warning signs were visible but it was difficult to determine their significance, according to Alex

Following the above conversation there was a change in their relationship. I interpreted this conversation as instituting a change in the power dynamics, establishing a hierarchy in which Alex's wife could observe and critique his behaviour. Her criticisms were accepted as valid, implicitly condoning her surveillance of his behaviour.

The change in their relationship was portrayed as drastic and instantaneous, saying 'from that night I asked the question and the next day on, it was literally from then

onwards, every time there was another female in the place there was a rage.'. Things changed 'the next day' and his wife's concerns were directed towards 'every' woman in close proximity to Alex, with the anonymous 'female' underlining this. His wife's behaviour was positioned as extreme, suggesting that her concern was with all women who were in the vicinity of Alex, not merely with behaviour that may be deemed flirtatious or otherwise untoward. The deployment of a generalised narrative in this instance served to portray this behaviour as constant and, as a result, extreme.

Alex told me that his wife blamed him for her aggression, as she was presented as suggesting that if he did not engage in inappropriate behaviour towards other women she would not have responded in the way she did. Alex later told me that he believed that he was a 'bad person' for a long time.

4.6.2 - The Abuse

Alex's interview moved backwards and forwards in time as he related events and issues that he deemed to be of significance. The above incident, however, was related early in the interview and its significance for all future incidents was highlighted. They married a year after this incident but Alex told me that their marriage was never 'good'. There were 'patches' that were without incident, but this was at the discretion of his wife. Thus, Alex was portrayed as having little agency. He reported experiencing both physical and verbal abuse but told me that he was most affected by the verbal abuse that he experienced. This verbal abuse involved chastising him for his alleged behaviour in the presence of other women before evolving to more general criticisms of his behaviour. Alex was positioned as undeserving of the IPA that he experienced through reference to his performance as a 'provider' and the good life that they enjoyed as a result of his success in his business.

His wife's jealous behaviour, which seemed to manifest itself in all situations, left him socially isolated. He told me that 'It got to the stage that em the we didn't, we hardly went anywhere, apart from at her behest…..it wasn't just something that affected us when we were in, say, particularly glamourous company.' The abuse was unpredictable, it could not be circumvented by avoiding 'glamorous' women or particular activities. Alex made use of extreme case formulations to emphasise the pervasiveness of the abuse suggesting that it affected 'every last' part of his life and that it could happen 'any, anywhere at all'. I interpreted this as suggesting that the abuse was difficult to avoid due to its unpredictability, with the effect that this countered the discourse that he was some way responsible for the abuse that he received (Anderson and Doherty, 2008).

Alex's wife was positioned as selectively deploying her 'rages', with the effect that he was kept isolated from his family, with Alex saying '…we'd be invited somewhere, there'd be an excuse by [wife], maybe we shouldn't go here or I don't want to go here because you'll do this or whatever'. By contrast, they regularly attended her family's functions as Alex suggested that she was concerned with 'keeping up appearances' with her side of the family. Alex suggested that her concerns about other women would be suspended, telling me that 'there would be people that she would be uncomfortable about on her side of the family she didn't do that because she had to keep, she had to keep up appearances in front of her mother'.

When they did attend social gatherings, Alex told me that his wife invariably accused him of inappropriate behaviour with one of the women in attendance. He attempted to avoid her abuse, recognising this pattern and attempting to disrupt it by going to bed immediately following a night out. If he stayed downstairs he risked being chastised about his behaviour with other women.

The IPA came in the form of his wife's 'rages', the regularity and pervasiveness of which gradually had a coercive controlling effect (Stark, 2009) on Alex such that he would behave as if his wife was always present. Alex told me that 'it got to the stage that I actually feared her…rage', an unusual admission as it has been remarked that it is unusual for men to speak of fear in relation to female abusers (Holtzworth-Munroe, 2005), although men in Migliaccio's (2002) narrative study reported fear in a variety of situations including fear of future attacks, as in Alex's narrative here. Alex distinguished his wife's behaviour from a 'normal' aggressive response, saying '…it wasn't just someone being naturally upset, it was a massive rage.' Alex did not provide much detail about these 'rages', however, but they were positioned as excessive responses to minor situations.

These 'rages' were not the end of the abuse, however, as Alex told me that his wife would explain at great length what he had done to upset her and how it was all his fault.

> "Now every time we ever had, there was ever a rage or a row or whatever it was, there was always this long-winded way of Joanne would talk at length about why she did what she did, and why I shouldn't have done what I did and we eventually sit down and I'd apologise and right and we'd we'd you know the peace would be created for a short period of time."

The generalised nature of this narrative, along with Alex's use of the words 'ever' and his suggestion that this occurred 'every time' presented this as a pattern. I interpreted these exchanges as further opportunities for Alex's wife to abuse him, positioning him as a 'terrible person'. These conversations were often quite drawn out and could occur late at night. As Alex ran his own business and would need to be up early in the morning to go to work, this had the effect of leaving him sleep-deprived. His wife, by contrast, worked part time and could sleep late following these discussions. Here he draws on his identity as a provider in the same breath as he discusses the IPA he experienced.

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The IPA that Alex experienced had an impact on how they ran their business, as they refrained from taking on female clients or employees. Further, Alex suggested that he had to account for his whereabouts at all times, saying '...I had to account virtually if I went out somewhere, if I met a client, if I and even little, even the the innocent, the most innocent of things that you would think would never even cause a problem or would cause a question was questioned'. Alex told me that this behaviour 'governed' every facet of his life, to the extent that he could not leave the house without being questioned about the women he encountered, upon his return.

He told me that he believed that he was a bad person for much of the relationship and was too ashamed to speak to anyone about the issues in the relationship as he was afraid they would confirm that he was a terrible person. Alex offered this as an explanation for 'how I stayed in it so long'. He believed that he had treated his wife terribly and 'owed it to her to make life as good as possible for her, in every which way possible.' He appeared to indicate that his wife exerted control in this way as he attempted to 'make life as good as possible for her'. His behaviour was oriented towards pleasing her. He remained in the relationship out of a belief that he owed her something. Here also we can see a prominent discourse of IPA – the question 'why didn't they leave?', which comes with the assumption that leaving is easy to do. This conveys the influence of social discourse on accounts of experience explicitly, that the wider world can raise questions that these accounts serve to answer, in one way or another. This one is not specific to men who have experienced IPA but it highlights the thrust of this thesis, that accounts are given in a context which is taken into account when giving a narrative of IPA.

Alex's wife's anger was positioned as inauthentic:

> "I mean it was one particular day there was a rage about something not very important….she flew for about twenty minutes, really aggressive, you you know. And she, the minute she exited the room she started talking in a cheery fashion to the dogs…..Right. It was, it was almost as if there was a light switch, you know now if you're, if one is that upset and angry it's it's not possible [Barry: Yeah], in my view, that she could just switch to being so cheery…"

She was able to quickly change her behaviour and tone of voice, something that Alex suggested was not possible, portraying emotions as beyond the control of the individual experiencing them. He thus seemed to portray his wife as either a deviation from that norm or as selectively deploying her rage. In the context of the interview as a whole, in which Alex portrayed his wife as controlling and manipulative I favour the interpretation that he portrayed her as strategically deploying her anger.

When talking about the physical abuse in the relationship Alex reported that he was a participant in the abuse, engaging in some violence towards his wife:

> "Right. I have to be honest….. after I had asked her the question I asked her what she didn't like and she the genie came out of the bottle so to speak…..Eh pretty soon thereafter the physical abuse started…..she'd get into a rage and she'd hit me….quite hard, you know. Em it that carried on for a full year and I didn't I didn't put a finger on her, not for a full year. And I there was a lot of physical abuse early on, a lot of slapping, boxing eh stuff like that. And to my shame one day I retaliated, I hit her back, and there was a period of time over a few years. Now there was a lot of it early on and then it was sporadic for a long, for a long time. But I wasn't totally blameless for that period of time. Right and then I stopped, because I was moving on with my life…Em but…when it first came about…..she was doing it on a regular enough basis, certainly weekly, possibly more. And quite…as hard as she could muster…And sometimes I I kind of feared her in a sense that sometimes it would be better to let her do it because if you tried to stop her she she you'd fear that she'd pick something else up and...And then she has hit me with stuff once or twice as well. You know she hit me with the back of a shoe once. She hit me once when I was asleep in bed….. I will say in my defence that I…never instigated it…."

Alex first mentioned this physical violence well into the interview, despite discussing his wife's 'rages' early on and despite the fact that this physical violence began soon after the discussion that he identified as the origin of the IPA that he experienced. As such the IPA was a constant feature of his abusive relationship but not disclosed until later in the

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narrative. The absence of this violence from his account up to this point seems noteworthy given that it co-occurred with the psychological abuse that he experienced. This, in conjunction with his explicit expression of shame regarding his role in this violence, and his suggestion that he was not 'blameless' would seem to fit with the finding in the work of Zverina et al (2011) that men believed their victimisation would be undermined if they engaged in violence. One participant in Zverina et al (2011) suggested that certain forms of resistance, particularly violence, would transform them from victim to perpetrator. Alex's construction was more nuanced, however, as he acknowledged his role in the violence and portrayed this as unacceptable but he also highlighted that he did not engage in defensive violence until a year into the relationship, his violence was restrained by comparison to his wife's, and he stopped while she continued. Thus, while he accepted blame he did not draw an equivalence between his behaviour and that of his wife's, as seemed to be done by the participants in Zverina et al's (2011) study in their negotiation of a victim identity. His wife was positioned as relishing the violence, hitting him 'as hard as she could muster', and escalating her violence if he responded, hitting him with a shoe and hitting him when he was asleep. As such a clear distinction was drawn between the violence they both engaged in. Further, as well as not instigating the violence, Alex stopped his participation after one year, suggesting that 'I was moving on with my life'. He was positioned as having unilaterally decided to end the violence, despite his wife's continued aggression. By engaging in violence towards his wife, in response to her violence, Alex may be suggested to offer an account of situational couple violence (Johnson, 2005). However, this is complicated by the specific nature of his presentation as his wife was engaging in violence towards him long before he reciprocated, she always instigated the violence, and he discontinued his violent behaviour years ago while she continued. Further, Alex

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was presented as experiencing coercive control, with this violence one aspect of this controlling context, while his own violence was simply defensive. This case may thus present a puzzle for Johnson's (2005) typology of IPA, perhaps indicating greater fluidity between the abuse categories than the theory allows.

This narrative seems to have the effect of countering the discourse that men should be able to defend themselves from violence and abuse (Burcar and Akerstrom, 2009) as Alex highlights the complexity of engaging in defensive violence. Alex suggested that his wife would sometimes engage in more severe violence if he hit her back, thus suggesting that defensive violence may be counter-productive, increasing the risk he faced, rather than reducing it. Further, his presentation of his wife engaging in violence towards him when he was asleep and physically unable to defend himself may also have this effect. However, Alex suggested, on the one hand, that his reciprocal violence exposed him to greater risk, and later in the interview, proposed that his reciprocal violence helped to calm the situation down. In this way his presentation appeared contradictory, perhaps highlighting the confusion surrounding the most appropriate way to conceptualise violence by men in the context of the receipt of IPA. Is it defensive? Or should he be conceptualised as a participant in situational couple violence (Johnson, 2005) and thus not 'blameless'? In any case, he told me that this violence was never serious thus mitigating the blame that may be apportioned to him or his wife. If he did retaliate he asserted that this would be used by his wife as justification for her own behaviour, serving as evidence that he was 'as bad' as her. Alex objected to this, however, and constructed two distinct figures that of 'abused' and 'abuser':

> "…it's not possible to do that with somebody, not that I'm that type anyway [Barry: Yeah], you know, but it's not possible, you can't turn you know the the

person who's abused, just doesn't have it in them to turn around and abuse the abuser, you know."

This construction had the effect of further underlining that no equivalence could be drawn between his wife's violent behaviour and his own. After having been abused physically and psychologically for a year before defending himself, Alex appeared to suggest that his status as 'abused' was set and he could not now become an 'abuser'. In this way his violence was positioned as defensive.

The general pattern of abuse continued in the same way for much of their marriage and it was in the latter years that 'things got worse', meaning that the focus of the abuse broadened. His wife did not simply fly into a 'rage' over his contact with other women, instead there was a more general focus on criticising Alex's behaviour in all circumstances. He suggested that 'everything' he did was wrong. Things came to a head at this point, with Alex's wife having a 'massive rage' about 'something that was not very important'. The juxtaposition of the 'massive rage' with the unimportant reason for this 'rage' portrayed his wife's behaviour as lacking connection to reality, and in this way perhaps positioned her behaviour as deviant. Her behaviour could not be construed as a justifiable response or part of a relationship dispute, it was an overreaction.

At this point Alex's wife suggested that they needed some time apart. During this time apart Alex discussed his situation with his sister, which he had felt unable to do in the family home. This appeared to help him challenge the internalised perception of himself as a horrible person, deserving of such abuse. He adopted a different perspective on the behaviour of his wife, reconceptualising it as IPA, and this emboldened him to challenge it. Positioning this change as the result of discussions with third parties may be suggested to give Alex some distance from his identification as a victim of abuse. This may have had the effect of reducing the stigma associated with such an identification.

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Positioning himself as heroically standing up to his wife, Alex told me that she was shocked when he confronted her about her behaviour. She seemed to be positioned as unaware that it may be considered problematic. Or perhaps she was shocked that he had challenged her about it. Alex suggested that his wife spent the weekend trying to maintain the 'status quo', meaning that she attempted to go on as they would usually have, with her policing his behaviour. He was positioned as resisting these efforts and insisting that they attend counselling, to which she eventually agreed. However, the counselling was presented as disappointing due to the counsellor focusing on the conversation that he identified as the origin of their problems. He believed that he was not given a fair hearing and eventually left counselling himself. I found it surprising that Alex objected to the discussion of an issue that he identified as the genesis of the abuse. He subordinated this issue to more recent issues, privileging the regular abuse he had received over the previous twenty years. Privileging the more recent abuse may be suggested to have the effect of ensuring that his wife did not escape blame/censure for her behaviour. Alex's wife denied the abuse and ridiculed his suggestion that she was abusive towards him.

Alex told me that he altered his behaviour towards his wife after his time away from her. When she became enraged he would refuse to have an argument with her. He suggested that this made things worse:

> "....I didn't rage back at her, I stayed calm and I just, I didn't, I didn't accept what she was saying to me and I I just said, I said "Look", I said "you can rage all you want but the its I'm not doing this or we're not doing this", or whatever it was, you know. That that, in itself, made life a lot more dangerous because she wasn't able to handle it....she was almost happy for me to do that ['rage at her'] because that only meant that I had to apologise even more and make it up to her even more...."

His use of direct speech seemed to mark the appearance of his agency. He resisted the abuse of his wife and suggested that she preferred when he would become aggressive towards her as it supported her negative characterisation of him, which facilitated her control as it had discouraged him from seeking support. This appears to be the inverse of the 'Cycle of Violence' (Walker, 1978). In the 'Honeymoon phase' the abusive partner spends time apologising for their bad behaviour and attempting to make it up to their partner. In this case, however, it was the abuse victim who was expected to do this.

Eventually they separated. This was instigated by Alex and resisted by his wife. They remained in the house together for eight months before he eventually moved out. The separation, however, did not put an end to the IPA as Alex portrayed his wife as deliberately slowing down the process of mediation, suggesting that a process that should have taken five weeks actually took five months. When she eventually made a demand, Alex suggested that it was unreasonable. They eventually began a legal process, during which his wife requested that a forensic accountant examine his finances to ensure that he was not hiding anything, which Alex positioned as a further act of abuse. If he was found to have breached revenue rules in some way, this could potentially have led to the loss of his licence.

The situation eventually progressed, with Alex's wife cooperating with the sale of their houses. Alex suggested that his wife did so out of self-interest as she had found a place for herself and the sale was necessary to facilitate this. He was happy about this, however, as it allowed him to move on.

Alex's narrative came to a natural conclusion here, at the ending of his relationship. He told me that he could spend the day relating stories but that he believed he had given

me a good overview of their relationship. I thanked him for speaking to me and the interview ended.

4.6.3 - Summary

Alex presented an abstract narrative in which he spoke generally, for the most part, about the IPA that he experienced from his wife. In contrast to the other narratives presented here the abuse that he experienced was not predicated on multiple incidents of abuse but rather on an environment of control established by his abusive partner, with this control predicated on the way in which he behaved with other women. In this way he portrayed the intimate partner abuse that he experienced as a pattern of regular coercive controlling behaviour (Stark, 2009). Alex identified a specific origin for this behaviour in the form of a conversation in which his wife objected to his behaviour towards other women. In a similar fashion to Aidan, Alex suggested that his wife's behaviour changed dramatically following this incident, again comparing this change to the flick of a switch.

Sexuality and the control of sexuality seem to be central issues in this text. Alex did not seem to question the right of his wife to police his gaze, rather the extent of this behaviour was at issue. He accepted her criticism of his behaviour and vowed to try and alter it but the extent and extremity of her criticism led Alex to label it as abuse. Her behaviour was extreme, but not invalid. This was evident in his suggestion in a number of places in the interview that his wife would become annoyed even if they were in the company of people who weren't particularly glamourous. While this marks his wife's behaviour out as strange it also seems to imply that her behaviour would be defensible if it were the case that they were in the presence of glamourous people. The underlying assumption goes unquestioned and serves as the foundation of all of their marital

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problems and the abuse to which he was subjected. In this way heterosexual masculinity was the focus of this narrative.

Alex's narrative was the only one of very few accounts in which children were not present in the relationship. They played a role in the sense that their absence was further evidence, for Alex, of his wife's controlling behaviour, as he suggested that she made the decision not to have children. However, Alex's account was, unlike most others, not concerned with attempting to protect or maintain custody of shared children.

Further, Alex's account differed from several of the others in terms of the positive interactions that he reported having with the police regarding the abuse that he experienced. He had few interactions with them but he suggested that they were helpful and receptive, in contrast to Aidan and Niall.

4.7 - Overall Summary

This chapter presented five case accounts, which resulted from the deployment of the four phases of the Dialogic/Performance narrative analytic approach. These cases illustrated the divergent experiences of men who experience IPA, as they related different forms of abuse, different outcomes and different experiences with institutional bodies. These cases thus illustrated the highly particularised way in which IPA is accounted for by men.

Despite such variation, however, there were similarities across the accounts in terms of the resources they drew on in the course of their accounts, and the performative effects of these resources within the accounts. These narrative resources will be discussed in detail in chapter five.

These interviews offered unique insights into the way in which IPA is constructed by men who experience it. Aidan's interview gave an account of institutional bias and the unwillingness of Gardaí to listen to the accounts of men who have experienced IPA, echoing work such as that of Migliaccio (2001). He was performatively produced as a man fighting to have his story heard and to access his children. Niall's letter similarly spoke about the problem of institutional bias but his story pointed towards the possibility of a positive future for abused men, although one over which they seem to have little control. Lack of control or powerlessness was a feature of Paddy's letter, highlighted by the litany of things done to him over which he seemed to have little control, as well as the passive tone of the narrative. Robert's interview, by contrast was characterised by a dualism, between those things over which he had some measure of mastery and that he could challenge and his ultimate resignation regarding the passage of time that he will never get back and his daughter's choice to remain estranged from

him. His position as a member of an Garda Siochana perhaps equipped him with the knowledge to challenge abuse in the form of malicious allegations, but he was powerless in the face of more informal sources of abuse. Finally, Alex's interview offered an account of a subtle IPA, with Alex relating his confusion regarding whether or not what he experienced was abuse, whether his wife had legitimate grievances regarding his behaviour, and whether he was the bad person she portrayed him as. These cases convey the variety of the lived realities of men who experience IPA, the variety of stories that are told about the experience of IPA. Stories of heroic resistance, enduring suffering, and powerless acceptance. The men in these five cases reported very different experiences of violence and abuse, ranging from name-calling and criticism to stabbing and coercive control, in very different circumstances. Paddy was retired and financially restricted, Robert familiar with the legal system and confident in his ability to challenge his wife over issues such as maintenance, Alex was wealthy and able to easily move on from the relationship. Paddy was in the midst of the relationship, writing his letter as his wife attempted to gain access to his room, Alex's separation had just been finalised and he was moving on from the relationship, Aidan and Niall had moved on to new relationships and Robert was trying to 'let it all go' and focus on the final years of his life. Alex was denied children by his wife, Paddy's relationship with his children was undermined by his wife but had recovered, Niall now had a positive relationship with his children, while both Aidan and Robert, at the time of interview, had no relationship with their children. There was thus quite a lot of divergence within the narratives. These factors all had an influence on the direction of their story, but they were not determining factors. Despite such differences, however, there seemed to be limited language available to the men to account for the abuse that they experienced, as the interpretive

summaries of the narrative cases reveal that the men relied on similar discourses to relate the abuse that they experienced.

Chapter five presents the findings from the cross-case analysis of these narratives

Chapter Five – Narrative Resources and the Performative production of IPA

5.1 - Introduction

The discussion in this chapter focuses on the five cases outlined in chapter four with the addition of illustrative quotations from the entire dataset of 73 written and spoken narratives to convey the extent to which the insights outlined in this chapter may be extended to the rest of the dataset. There are numerous ways in which these narratives could have been compared. For instance, the cases could have been compared linguistically, commenting on how they presented their narratives for analysis, and this is done to some extent in the analysis. While each of the narrative accounts of IPA, presented by the men in the preceding chapter, differed from each other they shared several narrative resources. This term borrows from the notion of interpretative repertoires (Wetherell, Taylor and Yates, 2001) in discursive psychology, to describe 'narrative resources'. As outlined in chapter 3 the term narrative resources also borrowed from the notion of narrative strategies, which are the use of particular techniques and practices to achieve a particular goal. However, the notion of a narrative strategy presumes an author who acts with a particular intention. I want to focus here on the effects of narratives, without reference to an intending author. I want to get at the idea that a narrative can have an effect beyond the intentions of the author. This is the reason for replacing the term 'strategy', with its connotations of calculated action, with the more neutral 'resources'. These 'narrative resources' were so called to indicate that the men drew on already existing tropes in the social world to frame a wider story about IPA, and that have particular effects for the account that is produced. Further, the term 'resources' was deemed to fit with the theoretical perspective of this study in

which the men are assumed to 'pick up the tools where they lie' (Butler, 2005), as opposed to strategically present a preferential narrative.

The narrative resources outlined here are not exhaustive, however the four strongest narrative resources identified by participants are listed in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Frequency table detailing the number of interviews and letters within which each narrative resource was identified.

Narrative Resource	Letters	Interviews	Total
'Good Father'	50	8	58
'Schemer'	35	6	41
'Mad' woman	27	7	34
'Good Husband'	25	7	32

These narrative resources were identified through the analysis of all interviews and letters in the dataset and decided upon based on their prevalence within the sample. These were commonly drawn on by the men across this sample to frame their divergent experiences. Further, these resources were drawn on in divergent ways and divergent circumstances across the sample, to similar effect. I suggest, in this chapter, that the narrative resources deployed in the men's accounts had particular performative effects which had consequences for the way in which the men were performatively produced as victims of IPA (Butler, 1999). While other qualitative studies, of men's accounts of the experience of IPA, have drawn on the importance of discourses of masculinity surrounding fatherhood and heterosexual relationships in the relation of accounts of IPA (Corbally, 2011, 2014; Morgan and Wells, 2016), no study to date has considered the role of discourses surrounding female violence in this context. The findings

surrounding the social construction of female violence are not new but their consideration in this context is. As such it seems necessary to consider these constructions in greater detail before progressing to the discussion of narrative resources with which this chapter is concerned.

5.2 – The Violence of Women

The conceptual availability of women as participants in violence and aggression has an impact on how readily men can position themselves as victims of violence and abuse from women in a western context. What language is available to talk about women who engage in such behaviour? In what way can this marginal experience be unified with the symbolic universe (Berger and Luckmann, 1966) within which men find themselves? What discourses can they cite which have the effect of producing them as the victims of violence and abuse from women? Much of the concern or disbelief surrounding heterosexual men who experience IPA seems to surround the notion that these men experience violence and abuse from women. As mentioned in section 2.7 IPA is perceived as less damaging and serious when it is directed towards men by their female partners. The idea that women may engage in IPA, towards men is thus problematic. However, it is clear that such violence and abuse occurs, given findings such as that of Watson and Parsons (2005). How then is it possible for heterosexual men to give an account of IPA experienced from a woman when such constructions rule out this possibility? In trying to answer this question I sought insights from research which attempts to account for violence by women. The consideration of such research will help to shed light on the discourses used to make sense of violent and abusive women and perhaps how heterosexual men explain such violence in their accounts of their experience of intimate partner abuse.

Gender is relational (Connell, 2005), meaning that masculinities and femininities are defined in relation to each other. Given this, it may be suggested that, within their accounts, men's masculinities may be constructed in relation to femininities, including that of their abusive spouse. Men's accounts of abuse are constructed in a complex cultural context in which there are gendered understandings of both men's and women's victimisation, as well as men's and women's use of violence. While there is limited language available to discuss men and victimisation (Corbally, 2011), there is also limited language available to discuss women and the perpetration of crime (Hatters Friedman, 2015). It seems as if the cultural understandings surrounding the use of violence and aggression by women may be of importance for men's accounts of abuse and violence at the hands of their female partners. The disbelief surrounding men's victimisation and women's perpetration of violence and abuse may collude to render men's accounts of their experience of violence and abuse 'unbelievable' (Corbally, 2011).

Women have traditionally been seen as the "kinder and gentler" sex, according to Kruttschnitt and Carbone-Lopez (2006) in their qualitative study of women's subjective accounts of their violence. Efforts to explain such behaviour have tended to deny women's agency, relying on biological predispositions or psychological disorders to account for their deviations from cultural expectations for female behaviour (Kruttschnitt and Carbone-Lopez, 2006). Construing women's violence as unnatural, irrational, or unintentional helps to maintain patriarchal dominance and obscure the political challenge posed by women's violence to gender inequality (Grindstaff and McCaughey, 1996; Stanko, 2001). Violence is perceived as a masculine trait and women are less likely to be arrested, charged, found guilty, and incarcerated than men, in this

way benefitting from cultural disbelief about their potential for violence (Hatters Friedman, 2015). Violence by women may be suggested to undermine the 'gender binary' (Jack, 2001; Chesney-Lind, 2006) due to this dichotomy or may undermine their membership of the category 'woman' due to their failure to conform to western cultural norms (Campbell, 1993; Gilbert, 2002). Unless women's violence can be identified by the courts and others as having an instrumental cause it may be treated as irrational (Campbell, 1993). By contrast, men who engage in violence and other criminal behaviour may be viewed as engaging in behaviour that was almost to be expected, or not out of keeping with normal male behaviour (Morrissey, 2002). Paula Ruth Gilbert (2002) suggested that "….society's cultural stereotypes about women and gender colour the way professionals in law enforcement, the legal system, the courts, and social policy agencies treat women who commit violent acts of aggression" (p.1271), and by extension the victims of their crimes. It may also colour the way the men and other women who experience such violence interpret their experience and account for themselves. Gendered discourses establish the 'conditions of possibility' for violent and abusive women and contribute to our shared understanding of such women. Current discourses surrounding women's violence are overly simplistic and Gilbert (2002) suggests that we should attempt to account more fully for the complex ways in which women participate in violence. Women's criminal behaviour is believed to require special explanation as a result of the sociocultural norms and criminal statistics that position female criminals as deviant in western legal discourse (Morrissey, 2002).

A further implication of the discourses that constitute and construct the violent behaviour of men and women is that they may encourage men and women to engage in violence and abuse in different ways. Campbell (1993) proposes that boys learn

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physical force as girls learn the power and use of words and of manipulation. The aggression engaged in by women may be more indirect, as a result of gendered expectations for behaviour, a suggestion that may find support in the findings of Corbally (2011) surrounding 'second wave abuse' and women's manipulation of institutional supports. Gendered expectations may also be deployed to disguise women's intent to hurt or control others (Jack, 2001). Miller (2002) suggested that gender and gender stereotypes were used by women to enable them to be more successful in their crimes, with some women suggesting that they used their knowledge that police would be less suspicious of women to help them deal drugs more successfully.

Feminist accounts often focus on the victimisation experienced by female offenders and offer this as an explanation for their offending, leaving little room for agency (Kruttschnitt and Carbone-Lopez, 2006). Morrissey (2002) suggested that feminist studies of violent women tended to focus on those women who could be characterised as victims, or those who could be viewed as enacting feminist 'revenge fantasies'. Media representations of women such as those analysed in Morrissey's (2002) research, tend to veer between denying their agency or denying their humanity, and portraying them as master manipulators, with little middle ground (Morrissey, 2002). Such accounts seem to suggest that women, if left to their own devices, would not engage in criminal offending and that they do so only as a result of their own victimisation. Such accounts contribute to the reproduction of gender hierarchies as they deploy dominant cultural narratives about women's violence (Kruttschnitt and Carbone-Lopez, 2006) which position women as lacking responsibility for their violence. Campbell (1993) criticises feminist 'essentialism' for maintaining misogyny, suggesting that we have simply moved from describing violent women as man-eaters, perverts or lesbians, to portraying them

as helpless or crazy, or 'evil' (Kruttscnitt and Carbone-Lopez, 2006). In both cases the agency of violent women is denied and inequality preserved.

The 'battered woman' syndrome may be seen as an example of an agency-denying account, as it suggests that abused women respond to abuse in terms of 'learned helplessness', undermining the suggestion that abused women can engage rationally with the situation they face and that when they engage in defensive violence they do so as a result of some pathology. Even where women are assigned some responsibility, in the sense that their acts are treated as crimes, these crimes are likely to be treated as exotic curiosities and the women depicted as monsters rather than murderers (Kruttschnitt and Carbone-Lopez, 2006).

While there may be some truth to suggestions that women who engage in violence have experienced victimisation or may suffer from mental health problems this does not necessarily suffice as an explanation for their violence, nor would it for male violence. For example, in their study of neo-naticides, infanticides, and newborn and infant deaths that were unrecorded, Gartner and McCarthy (2006) found that women who killed their children often made use of rational decision making in the course of these crimes. This was in contrast to their portrayal as 'mad, bad or victims'. Similarly, Morrissey (2002) suggested that there was evidence that the women, whose cases she focused on in her study, enjoyed their crimes. Their qualitative study aimed to undermine such narrow conceptualisations, examining the narratives of women who reported the perpetration of violence[10] and finding that such women spoke openly about this violence and offered a variety of explanations for it, the majority of which positioned them as rational agents

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[10] the authors acknowledged that in some situations these women were also victims of violence but they sought to avoid the assumption that the violence they experienced could explain their perpetration, analysing the accounts to see how the women framed this violence.

in the commission of their crimes (Kruttschnitt and Carbone-Lopez, 2006). These explanations included accounts of jealousy, disrespect, self-defence, self-help, and victim precipitation. It seemed that women's explicit explanations for such violence subverted those commonplace assumptions about women's violence that undermine their agency (Kruttschnitt and Carbone-Lopez, 2006).

5.2.1 - The 'Schemer' in Popular Culture

The figure of the 'Schemer', specifically the 'scheming woman', has a prominent place in popular culture. There are numerous films, television shows, and plays in which a violent female character is constituted in this way. From Lady Macbeth who manipulates Macbeth (Shakespeare, 1992), her husband, to kill another man, a crime that ultimately dooms him to Mrs. Mooney, in James Joyce's short story 'The Boarding House' (Joyce, 1914), who manipulates a resident into marrying her daughter, after said daughter had an affair with him popular culture is replete with female characters who engage in violence, abuse, and other forms of manipulation as part of an effort to achieve their own ends. Gillian Flynn, author of the novel *Gone Girl* (Flynn, 2012)*,* describes the main character of her novel as a 'functioning sociopath', a woman who is cold and calculating, who feigns multiple emotions throughout the text, and who, initially, sets out to frame her husband for her murder and then, when it is more advantageous, murders another man who she pretends has kept her captive. Cold, calculating female characters feature in TV shows such as 'Damages' (2007) and 'Luther' (2010). Further, 'Evil Genius' (2018) a true crime series on Netflix, uses the notion of the 'Schemer', the cold, calculating woman to frame the documentary about a bank robbery and murder. Viewers are invited to consider whether the woman at the centre of the documentary was an 'evil genius' who planned the robbery and manipulated others into participating, or whether

she was simply 'mentally ill'. As such, the 'Schemer' appears to be a widely available cultural resource for the purposes of framing the behaviour of women and one that abused men were likely to have encountered through their consumption of popular culture.

5.2.2 - The 'Mad Woman' in Popular Culture

Another common way of representing violent women in popular culture relies on the notion of the 'mad' woman. In this account women engage in violent acts because they suffer from some mental illness or trauma, and subsequently 'snap'. In 'Shutter Island' (2010), for example, male patients in the mental institution depicted in the film are presented as irredeemably evil and violent, with little effort being made to explain their violence. On the other, hand the violence engaged in by female patients is contextualised and presented as the result of trauma. One female patient explains her decision to murder her husband with an axe as the result of the fact that he 'beats' her and has multiple affairs, an explanation that is accepted as reasonable by the central character who wonders why she has been placed in this hospital. Her violence is rendered understandable by this explanation. Lizzie Borden, a woman who 126 years ago murdered her family, is commonly portrayed as 'mad'. Christina Ricci, who played her in the television series *The Lizzie Borden Chronicles* (2015), similarly suggested that she loves playing a 'crazy person' (Dawn, 2015). 'Mad' women abound in representations of violent women in pop culture, form Alex Forrest in *Fatal Attraction* (2002) to Annie Wilkes in Stephen King's novel *Misery* (1990). The representation of violent women as 'mad' in popular culture again may be suggested to make this cultural resource available to men in their construction of their experience of IPA.

The discussion of the narrative resources identified in this study begins with the 'Good Father' below.

5.3 – Narrative Resources and the Performative Production of IPA

5.3.1 - The 'Good Father'

> I can deal with the threats and I can deal with all the other stuff that comes from her but to destroy children is is totally em it's it's to me it's I I don't rate her as a person anymore. I've absolutely no feelings for her anymore. Em basically because of what she's done to the kids, that that to me is inexcusable. Em it's unforgivable you know. It's totally it's totally unnecessary you know and I've no doubt that she she'll do it again, you know. I'm in absolutely no doubt that she'll do it again that she'll try and turn the kids against me again. *James Interview*

> She proceeded to push me into the comer of the kitchen. She went on to slap me in the face and hit me. She picked up her handbag and hit me repeatedly with it on the side of the head. Our two children were looking at this. I did nothing until she pushed past our eldest child and pressed him against the kitchen units. I however saw red when our child was crying and tried to push her out the door….I cried for what I had become and what our kids had seen. *Dermot L2AmenV2*

> If I ask for anything or she's in a mood I get the threat, if I don't agree with her or whatever might go on, I get the threat. This would be no different if I had a court order, by the time court comes around again you have gone months without seeing your kids. I don't just feel bad for myself or anyone in my position but what affect this has on the children's self-confidence and how it affects their day to day lives, in school. *Joe L2AmenV2*

Table 2: Prevalence of the narrative resource of the 'Good Father' in the dataset.

	Letters	Interviews	Total
The 'Good Father'	50	8	58

I identified 50 letters and 8 interviews as drawing on the narrative resource of the 'Good Father'. This narrative resource referred to the way in which the men in this study framed their accounts of IPA around their children and the way in which the IPA they experienced affected these children, either directly or indirectly. The majority of the

men in this study were positioned as caring (Lee and Lee, 2018) and protective (Medved, 2016) fathers through reference to their close relationship with their children, their efforts to protect their children from the abuse of their wife, their efforts to maintain a relationship with their children in the face of their partners' disruption of their contact, their concern about the vicarious impact of the IPA on their children, and how they cared for and protected their children, in their accounts of abuse. Most men had children but, even in the case of one participant who did not, fatherhood still featured in his account, as an aspect of the IPA he experienced, the denial of fatherhood. Discourses of fatherhood were 'cited' (Butler, 1993; 1999) by the men with the effect that they were positioned in line with a valued masculine identity, and as 'ideal victims' (Holstein and Miller, 1990) – good, moral people who were treated badly. Accounts detailing how they protected or cared for their children had the effect of presenting the men as morally good, which seemed to position them as undeserving of their poor treatment by their wives. Further, accounts presenting the men as protecting their children positioned them within a 'hero' narrative, in which they subordinated the importance of their own welfare and focused on the protection of the child. They referred to the damaging nature of IPA, sometimes through reference to its effect on themselves, but more often through reference to its impact or potential impact on their children. Some of the men drew attention to how their fatherhood served as the means by which they were abused by their partners. Fatherhood was presented as the tool or agency (Bruner, 2004) that facilitated the abuse to which they were subjected. In some narratives men were simply separated from their children, which was portrayed as damaging to both the men and their children, while, in other cases, female partners of the men in this study were reported to have sought to undermine their relationship with their children.

The potential vicarious impact of abuse was drawn on even where the children were absent, with some men presenting themselves as thankful that their children did not witness the violent abuse to which they were subjected. This was evident in Niall's letter in which he suggested that 'All the abuse went on when the children were out of sight, thankfully' before going on to describe a violent attack by his wife. Through this concern with the vicarious impact of IPA Niall was positioned as protective, commonly associated with masculinity (Tsang, Skead, Wassersug, and Palmer-Hague, 2018), and self-sacrificing. Even as it was mentioned that he was experiencing severe physical violence, the focus of Niall's text was his desire that his children not witness the IPA. He subordinated his own welfare to that of his children. On this occasion he reported receiving severe violence, describing his wife as having 'smashed' his head off the wall but he said little about this violence. This silence regarding the effect of the violence on him may also be said to position him as masculine, in line with the reticence of men, in Stanko and Hobdell's (1993) qualitative study of male victims of violent crime, to speak about this crime. This leaves the reader with the impression that he was unaffected physically by violence from a woman, and was only concerned with the psychological impact this may have if his children had observed it. This had the effect of positioning Niall as the 'Good Father', but a 'Good Father' who was subjected to IPA by a 'scheming' wife, again juxtaposing the 'morally good' to the 'condemnation-worthy' spouse (Loseke and Fawcett, 1995). The severity of this violence underlined this identity of the 'Good Father', as even in circumstances in which his health was under severe threat, his sole concern was that his children, do not witness the abuse. This lack of concern for his own welfare and focus on the safety of others seems to position Niall as 'heroic' (Lupton and Barclay, 1997). In Burcar and Akerstrom's (2009) narrative analysis of men's negotiation of a victim identity in the context of the experience of violent crime, they describe how

some of their participants transform the 'shameful' into the 'culturally praised' by outsmarting their attackers and thus performing masculinity. Something similar may be observed here as the evaluative component of Niall's narrative focuses on the impact of this violence on his children, rather than the impact of the violence on himself, thus perhaps transforming the 'shame' of experiencing such violence from a woman, that he did not physically repel or resist, into the culturally praised position of the good father, protecting his children in difficult circumstances.

Similarly, Robert was positioned within masculine discourses of heroic struggle against an oppressive force (Gilbert, Ussher and Perz, 2014), through reference to his identity as a father. This normative masculine identity was enacted from the beginning of his narrative. He reported that he was 'used' to conceive their child, as part of his wife's identity performance. He was positioned as lacking agency in the conception of the child, even as he also wanted to have children, as he was misled about his wife's motivation for having a child. He directly challenged his wife's instrumental use of him to have a child, objecting that he should have been involved in the decision making process from the outset. Fatherhood may be considered one normative discourse cited in the enactment of heterosexual male identities (Featherstone, 2009), however, Robert's citation of this discourse here would appear to extend this gendered production. It is not simply enough for one to have a child to be performatively produced (Butler, 1999) as a masculine subject, according to Robert. Rather one must be actively involved in the decision making process. While Robert became a father as a result of his heterosexual relationship, the relationship between this and the enactment of normative masculinity was troubled by his narrative. His diminished role in the decision making process may be seen as a challenge to this relationship. In this sense Robert's

IPA experience extends normative gendered discourses (Butler, 1999). However, in his objection to the interference of his wife's parents he may be seen as citing the normative masculine discourse of the 'hero' who challenges his opponents (Connell, 2005; Dryden et al, 2010). This may redress what he views as a disruption in the appropriate hierarchy in such a decision making process. This was made explicit by Robert later in the text, suggesting that he was emasculated as a result of his wife's treatment of him, and that his challenge of her behaviour was a way to 'regain' the masculinity that was undermined in this instance. In Burcar and Akerstrom's (2009) study some men balanced their victim status with their performance of masculinity, suggesting that they challenged their attackers, and Robert may be suggested to do something similar here.

Several of the men portrayed their wives as engaging in intimate partner abuse that targeted their identities as fathers (Allen-Collinson, 2009). This offered these men opportunities to performatively produce themselves as masculine through heroically resisting these efforts (Connell, 2005). For example, much of the abuse that Robert experienced was related to his identity as a father and the disruption of his relationship with his children. As mentioned above, Robert claimed that his wife alluded to others that Robert was engaging in inappropriate sexual behaviour with his daughter. His efforts to maintain a close relationship with his daughter, spending time alone with her in his room in their shared home, were reportedly construed by his wife as inappropriate. Direct attacks on fatherhood in the form of accusations of inappropriate behaviour were also made against Aidan, as he reported that his wife made claims of inappropriate behaviour against him, accusing him of providing their young son with pornography. These men were positioned within modern representations of fathers as active within the home and having a close relationship with their children (Summers et

al, 2006; Enderstein and Boonzaier, 2015). However, both men portrayed these identities as undermined by their wives. In this way they enacted masculinities predicated on the struggle to maintain contact with their children, with Robert attending supervised access, while Aidan told about his various efforts to have supervised access and send his children Christmas presents. These false accusations put the men's masculinities, which were predicated on fatherhood, on the 'line' (Morgan, 1992) and they responded by challenging these accusations through the appropriate channels and seeking to maintain contact with their children. They were heroic fathers, who 'fought back' (Anderson and Doherty, 2008). Such claims of inappropriate sexual behaviour were reported by other men in the wider sample:

> "My ex decided to ramp things up and accused me of incest with one of our children. She had no problem and has no problem leaving all the children with me when it suits her which is virtually every day." *(Feargal L2AmenV2).*

Feargal, in his narrative had outlined his role as the primary caregiver for the children (Elliott, 2015) and thus here portrayed his wife as engaging in an attack on this identity as a father. However, his highlighting of her inconsistency here served to performatively produce him as a 'good father', as the children were often put in his care, and simultaneously highlighted the abusive nature of his wife's claim. It seems unlikely that someone would put their children in the care of someone they had accused of abusing those same children, with this seeming to portray her accusation as malicious. These actions were portrayed as efforts to remove the men from their children's lives and to undermine their children's view of them, or simply emotionally abuse the men. This may be seen as an attack on the masculine identity of fatherhood, in a similar way to that in which Allen-Collinson (2008) conceptualises the destruction of property associated with a particular identity as an attack on that identity. While children are clearly not property,

it is the association of children with the identity of fatherhood coupled with the efforts to undermine the relationship that may be seen as an attack on a valued identity. In this quote from Feargal's narrative he both reports on a form of IPA that he experienced and, at the same time, is performatively produced as a good father through taking responsibility for caregiving (Lee and Lee, 2018).

The men in this study reported that their access to their children was restricted both directly and indirectly by abusive partners. For example, Robert's wife reportedly took advantage of his working arrangements to restrict his access to his daughter, waiting until he was arriving home and then leaving the house with their daughter before he had an opportunity to spend time with her. He again experienced this as abusive. In Aidan's case he was more explicitly denied access to his children as they were removed from the family home and kept from seeing him. In both instances, in a similar fashion to Feargal, these were simultaneously reports of a form of IPA and demonstrations of their identities as fathers, firmly positioning the men as actively trying to be involved in their children's lives in the context of this abuse and upset by this disruption of their previously close relationship with their children. The citation of discourses associated with fatherhood had the effect of performatively producing the men as fathers and simultaneously as victims of intimate partner abuse. They were victims in the strict sense of having been wronged without cause, unjustly harmed, as in the case of Holstein and Miller's (1990) 'ideal victim'. The men do not eagerly seize on this term, although some use it, but the presentation of these men as engaging in socially validated activities as fathers and husbands, while simultaneously experiencing harm related to these identities seems to performatively produce these men as victims in the sense described by Holstein and Miller (1990). However, these discourses also allowed them to reject

the passivity and powerlessness, which may be deemed feminine, and thus position themselves within conventional notions of masculinity and men as active (Connell, 2005; Seidler, 1987). Robert, for example, was presented as engaging in an agentic struggle against his wife's efforts to restrict his access to his daughter, thus performatively producing him as a masculine subject. He was ultimately unsuccessful in maintaining a relationship with his daughter, however, he was performatively produced as a man who would go to whatever lengths possible to maintain this relationship. Similarly Aidan was portrayed as going to significant lengths to care for his children, for example, telling a story about one Christmas when his children were staying in a refuge with his wife and the efforts to which he went to ensure his children received their Christmas presents. He made several attempts to have these presents delivered, despite the opposition of his wife, her family, and the staff in the refuge. Eventually a member of An Garda Siochana successfully delivered them to the refuge for the children. His wife was presented as an unsympathetic character in this story as she made several unsuccessful attempts to ensure the children did not receive these Christmas presents. This portrayal of Aidan struggling against opposition to ensure that his children received their Christmas presents, positioned him within discourses of 'heroic' fatherhood (Lupton and Barclay, 1997) and thus as a 'Good Father'. Fatherhood in such narratives seemed to mirror masculine portrayals of the 'hero' (Connell, 2005) and those of Stay-at-home-father's who positioned caring fatherhood as masculine (Lee and Lee, 2018). Simultaneously, Aidan was positioned as a victim of IPA through his presentation of his wife as vindictively separating him from his children. Further, the portrayal of victimisation in this instance may also be considered to be a 'recasting' of masculine values in such a way that they may be seen as compatible with victimisation, in a similar way to that in which men recast traditional masculine values so that they fall in line with

caring (Lee and Lee, 2018). The stories of Robert, Aidan and others, by focusing on the denial of fatherhood through extra-judicial separation from their children, as the main form of IPA that they experienced, became men who were fighting back against wrongs done to them. Burcar and Akerstrom (2009) and Anderson and Doherty (2004) have highlighted the importance for men of 'fighting back'. In this instance 'fighting back' did not involve physical violence, instead it involved a challenge, legal or otherwise, to the wrongs done to them by their female abusers and which were in some cases suggested to have been facilitated by legal and institutional powers.

Faced with drastically different relationship circumstances in which they were separated from their children, both Aidan and Robert were portrayed engaging in significant efforts to maintain contact with their children. Their deployment of the 'fatherhood' narrative resource had the effect of portraying them as dedicated fathers who went to great lengths to maintain relationships with their children, with Robert stating that he put his 'head on the chopping block' to do so. The struggle that he faced and suffering that he endured also helped to position him as a victim of abuse, as he portrayed his child as the 'weapon' in this instance, put to use in order to abuse him. Thus his deployment of this narrative facilitated the performative production of a positive masculine identity as father and positioned him as a victim of abuse that sought to disrupt this identity. In a similar way to those in Corbally's (2011) study both Robert and Aidan told stories of 'stolen' fatherhood.

'Stolen' fatherhood was also visible in Paddy's account, although it was not the central focus that it was in other narratives. Little mention was made of fatherhood but, as mentioned in chapter 4, he suggested that his wife 'turned' the children against him. She was portrayed as doing so because 'they were warming too much' towards Paddy,

positioning her as making an effort to disrupt his masculine identity as a father. Paddy's claim here serves simultaneously to performatively produce him as a masculine subject, through making a claim to the 'highly valorised masculine identity' (Enderstein and Boonzaier, 2015, p. 512) of fatherhood, and to performatively produce him as a victim of IPA, through the claim that his wife obstructed this identity. While little is said about Paddy's fathering practices, such that we cannot say whether he may be suggested to enact an alternative masculinity through reference to the 'caring father' or a more traditional 'father-provider' masculinity, he was presented as a successful father to the extent that his children's affection can be taken as an indicator of success (Lee and Lee, 2018). Again the attack on Paddy's identity was positioned as an aspect of abuse, with the children serving as simply the 'agency' through which the IPA Paddy experienced was enacted (Bruner, 2004). He was portrayed as a 'Good Father' whose children warmed to him and whose aversion to him lasted only a short period. In a similar way to Robert and Aidan above, the deployment of this narrative resource, even in the limited manner here, seemed to have the effect of positioning Paddy as having a good relationship with his children, which was deliberately disrupted by his wife. As such he was performatively produced as a victim of IPA at the same time as he was performatively produced as a 'Good Father'.

For other men in the sample 'stolen fatherhood' (Corbally, 2011) was imposed not by their abusive partners but by institutional bodies. Dan, for example, presented a situation in which his 'being there' for his children was undermined by the institutional forces whose job it was to make decisions regarding access.

> I never expected what the psychologist did next. She drastically cut my access to two weekends out of three……She said she will not change the arrangement in my case because…..She says I am hurting so bad I am

affecting the children. The main reason I am hurting is she took the children from me. (*Dan L2AmenV1)*

In a similar fashion to other men in this dataset Dan was positioned within discourses of fatherhood which emphasise 'being there' (Lupton and Barclay, 1997) but also which position fatherhood as 'desirable' for men, perhaps echoing the suggestion in the accounts of 'stay-at-home fathers' that they want to stay at home to care for their children (Lee and Lee, 2018). In this extract the psychologist was presented as subordinating emotional expression in the performance of fatherhood. Dan's emotionality was positioned as incompatible with his performance as a father, with his expression of emotion or 'hurting' suggested by the psychologist to be damaging to the children. Dan was presented as contesting this, claiming that his reaction was a normal response to being separated from the children. In this instance Dan privileged presence and caring as an important part of fatherhood, seeming to position him within discourses of masculinity which offered an alternative to the hegemonic father-provider discourse (Enderstein and Boonzaier, 2015). Enderstein and Boonzaier (2015), in their narrative based study of early fathers, suggest that fatherhood may serve as a site for the development of alternative masculinities centred on caring and emotional connection with their children. In this case Dan's strong desire to maintain contact with his child, outlined here, had the effect of positioning him as one such father. He wrote of his emotional response to the separation from his child, 'hurting', in this way positioning himself within such alternative discourses of masculinity, as identified by Enderstein and Boonzaier (2015). Simultaneously, and relatedly, this separation was cast as an aspect of the IPA to which Dan was subjected, the 'stolen fatherhood' to which Corbally (2011) refers.

In a similar manner to Dan, a number of the men were portrayed as motivated to endure the IPA that they experienced, suggesting that this was a way of maintaining contact with their children or proximity to them. They deployed language emphasising their emotional connection to their children, echoing that of the men in Enderstein and Boonzaier (2015), who suggest that such language is not condoned within normative masculinity but is permissible in the context of fatherhood. It may be that staying with their children in the context of IPA underlined this emotional connection at the same time as it highlighted the abuse to which the men were subjected. These men were portrayed as actively choosing to remain in the home because of their love for their children, with the result that they were exposed to further abuse. They could not defend themselves physically from this abuse because to do so would be to risk sanction from institutional forces that may remove their children from their care. Some were presented as putting their children ahead of their own needs, while fatherhood was presented as desirable or pleasurable for others. Staying with their children was something that they wanted to do for themselves, as well as for their children. The account provided by Mike served as an example of this narrative resource below:

> "I have put up with this abuse for years in order to be with my children."
> *Mike L2AmenV1*

Mike was constructed as a caring father, suggesting that he endured the abuse in order to 'be' with his children. While this was simply a short statement at the end of one narrative it positioned Mike as a particular sort of father whose practice is based on care and presence. Summers et al (2006) in their analysis of the talk of low income fathers found that 'being there' was often emphasised as an important aspect of fatherhood. This referred to both physical and emotional presence (i.e. offering emotional support when necessary). I suggest that the above falls in line with such a conceptualisation of

fatherhood. Despite the abuse and discomfort faced by the men they choose to remain in the home so that they could be physically present for their children (Summers et al, 2006). By enduring the abuse they were positioned as 'Good Fathers'.

Being there was presented as a necessity in Brian's narrative (Wall and Arnold, 2007) arising out of the fact that he had children, suggesting that he would have left the home if he had no children but that he is prevented from leaving because of his children. It is not a choice, he simply 'can't' leave his children.

> If I had no kids I would leave. But I can't leave my kids. My oldest son sees what's going on and has begged me not to leave. *(Brian L2AmenV2)*

Lee and Lee (2018) have commented that masculine 'responsibility' was recast in their study as caring for, or being there for, one's children instead, or as well as, being a financial provider. Viewed in light of these observations Brian's utterance here may be viewed as positioning him within such notions of responsibility and thus as a masculine performance. His responsibility to his children takes precedence over his own experience of IPA. He endures the IPA, remaining in the home because of this responsibility, perhaps again also recalling masculine notions of the hero, in this case the man who faces danger for the sake of his children (Connell, 2005). Brian reported being punched, kicked, spat at, and bitten, as well as having had false accusations made against him. However, he decided to stay in the home for his children. Further, the presentation of his child begging him not to leave may be argued to portray him as a 'Good Father' whose presence was desired as much as it was the case that he believed he should remain because it was appropriate to do so. Brian's hypothetical narrative also seems to portray his situation as lacking choice, which may be interpreted as suggesting that Brian lacks control in this situation. As masculinities are often associated with control and rationality (Connell, 2005) this may be suggested to be out of keeping

with normative masculinity. However, this was framed in a context of responsibility for his children, as well as a context in which he was experiencing IPA. Those who experience IPA are frequently asked 'Why didn't you leave?' and Brian's account would seem to offer an answer to this implicit question. He could not leave because he had to stay to take care of his children. He did not have complete mastery of his situation but this was because of his sense of masculine responsibility, not because he was somehow lacking. In this sense his utterance here may be seen as striking a balance between positioning him as masculine and positioning him as a victim of IPA.

In other contrary cases, however, men were positioned as 'Good Fathers' through portrayals of them putting their children first, even where this meant leaving the family home, invoking discourses of protective masculinity in doing so (Medved, 2016). Some men were presented as suggesting that their presence in the home posed a threat to the safety of their children. The abuse to which they were subjected was portrayed as potentially dangerous to their children, or at least an undesirable or unstable environment for their children.

> Any contact will almost always end in conflict, verbally mostly in my experience…...I was forced from my home by abuse and violence, and by what I thought would be the best for my children's piece of mind and safety. *(Joe L2AmenV2)*

In the above quotation the abuse and violence was presented as forcing Joe from his home. In contrast to a number of the other letters, it was suggested here that presence of the father was not always desirable. In this instance 'the best' for Joe's children was constructed as incompatible with his continued presence in the home. Again, however, it may be said that this text was similar to that of the other participants in the sense that the interests of Joe's child were put ahead of his own. Thus while his narrative differed from those men who were portrayed as going to extreme lengths to maintain close

contact with their children, separation from the child in this instance was framed as being in the best interests of the child, thus positioning Joe within those discourses of traditional masculinity which emphasise protection of children and spouses (Medved, 2016). In this way Joe was performatively produced as a 'Good Father' and, in a similar way to that of the other men, he was simultaneously produced as a victim of IPA as it was abuse and violence that was presented as motivating him to protect his children in the first instance.

It is perhaps testament to the importance of fatherhood in normative discourses of masculinity that even in the narratives of men who did not have children, fatherhood played some role. Alex, one of few men in this study who did not have children, made mention of the efforts of he and his wife to have children and it was suggested that they were not 'blessed' in this regard. Alex blamed his wife for their failure to have children. He suggested that she made all of the decisions in the relationship, saying 'she appeared to get her own way, em even us not having kids. I personally think that she didn't want to have kids. Now she would never say that [Barry: Yeah], you know. But we never tried hard enough for kids.' Thus their failure to have children was one example of her coercive controlling behaviour, as it was a decision that Alex was portrayed as excluded from. His wife reportedly refused to explore other options after their inability to conceive and, this was portrayed as evidence of the fact that she did not want to have children. Alex's statement that he 'wasn't able to give her a child', positioned him as lacking agency in relation to their having children. His infertility, however, was not at fault for his inability to be a father as natural conception was only one of several options available. Thus, this bodily failure did not undermine his masculine identity. Instead his wife did so by making the decision that they would not have children. In this narrative

his unrealised desire to be a father became one way in which he was performatively produced as a masculine subject. The role of fatherhood in this narrative was minor by comparison to its role in some of the other narratives, however, by virtue of the fact that there were no children in the relationship.

5.3.1.1 – Summary

The 'Good Father' was the most prevalent narrative resource across the dataset. Its deployment supported decisions to both remain in the family home and leave the family home, highlighted controlling or manipulative behaviour in the relationship, as well as the denial of fatherhood constituting an abuse in itself. In each case the discussion may be considered to have centred around a denial of fatherhood, whether in whole or in part. Robert and Alex were denied participation in the decision to have or not have children. Robert, Aidan, and others were positioned as caring fathers, heavily involved in their children's lives, who were then denied contact to their children in various ways either through the deployment of false allegations, restriction of access, or through enacting abuse. This juxtaposition had the effect of performatively producing the men as 'ideal victims' (Holstein and Miller, 1990); good men who had been wronged. Their citation of discourses associated with normative heterosexual masculinity, the 'Good Father' had the effect of performatively producing the men as masculine subjects, in the face of the abuse that they experienced.

5.3.2 - The 'Mad' woman

> "I'd often say to people…."Yeah you know my ex is a psycho". They'd always be like: "Yeah I know, I know someone like that, going out with a psycho". And I was like: "No this one's actually clinically insane". And they're just like: "Ah yeah yeah"…..You know because they'd be talking about people not getting on…being a pain in the ass….but not really getting the abuse I went through. – *Mark Interview*

> "So she had our son in her hands and she punched me across the face. Em so I spent….the day in….hospital to be verified that I was assaulted…..So eh I came into the house the next day and there she was all chatty as if nothing had ever happened……this was the the madness of it. That dealing with mental illness you just don't know what you're going to deal with. – *David Interview*

> "I don't know what to do. But if I know one thing, it is that my wife has a mental health problem but what do I do? Who do I look to help me? What will she do in the future? Will she try and stab me again. The next time will she kill me? What will she do to our baby when its born?" *Naveen (Letters to Amen: volume 2)*

Table 3: Prevalence of the Narrative resource of the 'Mad' woman in the dataset.

	Letters	Interviews	Total
'Mad' woman	27	7	34

Narrative resources that positioned the abusive female partners, of the men in this sample, as experiencing some form of psychological problem, addiction issue, or being unable to control their behaviour in some way were made use of in 27 letters and 7 interviews. As such, they cited normative discourses (Butler, 1999) associated with violent and aggressive women which denied their agency (Kruttschnitt and Carbone-Lopez, 2006). In this way they made use of narrative resources that upheld gender norms, as by denying the agency of these women, they pose no threat to appropriate femininity (Weare, 2017) or hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005). In their accounts of IPA the men in this study described their wives behaving in ways that were positioned as unexpected or unusual, irrational or in ways that required some form of

psychological assistance. I identified such references as indicative of the discourse of the 'Mad Woman', while acknowledging that not all of these references went to the extreme of labelling the abusive partner 'mad'. In narrative parlance, such accounts may have offered some form of explanation for the canonical breach (Bruner, 2004) represented by female violence and abuse against their male partners.

Identifying the behaviour of their wives as irrational supported the contention that the men were victims of (mostly) unilateral abuse and violence, if irrational is taken to mean that the behaviour of their wives lacked reason. This served to assist in the construction of an identity as a male victim of intimate partner abuse by underlining the fact that they did not initiate the abuse. The abuse was the result of their wives' irrationality, not the result of anything the men had done, according to these accounts. In this way the men were performatively produced as male victims of intimate partner abuse as they cited normative discourses regarding feminine behaviour, with the effect that they produced themselves as an 'ideal victim' (Holstein and Miller, 1990), a good person who was harmed greatly through no fault of their own. Further, this narrative resource did not challenge those discourses that suggested that men may be held responsible for the intimate partner abuse to which they were subjected, a source of concern for abused men that has been identified in other studies (Entilli and Cipoletta, 2017). It simply suggested that in this case an exception may be made, thus serving to preserve the status quo regarding male victims of IPA.

As well as offering an explanation for the behaviour of their wives and for the abuse that they experienced, it may be suggested that the narrative resource of the 'Mad woman' also contributed to the construction of masculine identity. Through positioning their wives as 'irrational' or 'mad' these men may be suggested to engage in 'othering'

(Said, 1988). Feminist theorists suggest that establishing difference in this way is one means of establishing dominance (Moane, 2011). Edward Said (1988), in his book Orientalism, described the process by which the identities of western colonial powers were constructed through being contrasted with cultural conceptions of the 'orient'. Said (1988) suggested that many terms have been used to describe the 'Oriental', including 'irrational', 'depraved' and 'childlike', which, through their use, serve to implicitly define the speaker as rational, virtuous and mature. It seemed as if the men in this study, through their characterisation of their partners, did something similar and in this way were performatively produced as masculine. By portraying their partners as 'mad women' or 'schemers' they were engaged in a process of 'othering', an effect of which was that the men were positioned favourably by comparison. By positioning the women as irrational the men may implicitly suggest that they themselves are rational, with rationality often associated with masculinity (Connell, 2005). In this way men were positioned within normative conceptions of masculinity. Connell (2005) suggests that it is a frequent theme in 'patriarchal ideology' that men are 'rational' and women are 'emotional'. The positioning of their female partners as irrational or 'mad' engaged in by the men in this study may be suggested to be an extension of this theme. Establishing their wives as 'other' in this way positions the men within dominant discourses of masculinity, even while they describe the experience of IPA.

As mentioned, the narrative resource of the 'Mad Woman' rendered the deviant violent behaviour of the abusive female partners understandable through reference to the normative discourse of woman as 'irrational'. It brought the experience of the men, which may have posed a challenge to gendered norms, within the 'symbolic universe' (Berger and Luckmann, 1966) through a process of 'nihilation'. In section 4.3 above

Paddy's portrayal of his wife, in his letter, as having experienced 'depression' and 'hallucinations' allowed him to link incidents together as resulting from these 'depressions'. Paddy supported this claim through his presentation of his wife's behaviour as lacking explanation on the basis of the material facts available, as he suggested that she behaved aggressively towards their landlords 'for no reason at all'. Framing the IPA that he experienced in this way served to minimise its importance, and perhaps preserve his masculine identity. It became only part of the *real* story which was his wife's generally irrational behaviour, resulting from her depressions and hallucinations. Further, he was only one of several people to experience such treatment at her hands and thus he was distanced from the notion that he experienced IPA as a result of some particular weakness on his part. It has been suggested that men in western societies are encouraged to reject weakness and vulnerability (Miller, 1986) and it may be suggested that Paddy's account here had the effect of denying his vulnerability through extending vulnerability to all. Another effect of this account was that it suggested that he was an exception to the discourse that men experience abuse because they somehow 'deserve' it (Zverina et al, 2011). By linking his experience with that of his landlord he drew an equivalence between them and seemed to ask; 'If they don't deserve it, why would I?'. In this way Paddy was performatively produced as a male victim through reference to an irrational female 'other' against whom he was positioned as rational, knowing, and thus masculine (Connell, 2005), and whose behaviour, by virtue of being irrational, was unjustified.

In a similar fashion to Paddy, Aidan's wife was positioned as deviating from what may be considered 'normal' feminine behaviour, deploying a mechanistic metaphor to portray this deviation from normality. As mentioned in chapter 4, he compared her to a

car that was 'broke' and presumably could be 'fixed' through the intervention of a psychiatrist. Further, the deployment of this metaphor also positioned this situation as beyond Aidan's influence. The car was simply broken, and expert knowledge was required to fix it. Similarly, his wife simply had an issue that was beyond Aidan's power to resolve. The characterisation of his wife as experiencing psychological difficulties, positioned her within discourses of the violent woman as 'mad' (Krutschnitt and Carbone-Lopez, 2006). In a similar fashion to Paddy, Aidan was positioned as an exception to those discourses in which men are blamed for the abuse they receive as it was positioned as beyond Aidan's control, and something to be addressed by expert knowledge. Deploying this discourse here allowed Aidan to manage his accountability to gendered norms (West and Zimmerman, 2009). The citation of the normative discourse of irrationality may be suggested to render his wife's behaviour comprehensible to those who may wonder how it is that she engaged in unprovoked violence and abuse towards him (Butler, 1999). Instead of being a violent woman, and thus deviant, she is 'mad' and thus simply one more irrational woman. Othering his wife in this way, by casting her both as irrational and comparing her to an inanimate object whose defect may be easily fixed, may be suggested to position Aidan as rational, making the sensible case to bring his wife to a 'mechanic', in the form of her psychiatrist. The analogy to an inanimate object may be suggested to recall instances in which members of racial or ethnic groups were 'othered' through reference to non-rational objects or animals (Memmi, 2003). While Aidan experiences violence and abuse from his wife, his narrative here would appear to resonate with Connell's (1987) suggestion that there exist hierarchical relationships among men and women, and men and other men, based on various attributions. Aidan's account thus seems to preserve the advantages conferred by masculinity at the same as he is positioned as a victim of IPA.

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A second effect of this discourse was that it served to explain away the abusive behaviour of the female partners. Paddy may be suggested to have absolved his wife of guilt for the IPA, positioning it as the result of 'depressions, hallucinations' and perhaps lacking in intentional harm. Their landlords were described as 'decent, generous people', who were 'helping' them out. Nothing in their behaviour precipitated the aggression of Paddy's wife. The explanation for the behaviour of Paddy's wife must thus be found elsewhere, in her 'hallucinations' and 'depressions'. Further, the suggestion that she 'found some reason', serves to position the issue as one of his wife's own creation. She was absolved of guilt but also stripped of agency (Morrissey, 2003) in Paddy's account of the IPA. Stanko (2001) has suggested that to view women's violence as rational or intentional poses a challenge to the status quo regarding women's appropriate behaviour, in which it is assumed that men are rational and women are emotional (Moane, 2011). If this is taken to be the case it may be suggested that Paddy's comments here serve to uphold this status quo, by avoiding an interpretation of his wife's behaviour as 'rational' or 'intentional'. Adopting a Butlerian (1999) perspective, Paddy's deployment of such a narrative resource in this context may be viewed as the citation of a normative gendered discourse that, in this context, undermines his 'marginalisation'. He was not a man who experienced abuse, he was a man who, along with others, was the target of a war waged by an irrational woman (Campbell, 1993). The 'basic reason' for this irrational behaviour remained elusive, however, as his wife refused to seek help.

Similarly, Aidan's suggestion that his wife's post-natal depression 'justified her behaviour', seemed to indicate that she was absolved of responsibility for her behaviour. Entilli and Cipoletta (2017) suggested that men's positioning of their wives'

behaviour as the result of psychological issues served to absolve their partners of responsibility, with this seeming to be the case here as the IPA engaged in by Aidan's wife was minimised and treated as beyond her control. Men do not see their partners as at fault for the violence or abuse that they engage in, according to Entilli and Cipoletta (2017). However, Aidan's positioning of this absolution as 'messed up' would appear to indicate some ambivalence surrounding the idea that her behaviour should be justified by this. It is controversial to suggest that abusive behaviour could be 'justified' through reference to psychological problems, and perhaps even more controversial to suggest that it can be 'solved' through psychological means. The justification of intimate partner abuse through reference to psychological problems seems to suggest that, for Aidan at least, IPA enacted by women against men requires such an explanation. This reinforces the status quo which holds that female violence is something for which an explanation is required, while male violence is the norm (Morrissey, 2002; Kruttschnitt and Carbone-Lopez, 2006).

Similar use of the narrative resource of the 'Mad Woman' was evident in several other cases in this study. Brian and Felim, in their letters, for example deployed this narrative resource as an overarching explanation for their wives' behaviour, in a similar fashion to both Paddy and Aidan. Brian, in his letter, presented a situation in which his relationship underwent a sudden change, going from 14 years of happiness to abusive practically overnight. This change was suggested to result from a situation involving his child at school, and the pressure Brian placed on his wife to deal with this problem. Brian reported that he had been 'beaten' on at least three occasions, with this involving punching, kicking, biting and spitting.

"As a result of all the stress my wife suffered a nervous breakdown. This is when our problems really started. My wife was put on anti-depressants. As a person she changed. She became stronger, but not in a good way. She blames me for everything and we are always arguing. She is especially bad when she drinks. She is not supposed to consume alcohol when she is taking anti-depressants. Her answer to this is not to take her tablets on the nights she drinks. Over the last year or so she has basically beaten me up on a least three occasions. She has punched, kicked, torn my hair, tried to break my fingers, spat at me and bit me on the face, hands, arms and legs. I am not a big man but I am a black belt in karate. I have never hit her." *Brian (Letters to Amen: volume 2)*

As can be seen from the above, Brian established an explicit connection between his wife's 'nervous breakdown' and her change in behaviour, which resulted in the IPA he experienced. Brian's wife was the source of all of the action in the text, with this underlined by his use of the pronouns 'She' and 'Her'. His claim that she consciously refrained from taking her medication when she consumed alcohol established a direct link between her psychological problems and the IPA that Brian experienced.

In a similar way to Aidan and Paddy, Brian was positioned within normative discourses of masculinity. He and his wife were distinguished from each other through the portrayal of his wife's management of her anti-depressants. Brian's suggestion that his wife drank, despite the effects it had on her behaviour, refrained from taking her medication when drinking and that her aggression increased ('stronger, but not in a good way') would appear to position her as irrational, failing to care for herself appropriately and as inappropriately aggressive. By othering his wife in this way Brian was positioned as rational, and thus masculine. He was contrasted with his irrational wife, identifying her behaviour as problematic and implicitly differentiating himself from her (Moane, 2011). Further, Brian's wife had been portrayed as vulnerable and as suffering a nervous breakdown as a result of her inability to manage the schooling situation facing their son. This situation was eventually rectified when Brian took over, indicating that he was able

to manage this and thus positioning him as capable in this regard, by contrast to his wife. He seems to imply that he would have successfully managed this issue if he had not already been preoccupied with work.

However, such assertions of superior competence and rationality occur in the context of Brian's account of significant intimate partner abuse. His account of having been 'beaten up' by his wife seems to subvert hegemonic masculinities, as women's physical inferiority is assumed (Pagelow, 1985). In this way his account seems to both subvert and reinforce hegemonic notions of masculinity, with this further reinforced by his claim that he was a black belt in karate. This would again seem to indicate his rational competence, he is capable of defending himself against his wife but chooses not to, in a similar way to that observed by Durfee (2011). The men in Durfee's (2011) study reported how they restrained their partners but ensured that they did not cause them injury.

Felim, in his letter, similarly deployed the narrative resource of the 'Mad Woman' to establish a direct relationship between his wife's mental health and her abusive behaviour. He identified his wife as having a 'split personality problem', as a result of the fact that she became 'exceptionally violent' due to a minor issue with their wedding arrangements. Felim's wife reportedly engaged in controlling behaviour and regularly stalked him when he socialised outside the home.

> "I honestly believe that Breda has a split personality problem. I first noticed it about a week before we got married. She went ballistic and turned exceptionally violent while I was driving the car. This was because of some small problem with the wedding arrangements. I put it down to pre-wedding nervousness." *Felim (Letters to Amen: volume 1)*

Felim's wife's behaviour was presented as lacking connection to the context in which it occurred. This disjuncture between the context and her behaviour was achieved

through the use of an 'extreme case formulation' (Pomerantz, 1986), that his wife 'turned exceptionally violent' in response to some 'small problem' with the wedding arrangements. Thus her behaviour was emphasised while the problem was minimised, with the effect that her behaviour seemed inappropriate in the context and, perhaps, irrational. This mismatch was explained by recourse to the notion of a 'split personality problem', with the suggestion being that his wife's unwarranted reaction was the result of some personal problem, rather than being a valid reaction to an environmental stimulus. Further the suggestion that she 'turned' exceptionally violent was suggestive of a sudden transformation. Felim was presented as failing to realise the significance of the above event at the time, with the suggestion that he put it down to contextual factors. The persistence of his wife's behaviour, however, undermined this initial interpretation and he re-interpreted her behaviour as the result of a 'split-personality problem', establishing continuity between multiple incidents. His current beliefs regarding her mental health were used to re-interpret her previous behaviour. This claim, that he initially interpreted her behaviour differently, serves to support his current interpretation, indicating that he did not rush to judgement. He may thus be seen as rational, taking time to deliberate over the reasons for his wife's seeming effort to crash the car. This was in contrast to the portrayal of his wife as irrational, over-reacting to a minor issue, and risking dangerous consequences. In this way, as in the case of the other men discussed in this section, Felim was simultaneously positioned as a victim and positioned within normative masculine discourses through his deployment of the narrative resource of the 'mad woman'. By drawing on this normative discourse of femininity he was able to explain his wife's violent behaviour in a way that was socially recognisable. However, in doing so his wife was portrayed as irrational, implicitly positioning him as a rational observer of her behaviour by contrast.

In contrast to Paddy, who appeared to minimise his own experience by highlighting that his wife's aggression was not solely directed towards him, Aidan's wife was presented as carefully managing her behaviour in front of others. Her irrational behaviour only became apparent to the judge late in Aidan's narrative and he seemed to be the only person who identified her behaviour as strange. Further, while Aidan directly challenged the behaviour of his wife using various means, in this way enacting an agentic masculinity, Paddy seemed passive in the face of the abuse, with his letter seeming to be the only action he took in resisting the IPA enacted against him. He suggested that he could not bring himself to bring the full measure of the law against his wife. By contrast Aidan vigorously defended himself against the accusations of his wife. Thus, the narrative resource of the 'Mad Woman' was deployed differently in each of the accounts in which it appeared.

Not all men cited discourses of femininity in which violent women were constituted as 'mad'. In contrast to both Paddy and Aidan, Robert and Alex simply identified their wives' behaviour as 'strange' or 'extreme', respectively. They did not establish a connection between their wives behaviour and psychopathology. Further, while Aidan and Paddy's deployment of the narrative resource of the 'Mad Woman' served to explain abusive behaviour, Robert suggested that his identification of this behaviour as strange served as the catalyst for the IPA that he experienced. Robert seemed to suggest that, by unveiling her deviation from expected feminine behaviour, he invited retribution from his wife. His wife was portrayed as attempting to give the impression of caring and loving so that she may be seen as fulfilling feminine ideals. However, this was positioned as a disingenuous performance in which his wife made instrumental use of him and his mother. In Alex's case, he did not explicitly identify her behaviour as

strange but his portrayals of his wife as becoming enraged as a result of his looking at other women in the rear view mirror of his car, as well as other similar instances served to position her behaviour as irrational. In this way, it can be seen that the narrative resource of the 'mad' woman functioned in several ways in the men's accounts of IPA. In Robert and Alex's accounts this resource was not central but still made an appearance in their characterisation of their wives' behaviour. In all circumstances, however, it appeared as if the men were positioned as rational, in contrast to their irrational wives, and thus were positioned within discourses of normative masculinity even as they related the abuse that they experienced.

Other participants similarly indirectly associated the abuse with individual psychology through the suggestion that their wives were in need of 'counselling' or other psychological support. In this way I interpreted their accounts as positioning the behaviour of their wives as in need of intervention and thus irrational. By constituting psychological therapies as necessary or relevant supports their wives' behaviour was positioned as deviating from the norm. It may be the case that men were sometimes correct in this interpretation, however such talk still had the effect of positioning their abusive partners within normative discourses of gender by making sense of their violence and abuse through discourses commonly applied to violent women (Morrissey, 2002).

Tony's narrative, for example, detailed the last few months of his relationship, during which period he reported that his wife first became abusive. His letter detailed the physical, verbal and psychological abuse he reportedly received from his wife and suggested that this IPA wife was also directed towards his son. Through an appeal to his

wife to attend counselling, the narrative resource of the 'Mad Woman' appeared to be cited.

> "Her behaviour became more violent; physically, verbally and mentally. She started to throw my things out of the house and destroying my belongings. She became more verbally aggressive towards me and even our son. When I stood up for him, she took it out on me. I asked her to go and get some counselling, but every single time she refused." *Tony (Letters to Amen: volume 2).*

Tony's appeal to his wife to obtain counselling positioned the IPA as an individual psychological problem. His suggestion that she go to counselling was positioned as a frequent occurrence as she refused 'every single time'. While individual psychology was not explicitly positioned as the cause of the abuse engaged in by his wife, citing this discourse positioned his wife as the problem, the one in need of help – it was an individual, rather shared problem. As well as this, the focus was on his wife's behaviour, with there seeming to be no reason for the aggression she was reported as displaying. Her violent behaviour thus seemed to be positioned within normative discourses of femininity as irrational, with Tony, as was the case with the other men, positioned as rational, and thus masculine, by contrast (Reeser, 2010).

Another participant Charlie, in his letter, deployed the narrative resource of the 'Mad Woman' in a similar fashion. He was portrayed as passive and his wife as controlling as he asserted that his wife made all the decisions, while he simply 'went along with them'. Charlie reported receiving both physical and psychological abuse from his wife, and he reported eventually being forced to leave the house as a result of the violence he was subjected to by his wife and the threats he received from her family. Her behaviour was positioned as inevitable, seemingly as a result of individual pathology.

> "She has refused me phone calls during the week to my boys and she won't let them phone me either. We went through all the counselling and

the counsellor told me afterwards that it did not matter who she had married the same thing would have happened." *Charlie (Letters to Amen: volume 1)*

While Charlie and his wife were portrayed as attempting to address the IPA together through couple's counselling, he was distanced from responsibility for the IPA through reference to the comments of the counsellor. In this way he may be said to avoid the 'turning of tables' that participants in Zverina et al's (2011) study reported. In this instance the narrative resource of the 'Mad Woman' is drawn on, with the effect of positioning the abuse as the result of some inherent quality of his wife, such that it was inevitable, regardless of who she was in a relationship with. Further, the presentation of this suggestion as coming from a third party serves to bolster the credibility of this claim. Again this claim that he was not at fault positioned him as normal in contrast to his wife's debilitating abnormality that rendered her abusive behaviour inevitable regardless of his behaviour. While Charlie was positioned as rational here, thus positioning him within one dominant discourse of hegemonic masculinity, he appeared to lack the control frequently associated with masculinity. No matter what he did his wife would behave the same way. In this way his account seemed to subvert masculine norms, even as it drew on normative discourses of masculine rationality (Connell, 2005), as Charlie was positioned as powerless in the face of his wife's abnormality. However, this negotiation may be seen as creating space for Charlie as a victim of IPA at the same time as he was positioned within masculine discourse. Positioning her behaviour as inevitable distances Charlie from responsibility for the IPA, while simultaneously positioning him as rational in contrast to her irrationality.

While, the narrative resource of the 'Mad Woman' was common in the sample, it was not universally deployed, with Niall, for example, not deploying it in his account at all.

5.3.2.1 – Summary

The 'Mad Woman' was the second most prevalent narrative resource across the dataset. Its deployment positioned the violence and abuse to which the men in this sample were subjected as the result of, or associated with, the psychological problems and irrational behaviour of their female partners. As such the men were distanced from the responsibility for IPA, thus undermining those discourses which suggest that men who experience IPA deserve the abuse that they receive or have precipitated this abuse in some way (Hines et al, 2007). The citation of normative discourses associated with violent women had the effect of performatively producing the men as victims of IPA through positioning them as the recipients of unsolicited violence and abuse from their female partners. IPA was variously associated with 'depressions' 'hallucinations', post-natal depression, 'split personality', it could be rectified by attending counselling, or was inevitable due to the psychological constitution of their partners. However, as well as undermining discourses which blame men for the abuse that they experience, the deployment of this narrative resource served to deny the agency of the female perpetrator. By positioning her violence and abuse as the result of, or associated with, some psychological issue, this narrative resource closed off a rational interpretation of her behaviour (Morrissey, 2002). As such, this discourse perpetuated traditional gendered discourses with the effect that they were positioned as 'ideal victims' (Holstein and Miller, 1990); good men who had been wronged.

As well as distancing the participants in this study from responsibility for the abuse to which they were subjected, the narrative resource of the 'Mad Woman' had the effect of performatively producing (Butler, 1999) the men as masculine subjects. As a result of the deployment of this narrative resource the men were positioned in opposition to

their female partners. 'Othering' their female partners by positioning them as 'Mad' had the effect that they were implicitly positioned as 'rational' by contrast. They were the rational observers of their wives' irrational behaviour and they were thus positioned within one dominant discourse of hegemonic masculinity. In this way their accounts may be seen as falling in line with the accounts of colonial representations of black men as excessively violent, with the result that white men are positioned in opposition to this as representatives as normal, rational masculinities (Reeser, 2010). Similarly, in this context the men may be suggested to be positioned as rational in opposition to their abusive female partners, who were presented as having no control over the violence and abuse that they engaged in.

5.3.3 - The 'Schemer'

> "She told me repeatedly she couldn't stand the sight of me, wished me dead and demanded that I leave the home. I refused as I had nowhere to go and I needed to be there for my children. Besides, the children begged me not to go. Eventually she succeeded in getting her way by falsely accusing me of head-butting her. I never touched her." *Joe L2AmenV1*

> "One day she told me that she didn't want me anymore. She said I would have to leave. She wanted me out. I refused. I came home from work one day and all my stuff was in the driveway. I was presented with an interim barring order on the grounds of mental cruelty." *Padraig L2AmenV1*

> "Eh I had been confiding in her for months that I was suicidal but she provoked it and continuously - and and actually that made the abuse worse. And I now know and believe wholeheartedly that she was proactively trying to get me to commit suicide so that she would get citizenship of the country." *Daniel - Interview*

Table 4: Prevalence of the narrative resource of the 'Schemer' in the dataset.

	Letters	Interviews	Total
The 'Schemer'	35	6	41

35 letters and 6 interviews drew on the narrative resource of the 'Schemer', constructing an account of a woman highly motivated to engage in intimate partner abuse in order to achieve a particular goal. Narrative accounts displaying this resource had the effect of positioning the abusive incidents as moves in a strategy to have the men removed from the family home, to restrict or deny their access to shared children, or to simply 'ruin' the men completely. Intimate partner abuse was positioned as goal-directed behaviour in accounts in which this narrative resource was deployed. Both 'first-wave' and 'second-wave' abuse (Corbally, 2011) were portrayed as being deployed by the female abusers in order to achieve their goals. This may be seen as an example of the discourse of the 'evil' woman that is often used to characterise female violence (Kruttschnitt and Carbone-Lopez, 2006). The deployment of this narrative resource, in

positioning the female partners as 'evil' to the extent that their humanity was called into question (Morrissey, 2002), had the effect of positioning the men as rational and 'normal' by contrast. Designating the women as such presumes that the designation may not apply to them. As such, the men were performatively produced as masculine through such constructions, given the association between rationality and masculinity (Connell, 2005). As was the case with the narrative resource of the 'Mad woman', this had the effect of negotiating room for the men as victims of IPA. Through their accounts of scheming, self-interested, and callous women they were portrayed as normal, rational men.

Some men presented the IPA that they experienced as instrumentally deployed by their wives in order to achieve some desired goal. Niall's wife, for example, was positioned as engaging in IPA towards him in order to encourage him to leave the family home. Niall explicitly suggested that his wife was motivated to remove him to move her lover in. She was thus portrayed as engaging in duplicitous behaviour, announcing that she wanted a separation and wanted him out of the house, but not informing him of the reasons for this. Niall's suggestion that she 'announced' that she wanted a separation, had the effect of positioning her as having unilaterally and abruptly ended a happy long-term relationship. I interpreted Niall as closing off interpretations that may run contrary to his own. The abrupt end of their relationship, and the 'happy' relationship that preceded it, meant that the end of their relationship could not easily be ascribed to prolonged relationship difficulties that may be seen in the breakdown of many relationships. In place of such a prosaic explanation for their relationship breakdown, the narrative resource of the 'Schemer' was offered in Niall's narrative. The ending of the relationship the first step in a grand plan, seeming to position Niall's wife In line with discourses of

violent and abusive women as 'evil' as she behaves in a self-interested fashion with seemingly little regard for the effect on Niall (Morrissey, 2002). The close correlation between the revelation of the affair, her demand that he leave the family home and the commencement of the abuse seemed to me to portray his wife's behaviour as oriented towards ensuring that this manipulative goal was achieved. There was little violence in the relationship prior to his wife's demands but the IPA began that very night, with the temporal proximity of these developments seeming to suggest that one was designed to influence the other. Niall's wife was thus positioned as a 'Schemer', in this account and in line with other accounts of violent and abusive women (Kruttschnitt and Carbone-Lopez, 2006). This narrative resource of the 'Schemer' then provided a frame for later events in the narrative as Niall suggested that institutional supports were complicit in the abuse through disbelief of his claims and favourable treatment of his abusive spouse, a claim made by men in several studies (Corbally, 2011; McCarrick et al, 2015). His wife was aware of this and incorporated it into her plan of abuse, according to Niall. Thus the self-interested 'Schemer' was central to Niall's narrative. Positioning his wife as 'other' in this manner had the effect of portraying her as a villain and he as the man who resisted her abuse by remaining in the home and thus not giving her what she wanted. In this way Niall was positioned within dominant discourses of masculinity. Further, he was rational and thoughtful in the way he resisted her scheming. Suggesting that she was trying to 'provoke' him to hit her back, he constructed physical resistance as inappropriate as it would play into her scheme and thus facilitate the IPA. Instead he resisted by enduring the IPA and remaining in the home, which thwarted her perceived goal. Thus he re-casted the traditional masculine value of 'fighting back' so that in this instance it did not mean fighting back in a physical sense, instead it meant refusing to

give in to his wife's demands to respond violently to her violence. Physically fighting back was cast as giving in to her demands.

In Niall's narrative his wife was presented as scheming to receive some tangible benefit for herself. By contrast Robert presented an account of a woman scorned. He portrayed his wife as attempting to 'destroy' him because of his actions that undermined her preferred self-presentation, with this perhaps resembling the plot of *Gone Girl,* whose protagonist wanted to similarly 'destroy' and ultimately kill her husband for being unfaithful. He obstructed her self-presentation as 'the best daughter-in-law' and dismissed her desire to have children at the behest of her parents as 'bizarre'. As a result, he explicitly suggested, she engaged in 'terrorism' in an effort to 'destroy' him, both in his career and in his relationship with his daughter. Robert told me how his wife made numerous malicious allegations against him, forcing him to defend himself through long and invasive investigations. Describing his wife as 'hell bent on ruining' him, he reported challenging these efforts through the same legal process deployed to abuse him. In Robert's narrative the legal system was not as hopelessly stacked against him as it was in Niall's case. Niall explicitly stated that the Gardaí, legal system, psychologists, 'the whole damn system' was against men in general, while Robert adopted a more nuanced position in which his wife misused the services of such institutions, but such misuse could be successfully challenged through the procedures made available by these same institutions. It was my interpretation that Robert's role as a member of An Garda Siochana influenced his faith in such institutions, and perhaps this was absent in Niall's case due to a lack of knowledge surrounding how these institutions do, or should, work. This interpretation was based on Robert's demonstrated knowledge of the scope of legislation pertaining to IPA and its effects. It could, however, have been the case that

Robert simply had more positive experiences, or that his standing as a Garda gave him an advantage. In any case both men related very different experiences with such institutions. Niall reported being frustrated at every turn, allowing his wife to get what she wanted, while Robert was portrayed as successful in many of his interactions with the legal system. He reported successfully contesting the accusations of child sexual abuse that his wife made against him, for example. However, in Robert's case the success of his wife's accusations was less relevant than the effect of these accusations, which placed restrictions on his contact with his daughter and disrupted his advancement in his job. This, coupled with her disruption of his contact in other ways, constituted the IPA to which he was subjected. Finally, Niall, despite his negative interactions with various institutions, managed to establish a relationship with his children and move on with his life, while Robert, at the time of interview, had not seen his daughter for several months and was apprehensive about what the future held for him. Both men, despite deploying the narrative resource of the 'Schemer' to frame their accounts, produced very different narratives of the IPA that they experienced, with Niall writing a story of enduring suffering, about which he could do little, until things seemingly simply moved on and he was able to have access to his children. Robert, by contrast, was positioned as engaging in a heroic contest against the IPA to which he was subjected but, despite some successes, found himself unable to maintain contact with his daughter. Thus the 'Schemer' and other narrative resources could not be seen as telling the 'whole story' about the IPA experiences of these men. They simply framed the abusive behaviour of their female partners.

In Robert's case he was performatively produced as masculine through engaging in a heroic contest with his wife, fighting back against her legal efforts to separate him from

his child. Again, as in Niall's case, this was not a physical fighting back. However, in contrast to Niall, Robert did not present endurance as resistance. For Robert his resistance was active, in the sense of actively challenging his wife in court.

This deployment of the narrative resource of the 'Schemer' was evident throughout the dataset. In a similar way to Niall, Alain's account positioned his wife as engaged in a coordinated effort to remove him from the family home:

> "I am a non-national with Irish citizenship. I have lived here for twelve years. Our house is fully paid for. I have 3 children. My wife is a teacher. She and her father, who is well connected, thought I would leave everything, including my children, and go back to my country after all the hassle they gave me. I didn't…" *Alain (Letters to Amen: volume 1)*

Here Alain reported experiencing intentional and goal-directed IPA from his wife and his father-in-law. While the IPA was not visible in this quote Alain presented a segment, which he suggested was from his wife's journal, and in which she described drinking to excess and attempting to stab him. In his narrative IPA was positioned as resulting from the self-interest of his wife. It was unilateral and goal-directed, with Alain presented as the recipient of the 'hassle'. In a similar way to Niall, Alain was presented as frustrating his wife's efforts and remaining in the home. He resisted the IPA by enduring the 'hassle' and remaining in the home, despite the struggles he faced. Alain suggested that his position as a foreign national rendered him vulnerable, while his wife was presented as intimately supported by her father in her efforts. His wife's father was suggested to be 'well-connected', seeming to imply that his wife had both the support and the means to make his life difficult. Alain's vulnerability was highlighted, but he was positioned within the masculine discourse of the hero as he resisted her 'scheme' in spite of her advantage. However, rather than being crushed under the weight of her advantage, it may be suggested that Alain's masculinity is bolstered because he has so far managed

to overcome such great odds, thus positioning him as heroic (Eckstein, 2010). His achievement in remaining in the home was thus underlined.

Dan also deployed the narrative resource of the 'Schemer', suggesting that through their interactions with institutional sources his wife 'realised' that she could engage in IPA against him, because he asserted that these institutional sources would not offer him protection. In a similar way to Niall's account, the abuse engaged in by Dan's wife was positioned as facilitated by institutional sources, with Dan suggesting that the inaction of structural forces led his wife to 'realise' that she could 'ruin' him. Dan's narrative informed the reader that his wife left him, and took the children, after clearing out their savings. Despite having an access agreement in place the judge who oversaw their separation agreement instructed that the children should primarily live with their mother. A psychologist that they consulted also recommended that Dan's access to the children be cut.

> "Because the court and the psychologist supported her, my wife said that she would ruin me and that she could do as she pleased. This she did with vengeance. She interfered with my time with the children. She would sometimes be missing when I would go to pick them up, or she would say they were sick, or that they didn't want to see me or use a host of other excuses." *Dan (Letters to Amen: volume 1)*

The intimate partner abuse engaged in by Dan's wife was presented as strategic and oriented towards damaging him. Dan suggested that she told him she intended to 'ruin' him. While her abuse was strategic and goal-oriented, it only became so following the decisions made by the court and the psychologist, according to Dan. The gendered assumption underlying the assertion by the judge that 'children should be with their mother' served to undermine a custody agreement between himself and his wife. Following this she was presented as becoming aware that she could act with impunity, with Dan's list of abuses underlining this. The refrain of 'She' ('She could…', 'She

interfered…') positioned his wife as active, interfering with his access to the children in various ways, while he was passive, seemingly lacking any form of recourse. In Dan's narrative, the IPA he experienced only became strategic and goal directed because it could. Only because his wife had the means available to her did she set out to ruin him. It was opportunistic IPA, with this seeming to position her within normative discourses surrounding violent femininity, presenting her as vindictively abusing him and thus as 'evil' (Morrissey, 2002).

Dan's presentation of the 'schemer' seemed to have different effects for the performative production of masculinity than many of the accounts within the sample. His narrative account seemed to suggest that his situation was hopeless, with Dan explicitly offering only two possibilities for the abused man; '…stay and put up with the abuse, or leave and be further tormented by denial of access to his children..'. This powerlessness would seem to position him within discourses of 'marginalised' (Migliaccio, 2001) or subordinated masculinities (Connell, 2005). His narrative did not focus on his efforts to overcome or endure the abuse as many of the others did, he seemed to see little hope for himself. Eckstein (2010), in her study of masculinity in the context of IPA, suggested that men seemed to position societal forces and institutions as valid opponents against which to fight and fail, but that women were not. Dan's narrative would seem to offer support to this, as his focus throughout his letter was less the IPA he experienced and more his experience with psychologists and legal advisors. He was positioned as powerless in the face of the legal system which enhanced the abuse that his wife could enact and which limited his options for response. Speaking of powerlessness in this way would seem to position Dan within discourses of subordinated masculinities, however, powerlessness in the face of such a system may be more

permissible, with Eckstein (2010) suggesting that the men in her study would position themselves as victims of the 'system' rather than their wives. She suggested that this allowed them to direct righteous anger at systems and position themselves within masculine discourses of 'fighting back' (Eckstein, 2010). The importance of the system to Dan's account is made plain with his suggestion that his wife became abusive only after she became aware that she could be abusive, thus the origin of the abuse is the system.

In a similar manner to the narrative resource of the 'Mad Woman' there were some men who deployed the narrative resource of the 'Schemer', but for whom this was not the central narrative resource deployed. Aidan, in his narrative, told of abuse that was the result of the psychological issues faced by his wife. However, the narrative resource of the 'Schemer' was deployed when talking about her interactions with the Gardaí and other institutional sources to suggest that she made use of these to engage in abuse against him. As mentioned above, Aidan suggested she was 'very clever', 'using' the Gardaí in a similar way to her mother, as she 'learned from the best'. He positioned her as engaging in rational, goal-directed behaviour in relation to the Gardaí, with the aim of enacting intimate partner abuse. This highlighted the complex way in which IPA was made sense of by these men. Aidan wife's behaviour was portrayed as motivated by the psychological issues that she was experiencing, and thus deploying normative discourses used to make sense of violent and deviant women (Morrissey, 2002). However, she was also portrayed as engaging in rational goal-directed behaviour. She was thus portrayed as both rational and irrational at the same time. According to Aidan her behaviour was an extreme over-reaction or misrepresentation of the 'real' situation, identified by him. However, at the same time Aidan suggested that she 'made use' of the Gardaí in various

ways in such contexts. Aidan suggested that she made malicious use of the Gardaí in order to engage in IPA against him. Similarly, Paddy, made little mention of the 'Schemer', apart from the premise for his writing the statement to the Gardaí. He suggested that he made this statement because he feared his wife would make a false allegation against him due to her threats. Thus, while she did not seem to have any grand plan he did seem to think that she may attempt to get him into trouble with the police. He also suggested that she turned the children against him, indicating that he believed that she had manipulated people in order to hurt him. While, ultimately she was positioned as suffering from psychological problems, he also suggested that she enacted several plans in order to engage in abuse. This highlighted the complex and contradictory way in which these narrative resources were sometimes deployed in the men's accounts.

Aidan and Paddy's deployment of the 'Schemer' differed from that of Niall and Robert as this narrative resource was not the central resource used to frame the IPA to which they were subjected. In Aidan's narrative his wife's performance of the 'Schemer' was subordinated to her psychological issues, as he presented this behaviour to Gardaí as the result of such psychological issues, with this accepted by Gardaí. These narrative resources intersected in Aidan's account. Similarly, Paddy subordinated the 'Schemer', allowing it to serve as the background to his account but foregrounding his wife's 'depressions' and 'hallucinations' in his report of the abuse to which he was subjected.

5.3.3.1 – Summary

Many of the men, across both written and spoken accounts, that were sampled for this study, spoke and wrote about the abuse that they experienced as serving some broader purpose, that their wives were trying to achieve some goal or other. I identified this as

the narrative resource of the 'Schemer'. This narrative resource had the effect of offering an explanation for the abusive behaviour to which the men in this study were subjected. This in itself is significant, given that men's engagement in violence and abuse is frequently treated as simply part of expected masculine behaviour (Morrissey, 2002). Explanations are offered for the violence and abuse engaged in by women precisely because this is seen as a 'canonical breach' (Bruner, 2004). This narrative resource, by virtue of the fact that violence and abuse was conceptualised as part of a 'scheme' or strategy to achieve a goal, meant that acts of violence and abuse were grouped together in the service of the same goal. Men told stories about their wives efforts to 'destroy' them, indicating that they engaged in behaviour geared towards undermining their performance in their jobs, or interfered with their finances. In other instances the participants told stories in which their wives were positioned as oriented towards the achievement of a particular goal, such as obtaining control of the family home. In several cases, these 'schemes' were portrayed as facilitated by institutional supports that favoured the wives of these men. While there was variety across the accounts in terms of the circumstances within which their partners were positioned as 'scheming' or how this 'scheming' came about (through the realisation that they had an advantage, as revenge for a perceived slight, as part of an effort to obtain some material advantage) it seemed as if the construction of the 'Schemer' had similar performative effects in most cases. The deployment of the narrative resource of the 'Schemer' undermined those discourses in which the men were conferred with responsibility for the abuse to which they were subjected (Hines et al, 2007) by presenting this IPA as part of a strategy or plan on the part of their wives. In the case of Robert this strategy was developed as a result of Robert's unveiling of her bad behaviour in failing to consider his feelings regarding having a baby, leaving him feeling used, as well as her behaviour in failing to

take care of his mother as she had promised to do, leading him to interpret her behaviour as an effort to position her as the 'best daughter-in-law'. She was positioned as an unsympathetic figure and so it was made difficult for the audience to view her retributive intent as justified. IPA was 'done' through such positioning in his narrative, establishing a heroic drama in which Robert fought back against the abusive intent of his wife. Similarly, in Niall's narrative the 'Schemer' narrative resource serves as the means by which IPA is 'done', although this is a 'Schemer' who is facilitated by institutional supports and so there is little scope for resistance such as that in Robert's narrative. Instead of a heroic drama, therefore, we are presented with a story of 'enduring suffering' which eventually results in a sort of homecoming as he develops a new loving relationship. Niall was positioned as powerless and forced simply to accept the abuse that his wife sends his way. In both Aidan and Paddy's narratives the 'Schemer' is simply part of a toolkit of narrative resources deployed to 'do' IPA.

These accounts also had the effect of performatively producing the men as victims of IPA, through reference to their wives' overarching 'schemes'. As such, it may be suggested that they were produced as particular types of victims, victims for whom the acts of IPA and their consequences in the form of physical injury or psychological distress were subordinated to the overarching aim of these abuses which were more far reaching. In this way the consequences of IPA for men are defined more broadly, beyond immediate physical injury or psychological distress and encompassing interference in career prospects and access to material resources. Whether or not these consequences are equivalent to those consequences experienced by women is not at issue here. This merely highlights the existence of consequences for men that are often neglected. Further, the 'Schemer' narrative was deployed with different effects for the overall

presentation of a victim identity. The 'Schemer' narrative, despite the differing circumstances of their experiences of IPA, had the effect of positioning the men as victims of IPA.

The deployment of this narrative resource also had the effect of performatively producing (Butler, 1999) the men as masculine subjects. Portrayals such as those outline above, in the case of Robert and Niall for example, positioned the men within discourses of hegemonic masculinity, in part through the 'othering' (Said, 1988) of their abusive female partners. They were portrayed as 'heroes' struggling against oppressive forces, or performed stoic or protective masculinities by remaining in the abusive situation and enduring the abuse, either for themselves or for their children. In this way a balance was negotiated between the position of 'victim' of IPA and masculinity. The men reproduced discourses of hegemonic masculinity even as they were positioned in ways which seemed to conflict with this.

5.3.4 - The 'Good Husband'

> "And I was accused…that I was a controlling person. And the only way that I was actually in control of anything, to be quite honest with you, in that relationship, was I was in control of paying the bills, I was in control of stopping off and doing the shopping on a friday on the way home from work…..to me most women would be actually would be ecstatic or delighted that their husband would…do the shopping….after doing a day's work….and try and keep the weekend free then to spend time with the kids….that's been turned around to say that I controlled everything, I controlled the finances…". *James Interview*

> She complained to her parents and family that I was doing nothing around the house. She told them lies about me. I washed the clothes, did the ironing and vacuumed the house before I went to work on a Saturday morning. I got up to the boys at night when they were babies while she stayed in bed. I never complained. She was going back home cutting me down to her family and they believed everything she told them. *Charlie L2AmenV1*

Table 5 – Prevalence of the narrative resource of the 'Good Husband' in the dataset.

	Letters	Interviews	Total
The 'Good Husband'	25	7	32

25 letters and 7 interviews drew on the narrative resource of the 'Good Husband', with the men making reference to their performance as providers, their love and care for their partners. This narrative resources had the effect of performatively producing the men as traditional masculine subjects in line with normative discourses of masculinity (Connell, 2005).

As well as speaking about intimate partner abuse in relation to being a father, a large number of the men made use of discourses surrounding their performance as husbands or partners. As was the case in relation to the concept of fatherhood, the discourse of the male heterosexual partner was deployed in a number of ways in the letters and interviews contained in this research. In some instances the men portrayed themselves as 'Good Husbands' in happy relationships, with the abuse they experienced unexpected

in this context. Others portrayed themselves as caring partners; telling of the abuse that they have received through reference to their efforts to seek assistance for their partner. Still others spoke of their performance of the role of husband or partner, through reference to the everyday, practical activities that they engaged in. The citation of this narrative resource, as well as positioning men within discourses of valued masculine identities, had the effect of resisting the discourse of male responsibility for intimate partner abuse (Zverina et al, 2011). One effect of the narrative resource of the 'Good Husband' was to present the abuse to which the men were subjected as surprising, unforeseen, and thus, perhaps, undeserved. As mentioned, some of the men referred to their marriages or relationships as 'happy', thus positioning themselves as partners in a successful relationship. Their problems at the time of writing represented a deviation from their happy relationship, and one for which their behaviour could not be blamed (Blomberg and Borjesson, 2013). They were positioned as 'Good Husbands' who were surprised by the turn their relationship had taken.

In Niall's narrative in section 4.5, he wrote that he was happily married for 14 years, positioning the subsequent unhappiness, or abuse that he related, as a significant divergence with previous experience. Niall's narrative juxtaposed the stability and longevity of their earlier relationship with the 'few days' that he had been away and following which his relationship became abusive. The suddenness of this change in circumstances, coupled with the presentation of his wife as the source of the decision to terminate the relationship, positioned this demise as beyond his control. This had the effect of resisting the discourse that men bear some responsibility for intimate partner abuse.

This presentation may be suggested to have the effect of negotiating a nuanced masculine presentation. Masculinity is often linked to control (Connell, 2005), and so the distance that is created between Niall and control in this instance may have the effect of undermining masculinity. In this context, however, Niall was misled by an 'evil' other (Kruttschnitt and Carbone-Lopez, 2006), who orchestrated the demise of their shared heterosexual relationship. This presentation thus had the effect of mitigating the damage that may have been done to Niall's masculine identity. He was positioned as lacking control but he was also simultaneously positioned as blameless for the demise of his heterosexual relationship. This had the effect of performatively producing him as a 'Good Husband' who had a hand in the happy marriage that they shared, and who was let down by a wife who did not hold up her end of the bargain.

The citation of the normative gendered discourse of the 'Good Husband' had an impact on the sense that could be made of the abuse that Niall experienced. Niall's performance as a husband or any deficiencies in the relationship were positioned as irrelevant to the demise of the relationship and the subsequent IPA. At least, no such deficiencies were mentioned in the letter. However, the suggestion that his wife had been having an affair with his friend would seem to undermine the presentation of a 'happy marriage'.

As well as positioning the IPA to which they were subjected as surprising, the narrative resource of the 'Good Husband' also served to position the men within normative discourses of masculinity, such as the 'provider' (Boris and Lewis, 2006). Alex was positioned as a provider whose business acumen allowed his wife to have a life of relative leisure and allowed them to purchase a holiday home abroad, as well as a large house in a desirable area in Dublin. As well as portraying him as a provider, attention was drawn to an imbalance in the relationship in Alex's account. He performed his role

as a provider, providing her with a comfortable lifestyle but he received abuse in return. In this way Alex's account had the effect of negotiating a masculine identity, even as it positioned him as a victim. He was portrayed as a good provider, evidenced by his wife being the recipient of a very 'comfortable lifestyle' but he reported that she never appeared to be happy, with the assumption seeming to be that she should be happy with this. Instead she was presented as controlling, making all of the decisions, but whose reasons for remaining in the relationship were presented as baffling. However, Alex also suggested that she made all the decisions and he 'let' her do so, seeming to position himself as having some control, even as he is controlled. She controls him, but she does so with his assent. This control positions him within discourses of masculinity (Ribeiro, Paul and Nogueira, 2007).

Many other men in the sample deployed the narrative resource of the 'Good Husband' in a similar fashion, invoking the traditional masculine identity of the 'breadwinner' in their narratives. In some instances this served as a counterpoint to the abuse that they received. One anonymous contributor to the letters suggested that while his wife excluded him from family meals and refrained from doing his washing, he was the only 'breadwinner' in the house, going out of his way to provide for them.

> My wife stopped cooking and washing for me. She would put a dinner on the table for the children and herself and I would then have to cook my own dinner and do my own washing. I was the sole breadwinner – my wife refused to work and stated that it was my job to provide for her. I worked all of the overtime I could get to provide a better lifestyle for my family. (Anon L2AmenV1)

He thus performed the practical activities associated with a traditional masculine identity but did not receive the benefits of a traditional division of labour. In this way the performance of the 'breadwinner' was positioned as part of a relationship, and thus he was positioned as a 'Good Husband', in contrast to her 'Bad Wife'. He reported that

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his wife expected this traditional masculine performance and division of labour. He was positioned as having performed his gender appropriately within their marriage, according to his wife's proscriptions, but suggested that she failed to do the same. She was presented as intentionally excluding and isolating him, despite his going to great lengths, working overtime for the benefit of their family. In this way the construction of gender and the construction of intimate partner abuse were intimately intertwined.

As mentioned in the preceding chapter, much of the abuse Alex reported surrounded his supposed tendency to look at other women. When Alex's wife raised her concerns about this behaviour initially, Alex reported that he made an effort to alter his behaviour to avoid this charge. This ultimately constituted the control that his wife exerted over his behaviour. Heterosexual monogamy was privileged in his account and Alex reported that he attempted to be a 'Good Husband' by eliminating behaviour that hinted at any deviation from monogamy. The 'Good Husband' in this instance was one who did not look at other women, at the request of his wife. This account highlighted the complexity of intimate partner abuse and how what seemed like relatively innocuous behaviour, in the beginning, soon became oppressive and controlling. Alex's efforts to be a 'better husband' by monitoring his behaviour around women were unsuccessful as his wife's demands surrounding his behaviour became more and more extreme. His account of being a 'Good Husband' both highlighted how he did not 'deserve' the abuse that he received but also highlighted how his efforts to be a better partner allowed his wife to engage in further abuse.

Some of the men were performatively produced as 'Good Husband's' through their accounts of making an effort to be romantic and loving. Aidan was portrayed, as a 'Good Husband' as he took a keen interest in his wedding and rejected the influence of others

in the planning of their day, constructing it as something to be shared between him and his wife. His rejection of external influence positioned him within traditional masculine discourses of control (Connell, 2005; Edley and Wetherell, 1995). This was the case even as discourses of masculinity were extended in this account so that they included romance and love, in a similar way to that in which some young men in Forrest's (2010) study constructed romance and love as central to masculinity. He engages in a contest with his in-laws from which he emerged victorious, positioning him within discourses of heroic masculinity (Eckstein, 2010). He was portrayed as a loving partner and their relationship was described as a 'whirlwind romance', in this way performatively producing him as a 'Good Husband'. Robert similarly constructed his relationship with his wife as one based on romance, telling me about their dates in Dublin City Centre and how he had spent time getting to know her in a deliberate way and then using the information about her likes and dislikes to design a ring for her.

> "And I would consider myself a bit of an old romantic and I went and I got, you know em, you know the way some people plan to get engaged……It's just where's the sort of romance, where's the spontaneity….But I got to know her likes and her dislikes and her tastes and…..I went and got an engagement ring made.."
> *Robert Interview*

Robert was distanced from those men he deemed insufficiently romantic, privileging a more attentive, spontaneous and romantic masculinity through his favourable presentation of the process by which he got to know his wife and surprised her with a ring he believed to be in line with her tastes. Casting other men as unromantic for their failure to do as he did, masculinity seemed to be strengthened by his behaviour, in a similar way to that in which some men in Forrest's (2010) study believed their masculinity was bolstered by their romantic and emotional expression in relationships.

Both Robert and Aidan were positioned in line with discourses of heterosexual masculinity. This notion of the romantic husband was not well-developed in the dataset, however it presented another means by which the men were performatively produced as masculine in the course of their narratives.

A number of the men were performatively produced as 'Good Husband's' through their accounts of acting out of care and concern for their wives. They reported such behaviours even as they related the abuse to which they were subjected by their wives. They reported concern for the welfare of their spouses and suggested ways in which they may look after this, for example through seeking counselling for their wives. It may be argued that such expressions of care and concern served to position the men as 'Good Husband's, for whom caring for their wives was of importance, while at the same time drawing on the narrative resource of the ''Mad Woman''.

Tom, related a story in which his efforts to look after his wife's welfare were taken advantage of and used as the means by which to abuse him:

> "Things changed drastically within that week, when a diagnosis of breast cancer was given to my wife. It was me who pushed her to go for a scan and biopsy.
>
> Under these circumstances I dropped a custody application I had started a week before, a very big mistake! I was soon stopped from seeing my kids through a solicitor and was accused of being a drunk and an alcoholic. I was refused legal aid. I was working and paying the agreed maintenance. I paid 300 to answer the allegations and apply for access. As I was then paying a mortgage and support for my family I could not afford any further court cases and gave up. Our youngest child was born. I was told of the impending birth by letter and was "allowed to attend his baptism. I saw him after the birth and not again for months until the baptism." (Tom L2AmenV2)

Tom reported how he dropped his application for custody of the children in response to his wife's health problems, thereby taking account of his wife's circumstances and attempting to act in her interests even as their relationship was deteriorating. Lethborg

et al (2003) describe how the men in their study subordinated their own emotional response to theirs partner's needs, in contexts in which their partners were diagnosed with cancer, and that they assumed a supportive role. While the context is different here in the sense that Tom is not in a loving relationship, it may still be suggested that his needs were similarly presented as subordinated to those of his wife as it was suggested that he adopted a (limited) caring role. The presentation of Tom dropping a custody application due to his wife's cancer diagnosis, may be suggested to have the effect of portraying him as caring, taking account of the circumstances facing his wife and removing one potential stressor. This was despite the the potentially negative impact on him. He continued to perform the role of the 'Good Husband' despite the ending of their relationship. However, his wife did not act in kind and instead restricted his access to the children. Thus Tom's attempts to act in a caring manner were portrayed as coming with a cost in this instance.

John, similarly, made reference to care, albeit in an earlier relationship in which he cared for his first wife during her illness. The description of his having cared for his first wife had the effect of performatively producing him as a 'Good Husband', while also offering a counterpoint to the claims his abusive partner was presented as having made:

> She and her daughter told lies and managed to get a barring order against me despite the fact that I owned my own home and was a victim of her and her daughter's abuse. This is the same home in which my children were reared and which I shared with my first wife for over thirty years until her death. I nursed her for three years after she became ill. (*John L2AmenV1*)

While his account diverged from the rest of narrative as it referred to a former wife, rather than the individual with whom he was having problems at the time, it had the effect of positioning him as a caring husband, undeserving of the abuse to which he was subjected by his more recent partner. This portrayal seemed to distance John from the

aggressive, dominating, patriarchal masculinity with which his wife and her daughter were suggested to have associated him. Further, it may be argued to establish an emotional attachment to the house as this paragraph relates his historical connection to the house as the location in which he raised his children and lived with his wife. The care in this instance may be suggested to highlight the impact of the abuse he has received in removing him from this house. He has not just lost his shelter, he has lost a home which was of some significance to him, with his performance of the caring husband making up part of this connection. John's account of being a caring husband served as a counternarrative to that told about him by his wife and step-daughter in order to obtain the barring order. Further, men in their accounts of caring for their wives position the act of caring as masculine, as part of a husband's responsibility to his wife (Ribeiro, Paul and Nogueira, 2007) and thus John may be simultaneously be positioned within masculine discourses of caring and portrayed as a victim of IPA from his new wife.

As well as those men who made reference to the caring work they engaged in in their relationships there were also men who deployed the discourse of the 'Good Husband' through reference to the everyday activities that they engaged in. This was sometimes offered as a counterpoint to the abuse that was enacted against the men, highlighting the disparity between how they suggested that their lives were viewed by others and the reality of their situations as they presented them.

> I am a man living with a woman who is constantly bullying me. It comes in the form of emotionally abuse but she has physically abused me as well. We have an ideal lifestyle to the outside world, four beautiful children, a beautiful house, two cars, nice holiday and I have a pressurised job but I manage to work from home so I do more than my fair share in terms of minding the children, school runs, homework, housework etc, but shes never happy. (Evan L2AmenV2).

> My life over the past 10 months has been hell. My ex-wife is a successful business women and she has a lot of influential and wealthy friends. I helped build up her

businesses to where they are today. I even supported her for a time when she was unable to take a salary from her companies. (Feargal L2AmenV2).

Evan deployed the discourse of the 'Good Husband' in his claims that he does his 'fair share in terms of minding the children, school runs, homework, housework…'. He thus performed the 'Good Husband' through reference to the practical activities that he engaged in. The accounts here seem to position Evan and Feargal within traditiona, notions of the husband as 'provider', as there is an emphasis on the material benefits that have accrued to their spouses as a result of their relationships. However, despite his portrayal of himself as an active husband he claims that this affords him no respite as his wife is 'never happy'. Similarly Feargal was positioned as a 'Good Husband', through reference to the way in which he assisted his wife with her business. However, despite this practical assistance Feargal reported that he has been through 'hell'. Thus it would appear that his active engagement did not confer him with any advantage. The role of the husband was viewed in an instrumental fashion as someone who completes tasks, with the implicit promise of receiving something in return. Evan presented himself as holding up his end of a contract of sorts wherein he had participated in the labour associated with the relationship but has not been appropriately compensated in return, receiving abuse instead. Her response to his engagement in domestic labour is presented as unreasonable as he suggests that she is 'never happy' irrespective of what he does. For Feargal, the 'influential' friends that his wife has made as a result of the position and her later threat to use this influence to abuse him, highlights how his performance of the 'Good Husband' has provided her with the means by which to engage in abuse against him. The men were positioned in contrast to their wives who have benefitted from the relationship while the men have been subjected to IPA. They were 'Good Husbands' in relationships with bad wives who did not reward them for their

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performances. These men supported and provided for their wives in difficult circumstances, and are thus positioned in line with normative discourses of masculine providers (Connell, 2005), but they face bullying, physical abuse, and are put through 'hell' by their partners, who do not hold up their end of the heterosexual bargain. This has the effect of performatively producing the men as traditionally masculine but, simultaneously, as abused because of the behaviour of their wives. Their accounts here seem to be in dialogue with the charge that men must have done something to deserve the abuse from their wives, in a similar way to the men in Zverina et al's (2011) study. In both instances it may be suggested that the deployment of the narrative resource of the 'Good Husband' had the effect of portraying the abuse to which they were subjected as unrelated to their performance in their roles as husbands.

Some men spoke about their efforts to rescue or preserve the relationship by returning to some previous ideal state or their efforts to encourage their partner to engage in some form of behavioural change. They thus spoke about being a husband in the context of crisis, their connection to this identity was under threat/precarious and they were attempting to stabilise this, preserve the status quo, or return to a happier time. They also involved third parties in their efforts to rescue the relationship, in the form of marriage counsellors in many cases.

> I asked Kay to set aside one night a fortnight just for us. Most times it was cancelled because someone needed her or something more important had come up…..We went to marriage guidance. After one session she left. I went for ten weeks on my own. The situation deteriorated and I was just a 'hole in the wall' for paying bills. *Padraig L2AmenV1*

In this segment from Padraig's narrative Padraig was positioned in opposition to his wife who was presented as unwilling to set aside time for them to spend together, at his request. She was similarly unwilling to attend marriage counselling, while he attended

on his own for a period of time after she discontinued her attendance. This oppositional positioning may be suggested to have the effect of performatively producing Padraig as a 'Good Husband' through distinguishing his behaviour from his wife who was presented as engaging in little effort to preserve the relationship. In this context, to be a 'Good Husband' was to engage in significant effort to maintain the husband-wife relationship. In this way Padraig may be aligned with traditional discursive constructions of masculinity as he may be suggested to 'fight back' against the demise in the relationship. His subordination of the idea that men are first and foremost providers can be seen in his use of the metaphor of the 'hole in the wall', suggesting that he performed an instrumental function for his wife. The derisory way in which he speaks about this positions the role of the husband as more than simply that of the breadwinner and further highlights his wife's disruption of his effort to be more than this by failing to continue with counselling.

Some men deployed the narrative resource of the 'Good Husband' in the context of their desire for the persistence of the relationship, with Brian's account serving as an example:

> "I still love her. I can forgive her. All I want is to get my old wife back." *Brian L2AmenV2.*

Brian established a sharp distinction between the wife that he began his relationship with and the one with whom he was engaged at the time of writing his letter. The possibility of preserving the relationship seemed dependent upon his ability to return his wife to her earlier state. If this was possible he could look past the IPA to which he was subjected. Brian was portrayed as loving his wife despite the IPA to which he was subjected, with this having the effect of performatively producing him as a 'Good Husband', willing to endure suffering to persist in their relationship.

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Further, Brian's account appeared to exist in 'dialogue' (Reeser, 2010) those discourses which suggest that men may be to blame for the abuse that they receive (Zverina et al, 2011). By establishing a distinction between his 'old' wife and his 'new' wife, this account would appear to have the effect of positioning the IPA as the fault of some change in his wife, in this case the psychological issues that she was suggested to be facing. In this way Brian was distanced from responsibility for the IPA, the loving observer of this change and the damage that it wrought. Some men thus position themselves as 'Good Husband's through their efforts to preserve their previously loving relationships and distance themselves from the state in which they currently find their relationship. Brian performs the 'Good Husband' by proposing that he can forgive his wife and remain in the relationship despite the abuse that he has received, with this contingent on their ability to return to an earlier state. The 'Good Husband' narrative resource thus made the IPA visible as it was positioned within the context of Brian's love for his wife.

5.3.4.1 – Summary

The deployment of the narrative resource of the 'Good Husband' had the effect of performatively producing the men as masculine subjects. They were positioned as caring, loving, attentive, as well as able to provide their partners with a comfortable lifestyle. Implicit within these portrayals was the suggestion that they did not deserve the abuse to which they were subjected.

The deployment of this narrative resource, as well as positioning the men as 'morally good' through highlighting the caring behaviour that they engaged in, also highlighted some of the IPA to which they were subjected. For example, its deployment made visible the controlling and manipulative behaviour of the abusive partners of some of the men, it highlighted the isolation and demeaning behaviour to which some of the men were

subjected, and it highlighted the change in behaviour that some men identified in their wives.

Some of the men, such as Robert, Brian and Padraig, were positioned as loving husbands who made an effort to be with and show their affection for their wives, but who were then denied access to this identity through their wives abusive behaviour. This juxtaposition had the effect of performatively producing the men as 'ideal victims' (Holstein and Miller, 1990); good men who had been wronged. Their citation of discourses associated with normative heterosexual masculinity, the 'Good Husband' had the effect of performatively producing the men as masculine subjects, in the face of the abuse that they experienced.

5.3.5 – Overall Summary

This chapter presented several narrative resources deployed by male victims of intimate partner abuse which together had the effect of performatively producing the men as male victims of intimate partner abuse. In doing so both the men and their abusive female partners were positioned in particular ways.

- The men were positioned as ''Good Father's' and ''Good Husband's'
- Their partners were positioned as 'Mad' women and ''Schemer's'

These narrative resources are presented separately above but they often occurred simultaneously in the interviews and letters. Further, while they are presented separately as the positioning of 'self' and 'other', it must be taken into account that the positioning of 'other' also has implications for the positioning of 'self'. This may be made clearer in Riessman's (2002) discussion of Gita's narrative, in which her position as 'perfectly normal' depends on the way in which she positions her partner and others. In a similar fashion the way in which the men are positioned is closely related to the way in which their female partners are positioned. Those narrative resources which allowed the men to perform valued masculine identities in the context of intimate partner abuse, in conjunction with those narrative resources which positioned their female partners as 'mad' or 'scheming' allowed the men to present themselves as good men who had been wronged undeservedly.

Men's written and spoken accounts of intimate partner abuse have the effect of explaining the deviation from the 'canonical narrative' of appropriate gendered behaviour that their experience represented. Their accounts draw on discourses which negotiate room for abused men, in part through 'citing' discourses which make room for women to be violent and abusive. It defied the 'canonical narrative' of intimate

partner abuse for women to be violent and abusive and this is managed by presenting these women as deviant in some way. Little effort is commonly given over to explaining why men are abusive. In fact, this is often resisted (Nicolson, 2010). However, the men, in this study, seemed to make some effort to explain the abusive behaviour of their wives. These explanations did not challenge dominant gendered discourses of female behaviour, rather they preserved these discourses by offering female violence and abuse as a deviation from the norm. Similarly, men positioned themselves in line with masculine discourses in their narratives, allowing them to 'do' masculinity or performatively produce themselves as masculine (Butler, 1999). In a similar way to that in which the men in Riessman's (2003) work both 'do' illness and 'do' masculinity, the men in this study similarly 'do' IPA and 'do' masculinity.

This section presented several narrative resources deployed by male victims of intimate partner abuse. These narrative resources had the effect of offering some explanation for how it was that women were violent or abusive towards men, explaining, in the process, women's deviation from the 'canonical narrative' of intimate partner abuse. In so doing the men present the women in question as deviations from the norm, thereby preserving this norm. In this way it may be observed that the way in which men account for intimate partner abuse is gendered, as most men attempted to account for this deviation from the norm. It may be asserted that men who account for intimate partner abuse are the subject of gendered demands and must account for the IPA that they experience in ways which take cognisance of these demands. This chapter offered several means by which men attempted to take account of these demands, specifically the demands to explain how women came to be perpetrators of abuse and, relatedly, how men may be victims. They did so through reference to psychological explanations

of their partner's behaviour or through reference to intimate partner abuse as an instrumental tool that allowed their partners to achieve desired ends.

This section similarly presented several narratives resources through the citation of which the men performatively produced themselves as masculine subjects. These narrative resources of the 'Good Husband' and 'Good Father' were not exhaustive but were the most prevalent in the dataset. However, despite using shared narrative resources these were deployed differently by each participant. These resources were used to frame often very different stories. The divergence in these accounts highlight the fact that these narrative resources were simply ways of framing the abuse to which the men were subjected. The 'narrative resources' outlined here were not reductionistic, they could not account for the particularity of the narratives.

Nelson (2000), in her discussion of the discourse of pro-feminist men's groups, suggested that the men in her study engaged in 'simultaneous moves towards innocence and domination'. These pro-feminist men 'secure' innocence by aligning themselves with feminist theories and welcoming minority 'others', such as gay men. Domination in the men's narratives was 'not a conscious or planned desire', instead Nelson (2000) described it as a 'privileged complicity' in relations that 'mark', in her case, some men as 'other'. While the context of Nelson's (2000) study is obviously quite different, I believe that similar points can be made in the case of this study. However, the men's accounts in the current study do not oscillate between 'innocence' (in the sense of moving towards greater gender equality) and 'domination', instead there is a move to establish innocence in the sense of having been the victim of unidirectional IPA. In doing so the men drew on the very discourses that serve to mark women as other, and seem to perpetuate male dominance, as the men were positioned in opposition to these women. The men in this study were simultaneously positioned as victims and 'mark' their wives as 'other' through attributions of irrationality in the form of the narrative resource of the 'mad woman'. In a similar way to the men in Nelson's (2000) study who were said to negotiate a more rounded heterosexual masculinity, the men in this study negotiated positions as victims of IPA. However, in both cases it seemed as if those discourses which served to 'mark' others were perpetuated.

5.4 – Comparing written and spoken accounts

The above consideration of the 'narrative resources' involved the analysis of both written and spoken accounts of men who experienced IPA and in the course of this analysis I considered differences and similarities between written and spoken accounts. This is outlined here. The narrative resources of the 'Good Father', the 'Good Husband',

the 'Mad' woman and the 'Schemer' were deployed with greater frequency in the interviews than in the letters. The frequencies with which these appeared in the Interviews versus the letters are displayed below:

Table 6: Frequency with which the narrative resources appeared in the sample

	Interviews	Letters
'Good Father'	88%	68%
'Schemer'	67%	48%
'Mad' woman	78%	37%
'Good Husband'	78%	34%

While the sample sizes of letters and interviews are by no means comparable it may still be worth highlighting that the letters and interviews related a similar number of incidents on average, with 8 incidents of abuse related on in each of the letters and 11 incidents reported on average in the interviews. This may be interesting given that the letters were all much shorter than the interviews, see section 3.13.2. The accounts provided in the letters were much less detailed, however, and there were fewer extended accounts of single incidents by comparison to the interviews. The letters were much more reliant on lists of abusive incidents, with little detail, than the interviews, perhaps as a result of the lack of space. Thus the mode of storytelling appeared to differ between letters and interviews.

I also compared the written and spoken narratives on the basis of the type of abuse reported. The frequencies of physical abuse, psychological abuse, financial abuse, and second wave abuse are contained in Table 6 below:

Table 7: Frequency of IPA by type of abuse

	Interviews	Letters
Physical Abuse	67%	88%
Psychological Abuse	100%	89%
Financial Abuse	33%	22%
'Second Wave' Abuse	89%	67%

As can be seen from Table 7 there were more reports of physical abuse in the letters than the interviews, but more reports of psychological abuse, financial abuse, and second wave abuse in the interviews than the letters. It would seem as if the men in this study were more likely to report physical abuse in written narratives than in spoken narratives, while all other forms of abuse were more likely to be spoken about in the interviews. While little can be said on the basis of this statistic alone, it may offer some support for the idea that the interview is a situation in which masculinity may be both threatened and affirmed (Schwalbe and Wolkomir, 2002). Perhaps the men were less likely to report violent physical abuse in their interviews with me because the conditions of possibility for male victims of IPA are such that men are expected to be able to defend themselves in violent physical encounters (Anderson and Doherty, 2008). As such, some men may not even conceptualise the violence that they experience as abuse. Or perhaps reporting such violence may involve the risk of punishment for failing to 'do' gender appropriately (Butler, 1999), and so men refrain from doing so. This risk may be greater in interviews due to the way in which knowledge is co-constructed in this setting. In the interviews I, as interviewer, had greater control over the interaction (Schwalbe and Wolkomir, 2002) and perhaps this had an impact on how gender was done. In the letters,

by contrast, the audience was an absent presence and this perhaps made it easier to discuss such violent abuse there. Berger and Luckmann (1966) highlight the importance of the 'here and now' to the social construction of everyday life, suggesting that face to face interactions make more information available to interacting individuals and certain presentations harder to sustain. Perhaps this risk makes it easier to disclose violent physical abuse through the more remote medium of the letter.

5.4.1 - Co-Construction of Written and Spoken accounts

This issue of the proximity and distance of the narrator from the audience may be considered relevant to the co-construction of narrative. In the interview situation both interviewer and interviewee participate in an evolving dialogue structured around the request to provide a narrative account of the IPA that they have experienced, whereas the letters were produced in response to a variety of circumstances, as mentioned in section 3.13.2. Some letters were addressed to Amen, some to the former manager of Amen, and some were recycled accounts that had originally been generated for a different purpose. Co-construction, or other concepts which address the idea that narrative are jointly produced (e.g. co-composition (Clandinin, 2013)), is a concept that is addressed in many studies that deploy narrative analytic techniques and books on narrative research (Riessman, 2008; Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou, 2013; DeFina, 2003). However, this concept is often treated differently in different studies with some conceptualising co-construction as a dialogue between two speakers (e.g. Myketiak, 2015) while in others co-construction is defined more broadly to encompass audiences both present and absent (Salmon and Riessman, 2013). Riessman (2008) suggests that she focuses on several issues when analysing the co-construction of a text, including break-offs, non-lexicals and pauses. These examples mark co-construction out as

situated, although restricted to the micro context of the interview. They also highlight a privileging of the spoken word over the written word. However, the written texts made other practices available for analysis, as mentioned in section 3.13.2, such as the use of punctuation, capitalisation and textual presentation. However, Riessman (2008) also defines co-construction as involving both present and absent audiences, who influence the text that is produced. They influence what can or cannot be said, how things can be expressed, what can be taken for granted, what needs explaining. It is this broader description that is of interest to the current study as this description is inclusive of both the situated audience and the direct impact such an audience may have on the construction of a text but also the imagined audience, perhaps in the form of a 'generalised other', whose presence is inferred on the basis of the content of the narrative. This is inclusive of the written and spoken texts, and seems to relate to Butler's (1999) theory as one is rendered recognizable as a subject through the citation of particular norms. The focus on rendering oneself recognisable is indicative of a focus on audience. Butler's (1999) theory is concerned with the outside, with the 'you' to whom the account is directed (Butler, 2005), as the performative production of gender relies on the effect of these acts on others, as opposed to the expression of something interior.

So how does this relate to the analysis of the letters and interviews and what may be said about this? If co-construction is conceived broadly as encompassing the audience both present and absent, as Riessman (2008) defines but as differs from her practice, then the performative effects of a text both written and spoken are brought into focus. The audience becomes central to whether the particular acts engaged in render the individual recognisable or convincing as appropriately gendered (Butler, 1999). In the

case of the interviews I was the primary audience, although as acknowledged in section 3.13.2 the men were also aware of an audience beyond the research context. It may be suggested that my request for accounts of IPA, presented the interview as a context in which a biography of abuse may be produced. Most men engaged in one long turn of talk, punctuated by my supportive non-lexical utterances which encouraged them to go on. Only when they had reached the end of their account, indicated by some form of closing utterance did I interject with further questions. Aidan, for example, ended his turn at talk with the phrase 'So now…' followed by a pause, after which I asked him to return to an incident he had related earlier and expand on it. This prompted another turn at talk in which Aidan expanded on this issue but also related others. Speaking generally about the interviews, they seemed to proceed this way for the most part, with me encouraging extra turns at talk and detail about the experiences of the men. In this way I had a significant impact on what was considered sufficient as an account of IPA, indicating areas that I believed required extra focus. My presence also allowed Aidan to draw on the rhetorical support of third party knowledge in a direct way, instructing me to ask a common acquaintance for verification of his story, and encouraging me to breach confidentiality, 'Now there's one for you and I give you my permission, right. You ask X what I was like with my kids, right. And I give you my permission to do that and I'll leave it with yourself after that.' Such an appeal, given in the evolving context of the interview had the effect of performatively producing Aidan as a 'Good Father', appealing to a shared trustworthy source. This appeal was facilitated by the close context of the interview and could not occur in a letter in which the relationship to the audience was distant. In the case of the letters the audience was distant and differed from that of the interviews. In *Letters to Amen: Volume 1* (Cleary, 2004) each of the letters are addressed to the former manager of the service and may be suggested to take on a more personal

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approach as a result. In *Letters to Amen: Volume 2* (Amen, 2012) the letters are not addressed to any particular recipient. In *Letters to Amen: Volume 1* (Cleary, 2004) the letters were often framed in response to a radio show or newspaper article in which the former manager of the service was featured. As such the letters may be seen as co-constructed or dialogical in a similar way to that in Stanley (2004) and her notion of the epistolarium. This may be made evident in Brian's letter:

> "Dear Mary,
>
> Firstly, many congratulations on your presentation in regard to violence on men by women during yesterdays Gay Byrne (Irish TV and radio personality) Radio Show. Thank you for speaking out so candidly. I noticed an article in last week's newspaper where you are seeking to document case histories of such occurrences. Here we go…" *Brian L2AmenV1*

In this case Brian may be viewed as presenting a narrative in response to a request from Mary, that was made on a radio show. In the sense that men's accounts are requested this may be suggested to resemble the way in which the interviews invited accounts. However, as we only have access to one part of the exchange, the way in which this account was requested cannot be said and the context of the conversation cannot be accessed. This manager was a vocal advocate for men who have experienced IPA from female partners and so it could be suggested that this influenced the account that was produced. Brian's forthright account could be seen as responding to such advocacy as he explicitly criticises 'society' and the 'law' for their attitudes to men, in this way offering a politically motivated account. In this way he may be performatively produced as a male victim of IPA through this political action, playing his part in standing up for other men and making their stories visible, who were perhaps identified by the manager of Amen as underserved, while on the radio.

The letters in *Letters to Amen: Volume 2* were not addressed to any specific individuals but in many cases personified the service itself. Sean's account may provide an example:

> "Dear Amen,
>
> I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support in every way."
> *Sean L2AmenV2*

Sean seems to orient to Amen Support Service, specifically as a support service, as opposed to as an organisation to which he is providing his narrative account of IPA. This is further underlined by his request for support with which he ends this letter, 'Please could you help me so that I can start a new life with my children who have and still suffer at the hands of my wife.' In this way his account is co-constructed differently to both the interview and Brian's narrative from *Letters to Amen: Volume 1.* He lets the audience, in the form of Amen Support Services, know what he wants 'a quick divorce' before going on to request their assistance with this.

In each of these examples the role of the audience in the co-construction of the narrative can be observed. In Aidan's interview my request for elaboration, followed by his appeal, had an immediate impact in terms of justifying his account. Such an exchange was not possible in the letters, given the nature of the medium, in which a response, if received, would arrive slowly. In the case of both letters, however, the role of the audience can be observed as the account is oriented towards political ends in the first instance and individual assistance in the second.

Co-construction of the letters also differed from that of the interviews in the sense that there was sometimes additional information available about the letters that changed the way in which they may be viewed by the reader. As mentioned above Paddy's narrative was framed as a 'statement made to Gardai'. This framing may be suggested

to have the rhetorical effect of supporting the truth value of his account. Presenting it as a statement made in an official capacity gives it the weight of the institutional process of which it forms a part. Similarly, an anonymous letter from *Letters to Amen: Volume 1* was supported with an additional letter from the doctor attending to this man following his receipt of abuse. This letter again involves an appeal to authority, and again may be seen as supporting the veracity of the accounts provided. These may be seen as important ways in which men were performatively produced as abused in the letters, as these appeals to authority undermine those discourses which position men's accounts of IPA as 'unbelievable' (Corbally, 2011).

5.4.2 – Variety

The temporality of the letters was more varied than that of the interviews, as identified in section 3.13.2. All of the interviews were provided at a point at which the IPA to which the men had been subjected was in some sense past, although some were still separated from their children. Aidan, for example, had not seen his children for five years and had begun a new relationship. Robert had also not seen his daughter for several years and had 'let it all go'. Alex had been able to move on from his marriage and start again. By contrast, in Paddy's account he was portrayed as writing his letter while his wife tried to gain entry to his room to attack him, while Sean's narrative above made an explicit request for help. This variety in the presentations of the point at which the narratives were written seemed to support the account of IPA. We were not simply told about the abuse we were shown it in the sense that the letters sometimes formed part of the immediate abusive context. This heightened the immediacy of the IPA in a similar fashion to the performance of narrative incidents in some of the interview accounts, such as Aidan's performance of his stabbing in chapter 4. I interpreted such

presentations as undermining those discourses which sought to render men's accounts of IPA unbelievable.

As a result of being a written source, the letters closed off several interpretive avenues often explored by Riessman (1993). These included tone of voice and pauses in speech. However, they made other items available for consideration, such as the use of punctuation and capitalisation. The written narratives also facilitated the deployment of different resources for the doing of identity work to those which were deployed in the oral narratives. For example, one participant, rather than using the word 'fuck', wrote f**k, performatively producing him as someone who objected to the use of such words. They do not tell us of their discomfort with such words, they show us. This would not be visible in the oral narrative, at least not in this way, where the textual production of the narrative is completed by the researcher who transcribes the oral narrative. Such a spelling may be used but its meaning would be much different in such circumstances.

However, aside from the differences outlined above both the letters and the interviews deployed the narrative resources to similar ends. In Paddy's letter and Aidan's interview it can be seen that both deploy the narrative resource of the 'Mad' woman to frame the abuse engaged in by their wives. In Paddy's case the 'depressions and hallucinations' experienced by his wife serve as the 'origin' of the abuse and similarly in Aidan's case the post-natal depression experienced by his wife is positioned as justifying her behaviour. The 'Schemer' is similarly deployed by Robert and Niall, with Robert suggesting that his wife engages in abuse towards him because she wants to 'destroy' him, while Niall positions his wife as engaging in a 'war of attrition' to encourage him to leave the family home. In both cases their wives are portrayed as engaging in abuse in a self-interested fashion in order to achieve a particular goal. Both of these narrative

resources are deployed to similar ends across the sample, as can be observed in the above discussion. The same can be said for both the 'Good Husband' and 'Good Father' narrative resources, as these are again deployed in similar fashion and with similar frequency across the sample. As such it appeared to me that the consistent presence of these narrative resources across the sample, see Appendix H, in light of the different abuses related, the different contexts in terms of both time and place, was indicative of the pervasive nature of these narrative resources in culture at large.

5.4.3 - Summary

This section highlighted some of the similarities and differences between the written and spoken accounts. The quantitative information provided in this section indicates the similarity between the accounts in terms of the content of these accounts. The narrative resources that were identified were deployed to a similar extent across both written and spoken accounts. As well as this, psychological abuse, financial abuse, and second wave abuse were reported at similar rates across the written and spoken accounts. The difference between the percentage of written accounts reporting physical abuse and the percentage of interviews reporting physical abuse was the largest difference identified. It was suggested that this difference may be related to the co-construction of accounts in the letters and interviews, such that the differences between the types of accounts and how they were co-constructed had an impact on whether physical IPA would be reported. This led into a discussion of co-construction across the accounts and an in-depth consideration of the role of audience in both books of letters (Cleary, 2004; Amen, 2012). I interpreted this co-construction of having differential effects for the way in which narrative accounts were justified and presented, as well as for the type of account provided. Finally, the issue of variety of presentation of narratives in both

written and spoken accounts was considered. These accounts varied in terms of the way in which the men were performatively produced in the accounts, with the specific medium, through which the accounts were provided, having an impact on how the men were produced as 'morally good' as per the example above. Finally, as mentioned, despite such differences between written and spoken accounts the narrative resources deployed to frame the experience of IPA were similar across both written and spoken accounts, with this perhaps indicative of the limited language available to men to talk about IPA.

Chapter 6 – Discussion of Findings - Performativity and Victimisation

My analysis of both written and spoken accounts of men who experienced IPA forms an important part of the body of qualitative literature examining men's accounts of IPA. Several key findings resulted from my use of Dialogic/Performance method of narrative analysis (Riessman, 2003; 2008), informed by Butler's (1993; 1999) theory of gender performativity, in this study. These will be discussed in greater detail below but, briefly, they are:

- The narratives show the variety of lives that may be lived, and told, by men experiencing intimate partner abuse.

- Paddy, Aidan, Niall, Robert and Alex were performatively produced (Butler, 1999), in their narratives, as male victims of abuse. This was done through the deployment of narrative resources that positioned them within dominant discourses of masculinity. At the same time, their abusers were framed as transgressing feminine norms.

- The narratives produced by Paddy, Aidan, Niall, Robert and Alex, as well as throughout the sample analysed for this study, highlight the limited language available to men to talk about experiencing IPA. Similar norms of gendered behaviour were cited across the sample, with the most prominent of these being 'the 'Good Husband'' and 'the 'Good Father''. Abusive female partners were positioned as 'Mad' women and ''Schemer's'. Together, these gendered constructions contributed to the production of the men as male victims of IPA.

- The narratives highlighted the variety of IPA experienced by men, with the men in this study reportedly experiencing severe violence in the form of stabbing, threats, as well as more subtle but all-encompassing control. They thus seem to challenge the notion that men only experience a limited range of IPA (Johnson, 2005). This study also found significant support for Corbally's (2011) 'second wave abuse' - IPA that which was initiated by the intimate partner but not exercised by her. All of the five cases outlined above contained, at the very least, a threat to make a false allegation of some kind.

- The written and spoken narratives were strikingly similar in terms of their content. The narrative resources were deployed similarly in both forms of data. Further, similar forms of violence and abuse were reported in both forms of data. However, these differed markedly in terms of the length of the narrative accounts, and number of incidents related.

The method and theoretical perspective deployed in this study allowed for the development of an in-depth consideration of how men talk and write about IPA. Gender was of central importance to this consideration, given the focus on men and the advocacy of a gendered perspective to the study of IPA. The deployment of Butler's (1993; 1999) theory of performativity positioned this study as unique within the literature examining men's accounts of their experiences of IPA. This approach allowed me to focus on the performative effects of the men's accounts of IPA. Rather than there being a 'doer behind the deed' (Butler, 1999, p.181), I took the view that the stories told by men in this context performatively produced them as 'men who have experienced

IPA'. I adopted this approach because my reading of the qualitative research dealing with men's accounts of the experience of IPA highlighted the importance of such performative effects of accounts, how the stories that men tell and the things that they say, bring them into being for others as particular types of men. Viewing the way the stories men tell are used to undermine and position them as other than 'victims', I wanted to examine how these stories have the effect of positioning the men as victims, specifically male victims. For men, it seems, performative effects are vitally important as the 'conditions of possibility' for abused men are such that there is a narrow range of discourse within which they can be positioned in order to be conferred as victims of IPA. If they do not say the right things about 'fear' for example, their experience may be undermined and treated as other than abuse, with Pence and Paymar (1993), for example, discounting the experiences of men who do not display similar fear to that of women, and the men in Zverina et al (2011) positioned by others as having precipitated the abuse to which they were subjected. Further, where Durfee (2011) positioned men as strategically engaging in self-presentation in order to attain the benefits of status as 'victimised', my focus on performative effects meant that there was no 'doer' who could be conceptualised as engaging in self-presentation in the hope of achieving some advantage. The perspective of Durfee (2011) places a high burden of responsibility on the user of language, seeming to suggest that the speaker (or writer) has near total control of the impact of their utterances. In contrast to this, Butler's (1999) approach acknowledges that individuals' utterances may be influenced by the sanctions of others regarding normative gendered performances but the focus is on the compulsion to cite particular normative gendered discourses, as opposed to some strategic self-presentation. In any case this shift away from agentic and strategic self-presentation meant that the men could be separated from the effects of their narratives. Men were

not simply trying to produce a particular impression, this impression was the result of discourses that they were compelled to cite.

However, the focus on performative effects and the discourses that men were compelled to cite in this study regarding gendered victimisation, those of the 'Mad Woman', and the 'Schemer' may be suggested to have led to a situation in which misogynistic discourses regarding women's violence were reproduced.

The narratives show the variety of lives that may be lived, and told, by men experiencing intimate partner abuse.

Chapter four conveyed that men who experience intimate abuse tell a variety of stories. They tell stories of heroically standing up to their abusers and authorities, of fighting for their children, trying to preserve their relationship, enduring IPA because they can't bring themselves to formally report their wives.

The cases and the examination of the details of narrative accounts reveal the contrasting meaning, as well as the complexity of IPA experiences. In the analysis of the cases I commented on the way in which the social and political context entered the narrative, through reference to employment, the ease of obtaining access to children, the 2008 recession, among other issues. These highlighted how different and changing social contexts had an impact on the constitution of IPA in men's accounts of experiencing IPA.

Each of the men drew on various issues in the construction of their accounts, such as social location, employment, the presence or absence of children, age, length of relationship, as well as the type of abuse to which they were subjected and numerous other idiosyncrasies that cannot be fully accounted for here. Such issues entered the accounts of the men in this study both explicitly and implicitly. Alex, for example, was

able to avoid the abusive behaviour of his wife when they had agreed to separate, because the size of their house allowed him to avoid her for the most part, there were 'two sitting rooms'. Further, their relative wealth and the sale of their assets meant that he was able to find a place of his own and move on. By contrast, in Paddy's case, while he did not express a desire to leave the relationship, he suggested that the abuse to which he was subjected was exacerbated by the loss of his job. This was a combination of his wife's increasing psychological abuse and his presence in the home. Further, Paddy was pushed almost to starvation by his wife's behaviour, coupled with his small pension. He was often unable to eat for long periods of the day, as he could not afford to buy food. While men from various walks of life experienced similar IPA the consequences were not necessarily the same for all. This may be an important finding for male victims of IPA as it may indicate that the material resources of men who experience IPA have an impact on how IPA is experienced. This finding is important from a policy perspective as it perhaps indicates a greater need for services for men in such situations.

The men in this study also had very different experiences with institutional sources of power. Niall suggested that the police, the judiciary and psychologists were all 'against him', a point with which Aidan would likely agree as he related how the Gardai failed to investigate his stabbing and regularly accepted his wife's accusations of IPA without investigating. Aidan had some positive experiences with judges and police but these were presented as exceptions to the norm, as he 'finally' got to speak to a police officer who would listen to him, and the judge who threw out his wife's case did so because of the irrationality of his wife's behaviour, which was starkly portrayed by Aidan. By contrast to Aidan and Niall, Robert and Alex reported quite positive experiences with police, on the whole. Alex had few experiences with the police, but both the Irish and

American police that he dealt with were portrayed as helpful. The American police treated him with respect. While Robert did not have direct interactions with the police in the sense of having to call them or his wife having called them on him in the course of a dispute he did have several accusations made against him which he had to address. He reported having to engage with the legal system when a protection order was taken out against him and successfully defending himself so that a safety order was not awarded. As well as this he had to engage with an investigation when an allegation of child sexual abuse was made against him. In these instances, Robert was well-informed regarding what may face him and, while he objected to the accusations, he did not object to being made the subject of the investigations and recognised their necessity for him to clear his name. However, these experiences were still identified as abusive but he identified his wife as the source of this abuse, rather than suggesting that he was the subject of an unfair investigation. Perhaps Robert had knowledge of such investigations as a result of his role as a police officer and he thus had a different perspective on the way he was treated by police. Perhaps he had access to the discourses of the institutional sub-world (Berger and Luckmann, 1966) of the legal system. This conveyed, however, that all of the men in this study did not portray the available institutional supports as 'Against men'. There was diversity in their portrayals. However, in some sense his may have been unacknowledged as Robert seemed unable to access his daughter despite his wife's breach of an access order. Even if only implicitly the absence of some means of enforcing such orders may be suggested to be 'Against men'. Further, while Robert seemed unable to do anything about his wife's obstruction of his access she was able to report his breach of the order and have him chastised by his superiors. Robert, for his part, did not even mention appealing against her failure to comply with the order. There is a need to ensure men who experience IPA receive equivalent support

regardless of social circumstances, or knowledge. As a result of the difference in the way men constructed the support they received in the course of experiencing IPA it seems as if the response of various institutional supports to abused men was inconsistent, with some men receiving a superior service to others. It is unclear why this would be the case. Are such services biased against men as Niall has suggested, or was Robert more knowledgeable about the workings of the legal system than Niall, and thus had more realistic expectations regarding what was possible. However, in both Niall and Robert's case the notion that greater knowledge was necessary may have been undermined by the suggestion that the psychologist laughed at Niall and, as mentioned above, that Robert was unable to challenge his wife's breach of an access order but she could challenge his. Both of these cases may be indicative of how support services and institutions are often experienced as unhelpful by men who approach them for assistance (Hines et al, 2007; Watson and Parsons, 2005).

The way in which the men spoke about abuse differed across the sample with some men, such as Alex, talking about IPA in the abstract, while Aidan gave significant detail about the acts to which he was subjected. This is obviously related to the type of abuse experienced, to some extent, but it also highlights the variety of ways these accounts were constructed in the text. Alex's abstract accounts of IPA meant that we heard little about the actual incidents of abuse, the physical and psychological abuse that occurred. However, his account may be suggested to perform the generalised, constant nature of the abuse that he experienced. We do not hear about specific incidents because he was in a situation of coercive control, in which what was at issue was the collection of daily incidents, criticisms, arguments, degradation, which on their own may seem minor but together constituted an abusive and controlling context. A context in which Alex

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suggested he was 'totally, totally controlled' and suggested that he behaved as if his wife was always around, which was to say he behaved in a way that he believed may limit his exposure to IPA. The generalised, hypothetical, abstract account did not just tell about the constant abuse that he experienced, rather it performed this.

By contrast Aidan and Robert's accounts contained long performances of several incidents in which they gave characters speaking parts, set scenes, and provided detailed descriptions of the abuse to which they were subjected, as well as their wives' and their own actions. Both they and their wives were positioned in particular ways by these incidents.

In the written accounts, however, it seemed more common to account for abuse through the use of a list. In this case a list of the abuse to which the individual in question was subjected was provided. For example, both Paddy and Niall list abuses to which they have been subjected in their letters. This may have been the case because of the limited space available in the letters by comparison to the interviews. The interviews were often much longer than the letters and perhaps did not facilitate such long exposition.

This diversity of accounts highlighted the variety of experiences that may be identified as IPA, with the men in this study reportedly experiencing severe violence in the form of stabbing, threats, as well as more subtle but all-encompassing control.

The men were performatively produced as male victims

Aidan, Paddy, Robert, Niall and Alex's cases highlighted the performative production of identity across the case through the deployment of discourses relating to self, others, IPA, and the social context in which IPA occurs. The performative production of the men as subjects who have experienced IPA was an 'effect' of the narrative accounts provided

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by the participants in this study (Butler, 1999). This is not to say that the men did not experience IPA or that they were not performatively produced as victims of IPA prior to their participation here. Instead what I mean is that in this study, with me as audience to the interviews and a wider audience for the letters, one effect of the narratives was the performative production of men as victims of IPA, as men who have been wronged by their intimate partners in some way. This performative production was a complex and contradictory process involved the citation of normative discourses of masculinity, femininity and IPA. Performatives involve the making of a statement but also the simultaneous performance of an action (Butler , 1993)

When men account for the intimate partner abuse that they experience they do so in a context in which there are existing understandings of intimate partner abuse, as well as gender and violence. These must be taken into account when men account for themselves as victims of intimate partner abuse, as individuals are accountable to such norms (West and Zimmerman, 2009). The men in this study do so through the deployment of the narrative resources outlined above. Similarly, the men in Zverina et al's (2011) account for dominant discourses in their talk about their abuse experiences, by explicitly rejecting having the 'tables turned' on them, with this being a reference to their fear that they would be blamed for having instigated the abusive behaviour of their spouse. This would seem to be related to the dominant discourse that men fall victim to intimate partner abuse as a result of their own actions.

This study found that abused men are compelled to cite sexual and gendered norms in order to produce themselves as masculine subjects. Across the sample I found that men who had experienced IPA cited the norms of the 'Good Husband' and the 'Good Father', as well as positioning their abusive female partners as 'Mad' women and 'Schemers'.

These constructions appeared to operate in unison. They positioned their wives as unintelligible to maintain their own intelligibility as to cast their wives as somehow 'not women' they sustain the impression that they have not transgressed gendered expectations. This echoes the finding of Sandberg (2018)[11] who found that the husbands of some individuals with dementia may have worked to sustain their wives as gendered, as a good housewife, as a way for them to accomplish masculinity, suggesting that their intelligibility as men was dependent on such positionings. This may also be said about the men in my study.

Women are often culturally constructed as passive and fragile (Gill, 2006), perhaps necessitating the time and space given in men's narratives to explaining the violence and abuse enacted by these women. Aidan, Niall, Paddy, Robert and Alex's abusive partners were rendered unintelligible as women by their engagement in violence and abuse, and as a result they were reconceptualised as deviant. These accounts of abuse made space for the participants in this study, resisting discourses which suggested otherwise, and also resisting the notion that they were 'marginalised' men. They were men who had been wronged in various ways by the women with whom they had been intimate, as well as social institutions. Women who engage in violence and abuse disrupt existing gender norms, as do men who receive such violence and abuse. This discourse that women do not regularly engage in intimate partner abuse and that when they do, it is likely to take the form of a resistance to men's violence (Dobash and Dobash, 2004) is supported by much academic writing and empirical evidence relating to intimate partner abuse and proposes that men are less likely than women to experience intimate

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[11] This study identified many actors involved in dementia care as engaging in a practice of re-gendering, where they tried to re-establish a normative gendered expression in efforts to counter discourses which characterised people with dementia as non-people (Sandberg, 2018).

partner abuse (Watson and Parsons, 2005; Johnson, 2005; Walby et al, 2017). The discourse that women are much more likely to experience intimate partner violence and abuse may render 'unbelievable' (Corbally, 2011) the narratives of IPA produced by abused men. They may encounter sanctions as a result of their claims and may be compelled, as a result, to explain how they have come to deviate from this normative discourse. How have they come to be a member of this rare group and how is it that their female partners have come to be violent and abusive towards them?

Following Butler (1999), being a male victim of IPA is not something one *is,* it is something one becomes through particular performative acts. This is not the same thing as suggesting that the abuse to which these men are subjected does not happen in some material sense. That is not at issue here, it is clear that these acts of abuse were experienced by the men in question. However, framing these acts as abuse in a context in which such acts are not necessarily readily accepted as such requires the citation of particular gendered scripts (Butler, 1999) and this seems to be the case for Aidan, Paddy, Robert, Niall and Alex above.

In a similar way to the participants in Throsby's (2007) study, who manage a stigmatised identity through the use of the available narrative resources, Aidan, Paddy, Robert, Niall and Alex seemed to undermine or circumvent prevailing discourses which suggested that men deserved the abuse that they received. The citation of the narrative resources of the 'Mad' woman and the 'Schemer' facilitated this. One effect of these narrative resources was that the abusive behaviour of the women was positioned as unconnected to the behaviour of the men.

It is argued that the men in this study invariably manage their accountability in their accounts of intimate partner abuse, as they live in a context in which there is a degree

of hostility to the notion that men may experience intimate partner abuse (Migliaccio, 2001, 2002; Hines et al, 2007; Allen-Collinson, 2009; Corbally, 2011). They may thus be motivated to defend or justify their claims to victimisation against claims to the contrary from third parties. It may be argued that their narratives serve as a response to the disbelief that they perceive surrounding their accounts of abuse (Corbally, 2011). In such a context, the men use a number of resources to make their situation understandable and credible. Further, even those who actively reject the term victim successfully present themselves as such through their construction of themselves as 'ideal victims' (Holstein and Miller, 1990; Blomberg, 2010), through a combination of positive self-presentations and negative portrayals of their female partners.

Similar norms of gendered behaviour were cited across the sample

Chapter five conveyed how the vast majority of men in this study, in both the written and spoken narratives, deployed similar narrative resources in their accounts. These resources were deployed in different ways in each text, but their content was similar. They drew on normative discourses of masculinity and femininity and in this way IPA was positioned as the result of their partners' deviation from normative femininity, while the men were positioned as remaining within normative masculinity. The consistency of these presentations across the dataset of 64 letters and 9 interviews would appear to highlight the limited language available to talk about men who have experienced intimate partner abuse. I found that the men in this study performatively produced (Butler, 1999) themselves as male victims of abuse through the deployment of narrative resources that positioned them within dominant discourses of masculinity, while, at the same time, framing their abusers as transgressing feminine norms. The limited way in which IPA is constituted, identified in the literature review above, may be

suggested to have established a context from which men who experience IPA are excluded and in which men's accounts of IPA are called into question. In this way the context in which men provide accounts of IPA may be identified, and often was by the men in this study, as 'Against men'. This may have contributed to the limited language used by men to account for their abuse.

I interpreted these narrative resources as having similar effects across the accounts. I suggest that the deployment of the narrative resources of the 'mad' woman and 'Schemer', as well as the 'Good Father' and 'Good Husband', had the effect of performatively producing these men as male victims of IPA. By this I mean that the narrative accounts produced by the men had the effect of making them recognisable as men who have been wronged and may be considered to have experienced abuse. This status is not conferred on men merely by virtue of having experienced violent and abusive acts, rather it is an effect produced through the citation of particular gendered norms when recounting the experience of IPA. The deployment of narrative resources of ''Good Father's' and ''Good Husband's' and thus positioned the men within dominant discourses of masculinity. These narrative resources further had the effect of positioning the men as 'good men' and perhaps inoculated them against having blame assigned to them for the IPA they received, or the 'turning of tables' (Zverina et al, 2011). One way in which blame has been assigned to men who are the victims of violence, for example, is through the charge that they should have been able to defend themselves (Anderson and Doherty, 2008; Burkar and Akerstrom, 2009). This extends those interpretations of men's accounts of experiencing IPA which suggest that discourses of masculinity facilitate the relating of such experiences (Corbally, 2011; Morgan and Wells, 2016).

The finding that men cited discourses which positioned their abusive spouses as deviant was an aspect of the originality of this study. While the construction of violent and abusive women as 'mad' or 'evil' is not a new finding (Kruttschnitt and Carbone-Lopez, 2006; Morrissey, 2002), the identification of such constructions in the context of men's narrative accounts of the experience of IPA from a female partner is new. This finding echoes and extends the finding of Entilli and Cipoletta (2017) that men distance their partners from responsibility for the IPA that they enact, by positioning them as suffering from mental illness, among other things. In the current study the men positioned their partners in this way, however, I did not interpret this as distancing their wives from responsibility for the IPA. Most men could not be viewed as rationalising the abuse (Migliaccio, 2002) in order to mitigate the blame that may be directed at their wives. Most men identified their wives as responsible for the IPA, even if they identified them as having diminished capacity due to psychological problems. Instead, I interpreted the effect of this positioning as assisting in the performative production of the men as victims of IPA. These norms framed the accounts and, I suggest, offered causal explanations for the behaviour of the abusive female partners, as well as explaining the inability of the men to respond to or protect themselves from the IPA they experienced.

The narratives highlighted the variety of IPA that may be experienced by men

I found that the men in this study experienced a wide variety of forms of IPA, seeming to challenge the notion that men only experience a limited range of IPA (Johnson, 2005; Dobash and Dobash, 2004) that was identified in the literature review. This finding is also in line with that of recent qualitative work which also undermined the notion that the abuse experienced by men falls within a narrow and less harmful range than that

experienced by women (e.g. Allen-Collinson, 2009; Corbally, 2011, 2014; Entilli and Cipoletta, 2017). Men reported physical abuse including stabbings, having objects thrown at them, having their heads 'smashed' against walls, having coffee poured over them. They reported psychological abuse including being obstructed from attending work, being constantly criticised, being compared unfavourably to other men in bed, as well as being demeaned by publicly and privately. Some men reported financial abuse in which they were denied access to funds and unable to afford food as a result. One of the most prevalent forms of abuse in the sample was 'second wave abuse' (Corbally, 2011). Many of the men reported that their wives made false allegations, took malicious legal action against them, and restricted their access to their children. In the course of such allegations and misuse of the legal system the men often reported negative responses from the police and the legal system, with this supported by much literature in the area of IPA against men (Migliaccio, 2001, 2002; Basile, 2005; Hines et al, 2007; Corbally, 2011, 2014). The police were characterised as credulous at best and biased at worst, in both Aidan's and Niall's accounts. In the interviews, for example, false allegations, malicious legal action and restricting of access to the children made up the majority of the abuse experienced by Robert. Similarly, Aidan and Niall spent significant portions of their narratives relating such issues, despite also reporting the experience of severe physical violence. Perhaps, second wave abuse offered the men greater opportunities to cite dominant discourses of masculinity, such as the 'hero'. Challenging the legal system and the police may be more in line with normative discourses of masculinity than challenging their abusive partners. This is conjecture, however. Further, the prevalence of second wave abuse in the accounts of IPA would appear to highlight the importance of legal support for men who experience IPA, perhaps

indicating that this would be a worthwhile area of focus for agencies seeking to offer support.

Reports of men defending themselves against their wives' physical violence were rare in this study, in line with Entilli and Cipoletta (2017). Alex was an exception, however, as he told me that he would 'rage' back at his wife when she would 'rage' at him. Even in this case, however, the violence was minimised, particularly Alex's role which was positioned as reactive and short-lived. The violence was portrayed as a small part of a wider problem, with his role positioned as a source of shame. Alex, in line with most men in this study, subordinated the physical abuse that he experienced to other aspects of abuse, such as psychological abuse and controlling behaviour. Some men suggested that the physical abuse to which they were subjected was unimportant when compared to psychological abuse or separation from their children. While this is a common finding in IPA research (FRA, 2014; Watson and Parsons, 2005) it has the effect of suggesting that those forms of abuse against which men's average size advantage would be of benefit, are of lesser importance.

Gender Trouble and Subversion

The context in which the men cited these normative discourses may be argued to constitute 'trouble' for those gendered norms as they are cited in a context in which they may traditionally be undermined. The citation of gendered norms, such as that of fatherhood, in the context of a story in which a man described receiving IPA, constitutes one such example. In *Bodies That Matter*, Butler (1993) relates how the citation of gender performatives in contexts other than those in which they originate, may subvert dominant discourses and alter the way in which they are deployed. All gender

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performatives necessarily fail, in the sense that they do not have a rigid and unchanging meaning, but rather are constituted differently every time they are re-cited in different contexts (Butler, 1993). Thus, it is proposed that men who deploy normative gendered discourses, in contexts in which they may not seem to easily fit, are engaging in a subversive act and actively altering the constitution of those gendered norms, negotiating space for the figure of the male victim of IPA. As their accounts are framed by normative discourses of gender, they do not challenge prevailing norms, rather they redeploy and subvert these with the effect that they negotiate space within their narratives for a recognisable male victim. It would seem as if the men in this study meet Butler's (1993) definition of subversion. However, is this a sufficient definition of subversion. Do the men's accounts subvert gendered norms by citing them in different contexts, or simply extend their reach. Subvert would appear to suggest some undermining. In this study, however it is not clear that gender norms were undermined through the performative production of the men as victims of IPA. Rather it would appear as if they were redeployed and extended to different contexts.

Subversion seems to be where butler's theory fails. There is something liberatory about the notion of subversion. The overthrow or undermining of an occupying force. The moving against prevailing wisdom. It is oppositional. How does this fit with the citation of norms and the bending of such citations?

It also seems to run counter to Butler's metaphor of the judge who cites legal precedent. Is there any way in which this judge could be seen to cite legal precedent to subvert the law?

> "…the judge who authorizes and installs the situation he names invariably *cites* the law that he applies, and it is the power of this citation that gives the

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> performative its binding or conferring power…..Indeed, it is through the invocation of convention that the speech act of the judge derives its binding power; that binding power is to be found neither in the subject of the judge nor in his will, but in the citational legacy by which a contemporary "act" emerges in the context of a chain of binding conventions." (Butler, 1993, p.3)

When a judge cites legal precedent in a particular case it would seem as if the aim is to test whether convention can be applied to a particular case. In this sense it would appear to be the case that the effect is to extend the precedent to a new situation, rather than to subvert the law. It seems more accurate to see such citations as broadening the law so that it encompasses a greater variety of situations. In the limited sense that Butler conceptualizes subversion this may meet the definition of subversion but in the example of the judge that she deploys to support the notion of citation of convention, it does not. to better uphold the law and argue for how it may be applied to the current case. The 'citational legacy' provides the judgement with some force, rather than this judgement undermining the citational legacy and exposing its contingency, as Butler (1999) suggests may be achieved through 'drag'.

This also raises an uncomfortable point about the narratives of the men and their deployment of narrative resources which echo misogynistic discourses surrounding violent women. Butler's (1999) concept of subversion may be argued to present an implicitly utopic world view, one in which the oppressive powers may be subverted thereby leading to a more equal society, or one more open to plurality by highlighting the fabricated nature of gender. In this way she seems to propose only one direction for the performative production of gender to operate. However, it is possible to imagine a situation in which gender may be performatively produced in a way which expands the reach of normative gender. In this way we can see the potential dangers of the narrative resources deployed by the men in this study, that in negotiating their identity as male

victims of IPA they deploy discourses which undermine the agency of the women engaging in IPA against them. These discourses may become more pervasive, as a result. While the focus of the study is to analyse the ways in which men narrate their experiences of IPA, it would seem to be the case that such narrations may have effects beyond expanding the space available to men within which to tell their stories.

As a result of the above, it may be suggested that a fruitful avenue for further research may be to consider the narratives of women who have engaged in violence and abuse towards their male partners. While some research has been conducted in this area (e.g. Banwell, 2010) the research literature in this area is limited. Even Banwell's (2010) study focuses on women who were not the primary perpetrators of violence and abuse in their relationship, and so it is of limited utility in this instance. An understanding of how women are performatively produced as violent and abusive perpetrators of IPA in their narrative accounts would be a useful addition to the literature. This may help to increase the diversity of ways in which violent female partners may be conceptualized and may contribute to a discussion of female perpetrators of IPA that does not strip these women of agency.

Similarities between written and spoken accounts

The narrative resources of the 'Good Father', the 'Good Husband', the 'Mad' woman and the 'Schemer' were deployed with greater frequency in the interviews than in the letters, as shown in Table 5. The higher frequency with which I identified narrative resources in the interviews as opposed to the letters may have been related to the fact that the interviews were much longer and contained accounts of many more incidents of IPA than the letters, and thus the interviews were perhaps more likely to contain

multiple narrative resources. Aside from this difference in frequency the written and spoken accounts were strikingly similar in terms of their content. The narrative resources were deployed to similar effect in both forms of data, as can be observed in chapter four in the case accounts as well as chapter five in the cross case analysis. Further, similar forms of violence and abuse were reported in both forms of data. However, these differed markedly in terms of the length of the narrative accounts, and number of incidents related. This finding may be striking given that the interviews were conducted face-to-face and thus, the narratives were co-constructed in a 'live' setting. By contrast the letters were likely written by the participants at their leisure and could have been revised before submission. As such, it would appear as if the narrative resources identified in this study were pervasive and perhaps taken for granted by the men in the construction of their accounts.

6.1 – Implications for Practice

One frequently recognised issue affecting men who experience IPA is that of recognising themselves as abused. The narratives presented in chapter four highlight the diversity of experiences of IPA and offer a broader presentation of IPA, which should assist men in recognising themselves as abused.

Further, Butler (2004) suggests that an individual's being depends on norms of recognition, which means that the autonomy of the individual is dependent on a social norm that exceeds it. She suggests that

> "our lives, our very persistence, depend upon such norms or, at least, on the possibility that we will be able to negotiate within them, derive our agency from the field of their operation. In our very ability to persist, we are dependent on what is outside of us, on a broader sociality, and this dependency is the basis of our endurance and sur- vivability" (Butler, 2004, p.32)

By this she means that we are constituted by social norms and require those social norms in order to be rendered intelligible by others. The deployment of the social norms of the 'Good Husband', 'Good Father', 'Mad Woman', and 'Schemer' performatively produced the participants as male victims of IPA, helping to render them intelligible as such. The presentation of these narratives here may provide the tools for other men to make themselves intelligible. These norms render the men intelligible as victims of IPA, as 'good men' who have been wronged.

I suggest that, in practical situations in which men may seek support, they may find that their experiences are denied (Buzawa and Austin, 1993; Hines et al, 2007; Machado et al, 2017), and that this may be because of the way in which they present these experiences. As outlined in chapter 2 women's experiences of IPA are taken as the benchmark against which men's experiences are measured. However, when men's accounts of experiencing IPA differ from women's accounts in similar circumstances doubt is sometimes cast on them. Norms which render women who experience IPA intelligible may not offer the same opportunity to men, predicated as they are on fear, helplessness and emotional expression, which often run counter to masculine presentations. Several researchers and practitioners highlight that men do not report the same fear as women when reporting IPA (Pence and Paymar, 1993; Holtzworth-Munroe, 2005). Similarly, Durfee (2011) has highlighted how men emphasise control in their accounts of experiencing IPA, something which runs counter to presentations of victimisation (Sundaram et al, 2004). Further, I attended a seminar at the European Conference on Domestic Violence (ECDV) in Porto in 2017 seminar at which a speaker related how the abused men she studied had characterised their abusive partners as 'Mad' or 'Bad'. Some of those in attendance suggested that the men's accounts sounded

like those of abusers as a result of this. As such, it seems possible that men using such narrative resources may be characterised as perpetrators rather than victims. It may be important to encourage service providers to engage critically with their thinking on this issue. Simply talking in a particular way about an issue does not mean that one has acted in the way commonly associated with such talk. Further, it may also be considered that this is not necessarily the way that abusers talk, perhaps, instead it is the way men talk.

The aim here is not to reify the way in which men and women speak, rather it is to acknowledge the persistence of normative gendered discourses in the production of subjectivity (Butler, 1993; 1999) and place this in a hierarchical relationship to constructions of victimisation (which are likely gendered from the outset in any case). By this I mean that abused men may be better served if they are approached as men, and thus gendered, as opposed to as victims.

It seems as if the latent misogyny in the stereotypic representations of women as 'Mad' and 'Schemer' are problematic, undermining men's claim to victimisation. They use similar language to those who engage in IPA. However, men who experience IPA exist in the same cultural context as those who engage in it, and thus may be subject to the same normative, and arguably misogynistic discourses.

Similarly, Durfee (2011) highlighted the tendency for men, in her study, who claimed victimisation to relate how they were able to control their wives, or how they were unaffected by the physical assaults. She suggested, as a result, that this additional and unnecessary (from the point of view of an application for a protection order) information served to undermine their gendered presentations and even suggested that these applications were likely to be an attempt to control their wives. In this instance Durfee (2011) again privileged the notion of victim over and above the presentation of gender.

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If one adopted this perspective one could similarly undermine the accounts of the men in the current study, as unnecessarily gendered and thus fraudulent efforts to control. However, if men are understood as compelled to cite normative gendered discourses (Butler, 1993) even within narratives of victimisation, Durfee's (2011) findings and my own may be viewed differently, as the subversion of normative gendered discourses with the effect of negotiating room for men as victims

The findings of this study should be of some use to support services. They offer further information surrounding how it is that men conceptualise the violence and abuse that they experience. This study supports and extends Corbally's (2011) findings that the identity positions of 'Good Father' and 'Good Husband' are of importance to how men who experience IPA talk about abuse. It echoes her findings regarding the experience of 'lost fatherhood' and the men's desire to be a husband to their wives (Corbally, 2011). However, it also extends her thesis, suggesting that the narrative resources deployed by the men allow them to position themselves in line with normative discourses of masculinity, subordinate their own suffering to that of their children, and offers them a route to engage in resistance which avoids implicating them in violence or abuse against their wives. The 'Good Husband' narrative allowed them to make a case for the IPA that they experienced as 'unjustified', as if they conceptualised IPA as some form of marital transaction, whereby they engaged in particular behaviours (providing for the family, supporting their wife) and avoided receiving IPA as a result. In this way the men may be seen as negotiating room for themselves as victims of IPA within already existing masculine norms (O'Brien, Hart and Hunt, 2005).

The deployment of narrative resources which position women as abusive may also be of use to support services in identifying those who are in need of assistance. Those men

who use attributions identifying their wives as 'mad' or perhaps as having some sort of plan in mind may be identified as possible abuse victims. However, these may only be signs which provoke further investigation. The finding that abused men talk in this way in both oral and written text is not the end of the analysis. It is not the case that only abused men talk in this way and so we can identify abused men by their use of such terms, as highlighted by (Anderson and Umberson, 2001). Instead services may pursue these avenues of talk when attempting to elicit information in relation to the abuse.

6.2 – Implications for Policy

I aimed, with this research, to contribute to the body of research examining men's accounts of IPA, in this case in the specific context of the Republic of Ireland. Despite the growth in qualitative work examining men's accounts of IPA, it is still a small body of research. The current study makes a valuable contribution to this area, considering the ways in which men talk about and frame IPA, in an Irish context where there are few services available for men who have experienced IPA and it seems there is little appetite to address the suffering of the estimated 6% of men who experience severe IPA (Watson and Parsons, 2005). This study places this context at the fore of the research, acknowledging that this context supplies the conditions of possibility for men who have experienced IPA. This study considered the interview and the letter as a site at which identity is enacted or brought into being, rather than one at which it is told about or expressed. This philosophical assumption of the study is important when considering the implications of this study. These accounts highlighted the conditions of possibility for abused men in an Irish context, constructed, as they were, in opposition to a canonical narrative. This was made evident by the time given over to explaining the origin of the abuse that they experienced, something that was also identified in Zverina

et al's (2011) study. If the context is seen as playing a role in the constitution of IPA, and its canonical narrative, it may be suggested that policy change may play a role in altering this context. As has been identified in section 2.2, policy documents in Ireland currently make only passing mention of men, before moving on to discuss the canonical narrative of male violence against women (e.g. HSE, 2010). Altering policy so that the IPA experienced by men receives more comprehensive treatment may help to alter how IPA is constituted in and Irish context and perhaps broaden the options available to men for narrating their experiences.

6.3 – Implications for Research

The finding that men are performatively produced as victims of IPA through the deployment of narrative resources that position victim and perpetrator, may resonate with the work of Burkar and Akerstrom (2009), who studied men's accounts of the experience of violence, have suggested that men who experience assaults may have responsibility or blame ascribed to them. The men in Burkar and Akerstrom (2009) engaged in particular gendered behaviours in order to negotiate room for themselves as victims of assault in such a context. Similarly, by positioning their wives as aggressors and locating the source of this aggression in the individual psychology of their wives, or as the result of some personal goal or ambition of their wives, the men in the current study negotiate a victim identity for themselves (Blomberg, 2010). Holstein and Miller (1990) suggest that one way in which an 'ideal victim' identity is negotiated is through the suggestion that the speaker did not initiate the event and bears no responsibility for what happened. I suggest that the narratives contained above fall into this category. By portraying the abuse as originating with their wives or partners, and proposing causes

for this behaviour, they underline their own lack of responsibility. These performances of victim identities are achieved in ways that may be identified as masculine (Burkar and Akerstrom, 2009). In the current study this included the enactment of the valued male identities of 'father' and 'husband', as well as the portrayals of the men as in control, or resisting the abuse they experienced. This also resembles the performance of masculinity identified by Weiss (2010) in her study of male sexual victimisation. This author found that men who had faced sexual victimisation accounted for this in ways which allowed them to repair and reassert their masculinity. In the context of her study it is suggested that the men achieved this through reference to alcohol consumption and the suggestion that they fought back against their attackers, thus portraying themselves as having resisted the abuse to which they were subjected. In this way the current study finds support for its findings from other studies examining men's victimisation.

Many qualitative studies of men who experience IPA highlight the issue of the stigma facing the male victim of IPA, with this serving to encourage men to refrain from reporting the abuse he experiences (Allen-Collinson, 2009; Corbally, 2011). Corbally (2011) has suggested that this may be related to the challenge posed to conventional masculine performances by men who have experienced intimate partner abuse. The current study may be seen as challenging the narrative of stigma which adheres to male victims of IPA. It does not suggest that men do not experience stigma, however it does suggest that men position themselves in line with normative masculine performances and thus negotiate a position for themselves as male victims of IPA. In this way they may mitigate the stigma identified in such studies and report IPA.

Entilli and Cipoletta's (2017) finding that men characterised their partners as

experiencing some form of psychological issue, for example, found significant support here, although the interpretation of this finding was extended in this research. In Entilli and Cipoletta's (2017) study it was simply suggested that such constructions served to absolve their abusive female partners of guilt for the abuse to which they were subjected. This was extended in the current study to suggest that this played a role in the performative production of gender.

The centrality of children to the experience of IPA was also underlined by this research, in line with the findings of other qualitative research studies examining men's experiences of IPA (Corbally, 2014; Morgan and Wells, 2016; Entilli and Cipoletta, 2017). However, in a similar way to the above, the references to children were interpreted here as part of normative gendered positioning, which allowed the men to performatively produce themselves as masculine subjects.

6.4 - Limitations of the Research

This study focused solely on written and spoken constructions of IPA by self-identified male victims of IPA. A comparison of the accounts of heterosexual men and heterosexual women would allow us to determine if the narrative resources identified in this study' are unique to men's accounts or if they are present in women's accounts also.

One limitation of the current research may be the fact that all accounts were written or produced by men who were current or former clients of Amen Support Services. This limited the study because it is possible that the men encountered the narrative resources, that have been identified as common, through their interaction with the support service or through their interaction with other men they encountered through the service. As no other men from outside the service were included in the study it cannot be said whether these narrative resources were also common amongst men who

experienced IPA but who did interact with a support service. It may be speculated that they were shared more broadly due to the fact that discourses of fatherhood and being a husband have been found in several studies of masculinity in different contexts.

Further, the men in this study were all men who made contact with a support service. Perhaps it was the case that the narrative resources outlined in this study were deployed only by those men who are likely to make contact, as they have negotiated room for themselves within normative discourses of IPA. It may be speculated that men who do not make contact with such services may deploy different narrative resources. However, if this was the case it would highlight the necessity of this study in making visible ways of talking about IPA and perhaps furnishing such men with the tools to negotiate room for themselves as abused also.

Another limitation may be that there is only so much that can be known about how the written sources were produced. It cannot be said whether the men themselves actually wrote these accounts as these were requested by Amen Support Services but were not elicited in their presence. However, as the focus of the study was on the way in which IPA is spoken about, and common conceptualisations of IPA negotiated with, this may not be too much of a concern. If it was discovered that the men behind these narratives were not all they claimed to be this would simply be another consideration for the analysis, and complicate the finding that abused men in both written and spoken accounts of IPA use similar narrative resources.

6.5 - Conclusion

The primary preoccupation of this study was how men, who self-identify as having experienced intimate partner abuse, accounted for themselves and for this experience. Men must account for themselves as victims of intimate partner abuse in a context in which male victimisation is frequently denied, ignored, or minimised (Zverina et al, 2011; Andersen, 2013). The men to whom I spoke and whose letters I analysed took account of wider societal norms, as well as the scene of address, when giving their accounts (Shotter, 1989). Those norms constrained the accounts that were produced, such that men accounted for intimate partner abuse in the ways provided by the language community in which they found themselves. They 'pick up the tools where they lie' (Butler, 1999). However, following Butler (1999), these constraints do not simply conceal some underlying truth of the accounts, such that men must hide the abuse that they experience. Rather, these constraint may be considered the ground from which an account was developed (Butler, 1993). These were the 'conditions of possibility' for the accounts, the taken-for-granted assumptions that formed the basis of the men's accounts of intimate partner abuse (Butler, 2005). This is to say that men talk about intimate partner abuse in terms of the discourses that are available to them to do so, and at the same time are performatively produced as coherent subjects (Butler, 1999). Intimate partner abuse is perceived as an issue which primarily affects women and whose effects are deemed to be much worse for women, irrespective of the abuse involved or the outcome for the individual (Harris, 1991; Seelau, Seelau and Poorman, 2003; Sorenson and Taylor, 2005; Hammock et al, 2015). Men who account for the abuse that they have experienced may also have been exposed to the norms which led IPA to be perceived as such (Zverina et al, 2011). These norms serve to constitute the phenomenon of IPA as excluding men, except in limited form as experiencing a lesser

form of abuse, and only rarely. As a result, men account for themselves in light of this, taking this into account as a norm, a piece of common-sense that they have to contend with, that they do not question as a necessary inclusion in their narrative (Zverina et al, 2011). Without this their abuse is 'unthinkable' (Butler, 1999). These are the constitutive background for their narrative accounts (Butler, 1999). Given that IPA against men is constituted as 'rare' these men set about accounting for their position amongst this rare group, producing narratives that highlighted the variety of lives that they lived and the variety of abuses to which they were subjected. As well as this, one effect of the narratives produced was that they offered an explanation for the deviation from the canonical narrative of IPA, as that involving male perpetrators and female victims. Continuing to position violence and abuse against men as rare, these men cited discourses of deviant femininity ('Mad Women' and 'Schemers') to explain how they have come to be members of this rare group. By citing such discourses in conjunction with normative masculine identity positions of the 'Good Father' and 'Good Husband', these men were performatively produced as male victims of IPA, good men who had been wronged.

The title of this study was chosen to highlight a number of things about the texts analysed in this study. The phrase 'Against me' highlighted the relational nature of IPA, that men do not simply experience IPA, this IPA was directed against them by an 'other' and this 'other' coloured the interpretation of the validity of men's claims to have experienced IPA. As such the men in this study offered explanations of those who engaged in IPA against them, through the deployment of the narrative resources of the 'Mad Woman' and the 'Schemer', which rendered violent and abusive women recognisable. The bracketed (n) drew attention to the disbelief men in general have

been identified as facing when relating their accounts (Migliaccio, 2001; Corbally, 2011). It highlighted how the accounts provided in this study ran counter to or 'against' the canonical narrative of IPA. Further, the literature review conveyed how the men in this study existed in a context in which IPA was constituted as excluding men. Thus, while not literally against men in the sense of being hostile to them, this context rendered their accounts and experiences possible within a narrow range. This study, however, has demonstrated several ways in which men 'pick up the tools where they lie' (Butler, 1999), even within this narrow range, to render themselves recognisable as male victims of IPA. At the level of the individual these findings may offer ways in which men can speak about IPA, a positive development given the suggestion that men do not often report IPA (Tsui et al, 2010). However, as I have identified above, the ways in which the men in this study characterised the women from whom they received abuse have long been identified as problematic (Morrissey, 2002). At a wider level the accounts produced here may be seen as perpetuating these problematic discourses. It would seem as if there is a tension that must be resolved between acknowledging men's suffering and facilitating the proliferation of problematic cultural discourses. Thus while the findings of this study may be positive in terms of providing ways for men to speak about IPA, we must be cautious in the exercise of this optimism.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Literature Search

Keyword term - restricted to article title	PsycINFO (accessed 16th of October 2013 (and monthly thereafter))	No. of articles	No. of articles when male victims added to search
Domestic violence		2728	6
Domestic abuse		233	1
Intimate Partner Violence		2493	5
Intimate Partner Abuse		206	1
Keyword term - restricted to article title	Web of Knowledge (accessed 11th December 2013)		
Domestic violence		9602	7
Domestic abuse		499	0

Intimate Partner violence		8771	6
Intimate Partner Abuse		324	1
Keyword term - restricted to article title	CINAHL (accessed 11th December 2013)		
Domestic violence		2409	4
Domestic Abuse		293	1
Intimate Partner Violence		2423	0
Intimate Partner Abuse		172	1
Keyword term - restricted to article title	JSTOR (accessed 15th January 2014)		
Domestic violence		377	0
Domestic abuse		12	0
Intimate Partner Violence		101	1

Intimate Partner Abuse		6	0
Keyword term - restricted to article title	PubMed (Medline) (accessed 15th January 2014)		
Domestic violence		2104	0
Domestic abuse		102	0
Intimate Partner violence		2061	0
Intimate Partner abuse		70	1
Keyword term - restricted to article title	ASSIA (accessed 15th January 2014)		
Domestic violence		995	1
Domestic abuse		99	0
Intimate Partner Violence		686	1
Intimate Partner Abuse		72	1

Appendix B - Interview Location and Mode of Contact

Name	Interview Location	Method of Initial Contact	Secondary Contact
John	Amen offices, Navan, Co. Meath	Telephone	N/A
James	Amen offices, Navan, Co. Meath	Telephone	N/A
Robert	Amen offices, Navan, Co. Meath	Telephone	N/A
Tom	DCU – researcher's office	Telephone	Text message
Aidan	Amen offices, Navan, Co. Meath	E-mail	E-mail
Alex	DCU – researcher's office	E-mail/Telephone	Text message
George	DCU – researcher's office	E-mail	Telephone
Daniel	Amen offices, Navan, Co. Meath	E-mail	N/A

Mark	DCU – researcher's office	E-mail	Text message/Telephone

Appendix C – Informed Consent Form

[x] The image part with relationship ID rId62 was not found in the file.
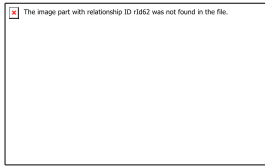
DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY

Informed Consent Form

Men's experience of Intimate Partner Abuse: Narrating experience in letters and talk

Barry Kestell, a PhD candidate in the School of Nursing in Dublin City University (DCU), is conducting research concerned with how men talk about intimate partner abuse. He is supervised in this endeavour by Dr. Melissa Corbally and Dr. Mark Philbin.

The purpose of the research is to give men an opportunity to tell their story of abuse in whatever way they see fit and to appreciate the particular way in which each man understands his experience, as well as the similarities that may cut across these accounts.

You are required to take part in a one-to-one interview with the principal researcher, Barry Kestell, with this interview lasting about one hour. This interview will be recorded for the purpose of transcription. The interview will begin with the statement: "Please tell me your story of domestic abuse". All other questions that are asked will follow on from the story that you tell or statements that you make. You control the course of the interview.

Your participation in this research is voluntary and you are free to end the interview or withdraw your data at any time, during or after the interview.

Please complete the following (Circle Yes or No for each question)

I understand the information provided

   Yes/No

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study

   Yes/No

I have received satisfactory answers to all my questions

   Yes/No

I am aware that my interview will be audio taped

   Yes/No

I may withdraw from the Research Study at any point.   *Yes/No*

I am aware that all data will remain confidential and in the event of publication a pseudonym will be made use of in place of my name. I am aware that all references to specific places and/or times will be removed to protect my anonymity.

Given the nature of this study complete anonymity cannot be guaranteed. As you are telling your story of domestic abuse it may be the case that someone who is familiar with this story may recognise the events. Names and details such as place names will be altered but the specific course of events may be recognisable to some people.

Please bear in mind that the researcher is obliged, by law, to report any allegations of child abuse made in the discussion.

I have read and understood the information in this form. My questions and concerns have been answered by the researcher, and I have a copy of this consent form. Therefore, I consent to take part in this research project

Participants Signature: _____

Name in Block Capitals: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D – Plain Language Statement

DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY

'**Men's Experiences of Intimate Partner Abuse: A Narrative Analysis of Letters and Talk'.**

Plain Language Statement

I.   Introduction to the Research Study

My name is Barry Kestell and I am conducting a project which is concerned with how men talk about domestic abuse that they have experienced. Domestic abuse constitutes abuse (either physical, psychological, economic or otherwise) experienced by an individual at the hands of a partner with whom they share an intimate relationship. I am looking for men who have experienced or are experiencing such abuse and are willing to tell me their story.

This project is being conducted in the School of Nursing and Human Sciences in Dublin City University. I am the principal investigator on this project and I am being supervised by Dr. Melissa Corbally and Dr. Mark Philbin.

II.   What will you be required to do?

If you consent to be involved in this study you will be asked to participate in an interview with me. This interview will be an opportunity for you to tell the story of your abuse experience, in whatever way you see fit. The interview will begin with the statement:

"Please tell me your story of domestic abuse"

Any other questions that are asked in the course of the interview will relate to the story that you tell.

The duration of the interview will be one hour, or as long as you would like to speak for. The interview will be audio recorded for the purposes of transcription. It can take place in DCU, at the Amen offices, or at another location of your choosing.

III.   Potential risks to participants from involvement in the Research Study

Participants may become significantly distressed as a result of their participation in this study as they will   be asked to recall events that may have been experienced as upsetting. Remembering such things can   sometimes cause distress and this risk is present in this study. If it is the case that you do not wish to continue with the interview, for whatever reason, you are free to end your participation, and you can do so at any stage. You can also withdraw any information that you have supplied to the researcher at any stage of the process, even if this is days or weeks after the interview has been completed.

IV.   Benefits to participants from involvement in the Research Study

Participants may glean some small benefit from being provided with the opportunity to tell their story of domestic abuse. Some people find that the experience of telling their story provides them with a sense of well-being and so this may be a benefit of the study.

V.   Confidentiality and Anonymity

Every effort will be made to ensure that the interview data remains confidential. All those who participate will be given a pseudonym and their data will be stored on a hard drive that only I will have access to and any documents relating to this study will be kept in a locked filing cabinet. As this is a small study, however, complete anonymity might not be possible. To avoid this all references to specific people or places will be removed from the research project but it is important that potential participants are aware of the possibility of this.

An example of the text after it has been altered may appear as follows:

 "I worked at X and one day (sister) came to visit".

As you are being asked to tell the story of your abuse experience it is also possible that even changing the names of people and places may not protect anonymity. The circumstances of the story that is told may be recognisable to others.

Please also be aware that I am obliged, by law, to report any allegations of child abuse made in the discussion. I am also obliged to report any crime, threat of a crime or allegation of a crime that may pose a danger to another individual.

VI. Destruction of data

Your audio recording and the informed consent form will be destroyed once the study has been completed, which is expected to be October 2016. Audio recordings and digital copies of transcripts will be deleted and signed consent forms and hard copies of transcripts will be carefully shredded.

VII.   Withdrawal from Study

Participation in this research project is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any stage of the process.

This project has received clearance from the Dublin City University Ethics committee (where I am studying). This means that the way in which I conduct this study has been reviewed to ensure the maximum consideration for your involvement and safety has been made. If you have any further concerns about this project and wish to speak to me about these please do not hesitate to contact me. My contact details are:

E-mail: barry.kestell2@mail.dcu.ie

Phone: 01-705****

Mobile: **********

If you have concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person,

please contact:

The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Research and Innovation Support, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel 01-7008000

Appendix E – Safety Protocol

Men's Experience of Intimate Partner Abuse: A Narrative Analysis of Letters and Talk.

Researcher: Barry Kestell

   School of Nursing and Human Sciences

   Dublin City University

   Collins Avenue

   Dublin 9.

Supervisors: Dr. Melissa Corbally

   Dr. Mark Philbin

Safety Protocol: Responding to Participant Distress

It is possible that participants may become distressed as a result of taking part in this study. In recognition of this possibility efforts will be made to limit the potential for interviewee distress and to respond appropriately to participants if such a situation arises. These efforts will be made up of the following measures relating to recruitment, the interview process, and the follow-up to interview.

Participant Recruitment:

● Potential participants will be contacted through advertisements directed at the population of interest, in this case male self-identified victims of intimate partner abuse. This advertisement will be placed in Amen offices and on their social media accounts (Twitter and Facebook), as well as the Amen website.

- The researcher will not initiate contact with the participant, contact is initiated by parties interested in participating.

- Participants will be interviewed at their chosen location [12] /time, with this location/time being agreed upon once the participant has confirmed their intention to participate in the study.

- In the interest of safety all participants will be asked to verbalise how they will ensure that they are not followed to the interview location.

- All participants will be informed of the potential for distress associated with participation in the interviews. This is referred to in the written information that will be supplied to participants at initial contact. This issue will be discussed further prior to the provision of written consent.

- All participants will be informed of their right to withdraw from the interview process at any stage, to identify feelings of distress to the interviewer, to expect a sensitive response from the interviewer, and to receive follow-up following an interview.

Conducting Interviews - Interviewer/Interviewee Safety

- Interviews will be held in public locations and will last no longer than one hour.

- The researcher will not enter or leave the building in question with the participant.

- The researcher will inform a colleague of the time and location of the interview and will text this individual immediately prior to and following each interview.

---

[12] In the interests of the participant's safety their choice of location is subject to the constraint that it may not take place in the participant's home. This location poses too many risks to both researcher and participant.

- A mobile phone will be carried in silent mode to allow the interviewer to make contact with others if necessary.

Conducting Interviews - Participant comfort

- A period of time prior to the interview will be spent in casual conversation in order to ensure the comfort of the participant. The interviewer will ensure that the participant is relaxed and ready to proceed before the interview commences.

- During the interview the interviewer must stay alert to signs of discomfort on the part of the participant and address these when they arise. Decisions will be made regarding whether to continue with the interview, continue after a break, or discontinue the interview, on the basis of these observations.

- The interviewer should make an effort to strike a balance between issues which are negatively emotive and those that highlight the strengths and positive qualities that the interviewee displays in the course of their story. As the interview progresses towards its conclusion it should be weighted more heavily towards these positive issues.

- Before the end of the encounter, the researcher should invite the participant to reflect on their participation in the study and, following Josselson (2007), may ask a question like: "How was it for you to be talking to me in this way?". The researcher must stay alert to signs of hesitation or discomfort on the part of the participant and should be ready to "empathically process or clarify any ways in which the participant may have felt distressed by the interview" (Josselson, 2007).

- The interviewer should express his gratitude to participants for taking part in the interview and invite the participant to ask any questions that they have about the

process (Josselson, 2007).

Interview Follow-Up

- If an interviewee becomes very distressed as a result of their participation in the interview process the interviewer will discuss, with them, the appropriate actions to take.

- The interviewee will be provided with the interviewers contact details so that they may contact him regarding any issues that arise from the interviews.

- Interviewees will be provided with information regarding free counselling services that will be provided in the Healthy Living Centre in DCU, as well as the counselling services that are provided by Amen, depending on the location in which the interview takes place.

- The interviewee will be informed that sharing their information with any external individual, for the purposes of counselling, will constitute a breach of the confidentiality of the study. The implications of this will be discussed with the participant at initial contact.

- The interviewer will not provide ongoing therapeutic assistance to interviewees who are distressed by the interviews but will ensure that such assistance is provided to participants. This does not imply that the interviewer will abdicate his responsibility if faced with significant distress. Instead, the interviewer will respond sensitively and helpfully to issues that arise in the course of the interview. Referral for further professional help will be discussed if the interviewer is faced with significant distress.

Appendix F – Transcription Conventions

Transcription Conventions – adapted from Blake Poland (2002)

It is important for qualitative research that transcripts be verbatim accounts of what transpired in the interview; that is they should not be edited or otherwise 'tidied up' to make them 'sound better'.

Pauses	Denote short pauses during talking by a series of dots (…), the length of which depends on the amount of time elapsed (one dot for less than one second, two dots for one seconds, three dots for two seconds). Denote longer pauses with the word pause in parentheses. Use "(pause)" for 3-5 second breaks and "(long pause)" to indicate pauses of six or more seconds.
Laughing, coughing, etc.	Indicate in parentheses; for example, "(coughs)", "(sigh)", "(sneeze)". Use "(laughing)" to denote one person, "(laughter)" to denote several laughing.
Interruptions	Indicate when someone's speech is broken off mid-sentence by including a hyphen(-) at the point where the interruption occurs (e.g. "What do you-").

Overlapping Speech	Use a hyphen to indicate when one speaker interjects into the speech of the other with "(overlapping)", and then return to where the original speaker was interrupted (if he or she continues). For example: R: He said that was impos- I: (overlapping) Who, Bob? R: No, Larry.
Garbled Speech	Flagged words that were not clear with square brackets and question mark if guessing what was said (e.g. "At that, Har). X's were used to denote passages that could not be deciphered at all (number of x's denoted approximate number of words that could not be deciphered). For example, "Gina went xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx, and then [came? Went?] home."

Emphasis	Used caps to denote strong emphasis; for example, "He did WHAT?"
Held sounds	Repeated the sounds that were held, separating them by hyphens. If they were emphasised, they were capitalised as well. For example, "N-o-o-o-o, not exactly" or "I was VER-r-r-y-y-y happy".
Paraphrasing others	When an interviewee assumed a voice that indicated he or she was parodying what someone else said or is expressing an inner voice in the interviewee's head (or a hypothetical voice in the head of a third party), quotation marks were used and it was indicated with "(mimicking voice)". For example: R: Then you know what he came out with? He said (mimicking voice) "I'll be damned if I'm going to YOU push ME around". And I thought to myself: "I'll show you!" But then a little voice inside said "Better watch out for Linda". Sure enough, in she came with that "I'm in control now" air of hers.

Appendix G - Glossary

Legal orders - Legal orders are granted by the court if it is believed that the safety and welfare of an applicant, or the safety and welfare of a dependant of the applicant requires that an order is granted. Safety and welfare includes both physical and psychological welfare. Legal orders covering domestic violence include protection orders, safety orders, interim barring orders and barring orders.

Protection order - This is an immediate order issued while the applicant is waiting for the court to hear their application for a safety order. It has the same effect as a safety order but only lasts until the application for the safety order has been heard by the court. After this point, if the applicant is successful, a safety order will take its place for whatever period has been ordered by the court, with an upper limit of five years.

Safety order - A safety order is an order of the court which prohibits the violent person from further violence or threats of violence. It does not oblige the person to leave the family home. It prohibits the person from watching or being near the home of the applicant if they are not currently resident with the applicant. A safety order can last for up to five years.

Barring order - A barring order is an order of the court which requires the violent person to leave the family home. This order also prohibits the person from further violence or threats of violence, and from watching or being near the home of the applicant. A barring order can last up to three years.

Interim barring order - This is an immediate order requiring the violent person to leave the family home. It is issued only in exceptional circumstances and lasts until the application for the barring order has been heard by the court. After this point, if the applicant is successful, a barring order will take its place for whatever period has been ordered by the court, with an upper limit of three years.

Appendix H - Letters – Table of Abuse and Narrative resources deployed

L2AmenV1 = Letters to Amen: Volume 1

L2AmenV2 = Letters to Amen: Volume 2

Name	Demographics	Type of abuse mentioned	Narrative Resources used
Paddy Murphy	- Married - Still in relationship - Pensionable age	- Emotional abuse/ Psychological abuse - - Physical abuse - Financial abuse - Second wave abuse	- 'Good Husband' - 'Good Father' - Abuse Narrative - ''Mad Woman'' - 'Schemer'
Patrick	- Married - Still in the relationship - Unspecified number of children	- Emotional abuse - Physical abuse - Second wave abuse	- 'Good Father' - 'Schemer'
Brian L2AmenV2	- Married - Two children - Still in the relationship -	- Emotional abuse - Physical abuse - Second wave abuse	- 'Good Husband' - 'Good Father' - 'Mad Woman' - 'Schemer'
Dermot L2AmenV2	- Married - Still in the relationship - Two children – both girls.	- Emotional abuse - Physical abuse	- 'Good Husband' - 'Good Father' - 'Schemer'
Feargal L2AmenV2	- Married - In the process of separation - Children – unspecified number	- Emotional abuse/ Psychological abuse - His access to his children has been restricted at times. - Second wave abuse	- 'Good Husband' - 'Good Father' - 'Schemer'
Joe L2AmenV2	- Married - No separation agreement but living apart	- Emotional abuse - Physical abuse - Second wave abuse	- 'Good Father' - 'Schemer'

	- Children – unspecified number		
Peter L2AmenV2	- Referred to as partner so it may be guessed that he is not married. - Left the relationship - Two children	- Physical abuse - Second wave abuse	- 'Good Father' - 'Schemer'
Tony L2AmenV2	- Married - Left relationship	- Emotional abuse - Physical abuse - Restricted his access to his son	- 'Good Father' - 'Good Husband' - 'Mad Woman' - 'Schemer'
Alan L2AmenV1	- Married	- Emotional abuse - Physical abuse	- 'Good Father' - 'Schemer'
Anon L2AmenV1	- Married - No mention of being separated - Three children	- Emotional abuse - Physical abuse - Financial abuse - Second wave abuse	- 'Good Father' - 'Good Husband' - Abuse Narrative
Brian L2AmenV1	- Married - Reports that he was 'deserted' - One son	- Physical abuse - Emotional abuse - Second wave abuse	- Abuse Narrative
Charlie L2AmenV1	- Married - Not living together but no mention of judicial separation - Two boys	- Emotional abuse - Physical abuse - Restricted access to children. - Second wave abuse	- 'Good Father' - 'Good Husband' - 'Schemer'
Damian L2AmenV1	- Married - Three children	- Emotional abuse - Physical abuse	- 'Mad Woman' - 'Good Father' - 'Good Husband'
Dan L2AmenV1	- Married - Separation hearing in progress	- Emotional abuse - Physical abuse - Restricted his access to children. - Second wave abuse	- 'Mad Woman' - 'Schemer' - 'Good Father'

	- Children – unspecified number	- Financial abuse	
Donal L2AmenV1	- Married - Separation in progress - Two children; boys -	- Emotional abuse - Physical abuse - Financial abuse - Second wave abuse/ secondary victimisation	- 'Good Father' - 'Good Husband' - 'Schemer'
Evan L2AmenV2	- Must be married as his wife has filed for separation - Four children	- Emotional abuse - Physical abuse - Financial abuse - Second wave abuse	- 'Good Husband' - 'Good Father' - 'Schemer' - 'Mad Woman'
George L2AmenV1	- Married - Not clear if separated legally but has left the home - Three children	- Emotional abuse - Physical violence - Financial abuse - Restricted access to children	- 'Good Father' - 'Mad Woman' - 'Schemer'
Ian L2AmenV2	- Partner – not married - One child – girl -	- Emotional abuse - Physical abuse - Second wave abuse	- 'Good Father' - Abuse Narrative
John L2AmenV1	- Married - No mention of separation - Three children	- Second wave abuse - Financial abuse - Emotional abuse	- 'Good Husband' - 'Schemer' - 'Good Father'
Patrick L2AmenV2	- Married - Children (unspecified number)	- Physical abuse - Emotional abuse - Second wave	- 'Good Father' - 'Good Husband' - 'Mad Woman'
Tommy G – L2AmenV1	- Married -	- Emotional abuse - Physical abuse	- 'Good Father' - Abuse Narrative
Gary L2AmenV2	- Married - Separated	- Second wave	- 'Schemer' - 'Mad Woman' - 'Good Father'

	- Children (unspecified number)		
Jarlath L2AmenV1	- Married - Not yet separated - Unspecified number of children	- Physical abuse - Second wave abuse	- 'Mad Woman' - 'Good Father' - 'Good Husband'
Kyle L2AmenV2	- Relationship not specified - No longer together - One daughter	- Emotional abuse	- 'Schemer' - 'Good Father' - 'Mad Woman' - 'Good Husband'
Naveen	- Married - Not separated - Wife is pregnant	- Physical abuse - Emotional abuse	- 'Good Father' - 'Schemer' - 'Mad Woman'
Tom L2AmenV2	- Married - Wife is dead - Four children	- Physical abuse - Emotional abuse - Second wave abuse - Restricted access to children.	- 'Good Husband' - 'Mad Woman' - 'Schemer' - 'Good Father'
Aidan L2AmenV1	- Married - Three children	- Emotional abuse - Physical abuse - Second wave abuse - Restricted his access to children.	- 'Good Husband' - 'Schemer'
Alain L2AmenV1	- Married - 3 children	- Emotional abuse - Physical abuse - Second wave abuse	- 'Schemer' - 'Mad Woman' - 'Good Father'
Felim L2AmenV1	- Married - 5 children	- Emotional abuse - Physical abuse - Stalking	- 'Mad Woman' - 'Schemer' - 'Good Father'
Joe L2AmenV1	- Married - Now separated	- Emotional abuse - Financial abuse - Physical abuse - Second wave abuse	- 'Good Father' - 'Schemer'

	- Unspecified number of children		
John L2AmenV1	- Married - No children of their own – one from her previous relationship	- Emotional abuse - Physical abuse - Second wave abuse	- 'Schemer' - 'Good Husband'
Sam L2AmenV2	- Was married now divorced – from 'EU' and divorced in home country	- Second wave abuse - Emotional abuse - Financial abuse	- 'Schemer'
Johnny L2AmenV1	- Married - Now separated - 10 children	- Emotional abuse - Physical abuse - Financial abuse - Second wave abuse	- 'Good Father' - Abuse Narrative
Marty L2AmenV1	- Married - One child	- Physical abuse - Second wave abuse	- 'Mad Woman' - 'Good Father' - Abuse Narrative
Mike L2AmenV1 pp25	- Married - Three sons	- Physical abuse - Emotional abuse - Second wave abuse	- 'Good Father' - Abuse Narrative - 'Schemer'
Mike L2Amen V1 pp63	- Married - Now separated - Wife had one boy from a previous relationship; five children from their relationship	- Emotional abuse - Physical abuse - Second wave abuse	- 'Good Father' - 'Good Husband' - 'Schemer'
Myles L2AmenV1	- Married - Now separated - Two children	- Emotional abuse - Physical abuse - Second wave abuse - Restriction of access to children	- 'Good Father' - Abuse Narrative

Name	Marital Status	Abuse Type	Narrative
Tim L2AmenV1	- Married -	- Emotional abuse - Physical abuse - Interfered with access to the children	- 'Mad Woman' - 'Good Father' - 'Good Husband'
Tom L2AmenV1	- Married	- Physical abuse - Emotional abuse	- 'Good Father' - 'Schemer' - 'Good Husband' - Abuse Narrative
Niall L2AmenV1	- Married - Now separated	- Emotional abuse - Physical abuse - Second wave abuse	- 'Good Husband' - 'Good Father' - 'Schemer'
Padraig L2AmenV1	- Married - Separated - Unspecified number of children	- Financial abuse - Emotional abuse - Second wave abuse - Physical abuse	- 'Good Husband' - 'Schemer'
Alan L2AmenV2	- Married - Left the family home - Unspecified number of children	- Emotional abuse - Physical abuse - Second wave abuse	- 'Good Father' - Abuse Narrative - 'Mad Woman'
Alex L2AmenV2	- Married - 3 children	- Financial abuse - Second wave abuse - Emotional abuse	- 'Mad Woman' - 'Good Father' - Good man - 'Schemer' - Abuse Narrative - 'Good Husband'
Peter L2AmenV1	- Married	- Emotional abuse - Physical abuse - Second wave abuse	- Abuse Narrative
Seamus L2AmenV1	- Married - Still in relationship - Two children	- Emotional abuse - Physical abuse - Second wave abuse	- Good victim - 'Mad Woman' - 'Good Husband' - 'Schemer'
Ted L2AmenV1	- Married - Separated - Unspecified number of children -	- Second wave abuse - Emotional abuse	- Negation - 'Good Father'
Vito L2AmenV2	- Married - Wants to separate from her	- Emotional abuse - Physical abuse	- Abuse Narrative - Vindictive woman

	- Three children		
Brendan L2AmenV2	- Not married - One child	- Emotional abuse	- 'Good Father'
Cathal L2AMenV2	- Married - Separation pending - No children	- Physical abuse - Second wave abuse	- Negation - 'Good Husband'
Colin L2AmenV2	- Not married - No children	- Emotional abuse - Physical abuse	- N/A
Eddie L2AmenV2	- Not married - Mother of his daughter	- Emotional abuse - Second wave abuse	- 'Mad Woman' - 'Good Father'
Jack L2AmenV2	- Married - Unspecified number of children	- Emotional abuse - Physical abuse	- 'Mad Woman' - 'Good Father' - 'Schemer' - 'Good Husband'
Mark L2AmenV2	- Relationship not specified - Unspecified number of children	- Emotional abuse - Financial abuse - Second wave abuse	- N/A
William L2AmenV1	- Married - Separated - 5 children	- Emotional abuse	- 'Good Father'
Andrew L2AmenV2	- Not married - Three children – all boys	- Emotional abuse	- 'Good Father'
Clive L2AmenV2	- Married - Unspecified number of children	- Emotional abuse - Second wave abuse - Physical abuse - Financial abuse	- 'Good Husband' - 'Mad Woman'
Daniel L2AmenV2	- Married - Now separated	- Physical abuse - Emotional abuse	- 'Good Father'
Desmond L2AmenV1	- Married - Unspecified number of children	- Emotional abuse - Physical abuse	- 'Good Father'

George L2AmenV1pp16	- Married - Awaiting separation	- Physical abuse - Emotional abuse - Second wave abuse	- 'Mad Woman' - 'Good Father'
Joe L2AmenV1 (2)	- Not married - One child	- Physical abuse - Emotional abuse	- 'Good Father' - 'Mad Woman'
Josef L2AmenV1	- Not married - One child	- Emotional abuse - Physical abuse - Second wave abuse	- 'Schemer'
Larry L2AmenV1	- Married	- Physical abuse - Second wave abuse - Restricting access to children	- 'Mad Woman' - 'Good Father' - 'Schemer'
Michael L2AmenV1	- Married - Has moved out of family home but no legal separation. - Children but unspecified number	- Emotional abuse - Physical abuse	- Abuse Narrative
Sean L2AmenV2	- Married	- Second wave abuse	- 'Schemer' - 'Mad Woman' - 'Good Father'