How to masculineHaevn Aalbersberg



How to masculine

A guideline for masculinity through truckspotting

By Haevn Aalbersberg

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This is to certify that to the best of my knowledge, the content of this thesis is my own work. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or other purposes.

I certify that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work and that all the assistance received in preparing this thesis and sources have been acknowledged.

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WARNING

This research paper is written by me, Haevn Aalbersberg, a transmasculine person graduating from Fine Arts at the Royal Academy of Art the Hague in 2025. The research paper is meant to reflect the masculine standards of today's society in a not so traditional way, truckspotting. I want to state that I intend no harm to any individuals who might feel attacked or referred to. The subjects that I will address in this research paper are simply facts backed up by actual knowledge, such as gender studies and observations from people, not just my opinion or my point of view (even though it is highly influenced by that).

I hope by providing this statement, that I have informed you, the reader, or hater enough and wish you a pleasant truckspotting experience.

- Haevn Aalbersberg (Truckspotter.2000)

Masculinity and gender

In this research paper I will focus primarily on contemporary white western masculinity, the one you will find in western Europe and in most of North America. This way of practicing masculinity might be a few hundred years old and is not even the only way to masculine. What this way of masculinity is, and where it came from I will be discussing shortly.

Before I do so, I would like to share my thoughts on gender and femininity. Since masculinity would not exist without those components. You know what, I will spice it up a bit; masculinity would not exist if it was not for sex1. So, there are three major components now that would not function without one another. But somehow, masculinity ended up being the most important in this conversation. This, to me and many others, seems a bit unfair. Why to be masculine to be more powerful? In everything? Personally, I think it is mostly about compromising, for some lack. Let's start with the sex, the biological part. Your biological sex is made up of your DNA, chromosomes, your brain², and of course your reproductive organs. All of us start out as female, even the biggest masculine men out there. Then some of us change a bit, not even that much, I mean men have nipples too. Humans produce more male than female sex beings, this mainly because males are born with a weaker immune system than females. Our biological clock knows, I think, how males are and know that some of them will most probably die earlier than females for whatever reason that might be... I will come back to this later, when I talk about toxic masculinity.

Anyway, with all those changes compared to a born female human being comes, of course, a certain responsibility, one that most males seem to have; the burden of maculinity.

¹¹ will discuss biological sex, male and female. And will refer in this paragraph to those two sexes. To indicate this is only about the sex and not about gender. This will be the only time I will address this topic in such a binary way.

² I am addressing the brain too, since it is part of the human biological system. This does not mean that I see the brain in a binary way. There have been studies done on the human brain that show that transgender people actually have similar brain patterns to the gender they were not born as. Some people even have brain waves of both genders. There are even 8 different types of brain patterns, so not even all cis-gendered people have the same brains as one another.

The type of gender I will be discussing was built around the social aspects of the two primary sexes male and female³. As said by Freud, men are more active, whereas women are more passive, which was concluded by their biological sex¹. Since the sperm is active, and will make its swim for the egg that sits there waiting for the sperm to arrive⁴. Those active and passive character traits were later enlarged on many social aspects in our society that you can think of. Gendered products and media used in the market to sell the idea of traditional gender roles really made generations believe there was nothing outside of this traditional gender binary. Our parents and their grandparents all grew up with this so-called gender norm. Even to think about something remotely different would have made you an outcast of this phenomenon.

It wasn't until feminists in 1848 started to protest for woman's rights, since the patriarchy made them seem as if they were any less than men². Because of those protests, other minority groups dared to speak up, and not long after we had the first gender theory, where they tried to look outside of the box of this binary where gender had been sitting since Darwin.

All of this scared a lot of men, all their traditional values of being the strong one, a provider, big leader, and breadwinner. Were all of a sudden being threatened by different groups, that they have always seen as less than them. Since the MAN was always the centre of our universe. How man learned to behave was without emotions, if you showed any you were weak (or worse, gay.)

³ Being born intersex is a big part of the gender discussion, a lot of conservative people don't want to acknowledge that intersex is a third gender, regardless of what people think, I do think it is a third sex just like in other species, humans are not simply born male or female. For this argument, I will only use the male and female sex, since those two have shaped society for most of our western history.

⁴ However this is not true, without the female reproductive system being active, the sperms would have no change of survival. The female reproductive system is doing everything in its power to give the sperm a chance to befriend the egg.

The simplest thing to do when you do not know how to manage your emotions since you are not allowed to express any, is to use anger. Because that is tough and cool, another manly man would definitely respect that and for sure agree with it.

Working in the factories, going on a mission, being in the army, being a war hero. All contributed to the idea of traditional masculinity. Big companies had the golden opportunity to profit from the stories of those hard-working men. Using anything from shaving blades to guns to make their profit. The idea of masculinity grew bigger with every new product on the market. As money kept rolling the gap between the people in poverty and wealth grew bigger, so there became more space to manipulate the majority of men.

This left many men unsure of what masculinity really is. Fortunately, there is a non-binary person who found those answers in trucskpotting.

All there is for a person who wasn't born a cis-gendered male but has always felt more masculine, is to observe.

"Masculinity"

The properties and characteristics of the male sex

The trait of behaving in ways considered typical for man

- DJDave 71

"Masculinity"

The epitome of what a man should be.

- ally2164

"Masculinity"

When no Harry Potter

"Masculinity is when no Harry Potter"

- perceistheworst

According to the Urban Dictionary, these are some of the many examples of what the word "masculinity" stands for. Looking at a more reliable source like the "Oxford Languages" the noun "masculinity" stands for: "Qualities or attributes regarded as characteristics of men or boys." Indicating that anything other than that explanation of the term isn't masculine? Which makes sense, from a heteronormative close-minded point of view.

To me, this information and translation of the word feels outdated, the truth of the matter is that everyone in this world has a relationship with masculinity, some have masculine partners whereas others crave to be more masculine. One has to go through a lot to fit into this so-called norm that man has created around masculinity. The norm our society has a chokehold on, it seems impossible to change, and when significant changes are happening, these norms seem to switch or broaden their horizons. There is always one group that wants to go back and undo all the growth and changes.

To be an outsider of the norm is sometimes hard. How to navigate through the linear when all you want to do is worm around and just be yourself. I would like to offer a guide on "how to masculine" through a queer/trans point of view. Searching for and through extreme forms of masculinity and exploring them from deep within. Hopefully finding out along the way what I find to be so fascinating about the masculine, and why it has always been such a big part of my existence. And keep on wondering why I couldn't just be feminine. (How easy life would've been)

Creating my own urban dictionary, using truckspotting as a guideline to dig through my understanding of the masculine world.

1. Introduction

How to spot a truck, the basics of truckspotting.

Truckspotting can be traced back to the Industrial Revolution when the first steam machines came to function. A site like that needs to be viewed, but what do you call such a person that views? Some have described people who view construction sites as "umarell", an Italian term for elderly men who are retired, and look at construction sites with their hands behind their backs, watching and judging every move that happens on the construction site⁴. Truckspotting is closely related to the umarell, but I would say truckspotting gives space to a wider spectrum of people. To understand what a truckspotter really is, I will split the word up in two.

The Truck:

- Excavator
- Transport truck
- Tractor
- High-worker
- Forklift
- Bulldozer
- Etc.

(I will elaborate on the personas of different trucks at 2.)

Those are just some examples of trucks, their most common habitats are:

- Construction sites
- Roads
- Farms
- Fields

(I will elaborate on the different locations at 3.)

(Trucks should be able to move around freely, they can be of any size)

One of the first steam trucks was a tractor, but it is debatable who invented it. What we know is that Benjamin Holt invented one in 1890⁵. However, two years later John Deere successfully managed to make one of the first gasoline tractors⁶. Holt decided to team up with one of his rivals C.L. Best and started to produce gasoline trucks as well. Becoming Caterpillar. It is almost inevitable to be successful in any competition: it is one of the drives to be great, to make more and better trucks. Without the need for competition, we would not have the trucks we have today, to push the innovation to the next level.

The Spotting:

The subject that makes the word a whole. Without the spotter, there is no truckspotting it is just truck. To digest this word let's start with the basics, the spotting in truckspotting is a verb, you are actively spotting. To point out a truck. Most people use eyesight to spot trucks, but there are other senses you can use to spot. Like listening to the sound of the hydraulic pump or motor. If you are at a construction site and the building is being demolished, smell the rubbish, the once concrete blocks crumpled down in powder. A smell only a true truckspotter can recognise.

By combining the two words you get something that is not complicated, it is what it is and what it is supposed to be: "truckspotting". I would like to provide one more source of information to know what truckspotting is, my own Urban Dictionary of truckspotting:

"Truckspotting"

To spot a truck.

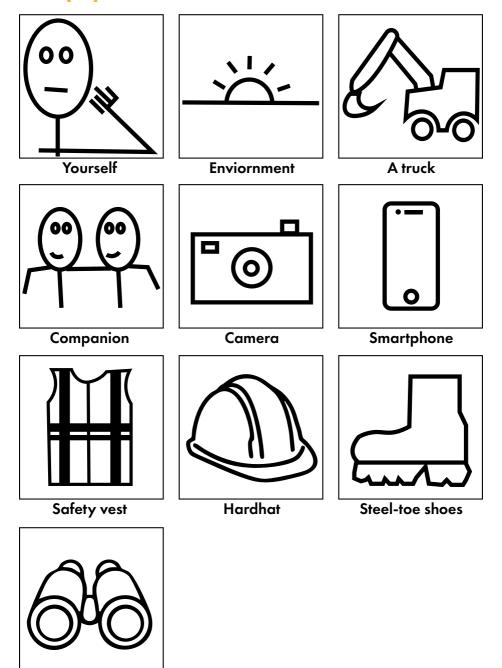
"Me and my mates went to a construction site, for our annual "truckspotting" weekend."

"Wow I spotted this amazing truck"

Explanation: "truckspotting" can be done anywhere, on every piece of machinery that is able to move around.

By: truckspotter.2000 7

2. Equipment



Binoculars

Yourself:

For some, it might be the most obvious but others tend not to think of themselves as a tool. But without you there is no truckspotting, keep that in mind! It is important to be there in full spirit and body.

Environment:

In 3 there will be more in-depth information about the locations you can go truckspotting at, always keep in mind what season it is and what weather you can expect before you go out truckspotting.

Summer: Be aware of the sun you might need additional equipment like, sunscreen, a hat, sunglasses, and a UV protective layer of clothes. Staying out in the heat can cause severe dehydration, bring enough water for the trip.

Autumn: Lots of rain is to be expected. Bring an assortment of equipment to keep yourself dry, such as an umbrella, rain clothes, a tent, and a towel.

Spring: No special equipment is needed.

Winter: Winter is not ideal for truckspotting unless you want to make your own Christmas cards with all the trucks you have spotted. But be prepared truckspotting in the winter comes with a big /I/WARNING.

A truck:

The criteria for a truck are mentioned in the introduction.

Just like us human beings, there are multiple personality traits a truck can possess. There is a whole variety of trucks from flamboyant trucks to toxic masculine trucks. All of those trucks are okay to spot, be careful though on how to approach the truck. Some trucks react differently than others, this can be scary, but do not worry. Deep down all the trucks are made from the same parts and have the same mechanism. Even though some trucks are newer than the older generation of trucks, that does not mean you have to forget about the older generation of trucks. In the end, those were the trucks that raised the newer generation of trucks, and without them, the new generation of trucks would not exist. So, treat every truck you see the same and they will make sure to be nice and shiny for your next truckspotting trip.

2.1. Optional equipment

A companion:

This could be your buddy from work, a neighbour, a best friend, a lover, or a group of random masculine-representing people. It is okay to introduce other sorts of people, for example; people that are more feminine, but make sure to inform them well on time about this manual.

Camara:

To document the truck you are spotting, it does not matter what camera you use¹. You need to make sure it will fit all your needs. Are you going for a more urban look, a more casual, or even a traditional look? There are different cameras for different needs. Make sure you are using the right one. One that can really capture the beauty of the truck.

Smartphone:

The smartphone has multiple functions, you could use this device to document your truck, but also to stay in contact with other truckspotters in case a bulldozer runs you over. Next to that, you can use your phone as a radio player to play music, be aware to use headphones so the people who are working with the trucks do not get distracted by your country hip-hop drum and bass music. The best phones to use are construction phones, like the CAT phone².

¹ Take for example my attempt to make a movie about talking trucks ("Sad Trucks, 2022"), I took a deep dive into the world of trucks and tried to portray our human experience on them. Sadly, without success, I realised that trucks are trucks and we are us. It did give me a valuable starting point in my truckspotting career, because that movie is where it all started. Where I got my inspiration from to give myself that voice that I was lacking in that film. Where trucks became a symbol for much greater things.

I spotted those trucks with a Panasonic sdr-s10 from around roughly 2007. The old-school look of this camera was exactly what the trucks needed in the scenes.

² Personally, I would recommend the CAT smartphone. They are made specifically for the construction site and will last maybe even longer than a Nokia brick phone. They are very durable. The only downside of those phones is that they run on Android⁸.

Safety vest:

It makes you visible to every human and machine. Choose your color wisely, considering the company that is working on a specific sight. They might have different colors of safety vests, which could give you access to places where you are not supposed to be;).

Hardhat:

In case an object hits your head. This sounds very logical, but it is not always mandatory. On most sights, you are only allowed to truckspot from the sidelines, where the fences are. Those areas are designed to be safe, you do not need any special equipment if you are spotting from the side.

Steel-toe shoes:

In case an object falls on your feet. Or a truck drives over them (OUCH.)

Binoculars:

Not all trucks are up and close, to spot the trucks from miles away. Or from the sidelines of a construction site.

3. Location

The location where you spot trucks is deeply personal, you as the truckspotter need to feel connected to the space, and the atmosphere. You simply need to handle the dust most of the locations bring. It is important to feel where you are and to have the gut feeling of inner peace when you enter the environment. The cherry on the cake is when you are in that perfect location and there is your favourite truck doing its favourite activity.

Road:

It could be any type of road, from pebbles to asphalt. Be sure in any case to be on the side of the road. NEVER be ON the road.

A Field:

This is where you find most of the tractors. Be sure to be visible or a mewing truck will not spot you. Tractors will mostly be visible at those types of locations, harvesting, plowing, mewing, collecting¹.

¹ The fields are where my truckspotting journey really began. I always wondered what life would have been like if I was born a farmer's boy, sitting on my tractor all day plowing the fields driving in straight lines over and over, to do it all again the next day. That life for me seemed so peaceful and calm. Something I lacked in my personal life and felt like I was missing out on. I could only daydream of a life like that.

Knowing that I needed to do something with this feeling I decided to go to the fields with my camera to see what was happening over there. Not even 30 minutes in, I found myself so bored, the tractors were too far away to really spot and they were only moving up and down for a couple of minutes, after that the person handling the truck completely took a break. Here I was filming a still truck. And knowing that for truckspotting itself the fields were not my perfect location. I had to find it elsewhere.

Construction site:

It is always a spectacle when something is getting demolished, the fumes that come free of the broken bricks, the dust that the concrete leaves behind when a big piece falls on the ground. The new wind a lost building brings, there is all of a sudden space for the wind to pass through the windows that once were there. The rainbow the water sprinkles make on the brick-breaking attachment in case of fire. All those elements make up the perfect environment for a truckspotting location². Of course, there is more to a construction site than only demolishing, there is renovation and construction itself. Which brings its own spectacle of elements.

² Personally, the construction site where the demolishing of a building is happening is my favorite. To see all the memories fade away as quickly as the machines can operate. My first real construction truckspotting happened at the old building of the the Hague

Conservatorium. I held no meaning to the place I did not even know what the place was until I later discussed my findings with a tutor. Where I found out all the memories he had there. It was then that I realized what a big of meaning buildings hold and the machines that build them or break them down. The big role the trucks play in people their memories without people really knowing it. I find it peaceful to know how things go, I find my piece in knowing what happened there and what new is to come.

4. Permission

When you are truckspotting close to a human or the owner in the truck is close by, be sure to ask permission, especially if you are going to post the truck that you just spotted on one of your platforms like Instagram, Tumblr, etc. When you use the picture for your private collection permission is not always necessary but it is still a decent thing to do.

4.1. How to ask permission

Be polite, open, and tough.

5. Community

The truckspotting community is one of the most important aspects of truckspotting. It shows the devotion of all the truckspotters. It shows the character where truckspotting is based on. It shows truly how special truckspotting is. Truckspotting is something all of us do without even realising we are doing. It takes a person with precision to realise that they are, in fact, a truckspotter. Some people might need a little push to realise that they are a truckspotter. Like seeing a other person posting some trucks on insta. Or spotting a truckspotter in the wild taking pictures of trucks.

To understand where this is coming from we need to go back to the basics, the longing for a community. A desire for connection and the need for a bond. Most of the truckspotting start at construction sites, the one where men work intense hours day in and out. Despite the circumstances, the people that work those jobs enjoy what they are doing and are passionate about it. So passionate that they bring their work home sometimes, having a beer with the buddies after a long day of work so they can blow off some steam. This doesn't sound so different than the life of a art student. After a long day of working in the studio, wanting some ease with some peers. Construction in general is not that different from art in many ways. From the idea, to executing it with a team, needing all the permits to finish to conclude the first phase. Then moving up to create a new something for people to enjoy. Working together no matter how many things go wrong and still be able to tolerate each other at the end of the day.

Being a truckspotter is about creating connections with people you never thought you would have a connection with, but here you are both admiring this truck, it is about connecting and feeling in touch with yourself. It is not about pretending like you are someone you are not, whilst truckspotting you can completely 200% be your authentic self, the one that is hidden under all the layers of social shame. The one you were when you were a kid and you did not know there was any social rules bound to your gender¹.

How to build a community:

Go out and spot your trucks first, see if there is other people around the site you are spotting at. Do not be afraid to walk up to them and make small talk. Ask how their day is going and look at their body language and see if they are open for a conversation. If they continue the convo and see where it will bring you. If you are really vibing with each other, ask if you can exchange socials. The best thing to find out is if they have a social media account, where they also spot and post trucks. After this interaction you can now start commenting on their post with fire emojis or with lots of love. Show your passion and they will show it too on your truckspotting page.

Most truckspotters are active on instagram².

¹ This kind of masculinity is the one I deeply adore and respect and feel, the one you can not describe but the one that was given to you at birth. The one before all the social norms weere forced on to you. I feel like this form of masculinity really shines through when people enjoy something pure and where they don't have to feel like they have to pretend or put on a persona. The type of masculinity that comes from deep within with no toxic masculinity involved.

² If we take me for example, with my instagram page: truckspotter.2000 is where I have built my truckspotter community, it might be only a community of 80 people. But most of them are very involved and spot trucks too.

6. Rules

The rules on truckspotting depend on what field of truckspotting you are practicing. If you are not sure about the rules, be sure to ask one of the more experienced truckspotters the rules. Be a beta until you are not anymore.

6.1. Respect

Truckspotting is for everyone, some groups of people are more dedicated than others. But every form of dedication is important. We cannot all be the most fanatic truckspotter out there, that will create too much tension and competition we do not want.

Here in Europe performing masculinity is based on very manly traits whilst this was not always the case, flamboyant men used to be the IT men of the time, wearing bright colours, dressing well, sometimes even putting on some good makeup. Being a representation of masculinity in some cases just works like that. Another example is trans-truckspotters, some might find them scary, different, and not easy to approach. All those are assumptions, just because you have watched too much right-wing propaganda does not mean those claims about transgender people are true². There are so many different types of men and masculinity displays itself in so many different ways, so whenever you see a truckspotter that is not completely an identical twin just like you do not judge them, rather treat them like equals as one should.

¹ One of my favourite musicians Dorian Electra made a album called "flamboyant" criticising modern day masculinity. In their own funny yet accurate way.

² I would argue that transmasculine people are more reasonable than cis-gendered people. Not all of them but a majority of them difficulty are. Something that most cis-gendered men are lacking, is the ability to understand what it is like to be a woman, trans people on the other hand were forced to live as a woman for some time. As much as I disliked being born in a female body, I do understand what it is like in a certain assent what life is like living in a patriarchal society as not being the centre of it. It is at times scarier than a men's locker room. So don't underestimate your fellow trans truckspotter, rather learn something from them and maybe for a change treat them like one of your bros. You would be surprised how much in common you have.

7. Safety precautions

Mental precautions:

Always be sure to be looked after by any other truckspotter, you do not want to end up in a weak position, where other truckspotters might leave mean comments on your truckspotting posts. If you are a victim of cyberbullying make sure to contact the truck safety line.

Physical precautions:

Better be safe than sorry, make sure you make your optional equipment part of your general equipment.

7.1. CAUTION **(**

Toxic masculinity, how to not masculine:

From birth, boys learn that they are the centre of the universe and that everything is about them. But before that little boy gets thrown into the middle of the mosh pit, he starts like any other human being. All embryos start out as the female sex for just a few weeks ¹⁰. Only men develop a little extra thing that will influence them for the rest of their lives. The phallo, what did that thing do to make man want to have infinite power? Is it a compromise for the fact that men are the weaker species, from birth to death? It is proven that women have a higher survival rate than men. This mostly is caused by the difference in the immune system¹¹, but also by the habits they inhered along the way.

Today is not yesterday and hopefully, it will never be yesterday again.

The changes that are happening right now regarding the topic of gender, are frightening for some men. They have a hard time accepting change and find themself having a hard time to move past men not being the centre of everything. Not only is gender scaring them to death, it is also the machines that are taking over their jobs, the jobs that were created by and for men. Women and children are now less dependet by

men, since they now have more rights than before (as they should). This all is new territory for men, a place where they, and their ancestors never have been before. This change can do a lot to a man, especially a man that does not know how to deal with those changes. How masculinity was perceived in the past is an outdated view, certain things are now being questioned and are seen as toxic behaviours. Again, this is not helpful for men that do not know better than what they have been taught. It could be perceived as scary, frightening even, how some men respond to those emotions is aggression, their defence mechanism is in full force and all they can do is act out of is their fight or flight instinct. To calm the nerves, they drink and do drugs, to regulate the emotions they cannot seem to understand.

If you know or are a man, or a masculine-presenting person, and you struggle with this kinds of behaviour, please take a break from reading and to take a look at: https://mantherapy.org/ here they can help you, guide you to a more peaceful existence in masculinity. They will show you what it is like to be a true non-problematic alpha male.

If you are not sure if you are performing toxic masculinity, here are just a few examples:

The incel:

A chronically online person, most of them men. In search for a romantic partner with traditional social standards, like doing the chores at home and being submissive to their significant other. They think extremely high of themselves, deserve the best, most beautiful romantic partner. In their chronically online existence, they often get lost in their own created world with fellow incels. Those online spaces are often, let's say most of the time seen as an unsafe space for any other person, especially feminine presenting people, since this is the group of people that incels obsess about. They have their own online platforms where they share their absurd ideologies and thoughts of rage. The incel could be referred to as; the trash of the masculine spectrum¹².

A gym bro:

Let's start by saying, that not all gym bros are portraying the toxic masculine. But most of them definitely are. I am talking specifically about the gym bros that use steroids to build their bodies as big as possible, not only do those steroids make them aggressive it also has a huge influence on their ego. The bigger they are the smaller their... but that only means that they have to pump it up more to compensate for their made-up lack. They form a thread for other groups, they like to make fun of people that are not the same as them. This in itself is already very toxic. Imagine a man, but ten times the bad parts that toxic masculinity can bring along, all cropped up deep inside of them, ready to escape at any given time.

Not only are they toxic in society, they are also toxic to themselves. In all aspects not just mentally but for sure physically. All the enhancing drugs that they are using on such an intense level, are not good for the heart. Muscles popping bigger than their heart ain't no joke. The worst part is that most of them are well aware of what all of those steroids are doing to their bodies, but they simply do not care ¹³. As long as there are gains there are no pains, as their life motto says so beautifully.

The alpha male:

Is what the incels think they are and the gym bros try to achieve. A true alpha male follows traditional gender roles and they see themselves as leaders. Big and strong and they know how to use a gun. They are not afraid to verbally and physically abuse people and knows how to not take care of himself or his family. Next to that the alpha male is most probably in battle with some sort of substance abuse, with the number one being alcoholism. This for them is only the best since it brings out the best alpha male version that there is.

Male artist: then there is him, the one who thinks he can get away with everything because it is art, and he is a man, so he better make good use of his powers. He has to exploit everything surrounding him. Luckily, some of those men who had abused power, see some consequences. Take for example the case of Julian Andeweg¹⁴, action was taken but was it enough?

Cult leaders: as if the list couldn't get any longer, we arrived at yet another power-hungry man, at least most of them are, some are just delusional. It is all about control over the other, mostly with religion to support them and to of course give them a purpose.

But do not worry those men are mostly just afraid of emasculation. Nowadays it is used as a term to point out a man who has lost his credibility in his or in some other people's eyes to be what it takes to be a real man, they see it as a weakness to be emasculated. It makes them feel scared and vulnerable, this is all they cannot handle. Certain right-wing groups fear that all the 'woke' people emasculate them, that the role they claimed for themselves will be taken away by all the minority groups that they love to have power over. But the funny thing is that emasculation is an ancient word and technique. The word itself is based on a Latin word that roughly translates into "to castrate" and so this technique was used quite often in different periods of time, and in some occasions, emasculation was even happening for the sake of free will. Some emasculation methods were to completely remove the phallo, so there would be no chance for any naughty things. Knowing where the term originates from, I can imagine that all those big masculine men do not want to lose their masculinity over emasculation.

These shown above are just a view example on how to use your masculinity in a toxic way, there are so many other ways to execute masculinity. Sadly most of the behaviours listed above are often seen as the way to masculine, it is imprinted in our society and it is up to us to change this norm.

"Instead of progressing and changing, men caught in the patriarchy fell behind and pulled everyone down with them until they looked around, saw the mess they had made, and asked how things had gotten so bad15."

- Jared Yates Sexton

Conclusion

Trucks have been a big part of manhood. Trucks somehow represent masculinity. Being one with the machine, finding your favourite truck, and bragging about it to your mates. Finally riding the truck of your dreams. Feeling like a real man when you see the truck that you wanted to spot for years. Going through fire and back to get that single shot of the fast-moving digger truck. The excavator with the right attachment in the right brand on the right construction site is like a wet dream that comes true. But what makes all this masculine?

The truck in my eyes is a metaphor for what men search within themselves, the bigger the better. The faster the cooler, the shinier the alpha? It is all about the ego and don't get me wrong, who am I to judge, but if you really get into it, ego is what it comes down to. How is there so much love for a piece of metal with a fun colour? Just like everything else, it is about the relationship the person holds to it, how society has shaped this stigma around trucks andhow it became the norm for masculine people to have this machine as their front-runner for their masculinity.

Passion is also a big part of the truck spotting scene all this named above can be linked to passion without a doubt. The beauty these machines hold and the magnificent shapes they have. To look at trucks like a piece of art, an installation. Seeing your favourite truck in action at a Caterpillar demolition is every truckspotters dream. Seeing the CAT2000 lit up by fireworks whilst swinging with its arm on the song "Fireball" by Pitbull is like watching an opera in real life¹⁶, I could feel the tears of joy going down my cheeks. As much as I like to link it all to ego and macho behaviour, that is not the only part of truck spotting. It is a way of living. This is what I had to say when I started writing my research paper...

CONCLUSION

What I like to say after writing the guide.

Men were made to work hard and though labor. This put them in the perfect position to control. To control and to be controlled. They were given the urgency of importance and brought this into their homes. Where they felt they were king of the castle, putting their wives, and others then them in a minority position. Nice, that is how our social structure is built. No new news here, just a quick sketch of where traditional masculinity as we view it today comes from. A lot of outdated standards and norms that still hold a lot of value in today's society. This is how the big corporations make their money, profit from the ordinary, and keep them in line. As long as they can keep up this picture for the mainstream, everything out of that box does not belong in their society. According to the big players out there. Once again, no new news, just like that all the products on the market are marketed towards certain groups of people, to keep them happy and steady. Give the illusion they have something to work for.

Now finally we come to trucks, big, shiny, robust machinery. Every hard-working man's wet dream. A truck, in my eyes, has become a symbol of masculinity. It ties everything perfectly together like the cherry on a cake. A man sees so much potential in a truck, maybe even more in a truck than in their partner. It is crazy to think about how a truck connects such a wide variety of men and that, to me, is so fascinating. From old retired men umerelling around construction sites to men who work the machines and then the men who make money off of the machines, it gives masculine men unity. By providing this guide I hope to broaden this unity to a more inclusive space where the masculine is available for a wider group than just cis-gendered people. Where I give myself some ease of mind knowing that when, one day I pass enough to belong in those spaces too. Where in reality, it does not matter if you belong as long as you know you are... a truckspotter by heart!

Masculinity through the eyes of Fine Art students:

"Masculinity"

CARS

Burping

Stinking

Beards

BeeRS

Motorcycle

Domestic Violence

Toxic

"Masculinity"

TO HIT THE GYM ON VIAGRA TO SMOKE CRACK BEFORE DINNER WHILE YOUR WIFE COOKS!

"Masculinity"

Being in touch with your feminine side as well

"Masculinity"

Masculinity is insanely vague to me. I don't even really understand femininity, which is my biological gender. But I guess because I was always passive about gender, I never needed to explore what I was told was "my opposite". Except for the era where I wore a lot of cargo pants because I gained conciseness at 14 lol.

"Masculinity"

A Motorcycle makes a 360 in the air and lands.

"Masculinity"

Macho mechanisme Machine Miaw!

"Masculinity"

A recommendation: Kings of the Hill by Yale Bartana¹⁷

Reflection

During the writing of my research paper, I started with a book called "Documents of contemporary art: Queer" by whitechapel gallery full of all the amazing stories from different queer artists. I took what was, for me, the most logical option out of all of the queer artists I now could choose from, and picked up one of Judith Butler's books, "Undoing Gender", purely so I had a better understanding of what I was actually going to write about since masculinity is part of the gender spectrum. Looking back at this, I of course do not want to brag about it but naturally, over time, I guess I knew lots of what was in it already, hoping to find more answers in one of their newer book "Who's Afraid of Gender". Where sadly it was a bunch of the same material as the previous book, only now more simplified so it would in theory be more accessible for a broader audience. Which I felt like there were people who were never ever set foot near a book like this, about gender (scary).

Here and there I read some articles, and one that stuck with me was "Gay Bombs, user's manual" by Queer technologies, inc. This was for me a perfect inspirational source on different ways of addressing serious topics and writing about them in a semi-funny way.

Now I felt ready to touch upon the scary part for me, the domain that is called masculinity, where to start, and how to even begin. On my brave quest for anything related to masculinity, I came across the book "Masculinities" by Raewyn Connell, which was one of the first of its kind. Discussing the notion of masculinity, from this, I got inspired; what is a contemporary theory about masculinity? After a long search on the web, I came across a book called "The men they wanted me to be" by Jared Sexton JACKPOT. To view masculinity from a first player point of view, was new to me. Always looking through the outside and finally getting a sneak peek at what actually goes around in for example masculine spaces, this book was great, filled with sources where there were even more sources around. It was a pool of sources and I was just chilling in it. Checking everything out what I thought was remotely interesting to me. This whole new world of masculinity alongside my own transition was a crazy experience, finding myself through words, at the same time experiencing them in real life was absolutely insane.

As time did its thing, so did I. When time became vague more sources started to arrive, I was recommended the book "Bitch" addressing the female sex in animals, and how things work biologically. Here I found my current interest in a book "Evolution's Rainbow's" by Joan Roughgarden, it might be a bit outdated but the information that is described about human biology and the social standards around it fits like a glove in this whole research.

What I gained from this research paper was definitely lots of information, that is for sure, but that is all useful. Every single paper, article, research, book, and video I touched upon fed me new insight into myself and my work, which is closely related to me.

I did start this research paper as what I thought to be an outsider of masculinity. But for all I know now, is that I never was an outsider I just could not accept myself as who I was without knowing who I could be. Which I still do not know completely, but I definitely came closer to being more authentic to myself and that I think is a great outcome for a research paper. Where the goal was to understand myself and my masculinity more, to give others the experience that I have experienced, and to give them pieces of knowledge that I now possess. To give people who are interested in themself lol and do not know, just like I did not, how close they are to themself as they actually are. To just like me get inspired to look up in dept what masculinity could be for them.

It could not all be positive sadly like most things go about, at one point I got really frustrated about masculinity, it was right after I finished the book "The men they wished me to be". Still when I bring it back up, I can feel that my frustration rises again. Since those kinds of topics are so out of my reach it feels like, it is about how society is shaped. Still to this day centred by the masculine. Confirming this by the reelection of Donald Trump, telling everyone that is outside of the norm to fuck off, literally. And I quote "From now on there are only two genders, male and female 18". And at those points in time I wonder if I would have been less furious if simply did not know. If I had stayed in my bubble and did not start to question our society as a whole. What I find really painful, is how there seems to be so little growth in certain groups of people in all of those years, and to not be able to reach out to them because they will not hear my voice, since I do not exist in their eyes. Is pretty hard to comprehend.

All of this newly gained knowledge led me to a need for more, my research into topics that are of interest does not stop here but continues slowly at my own pace.

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