

**Masculinity goes to class:
Gender performances and anti-oppressive perspectives in a Secondary classroom**

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Abstract

This research explores the complicated terrain of secondary school males' masculinity and the ways they make sense and meaning of these identities in the socio-political context of a feminist, anti-oppressive teacher's classroom. Within this thesis, I argue that schools are complex sites of negotiation for males and their masculine gender performances. Instead of supporting a "crisis narrative" approach to masculinity and gender in classrooms, this Critical Ethnography looks at the ways in which Secondary males respond to the social forces in their classroom environment. The findings of this research show that masculine gender performances in school are impacted by situational forces such as location, friend/peer groups as well as family relationships and support. Male students use a "mash-up" of masculine performances, using different tactics to survive the heterosexist and hierarchical classroom environment. Finally, this research also analyzes the way in which a feminist, anti-oppressive (female) educator responds to and interacts with male students and their masculine performances within a shared classroom environment.

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Chapter I: Introduction

This research project emerged from complex and rewarding experiences I have had as a secondary classroom teacher working with students for social justice. In the development of my researcher identity and in my roles as teacher, graduate student, and supervisor of school extracurricular groups, I constantly strive to work for social justice in school and educational environments. My evolving identity as an anti-oppressive and feminist educator has enabled me to have rich and engaging, but often troubling interactions with students. The space where my pedagogical philosophy meets students and their personal philosophies can be fractious, especially when my feminist values meet up against heterosexism and homophobia. It may appear self-evident that a teacher with these values would experience tense relationships with (in particular) male students, but to leave this tension unexamined is to reduce myself (the feminist, anti-oppressive educator) and my young male students to static, unchanging, one-dimensional ideologies. Teachers and students meet daily in classrooms all over the province and country. The learning environment is filled with political identities and agendas, personal and pedagogical philosophies and the subsequent tensions, negotiations and interplay amongst them. The work that is done in classrooms by teachers and students can be incredibly dynamic, leading to rich and complex learning experiences, but only when teachers become conscious or actively research this dynamic can anti-oppressive forces take root in daily practice.

The goal of this research is to explore the complicated terrain of secondary school males' masculinity and the ways they make sense and meaning of these identities in the socio-political context of a feminist, anti-oppressive teacher's classroom. Within this thesis, I argue that schools are complex sites of negotiation for males and their masculine gender performances. Masculine gender performances are complex because schools, as sites of social reproduction, encourage traditional gender norms and reinforce normative masculinity (Connell, 1989; Frank, 1996;

O'Connor, 1995; Pascoe, 2007). I examine how male secondary students find ways to perform masculinity in a variety of behaviours and methods, across different spaces within the school-based context. Like Kehler and Greig (2005), I examine “the ways versions of masculinities compete and overlap in schools” (p. 353), but unlike, Kehler and Greig, I examine these versions up close within the power dynamic of a female classroom teacher-researcher. This study demonstrates that performances of masculinity are influenced by peers, friends, teachers, administrators, and family members and masculinity is interpreted, explored, and understood in complex and sometimes contradictory ways. In secondary schools, concepts and performances of masculinity are constantly shifting, changing with the educational context and influences, namely of peers, family and friends.

My interest in the masculine identities of secondary school males stems from my experiences working with male students who have challenged my values and practices as a feminist, anti-oppressive educator. My feminist philosophy (and pedagogy) is guided by an interest in gender politics and the questioning of patriarchal forces in society as it affects people of all genders, while benefiting the few (Coulter, 2003; hooks, 1994; Kumashiro, 2002; 2004; McLaren, 2007; Tupper, 2005; Wotherspoon, 2004). By all genders, I use the meaning that includes not only conventional understandings of men and women (and people who accept these notions as the norm) but also those whose gender may not be a direct correlative to their sex. For example, a biological male whose gender identity is aligned with femininity or femaleness does not benefit from a patriarchal system that has particular, normative masculine expectations. Masculinity as a social category is one that few benefit from. However, those who benefit from it are not only heterosexual, white middle/upper class males, but also the dominant hegemonic masculine male who performs masculinity in a normative way. It follows that if the social category of normative masculinity (and those who emulate it benefits, then many people (though perhaps not the elite who benefit) have an interest in seeing such a hierarchical system disrupted

(Apple, 2002; 2003; Ellsworth, 1989; hooks, 1994; Kumashiro, 2002; 2004; McLaren, 2007; Tupper, 2005; Wotherspoon, 2004).

Into the Unknown: Researching Males?

As a teacher, I observed and began to name heterosexism and homophobia in schools, staff rooms and classrooms, including my own. I felt compelled to inquire into the following research question: **How can a feminist, anti-oppressive teacher learn and negotiate gender performances and interactions with her secondary male students as they enact and respond to constructs of masculinity in their classroom and school spaces?** Working with LGBT youth and their allies in classrooms and the Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) allowed me to see a common mechanism affecting all students, most acutely the LGBT youth. Heterosexism and homophobia (and oppressive gender performances) impact all members of a school community, but LGBT youth are particularly impacted as seen in higher rates of depression, experiences/sense of isolation, harassment/bullying, self-harm and suicide (Butryn, 2003; Eyre, 1993; Froyum, 2007; Gini & Pozzoli, 2006; O'Conor, 1995; Pascoe, 2007; Sanders, 2004; Soulliere, 2006; Stein, 2003; Stoudt, 2006). Schools are often heterosexist institutions reinforcing hetero-normative gender norms; for example, the male-dominated machismo of football and the female-dominated passivity of cheerleading (O'Conor, 1995; Pascoe, 2007). From my vantage point, this meant that everyone in a school community (students, teachers, and staff) were impacted because there are expectations based on perceived gender and sexual orientation, from the moment we enter any school environment and at any age. Those who maintain the gender status quo (consciously or not) often experience privilege, while those who are not within the gender status quo are most often marginalized (Froyum, 2007; Gini & Pozzoli, 2006; O'Conor, 1995; Pascoe, 2007; Sanders, 2004; Soulliere, 2006; Stein, 2003; Stoudt, 2006). Perception is a key component of this social reproduction (Froyum, 2007; O'Conor, 1995; Pascoe, 2007). People who are perceived as gay or non-conformist in their identity are susceptible to verbal harassment, social isolation and other

negative repercussions (Pascoe, 2007). Heterosexual males who are masculine in socially expected ways seem to be at the top of this gender/sexuality hierarchy of privilege.

As a heterosexual female I experienced the perspectives of a student and teacher in a secondary school, but I do not know what it is like to be a male student, as either conformist and privileged or different and ostracized. Thus, I decided to focus this research on bettering my understanding of these multiple complex identity experiences. As a female teacher, I felt I had little to no common experiences with my male students, not only on the basis of gender/sex, but also of culture/ethnicity and socio-economic class. I anticipated learning mainly about male students' performances of privilege, expecting their social interactions to be clearly one-sided in benefits for the male-oppressor or delineated as oppressive encounters that victimize or re-marginalize the other (female or LGBT).

This research explores how masculinity is interpreted and expressed among high school boys, I studied four male students whose actions and behaviours of masculinity were complex in nature, fluidly moving in and out of conformist and non-conformist performances. This study follows these four young men through classroom-based research from my grade 11 Philosophy course, into one-on-one interviews where they perform, discuss, and reflect upon their masculine identities. I also focus on how and what I (a feminist, teacher-researcher) can learn from the boys who participated and how that shapes my understandings of gender performativity.

Significance

Some suggest that a crisis narrative of academic achievement is developing in the media and research of boys and education where —the issues are cast as a win/lose, boy/girl debate” (Kehler & Greig, 2005, p. 353). Much of the current discourse in academia, popular publications, and documentation from the Ontario Ministry of Education focuses on males or boys as a rigidly

defined group with a specific set of learning habits¹, behaviours, and preferences. For example, *Me Read? No Way!* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2004) aims to prescribe a blueprint for all teachers to teach literacy to all male students in a way that focuses on so-called male interests. In schools more generally, engaging male students focuses on “a recuperative approach” which “aims at remasculinizing schools through such measures as hiring more male teachers, purchasing masculine materials that appeal to boys, developing more active ways to teach boys and inviting male athletes into classrooms as models for promoting reading among boys” (Kehler & Greig, 2005, p. 353). The focus of this crisis narrative for educators is the so-called under-privileging or avoidance of boys and their literacy needs in the classroom. These preferences are often seen as pushed to the wayside by feminist interests in the classroom, which seek to privilege females at the expense of males in classrooms (Foster, Kimmel, & Skelton, 2001). While conventionally recognized literacy skills (reading, writing, oral communication) are oft-written and discussed topics, this study seeks to understand the “social literacy practices” (Kehler & Greig, 2005, p. 352) of boys in a classroom environment. Social literacy practices according to Kehler and Greig (2005), “add a more nuanced understanding of the socio-cultural context in which high school young men routinely read and/or misread the bodily texts of their male counterparts” (Kehler & Greig, 2005, p. 352). The sub-unit of the Philosophy 11 open level class where this research occurred represents an opportunity “for understanding how masculinities are written and rewritten within a high school setting” (Kehler & Greig, 2005, p. 352).

I have encountered the crisis narrative amongst parents of male students when asked about the topic of my thesis research. My “cocktail party” answer to this question was usually something along the following statement: 'I'm studying boys and masculinity in the classroom!'

1 An example of one such publication is “Me Read? No Way! A Practical Guide to Improving Boys' Literacy Skills” (Ministry of Education (Ontario), 2004). This guide, to be used by educators purports to “distil for educators the most important research on how boys learn to read and write and the most effective instructional approaches and strategies for helping boys enjoy learning to read and write well” (Ministry of Education (Ontario), 2004, p. 3). “Me Read? And How!” was the Ontario Ministry of Education’s follow-up publication on the same topic.

This summary often elicits excitement and their own anecdotes such as; 'my little guy struggles in the classroom'; 'boys just aren't meant to sit still, in a desk all day'. My question to these parents (who believe in this crisis narrative) is the following: "I wonder how many little girls or any person for that matter are meant to sit in a desk all day?". These conversations often leave me feeling frustrated and excited—frustrated because I fail to understand how these parents, like many of us, can construct such a rigid and biologically determined perception of their sons. But, I am also excited by these parents' response because any passionate or engaged reaction to a research question or topic must mean that it is relevant to the life experiences of parents (as well as the educators who work with these boys). In my time as a teacher, I have observed gender segregated secondary English, Math and Science classes develop in response to this perceived crisis. Teachers are exploring the effectiveness of teaching these particular subjects to single gender (boys) classrooms.

As I move beyond frustration and into excitement as a teacher-researcher, it occurs to me that teachers, administrators and policy makers are identifying gender as a significant component in learning; however, I find it misguided because one-size-fits-all approaches rarely work in classrooms or when it comes to gender (Martino & Berrill, 2003; Martino & Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2003). The goal of this research is to name gender, particularly masculinity, and the way it impacts the daily interactions and exchanges between students and teachers-to-students in classrooms.

This study seeks to counteract the crisis narratives of boys' education in order to research male students and their masculine performances with an eye for the complexity and fluidity of their identities in classrooms and schools. This study is significant because it presents research of male students as they perform their masculinity in a school space, as observed, analyzed, and researched by their female anti-oppressive (social justice) teacher. Male students were provided with an opportunity (wherever and as much as possible) to speak for themselves. Studies about

masculinity in schools are often conducted by researchers outside of the school context. As a teacher-researcher, I have a unique vantage point and place within the classroom culture from which to conduct research and to seek understandings of masculinity as performed in classrooms and as discussed in more private, interview settings, away from the eyes and competing perceptions of peers. It is my hope that this research constitutes the beginning of a discussion about the diverse performances of masculinity (and gender) in classrooms, as well as the complex experiences of anti-oppressive teachers as they conduct research within their classrooms.

The Setting

The research site selected was a grade 11 Open level Philosophy class in a secondary school in a city in Northern Ontario. The class of twenty-four students (13 male, 11 female) was comprised of a group of students with a range of perspectives and personal philosophies, age (16-18 years old), gender, sexuality, cultural backgrounds (Aboriginal, Euro-Canadian, Afro-Canadian, Chinese-Canadian), academic abilities and familial backgrounds. The diversity of perspectives, life experiences, and their willingness to speak openly about themselves and the world around them made this group of students a rich source of data and selection pool of participants for this study. The data was collected during a week, just after the mid-way point in the semester. I had many opportunities over the term to build relationships with the students as their teacher and I was able to determine the students' capacity to respond to an inquiry (unit) focused on gender and masculinity. Most of the students were engaged in the course and showed enthusiasm in early activities which called for critical discussions of gender and other social justice issues. Students were given the opportunity to opt out of the data collection; they were informed that alternative arrangements would be made for them and they would not be punished in any way for not participating. Only one student opted out for the entire research period. In the end, four male students emerged as representative voices to portray the narrative ways masculinity was performed in this class.

Two Solitudes

I started my Masters journey as I entered into my second year as a teacher, a time that is filled with uncertainty and a developing sense of professional self (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). Thus, my identity as both a teacher and a researcher developed simultaneously, influencing, challenging, reaffirming and informing both new and emerging identities within me. In addition, I entered the M.Ed. program with a love of knowledge and learning, but unsure about my research interests. I knew I had an interest in the socio-political forces in schools; I could see unquestioned hegemony (Apple, 2002; 2003; Ellsworth, 1989; hooks, 1994; Kumashiro, 2002; 2004; McLaren, 2007; Pascoe, 2007; Tupper, 2005; Wotherspoon, 2004) in classrooms, staff rooms, and amongst students. This included power struggles, dominance and coercion to conform to the hierarchical system of schooling. Schools, from my vantage point, were a microcosm of society (Froyum, 2007; McLaren, 2007; Pascoe, 2007; Wotherspoon, 2004). Often, I felt like a spy on the inside of an institution of which I was highly critical but privy to information and benefits (regular pay, engaging work, and professional autonomy). In these earliest days of my teaching career, I felt that if my employer (the school board) sensed how critical I was of schools as an institution then they would be obligated to rid the system of my unconventional, against the grain teacher-stance. Academic study while honing my craft as a teacher helped me to play with the boundaries of my comfort zone and loosen my worries about the rigidity of teacher identity (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Ellsworth, 1989). My academic work (readings and research stance) influenced my classroom teaching. The more critically-focussed theory I read, the more passionate my commitment to activism in schools became. These two identities had begun their long journey of paralleled growth and challenges.

Emerging Interests: School-based activist and researcher?

During my first year of courses, my research interests started to emerge and solidify, particularly in response to a guest lecture on Queer pedagogy and heterosexism in society and schools that intrigued my feminist sensibilities and connected to my work with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered (LGBT) youth. I was an active ally of LGBT youth in schools because I was the staff advisor for the Gay/Straight Alliance at the secondary schools where I worked.

My interest in studying young men and masculinity stemmed from these experiences and the very real gender conflicts that regularly played out in my own classroom. I found myself resentful of the privilege of my (mostly white) male students. Their behaviours reminded me of my own experiences as an adolescent girl navigating heterosexist encounters and environments in secondary school (Britzman, 2003). And these boys' behaviours challenged my interest in working towards social justice in schools as a teacher. I wanted to be the person who held the mirror in front of the faces of these young men. I wanted them to see their privilege, to see how much space, time and power they took up in a classroom and took away from their female and LGBT peers (O'Connor, 1995). But first, I had to hold the mirror up to see myself clearly: a privileged, well-educated, able-bodied, English language speaking, heterosexual, middle-class White, Euro-Canadian female. I too occupy a lot of space and privilege in a classroom. I am grateful to the people who helped me hold the reflexive and critical mirror for self-examination. I felt that if people could help me see my own privilege then it would be possible that I could help my male students. But those who helped me, by challenging me, did so in a respectful, caring and non-combative way. I wanted to be that type of teacher and role-model in the lives of these young men, without power struggles and verbal sparring.

The process of role-modeling self-awareness of our gender performances would be made more complex because of the inherent inequity of power between teacher and student. I was not a peer helping a peer or a friend but a teacher who could easily impose or be ignored. I believe that

classrooms should be spaces where all students feel comfortable and have a place to explore their identities and grow in self-awareness. Power struggles with heterosexist privileged male students would only increase the complexity of classroom interactions with me (a critically-minded, feminist educator) at the helm. I had to figure out if I could create a classroom environment where equality and liberation could grow or if, as I sometimes felt, I was at the mercy of the social reproductive forces and systemic structure that make most classrooms a space where privilege and oppression dominate.

Situating Myself

Two sources guided my research. The first was Kumashiro's (2004, 2002) work in anti-oppressive education, a theoretical framework through which teachers interested in social justice work to end all forms of oppression in their classrooms, while engaging in self-reflexivity. The second source was Ellsworth's (1989) approach to problematize the notion of empowerment through critical pedagogical teachings in classrooms. This publication was pivotal in developing my understanding of the power mechanisms at work in any social justice oriented classroom. I could no longer work to end oppressive behaviours in my male students (on the basis of their gender and privilege) by using my power as a teacher to oppress them into my social justice preferences (Ellsworth, 1989). I could not look at critiquing social norms in a secondary school without looking at the way I use my power and social authority as a teacher. Heterosexism exists in all classrooms (even mine!). My chosen profession is to teach, and to educate in a socially responsible way. Students do not necessarily choose to be in the courses I teach, some do and some do not, so they are not in a position to choose this social justice pedagogy. I had come to a crossroad where I had to become more creatively analytical and self-reflective in the ways I teach students with different social convictions, political perspectives and life experiences. I needed to teach to "disrupt" (Apple, 2002; 2003; hooks, 1994; Tupper, 2007) social roles in education, not replace one form of oppression with another.

I am a passionate advocate for social justice and was nicknamed “Lawyer Leigh” by my family as a child because of my ardent defence of those I felt had been wrongly accused and/or misrepresented by society, including friends or people who were important to me. I was born and educated in Thunder Bay, Ontario until I was seventeen, at which point I left to attend McGill University in Montreal, Quebec. While completing my undergraduate degree, a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and African studies, I developed my commitment to social justice as I studied Third World Revolutions and feminist theory, and worked at the McGill Public Interest Research Group (PIRG). In my fourth and final year of my BA, I was starting to contemplate what I would do next. I had considered pursuing activism on a more full-time basis by working for the PIRG, an NGO, or another political organization. The “topic” on the activism circuit had shifted from globalization to a post-9/11 world, the war in Afghanistan, and terrorism. I had agreed to help out a friend by filling in for her on Wednesdays after school when she worked as a nanny for a six-year-old girl, Miriam. I derived a great deal of meaning and satisfaction working with Miriam. I would pick her up from her bus stop in Montreal's Mile End neighbourhood, bring her home, cook her some food and spend time playing and talking with her until her parents returned from work. Miriam, a privileged middle class, white girl with two well-educated professional parents, was filled with interesting and engaging questions about life. She asked me questions about racism, prejudice and the fact that there were some places where “women could marry other women and men could marry other men”. She had just learned her teacher was a lesbian and had asked her parents what that meant. I realized I was having meaningful conversations with a six-year-old about critical issues that I thought were socially important. From this serious exchange of views, I started to consider the ways an activist could be a teacher and how the identity of teacher could include an activist orientation.

In large part, I think that this sense of familiarity and community are what made my eventual discovery of the significant socio-political differences between my students and me so

difficult. I was not returning to my secondary school as a peer to the students I taught; I was starting a new journey in classrooms as a teacher. As a student, I could disassociate myself with students who had different values than I did, but, as a teacher in a publicly funded institution, it was my job to educate all students, regardless of their socio-political values. Or at least try.

Chapter II: Literature Review

In Chapter II, I examine key theoretical concepts in the literature such as anti-oppressive education, gender, masculinities (including hegemonic and protest), social justice and heterosexism in school contexts. This research is informed by critical pedagogy, feminist theory, and critical masculine studies (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Butler, 1990, 2004; Kincheloe & McLaren 2002; Pascoe, 2007), particularly the aspects of these theories that focus on school-based experiences of gender oppression (Pascoe, 2007). Students often learn about gender, normative masculinity, harassment, prejudice, and oppression in schools. Studying the way in which these social categories are shaped by and, in turn, shape life experiences in classrooms helps achieve greater understanding of these experiences by teachers and researchers committed to social justice.

Anti-Oppressive Education

The foundation of my pedagogy as a teacher is rooted in anti-oppressive education, theorized by Kumashiro (2002; 2004). Anti-oppressive education is defined as “re-centering education on issues of social justice, that is, on a social movement against oppression” (Kumashiro, 2004, p. 11). My pedagogical philosophy is that teachers are in a position to work against all forms of oppression as it is manifested in “racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, and other forms of oppression” (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 67). The interconnectedness among all forms of oppression is understood and emphasized within anti-oppressive education. Four key concepts of anti-oppressive education upon which I will focus are: 1) challenging “common sense”, 2) resisting repetition, 3) under-privileging rationality, and 4) “troubling” knowledge.

Common sense is a socially constructed idea challenged by Kumashiro in anti-oppressive pedagogy. It is as problematic in schools as it is in society. Common sense (inaccurately) assumes a common frame of reference and experience among people. In other words, what may seem like

—common sense” to one person may not be to another. Classroom teaching should rely on culturally *relevant* concepts instead of culturally *relative* ones in order to work against the notion of a universal set of values or so-called common sense (Kumashiro, 2002; 2004). What is often considered common sense is actually repetition of social routines, mores, and ideas. This repetition provides students and teachers with a (false) sense of comfort and validation, and helps to develop dangerous notions of —common sense” values and ideas. This repetition or normalization of values could more accurately be described as classroom or school culture, which may or may not be commonsensical to all people. In this way, unquestioned repetition perpetuates experiences of oppression and hegemony where those who are validated succeed and those who are not, do not. Teachers who seek this repetition, Kumashiro (2002) warns, —can help maintain the oppressive status quo of schools and society” (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 68). According to Kumashiro (2004), educators crave repetition and validation of their existence and will resist challenging themselves. Educators, along with their students, must engage in critical discussions, as well as consider and study information that is disruptive and discomforting.

What can evolve from these uncomfortable conversations and reflections is what is known as teaching for interruption or disruption (Apple 2002; 2003; Tupper 2005). This method of teaching enables the teacher to question the dominant narratives of curriculum by interrupting the seemingly natural flow of the narrative. For example, it may be perceived as a given that all football players are male, when in reality this is part of the social construction of school life. A teacher employing a strategy for interruption could question students as to why football is a male-dominated sport or alternatively, why there is no football team for females when every other team has a male and female team. These types of interruptions can and should occur in the form of teacher-reflexivity. Posing critical questions can poke holes in the fabric of the dominant narratives of curriculum delivery and classroom life (Apple, 2002; 2003; Britzman, 2003;

Ellsworth, 1989; hooks, 1994; Kumashiro, 2002; 2004; McLaren, 2007; Tupper, 2005; Wotherspoon, 2004).

Kumashiro (2002) warns educators to avoid privileging “rationality without questioning ways that it can perpetuate oppressive social relations” (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 74). If teachers begin to believe that they are somehow excluded from the process of engaging in critical thinking, the position of authority and rationality that teachers often occupy becomes privileged above others. Teachers are encouraged to determine the needs of their classrooms in all of their diversity, so as not to look to anti-oppressive education as “definitive blueprints” for education, but as pedagogies that are meant to “play out differently in different contexts” (Kumashiro, 2004, p. 104).

Educators, according to Kumashiro (2002) should be “learning through the crisis” (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 72) of this process by learning, unlearning, articulating, and evolving in their thoughts, goals, and actions *alongside* students. This can be a mechanism for change in schools while presenting a more holistic notion of education created amongst the teacher and students. Learning can be considered, altered, and modified as it is experienced. The educator in anti-oppressive education is a partial being with an unfixed identity (Kumashiro, 2004). Kumashiro (2004) asserts that “an anti-oppressive teacher is not something that someone is. Rather is something that someone is always becoming” (Kumashiro, 2004, p. 37). Anti-oppressive education is a framework in which it is possible for an educator to engage in self-criticism and reflection.

In an effort to develop theories that work against oppression in classrooms (anti-oppressive education, critical pedagogy), I focused on Ellsworth’s (1989) critique of the unchecked oppressive mechanisms that exist between teacher and student. Even in the context of an anti-oppressive or critically focused classroom, teachers are institutionally situated as knowers,

while students are not (Ellsworth, 1989). This relationship between knower (teacher) and the unknowledgeable other (student) presupposes that the teacher has an innate capacity to know more than students, and also to know the experiences of students. The anti-oppressive teacher as a knowledge producer may think they have the capacity to know a student's oppression because they empathize with them. Ellsworth warns the teacher-as-knower against thinking they have the capacity to understand a student's experience simply because of their values and desire for social change. This repressive myth, according to Ellsworth, only seeks to further marginalize students, particularly those who the anti-oppressive educator may think they are —helping.” She emphasizes that —no teacher is free of ... learned internalized oppressions” (Ellsworth, 1989, p. 308).

Effectively resisting social reproduction (or repetition in the language of Kumashiro) is best achieved when the researcher engages in rigorous self-reflexivity. This may include unlearning oppressive understandings or worldviews by listening to and reflecting upon the worldviews, life experiences, biases, and knowledge bases of students. The notion of empowerment in social justice-based teaching and research is discussed in greater detail in Chapter IV, as part of the data analysis.

Gender

Gender, according to Butler (2004) is:

... a kind of a doing, an incessant activity performed, in part, without one's knowing and without one's willing [...] it is a practice of improvisation within a scene of constraint. Moreover, one does not do one's gender alone. One is always doing with or for another, even if the other is only imaginary [...] the terms that make up one's own gender are, from the start, outside oneself, beyond oneself in a sociality that has no single author (and that radically contests the notion of authorship itself). (p. 2)

In other words, gender is a socially constructed, fluid part of a person's identity. At first glance, gender may not seem like a fluid part of oneself, however, gender performance can be and often is influenced (sometimes unconsciously) by immediate surroundings and people (Butler, 1990). It follows that individuals and groups, including classrooms and schools, impose norms and values about what it looks like to be a particular gender. School spaces promote particular understandings of both individuals and society. These societal norms help to shape an individual's behaviour and actions. Norms can be explicit, but they are more often implicit. For example, I see institutionalized, implicit normative expectations in schools. Football players are expected to be male and to look a certain way: large, strong, and aggressive. Cheerleaders are expected to be female and look small, thin, and pretty. There is no handbook that explicitly says football players and cheerleaders must be males and females respectively, or that they must present a certain type of gendered appearance--rather, it is an implicit understanding. Most football coaches do not recruit strong females and most cheerleading coaches do not recruit small, flexible males. This example highlights the common manifestation of gender as a binary concept or dualism. The assumption that social categories of boy/man, girl/woman always fit into a binary is problematized by Butler (2004). She argues that

permutations of gender which do not fit the binary are as much a part of gender as its most normative instance. To conflate the definition of gender with its normative expression is inadvertently to reconsolidate the power of the norm to constrain the definition of gender (p. 42).

Thus, gender is a powerful social force because it has the capacity to both construct and deconstruct norms (Butler, 2004). As will be shown in the case study of Robert, a gender-bending (Lorber, 1994) male who happens to have a large physical size ideal for football, gender performances can present or construct a perceived masculine identity while deconstructing another. The entrenchment of this binary can be salient to the point that social norms constructed

through the concept of gender can make hegemony within gender seem natural, not socially constructed (Butler, 1990, 2004; Irigaray, 1985). A “quantification” or hardened proliferation of multiple genders could be equally problematic because norms and boundaries are still being constructed. Instead, we should move toward an understanding of gender as “a mode of passage between genders, an interstitial and transitional figure of gender that is not reducible to the normative insistence on one or two” (Butler, 2004, p. 43). Despite its salience and power, gender as a social force is rarely, if ever, named as such in schools.

Masculinity as Hegemonic

According to Connell and Messerschmidt (2007), masculinities are dynamic identities that “are constructed, unfold, and change through time” (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2007, p. 852). There is a “layering, the potential internal contradiction, within all practices that construct masculinity” (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2007, p. 852).

Masculinities are socially constructed in a variety of contexts. The construction of masculinities happens in local, small-scale contexts: “in the arenas of face-to-face interaction of families, organizations, and immediate communities” (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2007, p. 849). Secondary schools help to construct normative forms of masculinity through sport as the physical demonstration of dominance (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2007).

Connell (1989) studied the stratification of different masculine identities in education. In his work, he identified how these identities often develop along class lines in school-based contexts. An important part of schooling for masculine identity construction is “[k]nowing where you stand” (p. 294). From this, Connell articulated “a typology of masculinities, even a marketplace of masculinities ... [to] know where you stand ... seems to mean choosing a masculinity” (p. 295). This language, Connell argues, is misleading as it presents gender-styles

and social groupings as a choice with no consequences or social forces at work. So-called choices are:

... strongly structured relations of power. In each of the cases mentioned, the differentiation of masculinities occurs in relation to a school curriculum which organises knowledge hierarchically, and sorts students into an academic hierarchy. By institutionalising failure via competitive grading and streaming the school forces differentiation on the boys. But masculinity is organised – on the macro scale – around social power. Social power in terms of access to higher education, entry to professions, command of communication, is being delivered by the school system to boys who are academic ‘successes’. The reaction of the ‘failed’ is likely to be a claim to other sources of power, even other definitions of masculinity. Sporting prowess, physical aggression, sexual conquest may do. (Connell, 1989, p. 295)

Masculinity in schools is affected by the context and situation in schools, while occupying space in normative understandings. Maleness is both restrictive and restricted while masculinity can have fluid, malleable traits that are shaped by the institutional spaces in schools (Epstein et. al., 2001; Foster, Kimmel & Skelton, 2001; Frank, 1996; Kaufman, 1987; Kehler & Greig, 2005; Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997; Mac an Ghail, 2004; Renold, 2007; Serriere, 2005; Tharinger, 2008). Researchers need to be aware of all the hierarchies and social factors that play a role in shaping masculinity in schools. Schools are sites where —maleness embodies multiple social categories” (Haywood & Mac an Ghail, 2003, p. 71). Mac an Ghail (2004) recognizes the role of schools as institutions and teachers as agents within that institution to construct and normalize certain masculinities. According to Connell (1989), schools as social institutions are sites where —the State and its powers of coercion” meet (p. 294). It is within this context that many of the rules and expectations around gender are formed.

Age and social development are important factors in students' social interactions. Certain behaviours and masculine performances are more acceptable for older males than their younger counterparts. In schools, demonstrations of (hetero)sexuality are a sign of maturity and adulthood. Deviation from heteronormative activities (e.g., touching, kissing, and embracing females) can translate into "proof" of one's homosexuality, a perception that resonated for the student participant Mark in this study. Some boys are not able to avoid the "fag" label (Pascoe 2007), and are accordingly harassed by male peers for his perceived homosexuality within a gender system that privileges hegemonic masculinity and plays out in schools as it does in society. Male students often gravitate to homo-social groups in isolation from females and gay males (or those who challenge normative masculinity and thus are assumed to be gay) to "prove" their normative masculinity. This phenomenon is reaffirmed in popular culture, readily consumed by teens (and adults) in films such as *Old School* and *SuperBad* (Alilunas, 2008). Some masculinities, in particular hegemonic masculinity, police the boundaries of acceptable performances of masculinity, while those who are not hegemonic in nature (perceived or otherwise) are forced to conform to these rules (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2007; Haywood & Mac an Ghail, 2003, Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997).

Hegemonic masculinity (HM) and the recognition that masculinity, like femininity, has a multiplicity of manifestations are important aspects of this research. HM is a negotiated, historically developed, overlapping, interwoven concept. For Kenway and Fitzclarence (1997), hegemonic masculinity is "the standard-bearer of what it means to be a 'real man' or boy," where males "draw inspiration from its cultural library of resources" (Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997, p. 120). There are behavioural aspects of hegemonic masculinity rooted in its social construction. These behaviours are defined, redefined, and policed by members of dominant groups. Hegemonic masculinity is a pattern of behaviour that polices males' behaviour, excludes women, and harasses masculine non-conformists (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2007; Foster, Kimmel &

Skelton, 2001; Frank, 1996; Kaufman, 1987; Kehler & Greig, 2005; Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997; Mac an Ghail, 2004; Renold, 2007; Serriere, 2005; Tharinger, 2008).

To return to the example of gender conformity in football, secondary male football players may encourage team-mates to work harder by calling them “~~is~~sy” or “~~af~~” if they do not perform to expected standards. These young males spend time working out and lifting weights in a space that is simultaneously policed for the males and is exclusive to those males who want/choose to perform their masculinity in a way that is unwelcoming of difference and based upon conformity, under the guise of the team-building/solidarity mentality. It is a space where gender non-conformists are not welcomed; even males must display a certain type of normative masculine behaviour to fit in which involves developing a muscled, masculinized body. HM is a salient form of masculinity both within groups of males (or perceived males) and towards people of other genders (or perceived other genders).

HM benefits from marginalized masculinities by appropriating certain masculine traits in ways that are “~~pragmatically~~ useful for continued domination” (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2007, p. 844). In other words, there is “~~a~~ constant renegotiation of what it means to be a real man ‘occurs’” (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2007, p. 845). HM becomes a hybrid and amorphous identity where it picks up and acquires other aspects of different gendered behaviour along the way, while maintaining HM's position of dominance. This hybridization is a major component of the way in which all masculine identities (not only HM) are performed, defined, and redefined in a secondary school context.

The “~~social~~ embodiment” of hegemonic masculinity is “~~related~~ to particular ways of representing and using men’s bodies” and the influence that this has when constructing understandings of hegemonic masculinity. In young people, “~~is~~illed bodily activity becomes a prime indicator of masculinity” (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2007, p. 851) as reflected by the

value placed on athletic prowess. Furthermore, hegemonic masculine bodies are objectified in the social practices of masculinity while simultaneously responsible for creating these norms.

Examples include “[b]ody practices such as eating meat and taking risks on the road” (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2007, p. 851). The notion of the corporeal self and representations of gender is extremely significant when studying secondary males, particularly with student participant Mark, in this research.

Dominance and aggression are twin manifestations of hegemonic masculinity in society and in secondary school settings. The social categories of girl/woman and boy/man carry with them certain expectations, alongside the implicit assumption and expectation of normalized heterosexuality (O’Conor, 1995; Pascoe, 2007; Serriere, 2008). If students transgress the normative boundaries of these binary gender categories, a spectrum of aggressive and/or violent retaliation can result. Students themselves, in addition to schools as institutions and teachers as authority figures, perpetuate and police gendered norms (Eyre, 1993; Froyum, 2007; O’Conor, 1995; Pascoe, 2007; Sanders, 2004; Serriere, 2008).

Hegemonic masculinity is a particular version of masculinity that requires violence (or the threat of violence), but HM is fragile because of the tension that lies between notions of maleness and performances and perceptions of masculinity (Kaufman, 1987; Kimmel & Mahler, 2003). This fragility or disconnect is the root of violence (stemming from confusion or frustration) as it perpetuates a masculinity that is dominant in nature. Homophobic harassment, Kaufman (1987) argues, is “—a means of trying to cope ... with our whole anxiety over the unsuccessfully repressed passive sexual aims, whether directed toward males or females” (Kaufman, 1987, p. 21). Furthermore, “it is a socially constructed phobia that is essential for the imposition and maintenance of masculinity” (Kaufman, 1987, p. 21).

Normative masculinity shapes bullying and harassing behaviours (Gini & Pozzoli, 2006; Sanders, 2004; Soulliere, 2006; Stein, 2003; Stoudt, 2006), and it can be perpetrated by males and

females of all gender orientations. Classroom research in an elementary school context reveals the status and power that is conveyed upon young boys in grade 6 who perform their heterosexuality through romantic relationships with females (Renold, 2006). These males gain status through their heterosexual relationships and behaviours with girls in their classes (Renold, 2006; Tharinger, 2008).

Another important masculine performance to consider, according to Connell & Messerschmidt (2007), is protest masculinity. This is understood as:

a pattern of masculinity constructed in local working-class settings, sometimes amongst ethnically marginalized men, which embodies the claim to power typical of regional hegemonic masculinities in Western countries but which lacks the economic resources and institutional authority that underpins the regional and global patterns. (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2007, p. 848)

In other words, protest masculinity develops amongst males who are disenfranchised by a patriarchal system whether based on their class, ethnic group, or another political identity that challenges the dominant system. Socially marginalized males can transcend this identity by demonstrating violence and aggression. Thus, socially marginalized males who find themselves seeking HM often protect the social order, but are not fully accepted decision-makers in a social context.

Heterosexism

An important component of the secondary school environment is assumed heterosexuality (Rich, 1980). The heterosexism that exists in schools and classrooms is implicit in activities like schools dances and semi formal dinners, where it is not prescribed but implied. According to Eyre (1993), assuming heterosexuality as normative in schools is a dangerous and damaging pitfall. She indicates that a —failure to examine heterosexuality as an institution would

be akin to failing to admit the variety of forces that maintain the economic system of capitalism” (Eyre, 1993, p. 274). Heterosexism, according to O’Conor (1995) is a salient force in schools because “curricula continue to reflect heterosexist assumptions, homophobic slurs are commonplace, and the school system has failed to support lesbian and gay students and teachers” (O’Conor, 1995, p. 274).

Heterosexism in schools is linked to the social reproduction of normative masculinity in schools. Conceptions of masculinity across context, social group, and spaces, as well as gender policing, are important concepts when studying masculinity in a school-based concept. According to Pascoe (2007), similar to masculinity’s fluidity in schools there is also “fag fluidity” (Pascoe, 2007, p. 59). Fag fluidity, like masculine gender fluidity, is in a state of flux in school contexts. If a male steps outside the boundaries of normalized and acceptable masculine gender performances, they are often perceived as a “fag.” What it means to be a “fag” in a secondary school context is as amorphous as what it means to be male or female. Being a “fag” is changing, but also built upon the same constructive and deconstructive elements upon which gender is formed. Thus, the fag label is in a state of constant flux, creating a state of constant fear or a “spectre of fear” (Pascoe, 2007, p. 62). Male student response to this fear is not only to modify behaviour so as not to draw attention to one’s “fag-like” qualities, but also to police others for their potential “fag-like” qualities. This functions as a self-protecting mechanism: e.g., if you police or aggressively draw attention to the fag-like behaviour of others, then you yourself must not be a fag. Being a “fag” (perceived or otherwise) is the greatest socially alienating insult, according to Pascoe. Males actively avoid it while trying to quash it in others. This gender policing comes in many forms: through taunts, slurs, and physical violence—which create a cycle of harassment and violence within the school. This violence also extends to psychological intimidation and sexual harassment of young women, because males are less likely to be considered a “fag” if they engage in the objectification of women (Pascoe, 2007).

Froyum (2007) expands upon the cultural relevant expectations of masculinity amongst teen, working, and lower-class African American communities in Los Angeles, California. She focuses on the layering of oppression that youth experience within this community. Her research reveals that the youth do not recognize the commonality of oppressions. Instead, gender and sexuality become a vehicle for the young people to overcome the oppression they experience along class and ethnic lines. Therefore, while these youth experience racism and classism, they do not want to experience homophobia and heterosexism and work hard to avoid the “fag” label. As one young man in the study says, “at least I’m not gay” (Froyum, 2007, p. 620). The youth in this study view sexuality as a choice, whereas their class and race are not. As a result, youth in this community engaged in homophobic and heterosexist harassment (Epstein et. al., 2004; Froyum, 2007; Stein, 2003). In addition, homosexuality is viewed as abhorrent in the context of the conservative religious values of students within this community. These youth, members of an economically and culturally marginalized group, define and align themselves with whatever system of power and dominance may afford them more privilege, often to the detriment of their family members and friends.

What's Missing?

This chapter has focused on outlining and highlighting key aspects of feminist gender theories and critical masculine studies as they inform research about secondary school males. These theories outline ways in which masculinity, in its various forms, is socially constructed and shaped by heteronormative forces in society and schools. The theories also outline the implications for masculinities in their many forms and the ways that youth participate in active gender policing of others. Yet, there is also a gap in the literature, relating to the experiences that teachers as researchers have in relation to these complex social dynamics. One of the key ways in which this research (respectfully) diverges from Connell’s work is a movement away from the categorization of males. These categories, while useful for describing power dynamics and

relationships, are also problematic because any set of categories falls prey to the tendency to portray masculinities as set or staid, rather than shifting and complex, especially in school spaces (Pascoe, 2007). This research attempts to bridge this gap by studying masculine performances of secondary males in school spaces, as well as the ways in which these performances impact my ongoing identity as a feminist teacher-researcher.

Critical Ethnography

According to Soyini Madison (2005a), critical ethnography (CE), is “critical theory in action” (p. 13), emphasizing the positionality of the researcher, the dialogue a researcher has with participants, and the theory and method that ground the research. CE emphasizes the responsibility the researcher has to work against injustice within social situations and experiences. A commitment to social justice by researchers fulfils “a moral obligation to make a contribution toward greater freedom and equity” (Soyini Madison, 2005a, p. 5). CE's emphasis on social justice, understanding relationships with research participants, and prioritizing ethical and moral responsibilities of the researcher meshes well with my pedagogical goals as a teacher-researcher.

A notable challenge for the researcher is resistance towards domestication, that is becoming a part of the culture of the participants in the study (Soyini Madison, 2005a; 2005b). This means that the researcher must make the experiences, voices, values and opinions of the research participants accessible in an authentic way, where they may not be otherwise. Research must be designed so that the authentic voices of participants can be seen through the framework that the researcher has created, not lost and reproduced in a way that diverges from the participants' voices. Resistance toward domestication is more challenging when the researcher is also the teacher in a classroom, a part of the social fabric. In other words, it is important for researchers to attempt to understand the dynamics of the group or research participants without duplicating the opinions, social groupings, or realities of the participants, while simultaneously

developing an open and sincere relationship with participants in order to undertake this type of research. Effectively done, a researcher can contribute to “emancipatory knowledge and discourses of social justice” (Soyini Madison, 2005a, p. 5) by both accurately representing the participants’ views while helping them to question their positions or learning to acknowledge other possibilities of masculinity.

Positionality

Fine (1994) emphasizes three positions in what she calls the “politics of positionality” (p. 17) in Critical Ethnography (CE) research, focused on social justice and researcher responsibility to work against injustice. She calls the first research position the ventriloquist, a stance which merely transmits information in an effort to be neutral. The second research stance in CE is positionality of voices where the research participants themselves are the focus of the research. Finally, the third is the activism stance where the “ethnographer takes a clear position in intervening on hegemonic practices and serves as an advocate ... while offering alternatives” (p. 17). My goal was to employ all three of these positions at different points in time and context so that research participants could, as much as possible have input (direct/indirect) into how they are presented, while also making space for social justice [my critical stance]. Positionality within CE provides conceptual space for me as a researcher to engage flexibly in a respectful way with participants while pursuing the research question and topic. It has the potential to be productively critical, as well as to problematize the nature of emancipatory pedagogies. Positionality, in this sense, also encourages what Davis (1999) calls “reflexive ethnography” (p. 61). Or, according to Soyini Madison (2005), the researcher can be “accountable for our own research paradigms, our own positions of authority, and our own moral responsibility relative to representation and interpretation” (p. 7). In the same way that I have a moral and professional obligation to educate my students as a teacher, I also have the obligation to conduct research in a way that is reflexive

of the needs of the research participants, without perpetuating a relationship characterized by hegemony and domination.

Working the Divide: Critical Ethnography in Classrooms

The development of critical ethnography as a methodology, according to Foley and Valenzuela (2005), “rejected positivism but also worked the divide between the powerful and the powerless” (p. 217). CE is flexible: it uses “multiple epistemologies ... [and] value[s] introspection, memory work, autobiography ... as important ways of knowing” (p. 218). It provides the opportunity for the interaction between the self and other. The flexible, contextually constructed nature of CE is important for research in a classroom context because of the complex interactions and the multitude of participants and dynamics that exist. Researchers undertaking CE should engage in research that invites participants to “co-construct their ethnographic accounts” (Foley & Valenzuela, 2005, p. 219). Furthermore, CE plays an important role in dynamic research that pushes research boundaries (Foley & Valenzuela, 2005; Soyini Madison, 2005a, 2005b). CE can be used to engage in creative, community-based social action within a methodological framework (Soyini Madison, 2005b). Mindful and respectful research with students guided by CE presents an opportunity to challenge social norms and create new understandings. I took that opportunity to allow my pedagogy as an anti-oppressive educator to mesh with the methodological foundations of this study.

Critical Theory and Ethnography in School-based research

In the context of teaching and research, critical theory can help develop strategies and articulate questions for understanding multiple worlds, including those in the classroom and school. Critical theory is concerned with “issues of power and justice and the ways that the economy; matters of race, class and gender; ideologies; discourses; education; religion; and other social institutions; and cultural dynamics interact to construct a social system” (Kincheloe &

McLaren, 2002, p. 90). Critical researchers know that dominant discourses in society construct people's understandings of reality, including their own. Kincheloe and McLaren (2002) reminded researchers that "schools *can* become institutions where forms of knowledge, values, and social relations are taught for the purpose of educating young people for critical empowerment rather than subjugation" (p. 89). The ideological relationship defined by schools as institutions and often entrenched by teachers and students through normative behaviours and discursive practices dictate a reality where both parties exist in a constructed binary relationship. This entrenched duality is a relationship and way of being in schools and classrooms that this study tries to challenge and re-imagine.

Critical hermeneutics play an important role in analysing and interpreting discursive data in the processes of knowledge production. CE researchers need to attend to writing and research that are "interpretations, not value-free descriptions" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2002, p. 97). Kincheloe and McLaren encouraged researchers to conceive of themselves as actively engaged in research studies by providing "thick descriptions of social texts characterized by the context of their production, the intentions of its producers, and the meanings mobilized in the process of its construction" (p. 97). In this study of secondary school males in a classroom context, I paid close attention in the analysis of data and writing to be mindful of the nature of the descriptions I make about participants. This included recognizing the nature (positive or negative) of my rapport with each student participant. I also highlighted my interpretation of statements (in interviews and in class situations) based on my previous knowledge of the participant (personality, past times/hobbies, interests) in so much as they might influence the statement. Finally, I treated and presented the data collected with the utmost respect for the dynamic and evolving nature of the classroom as a social (learning) space.

Transferability and accuracy in CE is related to the construction of meaning through a number of claims, including the roles and ways that researchers find and present meaning in the

daily lives of research participants (Carspecken, 1993). Ideally, researchers using CE are more able to “articulate the normative evaluative claims of others” (Carspecken, 1993, p. 119). The transferability of CE lies in viewing research themes, identities, and other social categories holistically, not as distinct entities (Anderson 1989; Kincheloe & McLaren 2002; Kumashiro, 2004). Critical ethnographers should be able to recognize, describe and interpret the myriad ways of being amongst or a member of the group including cultural cues, language, and social dynamics. Positionality and self-reflexivity of the researcher are an important part of this process of interpretation. CE researchers who are engaged in a self-reflexive process should be better able to identify normative statements of participants for what they represent and include the positionality (of these research participants) in recorded observations. A key component of CE is researching while resisting the social reproduction that is underway in schools. CE requires a keen eye for the ongoing culture within the research group (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2002) while interrupting aspects. In this way, CE is complementary to the goals of anti-oppressive education.

Critical reflexivity, as outlined by Anderson (1989), is particularly necessary for a researcher claiming to do CE. Critical reflexivity is defined as the integration and systemization of “two other forms of reflection – self-reflection (i.e., reflection on the researcher’s biases) and reflection on the dialectical relationship between structural/historical forces and human agency” (Anderson, 1989, p. 254). Analytic categories must be viewed as one part of the whole research process (including the researcher-participant relationship) so as to avoid becoming ideological in nature. CE works collaboratively using the participants’ own narratives and words as much as possible inside the research’s interpretation and account. This approach allows participants to tell more of their own stories, in their own words, and more accurately represent them through their own language. Chapter IV in this research uses the participants’ way of speaking, expressions and even written words including spelling and grammatical errors as a way to reflect the voices of the participants in a more transparent manner.

Researchers should maintain a critical humility, a concept embedded in reflective praxis (Anderson, 1989) and an affective disposition that is simultaneously working towards change and intervention with participants while remaining constantly aware of the researcher's privilege and potentially unnatural or omnipotent position in the work. This critical humility constitutes an important part of the research process for me. As a compassionate teacher, whole-heartedly engaged in this study (and my profession as a secondary teacher), it was difficult for me to analyse data, draw conclusions and write in an authoritative way about this topic for fear that I would not do a good enough job representing the voices, experiences and performances of the participants.

Self-reflective ability and critical-reflexivity therefore, are important components of the analysis (Chapter IV) of my research for myself as the teacher-researcher and for the four male participants. Self-reflection for the participants is used as an important marker of where the students are "at" in terms of their perception of their gender/masculine identities. The ways in which they discuss (or do not discuss) their gender/masculine is an important way into their own insights and self-awareness of how their masculinity affects their everyday lives at school, in classrooms, amongst their peers, with friends and family. Critical reflexivity, for me, is also an important part of the analysis so that I can be aware of my learning throughout the process, mindful of and transparent about assumptions (or presumptions) about the participants.

Two Hats: Teacher-Research

Teacher-research (TR) as a methodology is a key component of this research. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) emphasize the commonality amongst teacher-student and researcher-participant relationships as they "construct the role of teacher as knower and as agent in the classroom" (p. 16). Teacher-researchers must be conscious of the duality of these roles, including the power and agency ascribed to them. Thus, TR as a field of study is at the theoretical and

practical core of this research. TR constitutes “part of an effort to challenge the hegemony of an exclusively university-generated knowledge base for teaching” (p. 16). It also challenges schools as institutions and schooling as a process, an important part of my teacher identity as well. This situates TR as a methodology with a resistive foundation. The grassroots nature of TR is effectively grounded in its proximity to learning environments, students, and the reproduction of dominant narratives in schools. TR, like CE, is “grounded in critical social theory and aimed explicitly at social change” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 18). There is also an understanding within TR that:

... knowledge is understood to be constructed collaboratively by teachers, students, administrators, parents, and academics with the end of locally developed curriculum and more equitable social relations. The emphasis is on transforming educational theory and practice toward emancipatory ends and thus raising fundamental questions about curriculum, teachers’ roles, and the ends as well as the means of schooling. (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 18)

TR (in conjunction with CE) makes room for classroom experiences and site-specific knowledge. It enables teachers to research within their own professional context, with their own perspectives and ways of knowing, generating “local knowledge of teaching, learning and schooling” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 18) when schools and classrooms are sites for research. TR is challenging work to undertake because the dual role requires constant reflexivity. TR, like its component parts (teaching and researching), is “associated more with uncertainty than with certainty, more with posing problems and dilemmas than with solving them, and with the recognition that inquiry both stems from and generates questions” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 21).

As a teacher-researcher, I was positioned to undertake research with my students. Some important conditions for critical ethnographic research had already been satisfied. I had an established relationship with participants as well as an understanding of the social forces/dynamics in the research environment (Foley & Valenzuela, 2006; Soyini Madison, 2005a,

2005b). However, the position of authority as both a teacher and researcher is fraught with potential for the misuse of power and authority. In one way, I was well situated, but in another I was almost ‘too close’ to my research participants and doubly concerned with the power my dual role ascribed to me. Further, as a self-identified, feminist, anti-oppressive educator, I was aware of my own interests and possible biases in conducting research about gender and masculinity.

Chapter III: Research Design

In this chapter, I first identify the methodological approaches (critical ethnography and teacher-research) that guide this study, which were selected to support a teacher-researcher undertaking a research project within a classroom context. I then discuss the data collection and data analysis methods I employed.

Design

The design of this study was qualitative, based in teacher-research and critical ethnography, theories that are discussed in greater detail in later in this chapter (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Soyini Madison, 2005a, 2005b). There were two phases of study. The first was data collection of and during a unit of work as part of the grade 11 curriculum. The second was individual interviews with four male student participants. This study occurred during the third unit, —*What is Beauty?*”, of the Grade 11 Ontario Philosophy course. Within this unit, students were exposed to the basic tenets of the aesthetics branch of Western philosophy. In addition, the Ontario curriculum for Philosophy: the Big Questions outlines a place for critical thinking about beauty as a social construct, social justice, and feminism (Appendix B). The curriculum for the philosophy course was fluid enough to incorporate a study about gender and masculinity; however, it is not a required topic.

I selected the grade 11 Open level Philosophy class for this research because of the students’ ability to understand the curriculum unit’s dual purpose for covering course content and engaging in research. The suitability of conducting research on masculinity in this classroom was based on a number of criteria: (a) students were mature enough to discuss the gender issues because they were at a minimum in grade 11 and 16 years of age, and some were older and further into their high school experiences; (b) the students chose to take a course that is largely based on individual and collective critical thinking, thus, their self-selection into this elective

course situated them as students interested in engaging in modes of thinking and responses conducive for the research; and, (c) the nature of this elective course at an “open” level means it is available to students of all academic backgrounds and abilities and; therefore, attracted a diverse student population which made the context a richer group of diverse experiences and views.

A facilitator assisted in the research process by providing another perspective on gender and masculinity. He led the sessions so that I could actively work alongside a male with boys “to promote equity and unsettle masculinity as a limiting and restrictive construct” (Kehler & Greig, 2005, p.354). Blair, a fellow graduate student, was studying and engaged in dialogue, community action, and resistance to gender-based oppression. He shared in the goals of the research in order for a good working relationship to be established and had experience with youth and used an experiential approach to social justice education. These qualities paired well with some of my own perspectives, experiences, and contributed to the richness of the classroom dynamic and research environment. Blair’s male-ness, I strategized, would bring a particular lens to delivering the sub-unit in a mixed gendered classroom.

The unit and research collection was designed with my co-facilitator, Blair. I coordinated and balanced my many roles and the logistical aspects of the research: optimal curriculum design to elicit rich multiple gendered responses by the students; multiplicity of roles between teacher, researcher, facilitator of discussions, gendered interactions and data collector; the technology (video, audio) tools and monitoring for the data collection. In other words, I did not have to bear the entire workload of the curriculum, interactions with the students, the interview dynamics, and the technicalities of the data collection, all in the same time frame and place. Working with a facilitator provided me as a teacher-researcher with a partner with whom to make multiple research decisions, and it helped shift my role away from solely centred on the classroom dynamic as a lone teacher into a multilayered research process in the classroom, a distinct and

new modality in this course, through this unit. Given the fact that the research period was an intense, yet short, 5 days – another set of eyes, ears and hands was very valuable and helpful.

Blair's role as co-teacher or facilitator permitted me the liberty and flexibility to become more centred on my role as a teacher-researcher. For example, I was able to take field notes as a participant observer, interjecting into the classroom discussion when I felt it necessary or important (a phenomenon and decision-making process I explore in Chapter IV). As a facilitator, Blair was both different and complementary to my roles as teacher and researcher. Through our debriefings of the classroom sessions and the interviews, I could recognize my biases as a White, middle-upper class, well-educated feminist teacher and the level of attachment I may have to certain ideas and ways of being "teacher" in the classroom. Having a co-facilitator was a way of acknowledging that despite my level of self-reflexivity about the power inequalities in a classroom, undertaking the research without a facilitator may have exacerbated some unknown tension I was not aware of – Blair may 'see' qualities in students or activities that I did not because of my position as a teacher within the classroom and the institution of schooling.

In addition to my PO notes, I kept a research journal and log of my questions, reflections, and ideas about the research process and participants. This log was a record of meetings with Blair before and after classroom sessions. It was also a place to record student ideas during the one-on-one interviews. I also kept daily reflections about my experiences with the research process, classroom activities, and students. The intensity of the five-day data collection phase is reflected in these notes, which required further analysis, reflection, and coding in the days, weeks, and months following the data collection.

The five days of curriculum focused the classroom research sessions, but I was flexible in both the curriculum delivery and the treatment of emergent themes and ideas of the classroom research. Both Blair and I, along with the students, collectively discussed and developed

understandings of gender. Through the collaborative direction of curriculum design, teaching, facilitation and research debriefings, we explored with the students matters of gender and masculinity through a variety of classroom activities (Appendix A). These activities were audio and video taped. They were experiential, hands-on activities as well as personal, reflective exercises. Students were able to work in collaborative groups, as a whole class and individually. They demonstrated their learning in experiential modes, through team-building and leadership activities, verbally in classroom discussions, collaboratively through drama and role-play, and individually through written reflective journals. Video was also used to record the one-on-one, semi-structured student interviews that occurred at the end of the five days of classroom sessions, with a select group of four students.

All classroom activities were video- and audio-recorded, as well as documented in participant-observer (PO) notes. The audio recordings were abandoned during the analysis phase of the research because the cacophony of student voices made it difficult to discern one voice from another. Analysis of the classroom video data, guided by PO notes, occurred for key moments in classroom sessions and to contextualize the interviews with the four male participants. Any grammatical errors in the participant quotations and reflective work have been left intact to accurately portray the students' voices, the way they speak and share their ideas. These characteristics of their communication helped to develop authentic representations of the students by using their own word choices and ways of speaking as much as possible, as well as helping to understand the students' performances of masculinity.

Throughout the four-day classroom research sessions, I observed all the participants, but started to focus on the four male participants and their performed masculinity and how they shared their thoughts and ideas in a classroom context. Each of the five days had a different focus (complete day plans are included in Appendix A). Day 1 focused on integrating Blair as a member of the classroom (facilitator) as well as developing a co-teacher presence and

relationships with the students. I was able to step out of the teacher role that I had occupied all semester and into the observer role. It was important that the students begin to look to Blair as the session leader so that I could occupy a “backstage” presence to guide the research, make decisions about the direction of the classroom sessions and observe. I hoped to gain insight into the baseline understandings students had about gender as both a social construction and category. On day 2, the students considered responses to social difference (for example, gender and school social groups) in schools by discussing heterosexist harassment in schools, also referred to as “gender policing.” Day 3 focused on helping students to develop links or connections between gender norms/normative masculinity with power and inequity, and to highlight ways in which masculinity/gender can be performed through role-play and experiential activities that toyed with traditional gender roles and concepts. Day 4 of the facilitation drilled down into explorations of masculinity/gender, the connections to power, and the ways this gender/power nexus manifests in schools and social groups in schools. In the curriculum design, we also sought to elicit student perceptions of normative masculinity and the way it plays out in schools. Finally, on Day 5, we explored with the students the notions of social power within the emergent concepts of dominant and non-dominant voices in groups. The goal of this final session was to make the final conceptual leap toward gender as a range of masculine and feminine characteristics and performances, away from the traditional gender binary. This final facilitation provided students with the opportunity to reflect upon their personal experiences and gendered identities as they moved beyond the scope of the unit.

Four Participant Voices

Throughout the process I was seeking representative voices and performances to be used in the analysis of the experience that we had all been a part of. In the end, I chose four male students for additional one-on-one structured interviews. These four males were actively engaged in the research process. As individuals, they were active participants in influencing the social

gendered forces in the classroom. My interest in interviewing these students was to drill-down to see their perspectives on their own gender/masculinity and the way they performed this in a classroom context, thus, self-reflection is a key component of the analysis portion. It is important to identify that while these selected participants were male, many female classmates were engaged in the research, making valuable contributions to understandings of gender, power, and masculinity.

Thus, the four male students selected for one-on-one interviews became the focus of the analysis as a result of their participation in the classroom sessions. The journeys of these participants are documented in the following chapters to highlight their understandings, reflections, and performances of masculinity throughout the two phases of the research process: the classroom sessions and the one-on-one interview sessions. The analysis focuses on their ability to be self-reflective and how this interplays with their performance of masculinity in the classroom. I am interested in whether they know how their actions affect their peers, their relationships and the classroom environment. The interview data and classroom sessions are analyzed and discussed in Chapter IV. The classroom research was a more complex and multi-dimensional set of data where these four students negotiated their identities with other classmates and with other school social forces (peer groups) while being influenced by the directions of both the facilitator and teacher-researcher. While the order of data collection –classroom sessions and then interviews– made temporal sense in the school location, the analytical order in the thesis is inverted to first focus on the individual positioning of these four male students from their perspectives and in their own words.

The names of the students (as well as any friends or family members they make reference to) are pseudonyms that I selected to protect their anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the students, and to stay within the ethical guidelines of the Lakehead University Research Ethics board.

Document Analysis

Two documents were collected for analysis in this research. The first was a written reflection that students completed on Day 2 (Appendix A) of the facilitation, guided by the following prompt: *“Describe a situation in your own life where you experienced gender policing. You may have been the one policing someone else’s gender or someone may have policed yours”*. Students in this philosophy class were accustomed to writing reflections as part of their regular classroom activities, every two or three weeks, based upon course content.

The second document was collected on the last day of the facilitation and the classroom research phase. Students were assigned the task of completing a *“gender continuum,”* wherein they determined and represented certain personal characteristics or traits as having masculine or feminine traits. The goal of this activity was to prompt students to consider themselves through a series of gendered nuanced characteristics, rather than gendered identity pre-determined by a hegemonic view of their (biological) sex. Both the written reflection and the gender continuum of the four participants are presented in Chapter IV as Student Artefacts.

Research Process

The research proposal for this study was developed by me (as a teacher), in tandem with a five-day gender sub-unit called *“Masculinity goes to Class”* to coincide with the larger (and required) Aesthetics unit of the Philosophy course. The proposal was submitted to the Lakehead University Research Ethics Board and the Lakehead Public Schools research officer to obtain permission from both institutions to conduct the research. Parental and student consent were both obtained upon receipt of approval from both Lakehead University and Lakehead Public Schools.

I explained the research plan and goals as well as introduced Blair as a co-facilitator and new classroom member to the 24 students, before the research began. It was at this meeting that I also distributed the information and consent letters to the students, outlining the research process

as a sub-unit of study for the course (Appendix D). Both letters outlined the key ethical considerations: (a) the benefits of participating in the study; (b) that there were no risks involved; (c) their right to withdraw at any time; (d) that their marks would not be affected by their participation in the study; (e) confidentiality and anonymity of all information; (f) storage of data for seven years in a secure location, overseen by the supervisor; and (g) methods of dissemination of findings.

During the five-day study, students were audio recorded and video recorded from two different perspectives. Observations of student interactions, performances, peer interactions and classroom group work were all noted in the PO notes. The four male students were video recorded during their one-on-one interviews. During the 5 days of intensive data collection, Blair and I daily discussed what data was recorded, reviewed some of the highlights, potentials or short-comings, and thus made emergent decisions on what would need to be observed or collected in the next day's sessions. Despite the abandonment of the audio recordings during the classroom sessions due to the poor quality, multiple sources of data were achieved from the participant observer notes, video recordings of classroom sessions and interviews, as well as the student-produced documents or artefacts (described above).

In the weeks and months following the classroom-based data collection, I organized the data according to: (a) student; (b) data type (interviews, student artefacts, classroom sessions); and (c) teacher-researcher reflections. The first two components of the data were analysed and coded according to three broad thematic categories, and further coded into smaller sub-sets of these categories. The themes are also coded according to the interview responses by question. The following open-codes were used to describe the emergent themes and their smaller component parts:

1) *Normative Masculinity/gender*

RS = Self (in reference to)

RO = Others (in reference to)

I used this code to identify when the participants discussed gender conventions/norms and norms of masculinity in reference to themselves and others. This was an important consideration in order to see the learned understandings of gender the participants had.

2) *Relationships:*

FA = Family

FR = Friends

PG = Peer Group

TA = Teachers/Administrators

The relationships that students have with family, friends, their peer group as well as teachers and administrators is an important part of their identity, how they see themselves and how they act. Their socialization as individuals is an important part of the lens they bring to classroom activities and school life. Furthermore, the extent of influence (or lack thereof) that these groups of people have on teens is also important.

3) *Self Reflection*

i. RP = Research Process

ii. LE = Life Experience

iii. PS = Perception of Self

iv. MC = Making Connections Between Research and Life Experiences

Self-reflection is a key component to understanding oneself. I analyzed this theme in order to gain greater insight into the thoughts, perspectives and reflective abilities (or positions) in relation to their respective masculine identities. I am interested in whether they know how

their masculine performances impacts them, their peers, their classrooms and other spaces they occupy.

An example of the way in which a student interview response was coded is: (Q2, FA, Interview, Dec 1/09). This means the student discussed or referenced the influence of Relationships with family in his response to question 2 in his interview.

Other Codes used to identify the *source* of data include:

SA: Student Artefact

WR: Written Reflection on Gender Policing

CO: Explanation/Reflection on Gender Continuum

PO: Participant Observation notes

CS: Classroom Session

This data was coded, charted analysed in order to make meaning, alongside PO notes, of the way the four student participants and I interacted, informed, and influenced each other in the classroom setting, as discussed in Chapter IV. Charting helped me to see connections and analyze the coded data in a way that grouped like-concepts together so that I could pull out ideas relevant to this research. Chapter IV includes compiled charts that contain the most relevant and illustrative elements of the initial data coding and charting phase of this research.

An outline of the Research Instrument (Interview questions) including the personalized questions for each student participant is available in Appendix C. Students were asked two batteries of questions: 1) the same five predetermined (closed) questions and, 2) a set of personalized emergent questions (ranging from 2 to 4, depending upon the participant). The personalized questions typically reflected the unique contributions made by each of the students in the classroom sessions and sometimes emerged as a natural consequence of the interview itself.

They were often ideas or performances that I decided had more research potential that I needed to explore further with the participants.

I asked the four male students to participate in interviews and gave them the option of not completing an interview. I also gave the students the option of who conducted their interview, Blair or myself. None of the students stated a preference of interviewer and as such were scheduled for interviews according to a time slot agreed upon by the participant and researcher. I chose to have Blair conduct the three interviews with Robert, David, and Mark respectively, while I conducted one with Jamie. Blair completed the majority of the interviews, despite my role as lead researcher, because I wanted the participants to feel comfortable discussing the curriculum sub-unit critically and honestly. They knew it was a sub-unit I had designed. I was mindful that students may not answer as truthfully or candidly if I, as their teacher, was asking the questions. Blair would have conducted Jamie's interview as well, but Jamie had commitments on the day that Blair was available so I completed his interview the following morning after the classroom sessions had ended. The findings are described in the following chapter in which the voices and performances of the four male student are used to articulate the themes of this research.

Chapter IV: Emerging Identities

This chapter introduces and describes the four male participants who emerged as the focal participants. The selection of these four students was based upon their performances of masculinity (normative or non-normative), their relationships with peers, the level of power they wielded in the classroom context, the degree to which they occupied space (both physically and psychologically) in the classroom, their level of engagement with the research topic, and the social group to which they belonged in the school (Froyum, 2007; Pascoe, 2007). In each day's class debriefings, we discussed male students who were prominent or un/characteristic of the masculine majority in the classroom activities and/or contributed in interesting or un/usual (non-hegemonic or actively maintained hegemonic) gendered ways. We noted the diversity of the group of males and their masculine performances/identities as contributing to the inquiry into masculinity in meaningful and multiple ways.

The second part of this chapter outlines and describes the ways in which the four male participants, Robert, Jamie, David, and Mark², performed their masculinity in a classroom setting. It also highlights the ways in which the participants' performances of masculinity were constructed in the classroom environment and how they interacted. My identity and role as a feminist anti-oppressive educator was also in flux in the classroom environment, affected by the performances of these students. Their performances, ideas and communications about gender and masculinity often diverged from my own, were challenging for me to understand, but ultimately were of interest for me. It was critically important to observe and analyze the ways in which the participants constructed and performed their identities in a classroom setting (a site of learning

² All participant names as well as the names used for friends, family and classmates have been changed in all interviews and transcribed materials.

and complex social interactions) as well as how they perceived themselves in an interview context.

Data and Analysis

I analyzed the classroom data using four data sources: interview transcripts, classroom transcripts and my PO notes/journal. The fourth day of the research process provided particularly rich data to compare and contrast the masculine performances of the four student participants. The students engaged in an experiential activity called the “Colour Blind Initiative” (Appendix A). This collaborative, problem-solving activity created the context for all four of the participants’ classroom identities to emerge, in contrast with each other and themselves in a one-on-one context (Niblett & Potvin, 2010). This portion of data analysis was based upon relationships and interactions amongst the participants (and teacher-researcher) within the classroom setting. The one-on-one interview represents the individual thoughts, experiences and reflections of the four participants about masculinity and gender performances. The data from the Colour Blind Initiative (part of the classroom sessions) provides an opportunity to see the masculine performances at work, interacting with one another in the classroom environment. The four areas of focus for this portion of data are:

1. the four participants' overall role in the classroom (including their responses to the research process)
2. their interactions with other participants
3. their role in the Colour Blind Initiative
4. their interactions with the teacher-researcher

The concepts of dominant and non-dominant voices emerged within the debrief of the Colour Blind initiative. The concept of dominant and non-dominant voices was helpful as Blair and I discussed with students the roles they played in group decision-making. By introducing

language that assumed and implied hierarchy and hegemony, these concepts helped draw out the power inequalities that exist in classroom spaces, often unchecked or unnoticed. Students went on to describe the characteristics and qualities they associated with dominant and non-dominant voices. This enabled us to discuss ways in which social interactions could be infused with power, a concept that we extended into gender on the final day of the research. The student participants sections (below) involve select quotations that are particularly illustrative, more detailed and expansive charts used for data analysis can be found in Appendix E. The discussion within these section has two parts, the first part of the discussion focuses on a description of the student and the second focuses on how I responded and interacted with the students.

“Take it on the chin”: Robert

Robert was a grade 11 student in the Philosophy class. I had taught him in previous courses and knew him from his involvement in the Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) at the school. I had been witness to Robert's enthusiasm for artistic performances of different kinds, such as rapping, beat-boxing, and athletic performances in football. He also was an active participant in overt gender play or gender bending. Robert was eager to be involved in activities or school events that involved dressing in drag and occasionally wearing make-up.

Given the out-going, out-spoken nature of his personality as well as his overt interest in gender it seemed he would be an enthusiastic participant in the research. Thus, it was surprising, at the outset of the data collection, that Robert chose to abstain from the research. This abstention lasted for only one day. He joined the rest of the class on the second day of the sub-unit and research, stating, in his one-to-one interview with Blair, the following impressions:

At the beginning, when Ms. Potvin was going on...I'm like ‘Ah, this is going to be soooo boring’ – the way Ms. Potvin was describing it. So when she gave the opportunity to opt out, and like go to another classroom and do work, I actually originally chose that. And then like, I got my work done, then like I remember someone in the classroom – I can't remember who –

saying it was actually fun and everything. I'm like, 'Oh, okay, well I'll go on the second day.' (Interview, Dec 1/09)

Robert's interview, conducted by Blair, was the first of all the participant interviews. Unlike the others it took place before the final classroom session (Day 5 of the sub-unit) because of Robert's social commitments. This may have had a small impact on the lack of reflexivity on Robert's part in the interview; as seen in his interview data, he demonstrated very little self-reflection throughout the classroom sub-unit and research process, opting instead to focus on select moments or performances of gender, seemingly disconnected from the topics covered in the sub-unit. His participation in the classroom and research was characterized by a performance-based approach to masculinity and gender.

Robert showed his enthusiasm at being recruited by the football team, a stronghold for normative masculinity in high schools:

the first day of school - the senior guys for football were like „Oh my gosh he's big, he's male, you gotta play football“. And they spent the whole day convincing me to play football, and little did they know I was already going to play because it's a family thing. Like everybody – it started with my grandfather – my uncle, my dad, my mom, all played football. And so, but then there was like the expectation „Ya, you're big, you're a guy – act like one“. (Q3, RS Dec1/09)

The football team, with its elevated social status, reflects many hegemonic masculine ideals, Robert's participation on the football team gave him a vehicle to belong in a group with power. It also validated a common experience and masculine expectation within his family.

The importance of family continues as a theme discussed by Robert. Conflict in Robert's upbringing reveals some of the values/biases his grandfather had about the difference between men and women reiterating the traditional gender binary (Butler, 2004). He also establishes his own position in contravention of his grandfather's, indicating a complex, but defining, relationship with his mother:

my grandfather – he was always like „Men are the strong ones, women are the more, um, 'taking on the chin' kind of thing... That if something happens to them they just have to

deal with it, there's nothing much they can do. Like I don't really agree with it though. Like, a lot of my family's things I agree with actually come from my mother. And she's the one who's always like „Asking for help is not a weakness, it's a strength". (Q2, FA, Dec 1/09)

Despite Robert's acceptance as part of an elite group, when discussing his peers he says:

Oh my gosh, don't even get me started on how students can be cruel to others when they do something that's gender bending or something. It can get nasty." (Q2, LE, Dec 1/09)

He is alluding to his negative and /or harassment experiences with peers. He does not extrapolate on these experiences in greater detail in the interview, however, his student artefacts (further on in this section) clearly articulated the social consequences for Robert's gender bending in school contexts.

Robert's interview focused largely on interactions with family, friends, and peers. He spent a little time making reference to normative masculinity or gender traits, and only once indirectly reflected on his experiences. This lack of self-reflection (at least in this interview component) could be based on the fact that the final reflective component of the classroom sub-unit was not started at the time of Robert's interview. As shown in his written reflection and gender continuum reflection; however, Robert focused on incidents and experiences without reflecting on these moments or connecting them to his choices.

The following is Robert's written reflection, when asked to reflect upon an experience of gender policing:

My example [of gender policing] is with my co-op³ last year. Me, personally, I will wear makeup and eyeliner and while my family is okay with makeup/cosmetics and not okay with cross-dressing, my coop teacher and coop supervisor did not like me wearing makeup, and I was, like, why? When they told me it was unprofessional to wear cosmetics to work because I was a guy, I asked what made it professional that women could wear them and men couldn't, they did not have an answer other than, 'that's the way it is'. For a while, I continued on doing that [wearing cosmetics] until the vice-principal stepped in and told me I couldn't. I tried to get permission for it but I was not able, so I just didn't wear eyeliner to school anymore. I probably would if I could, not that I don't have a co-

³ Cooperative Education is a program where students can earn credits while gaining job experience in professional work environments.

op anymore, but after all that happened last year from it, I'm like why? –when I'll just probably be told no for some other reason (WR, FA/TA, Nov 27/09)

Robert's recount of his experience of gender policing from his teacher and an administrator is a vivid example of the experiences of young men who perform their masculinity in non-normative ways. Robert told this story through his reflection before the end of the research period. It was a contributing factor to his selection as one of the four interview participants.

Wearing make-up, a trait that Robert recognizes as outside the gender norm for males, but ~~—ok~~ ~~—ok~~ for women," identifies his frustration at the ~~—pop out~~ "answer of adults in the school when he was asked to remove his make-up. He does not elaborate on how this affected his future actions or perceptions of self, others, or schooling as an institution.

Despite his initial hesitations, Robert was engaged in the research process. He was measured in his participation, keeping himself on the margins of the classroom sessions, but answered questions and shared ideas when the opportunity presented itself. In describing his choice to participate on the second day, Robert made it clear that he was participating based on his own opinion of the process, and not by the description provided about the process. During the Colour Blind Initiative Robert participated in a way that demonstrated he was in control of how he participated and the extent to which he would conform to the rules of the activity. In other words, Robert cheated, trying to find ways to ~~—solve~~ "the Colour Blind initiative outside the parameters of the activity. Robert participated as a non-dominant voice in the activity. He ingratiated himself to Mark (Student Participant #3):

Robert: being assertive...firm, serious...I wouldn't want to disagree with Mark, I might lose my teeth.

Mark: I honestly don't know why people find me intimidating (CB, Nov 30/09)

Robert validates Mark's masculinity by identifying the capacity for Mark to inflict pain through violence. This validation represents Robert's desire to be accepted by Mark, a dominant (and popular) masculine figure in the classroom

Robert's behaviour in the classroom was erratic, in a state of flux. He was sensitive to the other participants' performances of masculinity, while also ensuring that he ingratiated himself to Mark. His ability to strategize and interact appropriately with those with greater power is a strategy he used in the classroom context, but also in a school-based context as a member of the football team. Robert was able to identify those masculine performers who have power and allies himself with them. This strategy of Robert's enables him to cultivate friendships (or try to) for his own safety and protection in a school environment where homophobic violence polices normative masculinity. Robert was masterful at navigating the amorphous and changing social terrain of schools and classrooms. This mastery however, seemed to contribute to Robert's unclear, unarticulated sense of self.

Robert and I

The relationship between Robert and I was tense, characterized by power-struggles and often frustration on my part. I often assumed an authoritative, disciplinarian role in the classroom with him. My own desire for authority in the classroom was challenged by him before, during, and after the research process. This is both troubling and fascinating. It was troubling because I could see my own attitude and personal preferences in 'dealing with' Robert as a student, in other words, I did not like him, his personality as a student. This is fascinating because Robert was the most overt gender-bending student in the school (often dressing in drag or wearing make-up), an active member of the GSA and a complex masculine figure – all characteristics and decisions that I find interesting. My identity as a teacher-researcher and Robert's masculine identity clashed in the classroom context. His desire to have proximity to agents of power in the classroom (myself, Blair, and other students) led to frequent conversations and debate. In the case of Robert and I

specifically, our mutual desire to assert power and dominance over each other and the domain of the classroom led to tension and clashes of personality. These feelings of a desire to maintain some kind of dominance and control over Robert appears to fly in the face of my pedagogical goals as an anti-oppressive educator. The existence of a hierarchical relation of power between Robert and I was a source of frustration, and learning, for me as an educator. I was reminded during these —powerstruggles” of how difficult seeking a goal of anti-oppressive education can be (Britzman, 2003). Mindfulness and acknowledgement of this seeming contradiction in order to work through this social reproduction of hegemonic power relations is important for me as an educator so that I do not continue this (flawed) practice.

It is these types of interactions that made the perspective and role of the teacher-researcher richer and more complicated. A high degree of reflexivity was required to ensure my biases or relationship with the student minimally affected my perspective as a researcher (Anderson, 1989; Cochran Smith & Lytle, 1999; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2002). As a teacher, Robert was a challenging student with whom I often clashed. As a researcher, I was able to work through these tensions by identifying them, in order to include Robert as one of the four participants for this research. His contributions as a gender-bending masculine performer and the systemic oppression he experienced as a result was an essential component in understanding the institutional (teacher and administrator) response to non-normative masculine performances.

“Just Try”: Jamie

At the outset of the philosophy course, Jamie and I had no previous contact (unlike the other participants), but, I had taught a number of his friends in previous courses and who were also in the Philosophy grade 11 class. As such, I knew Jamie’s social group of male friends quite well. Up to this point in the course, I had thoroughly underestimated Jamie's intellect and engagement in the curriculum and content. Jamie was not a diligent student in everyday

classroom life. He handed in little completed work and spent a lot of time socializing (albeit quietly) with friends. He drew very little attention to himself, but was prone to the occasional thoughtful contribution to classroom work and discussions.

I learned more about Jamie's abilities and his demonstrations of learning through his participation in the classroom sessions of the sub-unit on gender and masculinity. Socially, I knew that Jamie was part of the “gamer” crowd. He did not participate in organized sports or other school-based clubs. He, along with his friends, identified with and socialized through video games and the gaming community. The make-up of Jamie's friend group was predominantly and/or exclusively made up of young men. Jamie himself rarely, if ever, spoke to female classmates and did not seem to have any female friends (though he discussed interactions with females in his interview). He described the way he constructs his masculinity amongst his male-dominated friend group:

I think that hanging out with - most of my friends are male – you tend to do more stuff because it makes you seem more dominant...like you try to be big among your friends. But I also have friends that are female, and I try to be more sensitive and just not much of a jerk or anything. We do joke around but definitely cause...like it's all about how your friends receive you. Like I'm highly aware of how my friends receive me, and if I do something that they don't like, I'm really bad about that – like mad or sad or anything ... then I'll probably do it. And it's more my choice, but they do have an influence on me. (Q4, FR, Dec 2/09)

Jamie's performance of masculinity at the outset of the research was reserved and shy, but contributed in thoughtful well-articulated way when he did choose to share his ideas with others. His non-normative masculine behaviour sits in opposition to his primary mode of socialization and hobby: gaming. Normative masculinity is a strong undercurrent in Jamie's interactions with friends (all male), which becomes more pronounced and competitive in the presence of girls:

you wanna seem like you're the toughest and you're the funniest and everything else. You kind of get an adrenaline rush out of competing – it's the competitiveness in it...sometimes, and I'll probably hear about it later on...but not right there because you're not going to be like pushing them or anything in front of your friends...they'll probably joke around and joke about what I was saying [to the girl] and stuff, or like um,

mimic me like „Ah, you said that...“ [raises pitch of voice] kinda thing. (PQ1, PG/FR, Dec 2/09)

Both the above quotations reflect Jamie's behavioural responses depending upon the peer group, particularly the gendered make up of the peer group. He identified that he will (along with friends) act different towards males than females. The criteria of this interaction are based on the [so-called] expectations of males and females. In his conception you should act tough around males and more sensitive around females – regardless of the consequences.

Extending beyond the immediate friend-group a greater number of social forces and potential influences exist for Jamie:

In grade 9 when I first came here I was intimidated a bit, and I tried to like act tough and everything but I just...I think in grade 10 I realized like, just be yourself – you don't have to care what anyone else thinks. And just portray who you want to be and...well I was trying to fit in, and not really be able to cause it's hard to be a „tech-er“⁴ all the time or a prep all the time, so you just have to be yourself. That's why when we did that board with all the preps....like I don't fit anywhere, and I'm happy with that. I don't like being branded, then you have to always portray it and you always have to be that kind of thing. If you change, they can be all „you're a poser now“. So it's just...avoid all that and be yourself...I tried being a tech-er, and I don't really like working on engines or anything, and so when they were talking about that, I felt kind of dumbfounded, and like just trying to understand it. And I tried being a prep once, and I just...I didn't like their attitude. Like, my own friends – they don't really fit in anywhere either, so we all have a common interest there. And, like, I don't mind preps⁵ – I'll talk to them and everything...and „tech-ers“ – cause some of them are actually pretty cool when you get them one on one. In the groups, that's where it's kind of awkward. (PQ2, PG, Dec 2/09)

4 A 'tech-er' is one of the social groups in the school made up of predominantly working, middle-class students who frequently (though not exclusively) live rurally. Their hobbies and interests are largely defined by outdoor activities, including snowmobiling. Their interests in school are focused primarily around the skilled trades and technologies. As such, their day-to-day life is defined by bus transportation to school or their own personal vehicles and the skills acquired to maintain these vehicles as well as their outdoor interests. This is a term/label used by students in the context of the school where the research was completed to describe a groups of students.

⁵ A 'prep' is one of the social groups in the school made up of predominantly middle, upper-class students. Their hobbies and interests are often based within athletics, music, student government – more conventional extracurricular activities that their middle, upper-class families can afford. Their interests in school are often (perceived or otherwise) to be academically focussed with a goal of attending University as a post-secondary option. The preps are essentially the privileged class in the school. Prep is often synonymous/used interchangeably with snob or jock.

In discussing the different social groups, the ways he fit and did not fit within them he was also identifying socioeconomic and class-based differences within the school. He was also describing the reality of his friend group as ones who belong together, but nowhere else. Jamie also points to context in this last comment, indicating that one-on-one ~~some~~ of them [tech-ers] are actually pretty cool” but that ~~in~~ the groups, that’s where it’s kind of awkward”. He can navigate relationships with peers, outside his friend group one-on-one, but in a group setting it becomes more difficult.

As a researcher, I appreciated Jamie’s insights into the social dynamics in the school. In describing his own journey to find his place, he also described social life in schools including the hierarchies, the groups and the process through which males (and arguably females) form their identity in schools:

I think you always have to try...like people always feel the need to conform to society. Instead of being outspoken or anything, most people tend to be quiet. Like I am during a meeting... in community stuff and everything. You tend to like try to fit in with the majority. (PQ2, LE/MC, Dec 2/09)

The notion of classroom conformity is another important topic that Jamie discussed. His quiet thoughtfulness and engagement in this interview helped me to realize that he brought the same engagement to the classroom on a daily basis, but I had always brushed him off as a slacker because he tended to be quiet and not verbally expressive:

I don’t think just because someone’s quiet, they don’t take initiative – they kinda do and they kinda don’t, but...just because someone’s quiet doesn’t mean they’re not helping. They could be thinking about it, or they could be thinking about a strategy, and they’re just too shy to say it, or to speak out loud...maybe there’d be like, a contradictions, or people would get mad with the ideas, or kind of frustrate people as well. So someone needs to be the leader, someone needs to step up. That’s why you sort of have to take initiative....but it’s like, not key because you could probably sort it out just by people like quietly talking and just thinking about it – but it would take much longer...that’s what I think at least. (PQ3, RP, Dec 2/09)

Jamie's depth of reflection in the one-on-one interview was not matched by his less detailed written reflections (outlined below). His written reflections were complete and succinct, but also brief, to the point, and lacking in descriptive detail. This stands in stark contrast to Robert, who was more descriptive in his written reflections than in his interview. Despite this, Jamie provided insight into normative masculinity in the gaming world, an important mode of socialization for Jamie and young men more generally:

Being a gamer, I'm all for trying different games. One time, I was about 12 years old, I played a game that was aimed at a younger audience, when my older cousin seen this, he asked if I was a little girl for playing this specific game. I quickly took the game out and put in a different game. Now, I don't care what game I play. No matter what audience it is aimed at, I'll still play it. (WR, FA, Nov 27/09)

Despite the fact that he recalls the significance of this incident he resists this adherence to gender norms in gaming by playing all kinds of games, based on his preference, not gender expectations.

Jamie was a quiet, but consistent participant in the research process. Analysis of the classroom data and the Colour Blind Initiative did not reflect Jamie's level of engagement in the research process. His voice was often absent from classroom transcripts and video recordings. This silence, however, spoke volumes. Jamie was the quintessential non-dominant voice in the classroom. He attended every session, participated in every activity, and drew very little attention (positive or negative) to himself. He interacted mostly with his friend group and the people in close proximity. He contributed to classroom discussions occasionally, but not often. He indicated that the research process was thought-provoking, indicating genuine engagement, which was something he did not share in the classroom context. This silence (or near-silence) in a large group context sits in great contrast with the depth of reflective engagement in the one-on-one interview process. It would be a mistake to construe Jamie's lack of oral communication in the classroom sessions for a lack of engagement in activities, as he indicated in his interview. Jamie

did not orally communicate with any of the other four participants in the Colour Blind initiative except to answer requests for information, for example, identifying the colour of his shape. His only statement to a classmate during the Colour Blind Initiative was to offer a female student one of his shapes. Thus, in order to analyze his role, interview transcripts were used.

In the context of the classroom, Jamie interacted with Blair and I infrequently. He did not display the need for extrinsic validation like the other three participants. In the end, it was his comparatively quiet and unassuming performance of masculinity that made him unique amongst his peers in the classroom. Here he describes his approach to the Colour Blind Initiative:

Um, I didn't really wanna like shout out or anything, but if people were saying their colours I was still trying to mentally figure it out, and I helped by saying what colour I had. I was actually trying to sort it out, and trying to find out in my mind, 'cause I tend to work better when like I'm thinking, instead of saying. Like when I'm listening to music I tend to focus better, and blocking it out of my sight, I actually try to visualize it, cause I find that easier...I could have said something, but I preferred not to. But it wasn't like I wasn't helping, in any way. Like if no one actually did, I would eventually come up with an idea or try to figure it out and say what I thought it was and see if people agreed." (PQ3, RP, Dec 2/09)

Therefore, Jamie's lack of presence/role in solving the "problem" of the Colour Blind Initiative was deliberate, not accidental. He chose to approach the solution to the problem non-verbally, for himself but he did not need or want to assume a leadership or dominant role.

Jamie's performance of masculinity was quietly affected by those around him. Unlike the other three participants, he did not perform his masculinity in an attention-seeking way. He used time in the classroom to reflect upon himself and his roles in the classroom. His performance of masculinity was completely overshadowed by those of his classmates. It would be a mistake to think that Jamie's intra-personal reflective nature meant that his masculinity was rigid and unchanging. As he stated in his interview, he is always "thinking, instead of saying" (PQ3, RP, Dec 2/09).

Jamie and I

Before the research process and Jamie's interview with me, I made assumptions about

him as a student. He did not complete many assigned classroom tasks and contributed little to discussions. As his teacher I assumed he was a slightly disengaged, lazy student who lacked motivation. Through the research process, including a one-on-one interview, I began to understand more about Jamie and my own biases about what engaged students look like in the classroom. Upon reevaluation of this judgment, I realized that Jamie attended every day. He did not demand my attention in positive or negative ways, and was a constant and agreeable figure in the classroom. In the research process and interview, Jamie revealed a level of complexity and critical thinking that I did not expect because it contradicted my preconceived notion of him as a lazy, disengaged student.

Once Jamie's interview was complete, I was confronted (in my own mind) with the extent of my miscalculations about him. This led me to consider how males like Jamie--who associate mostly in groups of boys and engages in a male-dominated past-time like gaming, but with a passive personality--navigate classroom and school life. I began to question the quality of education that passive, introverted students are getting in Ontario classrooms surrounded by attention-seeking, extrinsically motivated students. Jamie attended my class because he wanted to learn, not because he had developed a relationship with me or because he wanted to impress anyone. Jamie was not resentful of his marginalized role in the classroom; he was happy that someone else would take the lead because it allowed him space to think. Jamie is an example of a male student whose masculinity identity, along with his identity as a student, is quietly in flux. The research process provided the space for me, as an educator, to expand my ideas to include a more complex picture of an engaged student who is eager to learn and think critically. Jamie's passive masculinity allowed him to roll through the classroom relatively unnoticed, for better or worse. He never drew the ire of his classmates, but we also missed out on his insights.

“Classic heroes like 'Conan the Barbarian' crap”: David

David was the most academically oriented student of the four participants. As such, he made efforts to speak in a way that reflected his identity, with a large vocabulary. This large

vocabulary did not extend into more frequent or longer oral communications or articulations compared to his peers. David was always ready to share an idea or opinion, and to challenge other students and myself. This gendered performance of challenging peers, authority, society, ideas, and concepts led to David's social alienation and isolation in the classroom. This position of marginalization was not uncommon for David, as he expressed in his interview and elsewhere. He was often simultaneously marginalized and at the vocal forefront of classroom activities. His complex (sometimes contradictory) performances of masculinity throughout the entire course and research process led to his inclusion as one of the four participants for interview.

David expressed both progressive and conservative views, and he was intellectually engaged, but socially cut-off from his peers. In a word, David was a conundrum, presenting many contradictions in his performances of masculinity. He was acutely aware of his own complexity and his fractious style of navigating classroom and social life. He was also persistent, aware of his rights as a student and person, and exercised them in dynamic and challenging ways. David was at once a social outcast and an engaged member of the school's student council. He identifies strongly with feminine characteristics while gender policing others (including close family members and friends) for their gender non-conformity. David's interview, conducted by Blair, occurred after the final classroom session (Day 5 of the sub-unit). Significantly, over the course of the semester, including the five-day research period, David frequently stayed after class to discuss his ideas and thoughts with me and with Blair.

David was eager to discuss his perception of normative masculinity as it relates to femininity and the correlating [for him] notions of being a man/woman:

I think nowadays men care a lot more about their appearance and their fashion and I guess that's kind of a good thing in a way. I mean, we shouldn't care too much about our appearances but it shows that in a way – for better or for worse – that we're [males and females] becoming more alike. And I think we always have to keep this...I think it's appropriate to keep a kind of divide between what a man is and what a woman is, but I think it is also very important that we try to, you know, keep that line more thin...yes,

fluid. Like I don't know, like I guess it's kinda me...I guess I'm really saying „oh I want to have it both ways“ when I shouldn't be. But it's kinda like the whole action star thing. It's like, I really...I really love these classic people like Rambo and things, and I think that it's all this masculinity and things, but really I know that's not...I can't have it – I really shouldn't be trying to have it both ways, where I appreciate the efforts of masculinity and all these classic heroes like Conan the Barbarian crap.

Focussing on attention to appearance David argues here that men are becoming more like women because they “are more” about their appearance. He also places a positive evaluative claim on this, that this is good, but also contradictory. He endorses the notion that there should be some distinction between male/masculinity and female/femininity, while also argues that gender fluidity is positive. David connects these seemingly contradictory notions to himself when he identifies that while he is not often the masculine ideal, he readily consumes media that present normative [hyper] masculinity. He reflects upon the possibility of having it “both ways,” that is, a world where he can consume the media/entertainment he enjoys, while also encouraging a system with greater gender fluidity.

David's family history and family life provide insight into David's home life and the influence of male and female role models in the absence of his mother:

well, my mom – she left at a very early age. I was maybe like three...four... I can't quite remember but um. Really I don't remember what it was quite like having a mother or anything, so um. My Dad had to raise me most of the time, but he was away a lot...everybody's moving out west. But, um, he had to work many hours of the day and when he came home he was tired. And I can understand why he was always agitated „cause he always had to just come home and do more work. When me and Adam were still really young, we couldn't quite cook for ourselves yet or anything. So basically, we didn't really have much of a mother figure around, and our dad...well, I don't really want to say we didn't have much of a father figure around. He was present a lot, we just never really got to do much activities with him... my grandmother, she helped out, she helped raise us a lot and same with my Auntie. So I feel like I got some kind of...maybe some sort of feminine influence from them. Or maybe not feminine but.... my grandma, she gave me, I'd like to think she brought me up a lot on my ethics and morals. And my Auntie Jacqueline, on the other hand, she taught me a lot of ... you know, just critical thinking and just ...you know, taking things not at a first glance or first appearances...whatever you want to call it. (Q2, FA, Dec 1/09)

David is carefully identifying that his brother (Adam), Auntie and grandmother were positive influences in his life and gender development, while also identifying that while his father was in

his life (unlike his mother) he certainly was not in a position to be an active and engaged single parent. Family life was a very important component of David's gender identity and the construction of his masculinity. He indicates an inadequate male role model and the increasing responsibilities assumed by himself and his older brother Adam, as defining identity-building experiences in his life. Despite other intensely reflective moments, David did not connect (either verbally or in his artefacts) these key family experiences to his masculine performances in dealing with other people.

Social isolation from peers is a significant experience for David throughout his life in schools. Here, he discusses his relationship to peers in his early school days:

I didn't really...I mean I didn't associate with...I mean I was always the kind of person who was more or less on the outside of things. Like I was the person everybody knew – everybody was kinda friends with, you know, didn't really...wasn't a big player of the games [sports, activities with other], if you know what I mean (Q3, PG/TA, Dec 1/09)

The self-portrait David creates here is as the outsider in his peer group. He is someone that everyone knows, but no one includes or spends time with. Describing his childhood (and self-perception) in greater depth David goes onto say:

I was never the biggest or the strongest person and I actually was a very aggressive child –Yeah, I think I should have mentioned that earlier – I was very aggressive as a child. I always tried to prove myself as more...like you watch these classic cartoons and you know, movies and whatnot, and you always see people – if they're getting pushed around or something – they always, you know, find some kind of other strength in them or something and, I don't know...I guess I kind of bought into that whole thing a little bit, which is a little bit ridiculous looking back. Like I see a lot of things that I did in the past, and I just shake my head and go „I can't believe...I should have done it a different way" but I guess at some point I started to regret it but...I don't really have much people's respect...I'm more of an apathetic-like person (PQ2, RS, Dec 1/09)

David discusses his development and the changes in his identity and behaviour in a reflective way, he can see how he has learned, acts differently, and reflects upon his experiences:

That's just who...that's just who I've been for a very long time like....when I was a kid I was happy and eccentric and crap, and then I got a little bit older and I started to get a little bit more depressing, so to speak...and well, over time I guess it just became who I am – just kind of more of a very critical, cynical person, but like, I don't know. I actually

kind of prefer this...I'd like to think I've become more mature ...and learned a lot – still have a lot more to learn. I've come to the realization that I have a lot more to learn... I can't remember who said it but basically – „The more you know, the less you know. And the more you learn, the more you understand that you know so little“. (PQ2, PS/LE, Dec 1/09)

An important self-reflective activity and revelation for David is his reflection upon gender policing his brother Adam:

I myself am guilty of some 'gender policing' in the past, although much of it was truly just teasing and petty insults as a child. I have questioned others "gender and sexuality (always sarcastically) based upon the clothing choices, activities, and interests of the individual or group. I still do this somewhat to this day, this being a habit I wish to abandon. One example in particular of how I have 'gender policed', is by mocking my brother Adam. My brother has developed a love for cooking, cosmetology and fashion (something often associated with women) over the years. Not so much trying to discourage him as so much, laugh at him, I have called him a housewife more than once. My brother also enjoys a variety of female singers, and listens to more softer, trendy music, something I have made fun of. Not only have I questioned Adam based on himself, but also on the friends he keeps. He is friends with students of many groups, but I have seen him associate with the most are the "emos", which has now evolved into the "scene kids"⁶. These scenes wear tight colourful clothing, pants low, and relatively act what can be considered 'feminine' by society standards. As I see him associate with this group, and become more feminine when he does, I cannot help but feel a little disgusted, insulted by what I believe to be an unoriginal, pathetic trend, and cannot help expressing this to him. The act of 'gender policing' is arguably wrong, yet it is something that is likely never to die for better or for worse. Perhaps children oughtn't be 'policed' by societies standards, but rather, encouraged to grow how they see fit in an unbiased setting, controlled, predominantly by neither masculinity nor femininity. I myself must learn to stop, something which will take time. (WR, LE/PS, Nov 27/09)

David's reflection about gender policing focuses on the occasions where he has policed his brother Adam (instead of a situation where he may have been gender policed by peers/friends).

This stance is unique amongst the other four participants. The three other participants discussed situations only where they had been gender policed, not the gender *policer*. Furthermore, unlike the other participants, David also reflects on his own actions and indicates a desire to change his

⁶ Emos and Scene Kids are two distinct, but related, groups of students in this context. Emo is short for emotional. Emos, therefore, are seen as teens who are very emotional (often depressed), they wear dark, fitted/tight clothing, wrist bands (sometimes to cover wounds from self-harming) and listen to indie/punk music. It is not a flattering term and is often used in a pejorative way, as an insult. Scene Kids are similar to emos in terms of their so-called "emotional" state, they also wear fitted/tight clothing except their clothing is brightly coloured. They listen to music from the techno/house genre and are perceived as being more privileged and superfluous in their interests than emos. One student articulated succinctly that scene kids are "emos who wear colour and spend all their time at the mall".

own interactions (not wanting to gender police his brother). He also reveals his own assumptions about the gendered nature of certain tasks and interests. So-called feminine interests/hobbies that his brother pursues include cooking, cosmetology, softer music and friendships with emos/scene kids; a group often seen as not conforming (clothing, emotional predisposition) to norms of masculinity.

David's performances of masculinity in the classroom stood in stark contrast to Jamie's. He is a constant attention-seeker of both classmates and teachers, frequently bearing the brunt of his classmates' frustration. He actively participated in classroom life and the research process. David was a dominant voice, but a challenged figure in the classroom. His performance of masculinity was characterized by aggressive language, tone of voice, and ways of interacting. Despite overt tensions and a lack of popularity with classmates, David was consistent and committed to his ideas. David's interactions with the other three participants varied. His interactions with Mark were frequent, characterized by a power struggle fueled by David's cynical form of aggressive masculinity. He was criticized initially by Robert, then supported by him in the debrief of the activity. There was no interaction between David and Jamie. His commitment to his performance of masculinity played a role in the Colour Blind initiative as well. It was his suggestion that solved the collective problem of the initiative. His idea required the support of Mark, a dominant voice with greater social currency in the classroom, to be implemented. Interactions amongst David, Blair, and I were characterized by advocacy and encouragement. Blair and I highlighted the valuable contributions that David made to the research process. We assumed this role because of David's marginalized social status in the classroom:

D: because its funner that way...maybe that's because that's the only way I can get people's attention, because I don't have the same commanding respect and authority and I don't like using authority because authority pisses me off so I use that other tone to catch people's attention...yes sarcasm, because everyone pays attention to sarcasm

Blair: So David...because you can't or don't garner people's attention by using the same commanding, controlling voice you use sarcasm to do that?

D: That wasn't the intent, but I suppose it turned out that way

L: Alternate techniques to gain access to participation?

D: it wasn't really sarcasm...I didn't use 'high technical words', I mean I didn't swear so I guess that's an improvement" (CB, Nov 30/09)

David discussed perspective on leadership – he was reluctant to see himself as a leader because of his own opposition or discomfort with authority:

I can't just take on this whole sort of leadership role very easily and say „Listen, I think we should do things this way“, or „We need to do things this way“ or...cause a lot of the time I feel like...I don't answer well to authority. That's not to say I'm some „anti-establishment, screw the system“ kind of nihilistic person...who claims to be anarchist but doesn't even know what it means. (PQ2, PS, Dec 1/09)

David was much more comfortable with his role as the marginalized outsider looking in and poking holes in the plans and theories of his other classmates. This is a strategy that garners other attention, but is also an effective tool for subverting the authority of others, like Mark (Participant 4).

The following conversation records David's fractious relationship with his classmates, particularly his power struggles with Mark.

Mark: Okay guys, guys, guys, I want to try something its David's method, make him happy, cause he doesn't sound very happy

D: Yes, humour me [students quickly solve problem using David's solution] ...That too way too much effort...we could have gotten this done in two minutes if everyone had listened (CB, Nov 30/09)

At the end of this classroom activity, David stayed behind to discuss his role in the activity and the classroom with me:

David: I feel like this antagonistic figure...

L: So did you ever think that maybe you as an individual when you're using sarcasm, like you were discussing with Stacy, that maybe you're subverting that power by doing that?

D: I don't know, they don't seem to notice me much. (PO, CS, Nov 30/09)

These conversations show David's interest in discussing, debriefing and analyzing classroom dynamics. He discusses his role in the classroom as antagonistic and also marginalized; someone who goes unnoticed by students like Mark.

David simultaneously performed masculinity from a dominant position and a marginalized one. Unlike Jamie, who was content, albeit passively marginalized, David was a dominant voice in the classroom. He lacked the social status amongst his peers to be well-liked. This was in large part due to his cynical, sarcastic approach. It was not his ideas that were criticized and disliked by his peers, but the way he delivered them. Masculinity for David was as conflicted as his role in the classroom. His status in the classroom fluctuated from activity to activity, including his own desire to participate. Despite the fact that he was a dominant voice in the Colour Blind Initiative, he stated, "I really didn't care for this project, I hated it, I wanted it to end" (CB, Nov 30/09). It was difficult to tell if David hated the activity or if he hated the way he was treated by his peers. The social dimension of the classroom and the public nature of this reflection did not allow space for David to reflect in an honest way. His masculine performance in the classroom context was reactionary. He wanted to be different than other males; as a result he received negative responses and criticism from his peers. Sarcasm, instead of humour, dominated David's approach to performing his masculinity alongside other males like Mark.

David and I

The relationship that David and I forged over the course of the semester was based upon intellectual conversation and idea-sharing. In the early parts of the semester, David used his characteristic style of sarcasm and cynicism to challenge my academic abilities in the classroom environment. I often found my verbal and intellectual responses shifting quickly to keep up with David's morphing identity and complicated social interactions with peers. It became obvious to me that David was a student who enjoyed confrontation, with peers and teachers. He also had an expansive vocabulary and used it to intimidate students (and teachers) intellectually. This kind of

verbal and intellectual sparring is the type of challenge that I, as a teacher, enjoy. By the end of October, David had relented a little, leaving me with the sense that I had somehow —passed” his test. Unlike my relationship with Robert, my own interest in verbal debate supported David’s version (and my own?) of a dominant masculine performance. Navigating my own teacher-student relationship with David was a complex process, but it was also my responsibility to ensure all students in the class had a safe learning environment. This meant that I assisted in negotiating David's relationships with other students. I relied upon logical, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills (appealing to David's logical side) to mitigate tensions that would develop. Sometimes these tensions were well-founded and I would defend another student's position or the point that challenged David's. At other times I would advocate for space to be made for David's ideas and perspectives.

As a member of the cross-country running team, David's conversations with me about philosophy would spill over into our after-school practices. This led to the largely positive and intellectually stimulating relationship evident in the research process. This relationship was extremely rewarding for me as a teacher because of David's complexity as a male student. His dominant approach and perspectives often clashed with mine, but this occurred in a manner that we both enjoyed: academic debate. From this David and I were able to establish a relationship of mutual respect. I was able to see David, a student who had a reputation for being difficult, grow to respect me in my role as a teacher and academic.

“It's No Big Deal”: Mark

Mark decided to take Philosophy because his friends were enrolled and his girlfriend encouraged him to register because she had enjoyed and profited from a previous course section. Mark had a diverse group of friends comprised of males and females and was very proud of his heterosexual relationship. He was also very proud of his close friendships with male friends and

demonstrated his affection for them through hugging and some physical touching. Mark derived a lot of his identity from his physical self. He did not identify with the “jocks” as a social group in the school because his athletic pursuits had been almost exclusively outside the scope of school athletics. Despite his large physical size and fitness, Mark, unlike Robert, chose not to play football. His main sport interest at the time was body-building—an athletic pursuit that defined much of his daily routine, including within Philosophy class: Mark often asked to be excused in order to go consume his protein shakes. He needed to drink these shakes at precise times (during class) to optimize his second daily workout after school. Mark's diet was also largely defined by his body-building, as were his conversations with friends, classmates, me and Blair.

Mark developed an interesting ritual at the start of the classes during the sub-unit (data collection phase). He would arrive punctually to class (before the bell in many cases), put his bag down at the desk he preferred to sit at (the seating was unassigned in this class so this was a strategy he used to secure the seat he wanted), and make casual conversation with students or the research team. Before the bell marking the start of class would ring, he would ask permission to go to his locker to either change his shirt or get a sweatshirt, then return only after the bell had rung and all the other students had arrived to class. The significance of this routine did not occur to Blair or me until the day that Mark returned to class in a tank top, having changed out of his regular shirt and carrying a hooded sweatshirt. It became clear on that day that this physical ritual was a way for Mark to establish his place in the class (securing his seat), and also to display his social superiority (by arriving late without reprimand), while he also exhibited his physical self by drawing attention to his (re-clothed) body. In many cases, Mark drew everyone's visual attention by explaining that he had to go to his locker, but the day he arrived in a tank top (in the middle of winter), he offered no explanation and required none for the attention of his classmates' eyes. He also represented a dominant voice in the classroom, occupying much of the conversational/intellectual space. Mark's consistent performances of masculinity—grounded in

his physical displays—were major factors in his interview selection. Blair conducted Mark's interview, after the final class session.

Mark, like Jamie, articulated a sense of relief and happiness about discussing gender and masculinity in the sub-unit of the course:

A lot of people see it the same way I did...like I do, and...most aspects. And I thought that was really interesting because I kinda thought I had my own little...like I was in my own little world for that, and I was completely off with that...Like, the way I believe what masculinity is, is the way that other people see it as well – well, the majority of people – I found at least in this class. And I thought that was kinda cool...thinking I'm not alone on what I think....that there's other people around that...

L: So how is it you characterize what you believe about masculinity?

You know, like aspects like ah, the way you sound, the way you look, how you dress – all those things you know....general things...I don't know how to explain it but...in general. (Q1, RP, Dec 1/09)

He is happy that his opinions and ideas (though he does not articulate exactly what components make up these opinions and ideas) are shared and therefore, validated by his peers.

When asked about the role that schools play on a students' gender identity Mark responded by discussing the impact that being gay would have on a young man's social status in schools. This is helpful in understanding the perceptions students in general have toward other students who may be (or are perceived to be) gay.

I don't think it's so much the schooling, as much as the students in the school[that influence/impact students]...I just think that....say for example, someone is gay...Or whatever the term is..."

L: Gay is fine.

Okay. And, you know, they are not going to be as accepted, if you ask me, in a school setting like this [if they are gay]. You know, they may think, other people may think differently of you. I mean, yeah, sure, there'll be some people that...for me, I don't really care and it's not a big deal to me, but for some people that is a big issue. Like I know personally for my father, homosexuality is a really big no-no for him. Like, he's just...I, I can't even talk to him about it. Whereas, you know, for me it's whatever... it's not a big deal. So that's how I think...not so much schooling, but the students in the school will kind of...go against that. (Q3, RO, Dec 1/09)

It is significant that Mark seeks assurance from Blair that the term gay is an acceptable term to use. Students often use the term gay in a pejorative way, so when the occasion arises to use the term in an appropriate and respectful way, Mark (in this instance) was concerned it is the “wrong” term to use. Despite being reassured that it is an appropriate term to use – he did not use it again, opting for vague references to “them” and “they” – meaning people who are gay.

Sports, athleticism and physical stature were important, in fact, the defining parts of Mark’s masculine identity:

I see myself as a typical male, hopefully...I like sports...I like being with my friends...I like being with my girlfriend. I love everything like that. You know, I have a deeper voice. I don't sound like a mouse. Um, I'm bigger than the majority of kids. Um, I don't know...however else you can typically think of a male...there [are] qualities to me that are feminine or whatever...my feelings, yeah, I'll admit that, I have very feminine feelings. (PQ1, RS, Dec 1/09)

Mark’s physical self is the site that defines his masculine self. It is a place of normative masculine reproduction. His emotions or “feelings” are a site where he allows himself to be counter-normative or “feminine”.

Another example of Mark’s counter-normative masculine performances is through his intimate same-sex friendships:

Daniel⁷, in this class, is my best friend that is male. And I mean, for him, he couldn't care less, I mean...You know there's days I'm having a bad day, first thing he'll do, he'll come up and give me a big hug. I mean, that's just the way he is. You know... he's trying to make me feel better...he's not trying to like pick me up, or you know, trying to hook up with me, he's just trying to make me feel better. He's just trying to be nice...he's trying to be sincere. And whereas everyone else in my group, they all know what I'm like, I mean, they all know what everyone else is like. Just because I act a certain way, doesn't mean I'm actually like that...Say like, hugging Daniel for example...just because I hugged another guy, doesn't mean I'm gay...it's not a big deal...And even if I was gay, I mean, I'm pretty sure all my friends would accept that. I mean, it's not a big deal. (Q4, FR, Dec 1/09)

7 Name changed

In this statement he articulates an understanding that touching and hugging one's same sex friends (for males) is not a widespread practice, nor is it acceptable. Another important component of this comment is the [perceived] implications of same sex hugging and affection: being gay. He disassociates himself from gayness by saying that his friends know him and "the way he is", would accept him. The subtext/tone of this comment is that Mark is persuading Blair that he is not gay, despite this "deviant" behaviour, but if he was, "it's no big deal".

Mark returned to his athletics pursuits and reflected upon his physical self, a great source of pride and identity. He did not connect the ways in which his athletic pursuits, particularly body-building would have on his masculine identity. He concluded by emphasizing that only his opinion mattered and those of others did not. However, his discussions and classroom conduct revealed a Mark who was very concerned with the opinions of others:

the whole sport [body-building] is pretty much based on looks... the size of the certain muscles, the symmetry, you know, how well they're proportioned to the rest of the body and stuff like that. I mean sure, there's nutrition and stuff like that, but ...when you're actually out on the stage, it's all about looks...it's all about how you look...for me personally, a lot of people think it's weird and they'll think that it's „gay“ to do that, where, you know, it's just my personal opinion. Like to me, you know, I play hockey as rec [recreation], and I did that for baseball, and I played baseball for a cardio workout. And you know, a lot of people like hockey and think it's [body-building] weird, but I think it's weird to play hockey competitively, just because of some of the things that I've heard that go on...I don't really think it [body-building] has a big impact [on self-perception]. I mean there's probably some things that I do that impact it, but not very much. You know, I think everyone is who they are to themselves. Like I have a thing on my wallet that says um „The only thing that truly matters is how you see yourself“. And I find that to be extremely true.(PQ1, MC/SP, Dec 1/09)

When asked to reflect about gender policing, Mark made reference to the role his father played in his gender performances:

When I was about 12, I was an extremely overweight child. As a joke I would always make fun of myself to get others to laugh; and I would do this by means of making fun of my weight, especially my 'boobs'. One of the things that my father used to tell me was 'real men don't have boobs, they have pecs'. At the time, I thought this was a hilarious saying because anyone who knew me, knew I didn't have pecs, I clearly had boobs. But now as I look back at this, I realized that my father was stereotyping males to a whole other extreme. This is my example of G.P. [gender policing] towards males in our society.” (WR, FA, Nov 27/09)

When asked about this influence in his interview Mark said did not see any connection or impact (positive or negative) to his current focus, indeed a strong fixation on his physical self. In addition, Mark indicated that his father is one of the primary influences in his athletic pursuits, first in soccer, then baseball, and finally body-building, the latter echoing a sport that his father enjoyed as a young man.

Mark was a popular student amongst the majority of his female and male peers. He was a dominant voice in the classroom and in the research process. He used his larger physical stature and humour to assert himself in the classroom. His jokes were often self-deprecating, focused on his own intelligence or lack thereof as he presented himself. Mark identified that the role of class clown was a comfortable one for him, stemming from his childhood when he was a so-called chubby kid. Despite his physically fit adolescent body, Mark's performance of masculinity from his earlier childhood had transferred well into his adolescence. Mark had two major characteristics of his masculine performance: size and humour. He was at the helm of the Colour Blind Initiative, a self-imposed role:

Mark: So we, so just let me just clarify then, we'll all get an individual set and we all get the same thing

Camera is roaming, students are discussing shapes

David: (inspecting his shapes) ya, okay, this is easy

Mark: (to his friends) "I just lost the game – sorry guys"

David: (to Mark & friends) "You're all retarded for playing the game"

Student continue to discuss their shapes, the texture, trying to determine the characteristics of the shape

Mark attempted to coordinate his peers, using his social status to command attention, but in the end combined David's solution with his own popularity. Mark did attempt to assert

authority over the group, but until he combined David's idea with this approach, the group was unsuccessful in achieving their goal and solving the problem.

Blair and I were both subjected to Mark's indirect assertion of authority using humour, like his fellow classmates. He 'reprimanded' both Blair and I, couching these opportunities in a joke:

Mark: Ms. Potvin, no secrets in class!

Blair and I, having a quiet conversation about our discussion questions

Mark's ability to navigate complex social situations assisted him in maintaining his dominance and likeability amongst the majority of his classmates. He enjoyed being in charge (an authority figure), wanted to be perceived that way and ensured that both classmates and teacher knew this as well. It was because of this part of Mark's masculine performance that he presented the most normative form of masculinity amongst the participants.

Mark's masculinity was much more rigidly constructed in the classroom than the other participants in the study. His ongoing performance of masculinity in the classroom was different from the fluidity of identity that he presented in his interview. The masculine self that Mark presented in his interview was an open-minded person, accepting of others and their differences. In the classroom Mark put aside the differences of others in order to be a dominant voice. This status and power was displayed most clearly by Robert's attempts to ingratiate himself to Mark because the latter was a student with far greater social status and acceptance. Robert described characteristics of Mark's dominant voice —being assertive...firm, serious” he went onto express his intimidation: —I wouldn't want to disagree with Mark, I might lose my teeth”. Mark's response to Robert's validation of his hegemonic performance of masculinity was —honestly don't know why people find me intimidating” (CB, Nov 30/09).

Mark registered for the Philosophy course because his best friend was in the course and it was suggested to him by his girlfriend, a student I had previously taught and with whom I had a positive relationship. As such, his choice to take the philosophy course was a socially acceptable or “safe” one for Mark. He knew he would probably have social status amongst his peers and likely good rapport with his teacher upon entrance into the course. Mark and I got along well in the classroom environment, but I was often troubled by his lack of self-reflexivity. In the period of time leading up to the research, I could see that Mark was developing his identity and sense of self, and I also saw the way he constructed his masculinity based upon body-building. Despite his reliance upon hegemonic masculine norms, he would often boast that his favourite colour was pink. He also engaged in close intimate relationships with male friends and presented himself as a “sensitive” male. My relationship with Mark was positive from start to finish in the Philosophy course; however, this may be due to the fact that I did not challenge him very much.

Mark's performances of normative masculinity became more pronounced as the semester continued. I had the opportunity to work with Mark on a project (after the research and semester had ended) and found that he had become more entrenched in his normatively masculine self, moving away from attempts to display complexity of identity. This was troubling for me as a feminist anti-oppressive teacher. My hopes, under the umbrella of this philosophy, would have been for Mark to consider his normatively masculine performances and perhaps negotiate a way to include the greater complexity of identity shared in his interview. Instead, Mark's normatively masculine performances had become more entrenched and more rigid.

Chapter V: Discussion and Analysis

The discussion and analysis of the collected data lead to the identification of several themes that were repeated throughout the research process. The most dominant themes are discussed here and include the following: normative masculinity, relationships to family, relationships to friends/peer groups and self-reflections.

Normative Masculinity (gender norms)

All four of the participants had a strong sense of the way that normative masculinity is represented and reproduced in society, families, and social groups. Only David recognized his own potential to reproduce, indeed reinforce, normative masculinity when he identified his own active gender policing of his brother. Jamie identified societal forces such as the media, that shaped ideals of males as “strong, powerful...all that stuff” whereas Robert and Mark focused on normative masculinity as performed collectively by peers and themselves.

Relationships: Family

Friends and peer groups were prominent influences in the construction of the male students' identities but parents, siblings, grandparents, and cousins also helped to shape their gendered and masculine selves. The particular type of influence by family members was dependent upon the student and the family member. Mothers had a variety of influences in the lives and identity construction of these four males. For example, Robert cited his mother as a negative force that eventually turned positive in his life. Jamie and Mark both cited positive relationships with their mothers, characterized by nurturing and loving support. David's mother left his life and his family at an early age, and as such he referred to female influences like his grandmother and aunt as positive and nurturing influences in his life.

Fathers were also shown to have diverse roles in the lives of these four participants. Robert did not speak about his father, citing his grandfather's influence in his life. This influence

appeared to have been infused with normative masculine teachings, including a woman's role to “take it on the chin”, in the context of men’s so-called justified violence against women. Jamie referenced his father indirectly, indicating that his father's extended family was a little hard on him, unlike his mother's extended family who he characterized as more “babyish.” David spoke mostly of his father's work and inability to spend time as a family (despite his mother's absence) because of a demanding work schedule. This schedule also caused David and his brother to assume responsibilities at a young age and to spend periods of time alone. Mark's father and his constructions of masculine gender performance played a major influence in Mark's life, most notably by Mark’s enthusiastic and consistent (daily) participation in body-building. Despite the potential negative impacts of his father’s gender policing, Mark did not articulate frustration with his father in the interview. Quite the opposite, Mark described how he now makes fun of his father because of his age (60 years) and his lack of physical prowess. In this way, their masculine identities have inverted: Mark’s father's aging physique, instead of Mark’s flabby adolescent body, is now the source of their emasculating jokes.

A significant relationship that David identified is with his brother. The two brothers, David and Adam, were often responsible for themselves and their daily routine of life (cooking, cleaning, and other household tasks) because of their absent mother and father's work schedule. David identified strongly with his brother because of the reality of their day-to-day lives; however, he admitted to openly gender policing his brother based on characteristics, hobbies, and things David considered “effeminate” about Adam (e.g., cooking, cleaning, and putting effort into his appearance). Adam also enjoyed spending time with students who are classified by David as “no/scene kids”, a social group he openly disdains.

Relationships: Friends/Peer Group

All four participants identified with a friend group. These groups were made up of people the participants felt close to or who shared interests and hobbies. Robert, Mark, and Jamie felt comfortable in their friendships and describe a sense of security in these groups. David expressed a kinship and likeness, but also spoke of being teased by his friends for certain traits. All four participants felt more comfortable 'being themselves' in the secondary school context amongst the security of friends than in a larger classroom setting.

Occasionally, sitting in contrast to friends, were the participants' school peers. Peers were members of clubs, classes, and other social groups in the school and where social and gender differences may or may not go unnoticed by the group. Some peers/groups in the secondary school setting were identified by the participants as people with whom they did not fit in culturally or feel personally comfortable around. For example, David identified his deep disdain with "emo/scene" kids. Jamie identified being intimidated and feeling excluded with "teachers" because he never enjoyed "fixing engines" or engaging in similar technical activities. He did try to fit in with particular groups before finding the comfort of his social group: gamers. Jamie also indicated that gender policing occurred in his friend group, particularly if a male was to interact with a female, or give relationships advice to his friends, or talk about emotions. Robert identified football players as team-mates or people who encouraged him to use his physical stature for the benefit of the team, but he did not identify them as his friend group. Mark identified strongly with his friends. He felt accepted by them and comfortably different from normative masculinity in the level of affection he expressed with his male friends. He stated that hugging his male friends (especially his best friend) is something he does frequently and that "it's no big deal" to him or his friends.

Robert and Mark were the only two participants to discuss romantic relationships. Robert described having kissed other males in his written reflections, while Mark reflected on his girlfriend and how he enjoys "everything like that".

Self-Reflections

While all four participants engaged in degrees of self-reflection, some were more transparent about their thoughts, connections between life experiences, and the study's sub-unit topic, gender and masculinity, in the construction and reconstruction of their masculine selves. David was the most self-reflective participant. He was eager to make connections between himself and the world, comparing and contrasting himself to people around him, often coloured with his characteristic cynicism. He identified attitudes and actions he wished to change. He revelled in the complexity of his masculine self, including his interests, being effeminate, and enjoying —Rambo, Conan the Barbarian crap.” Jamie also reflected keenly on himself and his life experiences within classrooms, social groups, and family. He discussed the role that normative masculinity plays in the media and the ways such performances impact perceptions of masculinity. Mark engaged in self-reflection because he could describe himself clearly and had a good sense of self, but made few connections about forces that have shaped him historically. Most acutely, he made no connection between his father's adherence to masculine norms and his own adherence through his athletic pursuits and fixation on his physical body. Robert engaged in the least amount of self-reflection. He was descriptive, detailing life experiences, relationships with family, friends, peers, teachers, administrators and others, but did not provide any transparent insight into his self perception or make connections about influences that have shaped his sense of self or masculine identity. One can infer that family, friends, and his physical self are important, but these are not self-identified in the interview or reflection process.

Analysis

All four participants displayed more rigid masculine identities in the classroom context than in their one-on-one interviews. Despite this increased rigidity, some of the participants' masculine performances were more fluid than others. Robert's masculinity was in the greatest state of flux in the classroom context; he masterfully navigated the channels of power and aligned

himself accordingly for social acceptance. Jamie's overt performance of masculinity was passive and rigid, appearing like an unchanging, unaffected, and disassociated entity. However, interview transcripts reveal he did experience reflexivity in the classroom environment, in a way that was private and intrapersonal. Sarcasm and cynicism were employed by David in his more rigid performance of masculinity, in the face of unpopularity and criticism from peers. Physical dominance and indirect assertiveness enabled Mark, the most rigid of all classroom masculine identities, to perform in a normative and hegemonic way. It is clear from this data that despite the fluidity or rigidity of masculine performances in classrooms, the perspective and performances of these male participants changed *in situ* or situationally. In other words, masculinity amongst these secondary males is effected by the context as well as the other performances of masculinity (and gender) going on around them.

Mark and David, two dominant voices amongst the four participants, occupied the center of power. Within this center, Mark and David struggled for power and authority amongst their peers and each other. Robert, a non-dominant voice amongst the four participants, had asserted less power than Mark and David in the classroom, but tried to gain greater legitimacy and power by building relationships with me and Blair, as well as David and Mark. Jamie, a non-dominant voice, existed deliberately outside these nodes of power. By not participating in these classroom based power struggles, Jamie exerted an intrinsic authority over himself. Figure 1 (below) attempts to illustrate the interactions and power machinations amongst the four participants. Mark and David occupy the primary node of power in the classroom. Robert seeks a relationship with these major power brokers, but operates outside their context attempting to gain access while remaining outside. Jamie functions as the most distinct entity amongst the four, his silence and non-participation often works against this powerful-powerless couplet that Robert tries to alter and influence.

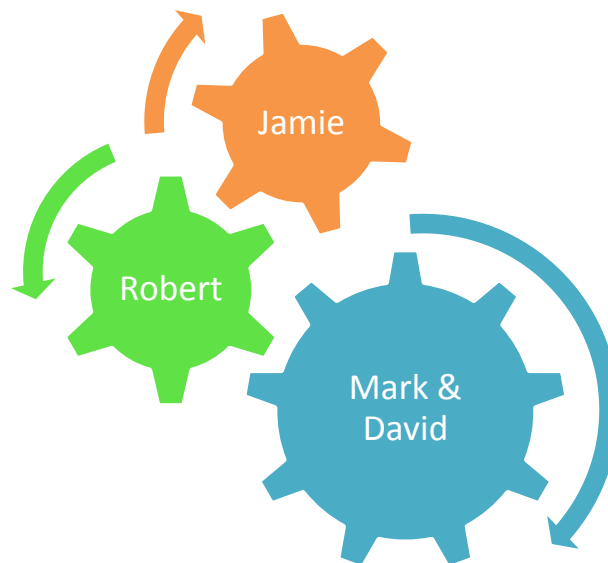


Figure 1: Power dynamics amongst participants

Mash-up Masculinity

The four male participants in this study present diverse, fluid examples of masculinity both within themselves and in contrast to one another. Constructing masculinity in different ways is a *mash-up* of masculinity, both in the context of the individual student performances as well as the landscape or spectrum of masculine performances amongst boys in secondary classrooms. While the four participants each identified with one social category of maleness and masculine performances in their classroom presentation of selves, during the one-on-one interviews with adult facilitators, they were more descriptive and fluid about their gender identity.

The four male students each revealed a mash-up of masculine characteristics constructing their individual gender identity. Robert is the big football player who likes to wear women's clothing and make-up. Jamie is a gamer who is aware of the social forces (power relations) that shape gender but is not confined or socially restricted by the masculine norms of his social group. David is a masculine resister who idolizes the hegemonic masculine archetype of super-heroes while self-identifying as possessing effeminate physical characteristics. Mark is a muscular body-

builder who stresses the importance of accepting multiple gender identities and sexual orientation. The fluid nature of this mash-up of masculinities was the strongest common experience of these adolescent male identities in the study.

A better understanding of the masculine/gender performances of secondary school males became apparent to me as I observed these four students present and experiment with situational versions of their maleness. These performances may be reflective of the boys' need for social survival or thriving on the social power of masculinity in the school environment, despite the fact these students generally believed gender and masculinity were more complex and fluid than any one of their individual performance could reveal. It is important to note, however, that one-on-one interview data is only one context. Classroom dynamics, family forces, peer influences, friends' relationships and experimental performances are all significant contributors to the mash-up of masculinities as constructed by Robert, Jamie, David, and Mark. Schools are the spaces where friends, peers, and teachers have significant and direct influence on identity construction. The mash-up of masculine performances that emerge and reveal themselves in this study present a more complex and complicated face (or faces) to masculinity and boys in secondary schools than I (as a feminist teacher-researcher) anticipated. The sophisticated decision-making that boys in secondary schools contend with in order to assert and understand themselves requires careful consideration of context (classroom vs. one-on-one), peers/friends and self-reflection. Often in the case of this research, there is a gap present between the way boys talk about their masculinity and the way they perform it. This is not random, nor necessarily ignorant. Instead, I argue that the diverse presentation of masculine identities is part of the strategy of boys to navigate and negotiate their complex masculine identities in an institutional context that too often tries to pigeon-hole their identities into one rigidly constructed, unchanging entity.

Conclusion

In seeking to answer the primary research question: **How can a feminist, anti-oppressive teacher learn and negotiate gender performances and interactions with her secondary male students as they enact and respond to constructs of masculinity in their classroom and school spaces?** I learned that these secondary school males negotiate their masculine identities in and amongst each other in a classroom context as part of a mash-up of masculine performances. These performances are part learning, part survival mechanism and part social positioning. As a feminist, anti-oppressive teacher, my own negotiations of identity are effected by this knowledge and learning. In other words, it has effected my own identity as a teacher-researcher to learn about the complex negotiations of masculinity that these boys undergo. This has helped me to understand and relate, in a real way, to the experiences of these male students. At the outset of this study and even after the research, I planned to discuss the masculine performances of these students as part of a continuum of masculinity, with different archetypes represented. After consideration of the critical masculine studies literature (Connell, 1989; 2007; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) presented and the data from this study, I do not want to apply more labels or caricatures to these secondary males. To do so would present too narrow of a perspective of masculinity given what I have learned. Adolescent masculine performances amongst the four participants are in a constant state of flux, each one different from the other (Pascoe, 2007). Their identities are truly a mash-up of strategies, performances, qualities and interests. This mash-up of masculinity is performed, reflected upon and presented depending upon the context, the social scenario and the required task.

Two Hats Revisited: Negotiating Feminist Teacher and Researcher

This research process was new, complicated, and sometimes strange for me. As a teacher with four years' experience, I was accustomed to the teaching role; however, the role of researcher added a new layer to my identity. It was (and is) a tricky process to negotiate these two

identities because I found working both roles simultaneously involved stumbling and confusion. At times I felt confused about how (and what) to undertake as my next steps. I had difficulty making time and space in my life to move the project forward, towards completion despite instruction and encouragement from peers and my supervisor. I did not always know how to analyse, write and put into action much of the theoretical background I had read and reflected upon. My personal feelings about student participants (whether good or bad) also made it difficult to write about their role in the research. Recognizing one's power and authority as a teacher and researcher in the analysis of research findings is much easier said than done.

As a teacher entering into research with student-participants, I had an established relationship with the students in the classroom. This relationship could be positive or negative in nature and sometimes it was both. Recognizing that as a teacher I can have complicated feelings and frustrations with students, the research became a difficult and heavy process of self-reflexivity because I self-identify as a compassionate, caring, and empathetic teacher without contradiction. Some of the male participants' experiences were a challenge for me to research, analyze, and write about because my own perspectives or personality conflicted with theirs. This led me to think that it can be easier to study student-participants that you like, or with whom you share similar perspectives. However, the very nature of this research pointed out that there were more differences than similarities amongst the participants and myself. While it was challenging, I enjoyed this complexity. Through the messiness of researching and writing about students, I learned about the difficulties that self-reflexivity required of me within critical ethnography (Anderson, 1989; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2002).

It is uncomfortable and complicated to recognize that I do not have close relationships with some students. This was exacerbated by the fact that images projected in film and literature are anchored in the notion that effective teachers are the ones who develop meaningful bonds with all students in films like *Freedom Writers*, *Dangerous Minds* and *Dead Poets "Society*.

These iconic student-teacher relationships that are forged by filmmakers for audiences do not portray the complexities of school life, regular teacher-student relationships, and the dynamics of real classrooms. When it occurs to me that I may not have a good relationship with all students, I feel like I have failed in my goal of being an anti-oppressive educator. However, I realize that my personal (not political or pedagogical) opinions and relationships, if identified and recognized, do not necessarily usurp or undo my pedagogical aim of anti-oppressive education.

Curriculum Lessons

Anti-oppressive pedagogy can be a guiding philosophy for activist-educators, those promoting social change for equity and social justice. Conventional discourse about the Ontario curriculum, (Appendix B) is designed to support teachers and students in classrooms to learn a common set of knowledge and values about any given topic (McLaren, 2007; Wotherspoon, 2004). The Ontario curriculum, like many others, lays the foundation for what teachers are supposed to teach. In the case of Philosophy: The Big Questions, critical thinking is amongst the “~~tr~~ands”. Teaching critical thinking, in the absence of appropriate pedagogy, falls short of this important educational goal. The content knowledge highlighted by the curriculum combines the ideas, theories, and values that politicians, educators, and stakeholders view as important for students to learn (and teachers to teach!). It is very difficult as an anti-oppressive teacher to engage in a critical way with an education system that sets out to present itself as benign and neutral, outside of the values and mores of society. A curriculum and educational system that upholds academic standards of education and encourages teachers to engage with their political selves *could* encourage critical thinking and allow teachers to be fully engaged, evolving professionals. This type of system (standing in juxtaposition to the current one) would support many teachers in their teaching journeys. (Un)fortunately, those of us who consider ourselves anti-oppressive educators have to find a way to bring this perspective within a system that is limiting. One way in which the Ontario Ministry of Education has begun to support this kind of

work in school is through the recently published policy, *Equity and Inclusive Education In Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009). My opportunity to engage in a Critical Ethnography (CE) as a teacher-researcher helped me to create opportunities to make this space in my classroom with my students (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2002, Foley & Valenzuela, 2005; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2002; Soyini Madison, 2005a; 2005b). Some possible implications for research of this kind are shifts in Ministerial guidelines and school board policies to identify clearer frameworks to try to understand, integrate and implement for gender diversity.

The Philosophy curriculum provides space to discuss social justice and feminism, but falls short of identifying why discussions of gender are important, why these discussions could and should happen or be suitable in a philosophy classroom and how to have such conversations across generations, cultures, class, gender and sexual orientation. The curriculum outlines aspects of feminist thought as a possible topic in one of the units of the course, alongside issues like racism and other *isms*. Tokenizing gender and race issues in this way does not lead to fruitful or critical discussions about why these social inequities exist. Anti-oppressive education of this nature is messy, challenging, and filled with complexities (Ellsworth, 1989; Kumshiro, 2002; 2004). By including these key elements of the human experience as footnotes or addenda, the curriculum is privileging the dominant narrative over those of marginalized peoples. I designed a critically-focussed sub-unit on gender and masculinity which sought to subvert and trouble the dominant narrative of the curriculum. I took critical thinking and teaching about gender, namely masculinity, out of the theoretical realm of the curriculum strands and into the real world of classroom life through the lens of a feminist anti-oppressive educator. This looked like students (and I) performing, talking, reacting, role playing, challenging and reinforcing norms of masculinity with each other. These activities took place in their (my) classroom, focussed on their (my) lives and interrogated their (my) assumptions.

Challenges

As a teacher-researcher, I occupy a strong presence in the culture of the classroom before, during, and after the research process (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2002). However, my research was conducted with youth, who are at a different stage in their lives than I, with different ideas (from each other and myself), and different life experiences. This added a layer of complexity to the data analysis, because it was not the commonality amongst myself and the participants (nor amongst the participants themselves) that was the reason they were involved in this research. On the contrary, I selected these four students because of their differences from each other and from me. As a self-identified female interested in gender and power in schools, I could have studied girls and performance of femininity because of the [perceived] commonality of our experiences. Instead, I chose to focus on masculinity and the way in which boys experience masculinity in patriarchy. My curiosity about the experiences of male students, their understandings and performances of masculinity through their life experiences was ultimately rewarding, yet challenging experience.

Another challenging component of working with student participants was their lack of gender literacy. They often lacked the vocabulary (or comfort with the vocabulary as seen with Mark in Chapter IV) necessary to describe a concept or social phenomenon. This means that *if* a critically minded teacher had an interest in pursuing gender from a critical perspective in their classroom, a common understanding of language and terms is key. A teacher should establish a collective, working understanding of appropriate terms and the appropriate way to use terms. For example, as an educator I often use Concept and Word Wall activities to help establish an understanding of important concepts and terms in social science classes. The same strategy can and should be extended to a unit or sub-unit like this one in order to achieve not only a common set of words and working language for the classroom activities, but also to function as an exercise in critical literacy for slang or inappropriate terms. For example, *gay* is an appropriate term to use

(despite the fact it is often used in a pejorative way in Secondary schools), whereas *faggot* is not. Sources for these terms could be found in media representations of masculine gender performance, identity, and performances in a school setting. Films and situation comedies could also provide a platform to develop gender literacy and draw attention to heterosexist representations of both males and females. However, most importantly, the students themselves are familiar with the language used in their friend/peer groups, classrooms and school.

Future Possibilities

Areas of interest that were beyond the scope of this research study involve analyzing the intersection of masculinity, race/ethnic origin and class. The interplay of these three identities and life experiences could lead to a richer and more complex understanding of the ways in which males construct and perform their masculinity in school settings. It would also help develop my understanding of the social and political forces that shape males as they enter schools as institutions. While I have certain understandings of the socioeconomic and cultural background of the students in this study, there was nothing built into the research design that enabled me to analyze cultural background or socioeconomic status as a factor. Socioeconomic status (class) and cultural background did not emerge within the research process from the students themselves.

Anti-Oppressive Education

An important part of my identity as a teacher is my pedagogy, grounded in anti-oppressive education and feminism (Butler, 2004; Ellsworth, 1989; Fine, 1994; hooks, 1994; Kumashiro 2002; 2004; McLaren, 2007). In my mind, this positionality often constructed itself in a combative way in the course of teaching and working with, particularly, male students. Too often I fear I occupied the position of preacher, not teacher. Undertaking a research project of this magnitude while focusing on adolescent males and masculinity was a way for me to investigate life experiences and a positionality I did not understand or know how to engage. In trying to gain a greater understanding for active engagement, I initially looked for reductionist, clear-cut

examples of the oppressive (hegemonic masculinity) versus the progressive (protest masculinity) male student (Connell, 1989, 1995; Pascoe, 2007). This research challenged my understandings of gender politics in schools as much as it did my participants. It also pushed me to move beyond binaried notions of gender and hierarchies, towards an idea of maleness/masculinity that is re-centred to include the multiple representations of masculine selves. The theoretical guidance (and encouragement) to trouble my own knowledge (Kumashiro, 2002; 2004) helped the voices of Robert, Jamie, David and Mark as well as my own (in all our complexities) be heard.

This study is not intended to be a how-to, one-size-fits-all guidebook for feminist teacher-researchers or students of gender performances. I do seek, however, to encourage teachers and researchers to engage with their humanity, their emotions, responses to students and the way in which the classroom environment effects oneself not only as a professional, but also as a person. Teachers should recognize their perspectives and opinions and try to educate in ways that may be difficult and uncomfortable because it is challenging conventions in schools. After spending time talking, researching, listening, and educating adolescent males in Ontario secondary schools, I hope I have provided insight through this study into the masculine world and selves of adolescent males (their perspectives and performances) and the way I as a feminist teacher-researcher negotiated my own identity and ideas alongside of them. Masculinity in schools is not a simple, one-dimensional concept but rather a social construct of many identity variations, layers and incarnations (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

This study highlights the importance for anti-oppressive and/or feminist educators and researchers to disrupt the oppressive, reductionist and/or normative gender narrative in classrooms. Engaging with topics like masculinity, teachers must take (and sometimes make) social and curriculum spaces to talk about masculinity and gender. Thus, critically-minded teachers (and critical ethnographers) should work to identify and include their own understanding in classrooms alongside male students so that they can create the space for students to perform

their gender in diverse ways. As I often told my Philosophy students at the beginning of our class, „*Get ready, this will make your brain hurt!*“, and sometimes important and challenging work should.

The goal of this study was to broaden my understanding of masculinity as a social force in classroom and school contexts. It has also enabled me as a feminist teacher-researcher to reflect upon my role in the classroom and the relationship and interactions I have toward my male students in the classroom. This study has contributed to the growing bodies of knowledge that seek to understand masculinity in classrooms and the roles that teachers and researchers have in (re)producing hierarchies (or not) in classrooms. By articulating my own work to name gender and analyze masculinity as a complex identity amongst youth that others will seek to understand gender, masculinity and power in classrooms and schools instead of diagnosing it. Fundamentally, this study has navigated the often muddy waters of classroom life by representing the student participants in a way that is authentic and respectful of their growing (masculine) selves.

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Appendix A

Day Plans for Research:

Day 1: November 25/09

Goals:

- introduce Blair as facilitator, build classroom community
- introduce gender (conceptually), group brainstorm will also help to determine base of student knowledge/understanding as well as potential emergent themes, discussion topics

Guiding Question(s)/Topics: What is Gender? How do we define gender? Is gender/sexuality an important part of your identity? Do you think people (parents, teachers, peers) care about the way you present your gender/sexuality?

Day-plan:

- 4) CLASS INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES: Introductory games & Icebreakers
- 5) COLLABORATIVE GROUP WORK (self-selected groups): student explore the questions: What is gender? Where do you see gender in your everyday life?

Resources/Templates:

n/a

Day 2: November 26/09

Goals:

- consider responses to social differences
- introduce gender policing as an important component of homophobic/heterosexist harassment & bullying

Guiding Question(s)/Topics: How do we treat each other based on our differences (perceived or otherwise)? Do you think people like differences/diversity? Can you share some of your experiences or incidents you've witnessed where people were treated differently based on their gender and/or sexuality?

Day-plan:

- 1) CLASS DISCUSSION: explore gender as a sociological (not biological) phenomenon (Where did you see gender in yesterday's brainstorming activity?)
- 2) COLLABORATIVE GROUP WORK & PERFORMANCE (self-selected groups): Use

dramatic performance /skits (scenarios below) to explore challenging topics and encourage discussion about heterosexism & homophobia in schools/families/society.

Resources/Templates:

Skit Scenarios

1 skit distributed to each self-selected group.

Scenario 1: **Did not use this scenario

You're sitting outside at the end of the school day with your friends. A guy in grade 10 walks by. To you he looks like just about anyone else, but the group of boys sitting next to you, starting calling him names, yelling things like "fag" and "queer". You really want to say something, but you are kind of in shock and have difficulty finding the right words. A couple of the guys yelling names you talk to in biology and you're surprised that they would say that stuff, but you figure it's that other guy with them who has always been a bit of a jerk. By the time you've thought up something to say, all of them have walked away and it's too late. Things like this must happen fairly often and other people don't say anything, so you try not to feel too bad that you didn't. You try.

Scenario 2:

You and some friends are out for coffee, you've got that super sweet, whipped creamy good drink that you love and everyone and everything seems good. You link arms with your friend as you walk out and somebody standing outside the coffee place calls you a "dike". You're frustrated and are going to continue on with your day, but your friend stops. You look at each other, turn around, look at the guy and ask "What did you say?". He originally looked pretty proud of himself, but now he looks confused, he wasn't expecting you to address him. You and your friend look back and you say "you know what buddy, you should mind your own business - nobody cares what you think anyway". You both turn around, feeling good about having said something - it wasn't the best, coolest thing to say, but at least you said something. You and your friend walk away, your friend says "What an idiot", and you agree, pull your arm away and drink your coffee.

Scenario 3: **Did not use this scenario

You're at home watching some TV with your family. You're a big fan of "So You Think You Can Dance", mostly because you can't dance, but also because the stuff they do on there is crazy! Your parents come in, look at what you're watching and start discussing how much more "open" the world has become. Your mom says, "Look at those boys, so talented, on national television in tights, dancing around ~ this never would have been allowed when we were kids. People are so accepting these days". Your little brother gets up and starts dancing around the living room, using your scarf like a ribbon, re-enacting what is on TV. Your mom looks at him, then asks if he'd like to go outside and play in the backyard to "get out some of his energy". You're not sure why, but it leaves you feeling a little confused and frustrated.

Scenario 4:

You and your best friend ALWAYS walk to school together, you walk by her house in the morning and ~~pick~~ her up” on your way. As you’re walking down High Street towards the school, you see that kid from your period 4 class ahead of you. He’s wearing those sweet high tops that you like. ~~He~~ must have bought those jeans last night, he doesn’t usually wear skinny jeans” you think. As you get closer to him to say hi and ask how he’s doing you notice something different, you can’t quite put your finger on it, but as you walk away your friend says ~~Since~~ when do boys wear cover up? I think he was wearing eyeliner too!”. You realize that’s what was different, and respond, ~~Ya~~ that’s kinda weird eh?”. ~~Kinda?!~~” your friend says ~~I~~ guess we know he’s not going to ask you to semi now!”. “What do you mean”, you ask. ~~Dude~~ he’s obviously gay ~ no straight guy would ever wear makeup!”.

Scenario 5:

You’re in class and your teacher has just given your class the lamest worksheet assignment EVER. You can see why, it’s got some information that will be on the test, but seriously there has to be a better way than this sheet. The kids next to you looks at the sheet, slumps back and says ~~this~~ is SO gay”. You can tell the teacher heard and you definitely heard and you’re pretty sure that other people heard, but no one says anything. Someone behind you says ~~Ya~~, this is the gayest assignment ever”. Some girl in the back asks a question about the sheet, your teacher answers and everyone continues on with the worksheet.

Scenario 6:

You are the only kid on your bus that isn’t a ~~tech~~-er”. I guess they’d probably call you a prep, though you wouldn’t call yourself that – you have friends in lots of different groups. You kind of dress like a prep, but you do a lot of the same things on the weekend they do. It makes sense, you live in the country and so do they. All the boys who sit around you always talk about their sleds and riding their quads. Your family just got a new snowmobile (you NEVER use the word sled – it’s too tech-er) last weekend and you’re all waiting eagerly for snow. The boys around you on the bus start talking about how they want it to snow so they can get their sleds out. Tired of listening and not participating, you pause your music, turn around and say ~~I~~totally can’t wait for snow, my family got a new sled last weekend – I can’t wait to get our and use it”. The kids pause and look at you, in disbelief – one kid smiles and says ~~Cool~~ – I didn’t know you were into that stuff, what kind did you get?”. As you open your mouth to respond, the kid across the aisle pipes up and says ~~I~~didn’t know that Aeropostale made sleds?~~—~~Everyone around you laughs, though the kid who originally responded looks at you apologetically, but says nothing. You turn around, mortified and angry – so much for that idea.

Day 3: November 27/09

Goals:

5. develop an understanding of the link between gender norms/normative masculinity with power and inequity
6. highlight the ways in which masculinity/gender can be performed

Guiding Questions/Topics: How do you see gender performed in your life? How do you perform gender? What does it mean to perform gender? Are there certain characteristics associated with particular genders?

Day Plan:

- CLASS DISCUSSION: Recap performances & discuss gender policing
- PARTNER ROLE PLAY (self-selected): role-playing to elicit normative masculine/feminine gender performances based in pre-determined scenarios (see below)
- CLASS DISCUSSION: discuss what it felt like to play different roles
- SELF-REFLECTION: Individually, students complete a written reflection about gender policing. They are asked to write about an experience when they were gender-policed or alternatively, when they policed gender

Resources/Templates:

Role-playing scenarios

Scenario 1

Imagine you are hosting a cooking show, teach your partner how to cook:
 in a loud & boisterous
 like you were having tea with your grandmother ****CHECK THESE SCENARIOS**

Day 4: Nov 30/09

Goals:

- to explore masculinity/gender, power as it connects to self
- to explore masculinity gender, power as it connects to schools and social groups in school
- further elicit student perceptions of normative masculinity and the way it plays out in groups, wields power

Guiding Questions/Topics: Are particular genders associated with social groups in the school? Are certain social groups have more power than others? Is there a connection between these things? Are their certain gender performances that are associated with men/boys that women/girls also perform? Do these performances allow persons access to power? How can we move away from the gender binary of male/masculinity vs. female/femininity?

Day-plan:

- FACILITATOR GUIDED DISCUSSION: Blair guides students through ways of understand areas where gender, social groups and power interact and impact each other in schools

- **GROUP PROBLEM SOLVING ACTIVITY:** The “Colour Blind Initiative” (see instructions below) used to elicit the notion of power in group dynamics, the way in which this power may be gender normative and associated with certain groups of students
- **CLASS DISCUSSION:** Use the remaining time to discuss the emergent themes, roles and characteristics of the way the students “solved” the Colour Blind Initiative

Resources/Templates:

a) Colour Blind Initiative Instructions:

Step 1: Create a “set” of shapes. The set must have various shapes in a variety of colours. For example, 6 different shapes in 6 different colours.

Step 2: Distribute Bandanas to participants, instruct them to cover their eyes. (They may close them if they don't feel comfortable wearing a bandana.

Step 3: Instruct Participants about the “rules/goals” of the activity. They are as follows:

- The facilitator can only answer the question: “What colour is this?” (in reference to a shape)
- The facilitator will never lie in his/her answer

Step 4: Distribute shapes to participants (number may vary depending upon size of set and group). While distributing, indicate to students that 2 (or some other number) shapes have been removed from the set. Their task is to identify which ones have been removed through communicating with the other participants verbally. Do not provide them with any more information.

The purpose of the Colour Blind Initiative is to have participants work together using only their verbal communication skills to solve a problem collectively.

Day 5: Dec 1/09

Goals:

- To expand upon dominant vs. non-dominant voices
- to make the final conceptual move toward masculine & feminine characteristics, away from the traditional gender binary
- to provide students with the opportunity to reflect upon their experiences and the gendered aspects of their identities

Guiding Questions: can females have masculine characteristics/interests/traits? Can males have feminine characteristics/traits? Where have we demonstrated that? Does this lead to a new understanding of gender and oneself?

Day-plan

CLASS DISCUSSION: debrief the, Social Relevance of this work: Leadership/Non Leadership (voices)

REFLECTION: students will chart different personal traits/characteristics/interests (self-selected)

on a line of continuum where one pole is masculinity and the other pole is femininity (see continuum template below)

Resources/Templates:

I-----I
Masculinity
Femininity

Some traits/characteristics/interests to chart (suggested):

Physical appearance (body, hair, clothing, shoe size)

Hobbies/Interests

Appendix B

Ontario Curriculum Connections:

Subject: Social Sciences & Humanities

Course (name & code): Philosophy: The Big Questions (HZB 301)

Grade & Level: 11, Open*

*An open level class denotes a class where students from all streams can take, it is an elective course that will not count towards a students' University or College entrance, but could count as a Senior Social Science course (required for graduation).

According to the Ontario Ministry of Education's overview:

—Philosophy applies creative and critical thinking tools to fundamental questions about human nature; personal and social responsibilities' good and evil; the nature of human knowledge; social justice; how science, art, and religion are related [aesthetics]; and other such issues. Philosophy trains students in critical and logical thinking, writing, and oral communication, and acquaints them with principles underlying their own values and belief as well as those of other people and traditions.

Prerequisites: non” (Curriculum document, 111)

Curriculum Connections for Philosophy 11 (HZB 30) & Masculinity Sub-Unit:

Big questions in this unit: What is beautiful in science, art, religion? (aesthetics) and What is a just society? (social justice)

Strands	Overall Expectations	Specific Expectations
Philosophical Questions	OE.01 describe precisely and clearly three (or more) of the big questions of philosophy OE.02 summarize their own or others answers to these questions, and give reasons in support of the answers	SE.5 compare philosophical approaches to some of the big questions with non-philosophical approaches (e.g. philosophy and social sciences)
Philosophical Theories	OE.01 summarize the ideas of some famous philosophers with respect to one or more of the big questions in philosophy	SE.2 describe the differences in approach to three (or more) of the big questions of philosophy by some of the major philosophical schools (e.g., feminism and libertarianism about social justice)
Philosophy and Everyday	OE.01 relate the big questions	SE.01 describe the strengths &

Life	in philosophy to their own experience, reports in the news media and their society OE.02 demonstrate the application of philosophical theories and skills to jobs, occupations and everyday life	weaknesses of alternative responses to questions of applied philosophy (e.g., What obligations, if any, do humans living in the present have to redress racial or gender inequalities inherited from the past?) SE.02 apply philosophical skills such as precise writing and critical analysis to solve problems that arise in jobs and occupations
Applications to Other Subjects	OE.01 · identify philosophical theories and presuppositions in natural science, history, art, social science and humanities, and other subjects; OE.02 · demonstrate how philosophical skills that are used to address the big questions of philosophy can be used effectively in other subjects.	SE.01 – identify philosophical positions presupposed in some other disciplines (e.g., theories of knowledge in natural science, theories of the person in social science); SE.02 – contrast alternative philosophical viewpoints in controversies discussed in other subjects (e.g., over what is just in politics or society, what is a meaningful life in works of literature, what is beautiful in fashion or art)
Research and Inquiry Skills	OE.05 effectively communicate the results of their inquiries	SE.03 identify the main conclusions of some philosophical positions regarding one or more of the big questions, and the arguments used to support them SE.07 discuss their own views in philosophical exchanges in class with others SE.08 clearly explain their views and display their use of philosophical reasoning skills in short written papers, using accepted forms of documentation required.

*While there is a place for this, an educator must come at the curriculum with goals for social justice and this interest to really draw it out. The other course that focuses on gender maybe better situated to deliver this content, however at the time of this research the course was being piloted, therefore, not widely offered across the province.

Appendix C

Research Instrument: Interview Questions

Question Number/Code	Question Content
Question 1 = Q1	How was your overall experience?
Question 2 = Q2	How do you think your upbringing or family life experiences have affected your perceptions of gender and sexuality?
Question 3 = Q3	Do you think that school helps or hinders social decision-making in a way that reproduces gender norms?
Question 4 = Q4	How have your friends and peers have influenced your gender identity?
NB = Q1 – Q4 same for all participants	

Robert: Personalized Questions (Interview)	Question Content
Personalized Question 1 = PQ1	I wanted to ask a question about your reflection – I thought you had a really interesting reflection. In particular when you were talking about your experience of wearing eyeliner to co-op, and then you asked...you wrote...‘I asked what made it professional that women could wear it and that men couldn’t. They said that it’s just the way it is’. I thought that was a really astute observation...What did it make you think or what did it make you feel when you got that answer about ‘That’s just the way it is’?
Personalized Question 2 =	Is there anything else that you wanted to add?

PQ2	

Jamie: Personalized Questions (Interview)	Question Content
Personalized Question 1 = PQ1	The idea, um, wanting to be big around...like big guy or whatever around your male friends and...and can you describe that to me? Like what does that feel like as a male student with your male friends? Why do you think that is?
Personalized Question 2 = PQ2	Do you think that you are influenced by people who aren't your friends? Or do you not really care what they think?
Personalized Question 3 = PQ3	When we did the colour blind activity – so when you were wearing the blindfold and you were doing the shapes – what was that experience like for you?
Personalized Question 4 = PQ4	So the one thing I'd like to ask you about...was this idea that um, being lazy is associated with being masculine. Where do you think that comes from?

David: Personalized Questions (Interview)	Question Content
Personalized Question 1 = PQ1	We're interested, what...about your choice to step out in Day 2, when you asked to be excused?
Personalized Question 2 = PQ2	When we were debriefing the colour blind activity you commented on your use of cynicism, or sarcasm, as a way of making yourself heard instead of the sort of typical commanding sort of voice. Are you able to comment a little bit more on how you do that, or...how you came to know that that was a skill you had?
Personalized Question 3 =	You identified in your first reflection about times when you, ah, act as sort of a gender police towards your brother...I wondered

PQ3	if you ever experienced that gender-policing on you?
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Mark: Personalized Questions (Interview)	Question Content
Personalized Question 1 = PQ1	I wondered how your physical self - your conception of your physical body – impacts your personality and perception of gender?
Personalized Question 2 = PQ2	How did you get into body-building?
Personalized Question 3 = PQ3	I'm interested in the idea that <u>r</u> real men don't have boobs, they have pecs'. Um, how does this slogan affect the development of your gender identity?

Appendix D

Information Letter

November 23, 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am conducting a study on the impacts and effects of gender, specifically masculinity and on the social experiences and interactions amongst High School students. This study, titled —Masculinity Goes to Class” is planned in the grade 11 philosophy class (HZB 301) with curriculum connections in all three of the major units of the course. The introductory unit —What is a Person” addresses the characteristics of human beings and people, including gender. Furthermore, issues of ethics and morality are the focus of the second unit and perceptions of beauty in art, music and literature is the primary focus of the third unit. All of these units lend themselves to exploring gender. The goal of this research is to develop a greater understanding of the ways in which gender and masculinity affects the lives of **all** in Secondary schools, including the ways in which social differences lead to inclusivity or exclusivity. I am interested in the ways students interact with one another socially and the role gender plays in these interactions. This study will provide students with a forum to discuss their experiences with gendered roles as well as allow teachers to develop strategies in order to develop greater understanding. This study will assist in supporting school environments that welcome and appreciate diversity and engender respect.

- 1) All students in the HZB 301 class will participate in 4 facilitated focus group discussions during Semester I (October 2009 – January 2009), led by Faculty of Education PhD candidate and focus group facilitator (Blair). Students will participate in the focus group where they will be asked open-ended questions about their experiences and perceptions of gender and masculinity. In addition to classroom discussions, students will develop their own thoughts and ideas through interactive small group work, sharing, role play and reflective writing. The first session will focus on the introductions amongst the groups as well as exploring the question —What is gender?” in small groups, then sharing with the larger group. The topic of the second session will address differences and the way people treat each other based on gender. The third session will look at how schools and other institutions deal with or address gender. The fourth and final session will focus on what we, as individuals can do about the issues that arise from the first three sessions.
- 2) Once the classroom sessions are complete, students may be asked to participate in small focus groups or individual interviews.

To accomplish this research project in the HZB 301 class at Superior C&VI, I would ask for your consent for the following:

- 1) Students will be recorded (either audio- or video-taped) in a classroom situation as the project is implemented. Students may be interviewed either in the classroom or in a quieter space (office) by the researcher. Video/audio recorded portions of the exercise

may be used for one-time public presentations (in an academic context) and/or in publication of the research

- 2) Students will be asked to write one or more reflections, for evaluation, about the subject as part of regular course work

Please be aware that this study is cleared and following the guidelines, procedures and policies of the Research Ethics Board of Lakehead University. All information and text that students provide will remain securely stored at Lakehead University for five years in a locked storage space. All electronic or multimedia data will be downloaded and stored on a secured hard-drive (not connected to the Internet), again in a locked, secure room. After a 5-year period, all multimedia data (electronic, notes, or tape) will be destroyed. The findings and analysis of this project will be made available to students and parents at their request upon the completion of the project and to Lakehead University as part of the ethical agreement for this research.

If you have any questions concerning the ethical nature of this study or the ethical conduct of the researcher, you can contact my supervisor and Principle Investigator, Dr. Lisa Korteweg (343-8174) and/or the Lakehead University Research Ethics Board (343-8283),.

There are no known risks associated with this study but the benefits of participating include an enriched curriculum experience, collaboration with a university-based facilitator and an enhanced learning environment.

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary and families (students) may choose **not** to answer any question at any time. Participants in the study may also withdraw from participating at any time.

I sincerely look forward to your support and facilitation in this respectful and important research study. If you have any questions concerning this study, I can be reached at my office phone number –807 625 4005 or through email Leigh_Potvin@lakeheadschoools.ca

Thank you sincerely for your cooperation and your participation.

Sincerely,

Leigh Potvin

Social Science & Cooperative Education Teacher: Superior C & V I

Masters of Education Candidate: Lakehead University

Consent Form #1 (Parents/Guardians)

I, _____ am a parent/legal guardian of a student in the HZB 3O1 Philosophy class. I have read and understood the covering letter of the study proposed to occur in the HZB 3O1 Philosophy class. I am consenting for my child to participate in this research project and I understand that he/she will be involved in the following phases and procedures:

- My child will participate in a series of 4 lessons taught by teacher and researcher (Leigh Potvin) and Lakehead University PhD student facilitator (Blair), under the supervision of Dr. Lisa Korteweg, Principle Investigator (PI)
- My child will participate in video and audio recorded focus groups discussions, classroom group work, role play and other classroom activities with a focus on gender and masculinity.
- My child may be interviewed either in the classroom or in an open quieter space by the researcher on their experiences in the classroom focus group and learning activities
- I understand that portions of the video and audio recordings of my child may be viewed publicly for one-time academic presentations and /or publication of the research. This data (video and audio) will be accessible only by the Principle and/or Student Investigator.

I understand that if I have any questions regarding the ethics of this study or the conduct of the researchers, I can contact Dr. Lisa Korteweg (PI) at Lakehead University's Faculty of Education (343-8174) or the Lakehead University Research Ethics Board (343-8283). I also understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that I or my child may choose **not** to answer any questions at any time. I also understand that I can have my child withdrawn at any time from participating in this research project, even after signing this form.

I understand that all raw data concerning my child or me will be destroyed after a 5-year period. Information collected about my child during this study may be published for academic purposes (using a pseudonym) or for a presentation in an academic context. I realize that details and issues of respectful research or ethical conduct can be discussed at any time with Dr. Lisa Korteweg (PI), teacher researcher Leigh Potvin 625-4005 or the Research Ethics Board, 343-8283.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Printed Name of Parent/Guardian

Printed Name of Child

Consent Form #2 & Agreement to Participate (Students)

I, _____ am a student in the HZB 3O1 Philosophy class. I have read and understood the covering letter of the study proposed to occur in the HZB 3O1 Philosophy class. I am consenting to participate in this research project and I understand that I will be involved in the following phases and procedures:

- I will participate in a series of 4 lessons taught by teacher and researcher (Leigh Potvin) and Lakehead University PhD student facilitator (Blair), under the supervision of Dr. Lisa Korteweg, Principle Investigator (PI)
- I will participate in video and audio recorded focus groups discussions, classroom group work, role play and other classroom activities with a focus on gender and masculinity.
- I may be interviewed either in the classroom or in an open quieter space by the researcher on their experiences in the classroom focus group and learning activities
- I understand that portions of the video and audio recordings of me may be viewed publicly for one-time academic presentations and /or publication of the research. This data (video and audio) will be accessible only by the Principle and/or teacher researcher.

I understand that if I have any questions regarding the ethics of this study or the conduct of the researchers, I can contact Dr. Lisa Korteweg (PI) at Lakehead University's Faculty of Education (343-8174) or the Lakehead University Research Ethics Board (343-8283). I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I or my parents/legal guardians may choose **not** to answer any questions at any time. I also understand that I can withdraw at any time from participating in this research project, even after signing this form.

I understand that all raw data concerning me will be destroyed after a 5-year period. Information collected about me during this study may be published for academic purposes (using a pseudonym) or for a presentation in an academic context. I realize that details and issues of respectful research or ethical conduct can be discussed at any time with Dr. Lisa Korteweg (PI), teacher researcher Leigh Potvin 625-4005 or the Research Ethics Board, 343-8283.

Signature of Student

Date

Printed Name of Student

Date

Appendix E: Data Charts

Robert: Interview responses	
<p><i>Normative Masculinity</i> (references to gender/masculinity norms in self/others)</p>	<p><i>“the first day of school - the senior guys for football were like „Oh my gosh he’s big, he’s male, you gotta play football”. And they spent the whole day convincing me to play football, and little did they know I was already going to play because it’s a family thing. Like everybody – it started with my grandfather – my uncle, my dad, my mom, all played football. And so, but then there was like the expectation „Ya, you’re big, you’re a guy – act like one:.” (Q3, RS Dec1/09)</i></p>
<p>Analysis</p>	<p>Robert’s comment shows his enthusiasm at being recruited by the football team. A group with great social status and reflecting many hegemonic masculine ideals, Robert’s participation would see him included in a group with power and also validating a common experience/expectation in his family.</p> <p>This quotation introducing some important aspects of Robert, the importance of family but also the importance of receiving attention from those with more power (the football players and his family).</p>
<p><i>Relationships</i> (impact/influence of important people)</p>	<p><i>“a lot of memories of my family – particularly my grandfather – he was always like „Men are the strong ones, women are the more, um, ‘taking on the chin’ kind of thing...That if something happens to them they just have to deal with it, there’s nothing much they can do. Like I don’t really agree with it though. Like, a lot of my family’s things I agree with actually come from my mother. And she’s the one who’s always like „Asking for help is not a weakness, it’s a strength”. Um, so, lots of my stuff comes from my mother, so...we’re like inseparable now – me and my mom – when we’re together. I live with my grandmother and everything because if my mom and I do spend way too much time together, it will get to that point because we do have a lot of differences. Many our differences is where we’re the same – like we’re both really stubborn, we’re both the last to admit we’re wrong.” (Q2, FA, Dec 1/09)</i></p> <p><i>“a lot of my friends, they understand where I come from and everything, so they’re accepting of it, and I keep my circle close and everything. ..you got the really popular people who have like, tons of friends, but I’d rather have just one friend that’s gonna be there than a hundred friends that won’t. My friends are helpful...They don’t really understand it, so they ask questions and everything. And then like, trying to find the answer for them, I find answers for myself. But then like, if I have questions too – because I usually associate with people that are like me – if I have questions, they might have the answers. It’s more like we help each other kind of thing...not one relies on the other.” (Q3, FR, Dec 1/09)</i></p>

Analysis	<p>Robert’s first comment (family-focused) highlights some of the values/biases his grandfather had about the difference between men and women reiterating the traditional gender binary (Butler, 2004). He also establishes his own position running in contradiction to his father, indicating a complex, but important, relationship with his mother.</p> <p>Robert’s second comment (friend-focused) emphasizing the relationship he has with close friends. He does use some language that is vague and unclear – “they understand where I come from – they are accepting of it”. What “it” is, is unclear. However, from Robert’s student artefacts (reproduced below) and the nature of question 3, I assume he is making reference to (though not limited to) his exploration of same-sex crushes/relationships.</p>
<p>Reflection <i>(connecting self with sub-unit; self-reflection on masculinity/gender)</i></p> <p>Analysis</p>	<p><i>“Oh my gosh, don’t even get me started on how students can be cruel to others when they do something that’s gender bending or something. It can get nasty.” (Q2, LE, Dec 1/09)</i></p> <p>Robert’s comment eludes to his experiences. He does not extrapolate on them in the interview, however, his student artefacts below round out my understanding that Robert has played with gender norms and has experienced harassment or bullying from his peers as a result.</p>

Robert: Classroom Performances	
<i>Overall Role/Response (curriculum)</i>	<p><i>“It was...I was actually a little surprised – it was fun. But like at the beginning when Miss Potvin was going on. I’m like „Ah, this is going to be soooo boring”, the way Miss Potvin was describing it. So when she gave the opportunity to opt out, and like go to another classroom and do work, I actually originally chose that. And then like, I got my work done, then like I remember someone in the classroom, I can’t remember who, saying it was actually fun and everything. I’m like „oh, okay, well I’ll go on the second day”. I just had to get my form signed.” (Q1, RRP, Dec 1/09)</i></p>
Analysis	<p>This quote, also reproduced at the beginning of this section, shows Robert’s hesitation to participate in the research. The role of his classmates in his decision to</p>

	<p>participate shows Roberts role in the classroom as one who is influenced by the opinion of others. It is significant that Robert does not explain why he chose not to participate originally, other than thinking this activity was going to be boring because of my description of it – this speaks to the underlying tension in the teacher-student relationship between Robert and I.</p>
<i>Interactions with other participants</i>	<p><i>“Robert: being assertive...firm, serious...I wouldn't want to disagree with Mark, I might lose my teeth.</i></p> <p><i>Mark: I honestly don't know why people find me intimidating.” (CB, Nov 30/09)</i></p>
Analysis	<p>In this exchange, Robert communicates the qualities of the students with dominant voices in the Colour Blind initiative. It also shows his attempts to submit to Mark and his social authority in the classroom.</p>
<i>Role in Colour Blind</i>	<p><i>Robert peeks out from under his bandana, and says that he has an orange triangle and a brown teddy bear. (PO, CB, Nov 30/09)</i></p> <p><i>Robert: “But David came up with a really great idea so don't...”</i></p> <p><i>Mark: —Y and I used it!”</i></p>
Analysis	<p>In the first comment from my PO notes, I record Robert’s cheating during the Colour Blind initiative. This is important because of the ways in which Robert sought to go around instructions within activities as a way to assert his authority.</p> <p>The second comment shows Robert validating David’s solution to the Colour Blind initiative. This stands in contradiction to earlier in the activity (discussed in David’s section later in this chapter) when he challenged and discredited David.</p>
<i>Interactions with Teacher-researcher</i>	<p><i>“Robert [to Potvin as I approached him, blindfolded with the camera]: Ms Potvin, What colour is your hair?</i></p> <p><i>Leigh [in an irritated tone]: I'm not the facilitator and you shouldn't know I'm here” (CB, Nov 30/09)</i></p> <p><i>“Robert [to Blair]: I was on my way up to the board to write things down so we could keep track</i></p> <p><i>Blair: I know, but the idea was to do it without writing</i></p>

Analysis	<p><i>it down</i></p> <p><i>R: Well you didn't say that!</i></p> <p><i>B: [the idea was] to work as a collective” (CB, Nov 30/09)”</i></p> <p>These two conversations expand upon Robert’s decisions to usurp the process and participate in his own way. The first shows the tension between Robert and I and my irritation with him and his attempts to cheat. The second comment shows Blair and Robert negotiating another one of Robert’s attempts to gain control of the activity.</p> <p>While I characterize these actions as cheating, it is important to recognize (as will be discussed in greater detail below), that this may have been one of Robert’s legitimate tactics to assert himself and navigate the complex power dynamics in the classroom. After all, in the instance of the second comment above, neither Blair nor I said the students could not write it down, therefore, Robert may have been creatively interpreting the guidelines for his own (or the collective) benefit.</p>
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Robert: Student Artefacts	
<i>Normative Masculinity</i>	<i>Relationships</i>
<p><i>“On a scale I would rank closer to the halfway point [between male and female poles] because I share a lot of traits with both genders. I do have my soft emotional side which personally I would consider feminine, however at times I do have a dominant side to me which is a masculine trait.</i></p> <p><i>Physically, I have shared traits as well, my height and weight are a masculine trait as I am tall and I do weigh a heavy number, shape, which I hide with clothes is feminine, I have an hour glass shape and I do have more pronounced hips than the average male.</i></p> <p><i>Preferences in hobbies and relationships, I also rank myself at a halfway point because I have hobbies that women and men associate with, that just females associate with, and just males associate with. With relationships, I do lean more towards women, however, I will not lie, I have found males attractive. I have same sex crushes and as Grant* could tell you, I have kissed males.” (CO, Dec 1/09)</i></p>	<p><i>“My example [of gender policing] is with my co-op last year. Me, personally, I will wear makeup and eyeliner and while my family is okay with makeup/cosmetics and not okay with cross-dressing, my coop teacher and coop supervisor did not like me wearing makeup, and I was, like, why? When they told me it was unprofessional to wear cosmetics to work because I was a guy, I asked what made it professional that women could wear them and men couldn't, they did not have an answer other than, 'that's the way it is'. For a while, I continued on doing that [wearing cosmetics] until the vice-principal stepped in and told me I couldn't. I tried to get permission for it but I was not able, so I just didn't wear eyeliner to school anymore. I probably would if</i></p>

Analysis

In this description of his gender continuum Robert comments on his physical stature and emotional self ascribing himself both masculine and feminine qualities for both. Here he reiterates conventions and norms for the traditional gender binary; that to have a soft emotional side is feminine and to have a dominant side is masculine.

Robert's commentary on his physical self is presents a blurring of these gender norms as he describes his height and weight (he is a tall, broad young man) as masculine, but possessing an *hour-glass* shape – a physical descriptor often used to describe women (e.g., actresses like Marilyn Monroe and Christina Hendricks [Joan from Mad Men]).

Moving away from this balanced, yet normative approach of having some male and some female qualities, Robert discusses the flux of his sexuality and sexual exploration by saying he has same-sex crushes, finds other males attractive and identifies/implies that he has kissed Grant (pseudonym used), another male in the school.

This final paragraph indicated the state of flux in Robert's sexual identity. Though not stated here, Robert discussed his girlfriend in class many times during the sub-unit and course in its entirety. This comment enabled me as a researcher to see Robert as someone who was negotiating the nature of his romantic relationships in normative and non-normative ways; having a girlfriend, but exploring same sex crushes/relationships. One of the stand-out components in Robert's written reflections are the references to gender-bending, *same sex crushes and kissing males*". He is the only participant to make reference to any kind of same-sex romantic relationships.

I could, not that I don't have a co-op anymore, but after all that happened last year from it, I'm like why? –when I'll just probably be told no for some other reason" (WR, FA/TA, Nov 27/09)

Analysis

Robert's recount of his experience of gender policing from his teacher and an administrator is a very clear and vivid example of the experiences of young men who perform their masculinity in non-normative ways. As the date indicates, Robert told this story through his reflection before the end of the research period and was a contributing factor to his selection as one of the four interview participants.

In this reflection he outlines how his actions challenged the norms of the school, the teacher and administrator's perspective about the acceptability of young men wearing make-up and probed the notion of professionalism and what constitutes it. He clearly outlines this when he questioned the teacher and administrator as to why women wearing make-up was professionally acceptable and for men was not. He also expresses dissatisfaction with the status quo response he received.

As well, he is the only participant who articulated a clash with school authority figures over his gender, sexuality, and modes of self-expression. Wearing make-up, a trait that Robert recognizes as outside the gender norm for males, but *only for women*," identifies his frustration at the *–eop out*" answer of adults in the school when he is asked to remove his make-up. He does not elaborate on how this affected his future actions or perceptions of self, others, or schooling as an institution.

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Interview Responses: Jamie	
<i>Normative Masculinity</i>	<i>“they [other students] probably think that males themselves are more dominant in relationships, in sporting events, in politics – it’s all you see, pretty much.” (Q1, RO, Dec 2/09)</i>
<i>Analysis</i>	<p>Jamie’s comment here expresses the idea of what he understands as his male peers’ ideas and expectations of normative masculinity. In this quote, masculinity is understood as dominance and power in all spheres of social life (relationships, sports, politics, etc.).</p> <p>I was impressed by Jamie’s identification of dominance amongst many spheres of social life (relationships, sporting events and politics).</p>
<i>Relationships</i>	<p><i>“I think that hanging out with - most of my friends are male – you tend to do more stuff because it makes you seem more dominant...like you try to be big among your friends. But I also have friends that are female, and I try to be more sensitive and just not much of a jerk or anything. We do joke around but definitely cause...like it’s all about how your friends receive you. Like I’m highly aware of how my friends receive me, and if I do something that they don’t like, I’m really bad about that – like mad or sad or anything ... then I’ll probably do it. And it’s more my choice, but they do have an influence on me.” (Q4, FR, Dec 2/09)</i></p> <p><i>“‘cause you wanna seem like you’re the toughest and you’re the funniest and everything else. You kind of get an adrenaline rush out of competing – it’s the competitiveness in it...sometimes, and I’ll probably hear about it later on...but not right there because you’re not going to be like pushing them or anything in front of your friends...they’ll probably joke around and joke about what I was saying and stuff, or like um, mimic me like ‚Ah, you said that...“ [student raises pitch of voice] kinda thing.” (PQ1, PG/FR, Dec 2/09)</i></p> <p><i>“In grade 9 when I first came here I was intimidated a bit, and I tried to like act tough and everything but I just...I think in grade 10 I realized like, just be yourself – you don’t have to care what anyone else thinks. And just portray who you want to be and...well I was trying to fit in, and not really be able to cause it’s hard to be a ‚tech-er⁸“ all the time or a prep all the time, so you just have to be yourself.</i></p>

8 A 'tech-er' is one of the social groups in the school made up of predominantly working, middle-class students who frequently (though not exclusively) live rurally. Their hobbies and interests are largely defined by outdoor activities, including snowmobiling. Their interests in school are focused primarily

	<p><i>That's why when we did that board with all the preps....like I don't fit anywhere, and I'm happy with that. I don't like being branded, then you have to always portray it and you always have to be that kind of thing. If you change, they can be all ,you're a poser now". So it's just...avoid all that and be yourself...I tried being a tech-er, and I don't really like working on engines or anything, and so when they were talking about that, I felt kind of dumbfounded, and like just trying to understand it. And I tried being a prep once, and I just...I didn't like their attitude. Like, my own friends – they don't really fit in anywhere either, so we all have a common interest there. And, like, I don't mind preps⁹ – I'll talk to them and everything...and ,tech-ers" – cause some of them are actually pretty cool when you get them one on one. In the groups, that's where it's kind of awkward." (PQ2, PG, Dec 2/09)</i></p>
Analysis	<p>Jamie's first two comments here speak to the fluidity of his identity depending up on the peer group, particularly the gendered make up of the peer group. He identifies that he will (along with friends) act different towards males than females. The criteria of this interaction is based on the [so-called] expectations of males and females. In his conception you should act tough around males and more sensitive around females – regardless of the consequences.</p> <p>Jamie's second comment reflects the process whereby he found his place socially at school. In discussing the different social groups, the ways he <u>fit</u> and did not within them he is also identifying socioeconomic and class-based differences within the school. He is also describing the reality of his friend group as ones who belong together, but nowhere else. Jamie also points to context in this last comment, indicating that one-on-one –some of them [tech-ers] are actually pretty cool" but that –<u>n</u> the groups, that's where it's kind of awkward". He can navigate relationships with peers, outside his friend group one-on-one, but in a group setting it becomes more difficult.</p> <p>As a researcher, I appreciated Jamie's insights into the social dynamics in the school. In describing his own journey to find his place, he also described social life in schools including the hierarchies, the groups and the process through which males (and arguably females) form their</p>

around the skilled trades and technologies. As such, their day-to-day life is defined by bus transportation to school or their own personal vehicles and the skills acquired to maintain these vehicles as well as their outdoor interests. This is a term/label used by students in the context of the school where the research was completed to describe a groups of students.

⁹ A 'prep' is one of the social groups in the school made up of predominantly middle, upper-class students. Their hobbies and interests are often based within athletics, music, student government – more conventional extracurricular activities that their middle, upper-class families can afford. Their interests in school are often (perceived or otherwise) to be academically focussed with a goal of attending University as a post-secondary option. The preps are essentially the privileged class in the school. Prep is often synonymous/used interchangeably with snob or jock.

	<p>identity in schools.</p>
<p>Reflection</p>	<p><i>“And the way we actually had to mark ourselves down, it actually got me thinking about...like I’m not totally macho man, and like feminine qualities too. Like I’m not manly man, but like it was nice to actually think like that...because you never really think about that on a day-to-day basis, and having classes specifically just to think about gender and who you are and what you portray is kinda nice.” (Q1, RP, Dec 2/09)</i></p> <p><i>“I think you always have to try...like people always feel the need to conform to society. Instead of being outspoken or anything, most people tend to be quiet. Like I am during a meeting... in community stuff and everything. You tend to like try to fit in with the majority.” (PQ2, LE/MC, Dec 2/09)</i></p> <p><i>“I don’t think just because someone’s quiet, they don’t take initiative – they kinda do and they kinda don’t, but...just because someone’s quiet doesn’t mean they’re not helping. They could be thinking about it, or they could be thinking about a strategy, and they’re just too shy to say it, or to speak out loud...maybe there’d be like, a contradictions, or people would get mad with the ideas, or kind of frustrate people as well. So someone needs to be the leader, someone needs to step up. That’s why you sort of have to take initiative....but it’s like, not key because you could probably sort it out just by people like quietly talking and just thinking about it – but it would take much longer...that’s what I think at least.” (PQ3, RP, Dec 2/09)</i></p>
<p>Analysis</p>	<p>Jamie’s first comment identifies the impact of creating a space to discuss gender/masculinity in a way that allowed him to consider it, but there is also a sense of relief, as if gender/masculinity is always there, but rarely (if ever) discussed.</p> <p>His second comment articulates his perspective on conformity and the way in which he chooses to conform to society and I would argue, classroom life. This helped me as a researcher, learn about Jamie through his quiet thoughtfulness and engagement in this interview. I also learned that while Jamie was not an active participant in school-based groups, he is active in his community and family life.</p>

<p>Jamie: Classroom Performances</p>	
<p>Overall Role/Response (curriculum)</p>	<p><i>“Well, it caused me to think a lot, and about who I am as an individual actually...And the way we actually had to mark ourselves down, it actually got me thinking about...like I’m not totally macho man, and like feminine qualities too. Like I’m not manly man, but like it was nice to actually think like that...you never really think about that on a day-to-day basis, and having</i></p>

	<i>classes specifically just to think about gender and who you are and what you portray is kinda nice.” (Q1, RP, Dec 2/09)</i>
Analysis	In this comment Jamie discusses his engagement in the sub-unit on masculinity. He also speaks to a sense of relief in openly discussing and naming masculinity and gender in classrooms by saying it was <i>‘nice’</i> .
<i>Interactions with participants</i>	<i>“I’ve got two if you want one...I don’t know what this is though, it feels like Pac-Man” (CB, Nov 30/09)</i>
Analysis	This comment is Jamie’s only recorded interaction with other students during the Colour Blind Initiative. He offered a shape to another student (female) who is not one of the four participants. His lack of interaction with the other 4 male participants analyzed here speaks to Jamie’s presence in the background (instead of the forefront) of classroom activities. This is unique and different from the other participants.
<i>Role in Colour Blind</i>	<i>“J: Um, I didn’t really wanna like shout out or anything, but if people were saying their colours I was still trying to mentally figure it out, and I helped by saying what colour I had. I was actually trying to sort it out, and trying to find out in my mind, ,cause I tend to work better when like I’m thinking, instead of saying. Like when I’m listening to music I tend to focus better, and blocking it out of my sight, I actually try to visualize it, cause I find that easier...I could have said something, but I preferred not to. But it wasn’t like I wasn’t helping, in any way. Like if no one actually did, I would eventually come up with an idea or try to figure it out and say what I thought it was and see if people agreed. But I don’t think just because someone’s quiet, they don’t take initiative – they kinda do and they kinda don’t, but...just because someone’s quiet doesn’t mean they’re not helping. They could be thinking about it, or they could be thinking about a strategy, and they’re just too shy to say it, or to speak out loud...And I think maybe there’d be like, a contradiction, or people would get mad with the ideas, or kind of frustrate people as well. So someone needs to be the leader, someone needs to step up. That’s why you sort of have to take initiative....but it’s like, not key because you could probably sort it out just by people like quietly talking and just thinking about it – but it would take much longer...that’s what I think at least...Someone has to [take the lead], sometime...” (PQ3, RP, Dec 2/09)</i>
Analysis	This comment, taken from his one-on-one interview, is Jamie’s reflections about his role in classroom activities. He discusses to his non-verbal engagement in the activity. His lack of presence/role in solving the <i>—problem</i> ” of the Colour Blind Initiative was deliberate, not accidental.
<i>Interactions with Teacher-researcher</i>	<i>n/a</i>
Analysis	Jamie and I had no interaction (direct or indirect verbal communication) during the activity, this is indicative of the role he played in the classroom on a regular basis and how it could have been easy to <i>“overlook”</i> his insights and

	contributions.
Jamie: Student Artefacts	
<i>Normative Masculinity</i>	<i>Relationships</i>
<p>“My likes are mostly masculine. I enjoy playing video games and watching sports. I’m also generally lazy, which is meant as a masculine trait. My clothing and music are in the middle because I take care in what I wear and I enjoy all music and artists.” (CO, RO/RS, Dec 1/09)</p>	<p>“Being a gamer, I’m all for trying different games. One time, I was about 12 years old, I played a game that was aimed at a younger audience, when my older cousin seen this, he asked if I was a little girl for playing this specific game. I quickly took the game out and put in a different game. Now, I don’t care what game I play. No matter what audience it is aimed at, I’ll still play it.” (WR, FA, Nov 27/09)</p>
<p>Analysis</p> <p>In this written explanation of his gender continuum, Jamie identifies as mostly masculine, citing an interest in playing video games and watching sports as masculine. Significantly, Jamie also identifies laziness as a masculine trait something also portrayed in modern film and television (Alilunas, 2008). He describes his other interests as ‘middle ground’ because he puts some effort into his clothing and likes all kinds of music (an interest in fashion and pop music, for example, were identified by some class members as feminine).</p>	<p>Analysis</p> <p>Jamie’s example of gender policing, outlined in this written reflection, embeds his notions of gender in his favourite activity: gaming. He clearly articulates that he was teased and called a “girl” for playing a game for younger children. While he recalls this incident he resists this adherence to gender norms in gaming by playing all kinds of games, based on his preference, not gender expectations.</p>
Jamie: Classroom Performances	
<i>Overall Role/Response (curriculum)</i>	<p>“Well, it caused me to think a lot, and about who I am as an individual actually...And the way we actually had to mark ourselves down, it actually got me thinking about...like I’m not totally macho man, and like feminine qualities too. Like I’m not manly man, but like it was nice to actually think like that...you never really think about that on a day-to-day basis, and having classes specifically just to think about gender and who you are and what you portray is kinda nice.” (Q1, RP, Dec 2/09)</p>
Analysis	<p>In this comment Jamie discusses his engagement in the sub-unit on masculinity. He also speaks to a sense of relief in openly discussing and naming masculinity and gender in classrooms by saying it was ‘nice’.</p>
<i>Interactions with participants</i>	<p>“I’ve got two if you want one...I don’t know what this is though, it feels like Pac-Man” (CB, Nov 30/09)</p>
Analysis	<p>This comment is Jamie’s only recorded interaction with other students during the Colour Blind Initiative. He offered a shape to another student (female) who is not one of the four participants. His lack of interaction with the other 4 male participants analyzed here speaks to Jamie’s presence in the background</p>

	(instead of the forefront) of classroom activities. This is unique and different from the other participants.
<i>Role in Colour Blind</i>	<i>“J: Um, I didn’t really wanna like shout out or anything, but if people were saying their colours I was still trying to mentally figure it out, and I helped by saying what colour I had. I was actually trying to sort it out, and trying to find out in my mind, ,cause I tend to work better when like I’m thinking, instead of saying. Like when I’m listening to music I tend to focus better, and blocking it out of my sight, I actually try to visualize it, cause I find that easier...I could have said something, but I preferred not to. But it wasn’t like I wasn’t helping, in any way. Like if no one actually did, I would eventually come up with an idea or try to figure it out and say what I thought it was and see if people agreed. But I don’t think just because someone’s quiet, they don’t take initiative – they kinda do and they kinda don’t, but...just because someone’s quiet doesn’t mean they’re not helping. They could be thinking about it, or they could be thinking about a strategy, and they’re just too shy to say it, or to speak out loud...And I think maybe there’d be like, a contradiction, or people would get mad with the ideas, or kind of frustrate people as well. So someone needs to be the leader, someone needs to step up. That’s why you sort of have to take initiative....but it’s like, not key because you could probably sort it out just by people like quietly talking and just thinking about it – but it would take much longer...that’s what I think at least...Someone has to [take the lead], sometime...” (PQ3, RP, Dec 2/09)</i>
Analysis	This comment, taken from his one-on-one interview, is Jamie’s reflections about his role in classroom activities. He discusses to his non-verbal engagement in the activity. His lack of presence/role in solving the —problem” of the Colour Blind Initiative was deliberate, not accidental.
<i>Interactions with Teacher-researcher</i>	<i>n/a</i>
Analysis	Jamie and I had no interaction (direct or indirect verbal communication) during the activity, this is indicative of the role he played in the classroom on a regular basis and how it could have been easy to overlook ” his insights and contributions.

Interview Responses: David

<i>Normative Masculinity</i>	<i>“I think nowadays men care a lot more about their appearance and their fashion and I guess that’s kind of a good thing in a way. I mean, we shouldn’t care too much about our appearances but it shows that in a way – for better or for worse – that we’re [males and females] becoming more alike. And I think we always have to keep this...I think it’s appropriate to keep a kind of divide between what a man is and what a woman is, but I think it is also very important that we try to, you know, keep that line more thin...yes, fluid. Like I don’t know, like I guess it’s kinda me...I guess I’m really saying ,oh I want to have it</i>
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	<p><i>both ways”when I shouldn’t be. But it’s kinda like the whole action star thing. It’s like, I really...I really love these classic people like Rambo and things, and I think that it’s all this masculinity and things, but really I know that’s not...I can’t have it – I really shouldn’t be trying to have it both ways, where I appreciate the efforts of masculinity and all these classic heroes like Conan the Barbarian crap.”</i></p>
Analysis	<p>In this comment David is articulating his perception of normative masculinity as it relates to femininity and the correlating [for him] notions of being a man/woman. Focussing on attention to appearance David makes the argument that men and becoming more like women because they —are more” about their appearance. He also places a positive evaluative claim on this, that this is good, but also contradictory. He endorses the notion that there should be some distinction between male/masculinity and female/femininity, while also argues that gender fluidity is positive. David connects these seemingly contradictory notions to himself when he identifies that while he is not often the masculine ideal, he readily consumes media that present normative [hyper] masculinity. He reflects upon the possibility of having it —bth ways,” that is, a world where he can consume the media/entertainment he enjoys, while also encouraging a system with greater gender fluidity.</p>
Relationships	<p><i>“That’s [role of family] actually very interesting when I think about it, just because I’m a ...well, my mom – she left at a very early age. I was maybe like three...four... I can’t quite remember but um. Really I don’t remember what it was quite like having a mother or anything, so um. My Dad had to raise me most of the time, but he was away a lot...everybody’s moving out west. But, um, he had to work many hours of the day and when he came home he was tired. And I can understand why he was always agitated ,cause he always had to just come home and do more work. When me and Adam¹⁰ were still really young, we couldn’t quite cook for ourselves yet or anything. So basically, we didn’t really have much of a mother figure around, and our dad...well, I don’t really want to say we didn’t have much of a father figure around. He was present a lot, we just never really got to do much activities with him...well, my grandmother, she helped out, she helped raise us a lot and same with my Auntie. So I feel like I got some kind of...maybe some sort of feminine influence from them. Or maybe not feminine but....well my grandma, she gave me, I’d like to think she brought me up a lot on my ethics and morals. And my Auntie Jacqueline¹¹, on the other hand, she taught me a lot of ... you know, just critical thinking and just ...you know, taking things not at a first glance or first appearances...whatever you want to call it. But, if we’re</i></p>

¹⁰ Name changed

¹¹ Name changed

	<p><i>talking upbringings, does that involve early school life?” (Q2, FA, Dec 1/09)</i></p> <p><i>“Most, most in general though were just males and even the females I didn’t really...I mean I didn’t associate with...I mean I was always the kind of person who was more or less on the outside of things. Like I was the person everybody knew – everybody was kinda friends with, you know, didn’t really...wasn’t a big player of the games [sports, activities with other], if you know what I mean, but...” (Q3, PG/TA, Dec 1/09)</i></p>
Analysis	<p>Family life was a very important component of David's gender identity and the construction of his masculinity. He indicates, in his first comment, the lack of female role models, as well as an inadequate male role model and the increasing responsibilities assumed by himself and his older brother Adam, as defining identity-building experiences in his life. Despite other intensely reflective moments, David did not connect (either verbally or in his artefacts) these key family experiences to his masculine performances in dealing with other people.</p> <p>Peers/friends are the topic in his second comment, where he paints a portrait of himself as the outsider in his peer group. David is someone that everyone knows, but no one includes or spends time with. After spending time in a classroom with David, this is an apt portrayal of his role in the classroom.</p>
Reflection	<p><i>“I was never the biggest or the strongest person and I actually was a very aggressive child –Yeah, I think I should have mentioned that earlier – I was very aggressive as a child. I always tried to prove myself as more...like you watch these classic cartoons and you know, movies and whatnot, and you always see people – if they’re getting pushed around or something – they always, you know, find some kind of other strength in them or something and, I don’t know...I guess I kind of bought into that whole thing a little bit, which is a little bit ridiculous looking back. Like I see a lot of things that I did in the past, and I just shake my head and go „I can’t believe...I should have done it a different way” but I guess at some point I started to regret it but...I don’t really have much people’s respect...I’m more of an apathetic-like person” (PQ2, RS, Dec 1/09)</i></p> <p><i>“That’s just who...that’s just who I’ve been for a very long time like....when I was a kid I was happy and eccentric and crap, and then I got a little bit older and I started to get a little bit more depressing, so to speak...and well, over time I guess it just became who I am – just kind of more of a very critical, cynical person, but like, I don’t know. I actually kind of prefer this...I’d like to think I’ve become more mature ...and learned a lot – still have a lot more to learn. I’ve come to the realization that I have a lot more to learn... I can’t remember who said it but basically – „The more you know, the less you know. And the more you learn, the more you understand that you know so little”.”</i></p>

(PQ2, PS/LE, Dec 1/09)

“Well, I thought it [the research] was interesting a lot of the time, and there was some interesting discussion, but I couldn’t help but feel that a lot of the time we [the philosophy class] were pretty much just rehashing kind of the obvious. And maybe that’s just me, cause...I don’t want to toot my own horn or anything, but I think I’m a little bit more perceptive and a bit more of a critical thinker than a lot of people. I just tend to notice these things and observe these things from time to time. But, like I have strong opinions on the whole philosophy of aesthetics and you know sort of masculinity and femininity, complex whatever. I don’t know, it was interesting discussing it with other people...students, and some of the games...or whatever you want to call them – activities that we did. I mean, sometimes I failed to see the logic or value at first, but generally, by the end, I could at least get an idea of what we were trying to accomplish...Well, I don’t think I’ve exactly learned too much that’s like brand new. I think ...I’ve seen things from different avenues” (Q1, RP/MC, Dec 1/09)

“I can’t just take on this whole sort of leadership role very easily and say „Listen, I think we should do things this way”; or „We need to do things this way” or ...cause a lot of the time I feel like...I don’t answer well to authority. That’s not to say I’m some „anti-establishment, screw the system” kind of nihilistic person...who claims to be anarchist but doesn’t even know what it means.” (PQ2, PS, Dec 1/09)

Analysis

David’s first two comments above focus on his self-identification as an outsider (introduced above). He elaborates on his self-perception when he says that he often viewed outsiders (in “classic cartoons and movies”, as having some hidden inner strength. As a young child, always trying to prove himself, David claims he “bought in” to the idea that someone who gets pushed around has this inner strength, leading him to be aggressive. He also speaks to his development from being a young child who was “happy, eccentric and crap” to an older more depressed child to the present David, who is critical and cynical, but happy with this version of himself. He alludes to his lust for knowledge and learning at the end of this comment when he states, the more you know, the less you know.

Reflecting upon the sub-unit (in the last two comments), David discussed his interest in the topic, but laments the process. He continues to describe himself as different, unique and more advanced in his thinking than his peers. This is a conception from which David derives a great deal of satisfaction and self-worth. He also provides some insight into his own perspectives and values in the last comment when he discusses his attitude toward leadership and authority. In describing himself by what he is not (anti-establishment, nihilistic, screw the system), but also not a comfortable leader; David reflects upon his own [changing] identity as one he is still negotiating.

David: Student Artefacts	
<i>Normative Masculinity</i>	<i>Relationships</i>
<p><i>“Physically I believe myself to be more feminine, given that I can associate long hair, pale complexions, small frames, and thinness with femininity, despite my lower level [tone] voice. Personality wise, I think myself to be quite more feminine, as I see traits within myself (I am quite introverted for instance), to be more expect[ed] from women than men despite, extroversion in both groups.</i></p> <p><i>In terms of hobbies, I enjoy music very much, something more feminine in nature. Creativity and art is also more associated with femininity, things I also take to heart. I compete in sports, but more uni-sexual¹² ones such as x-country running by standard.</i></p> <p><i>My tastes are rather middle-ground, given that I enjoy a wide variety of foods, activities, movies, literature among much more. I enjoy beer, masculine, but also enjoy wine, feminine. I prefer drama to the action genre, but still appreciate a spectacle at fight scenes and violence in film, so long as the plot and characters are sufficient.</i></p> <p><i>I have previously taken a variety of personality quizzes, most of which are professional level and reliable. Always I am given the same result, middle to slightly right-brained, something that I believe is influenced by my creativity and emotions, but logic and skepticism as well.</i></p> <p><i>Although I may appear sarcastic, cynical, and apathetic (I very much am), I am also rather emotional and prone to mood swings and instability. I understand others very well, and look</i></p>	<p><i>“I myself am guilty of some 'gender policing' in the past, although much of it was truly just teasing and petty insults as a child. I have questioned others' 'gender and sexuality (always sarcastically) based upon the clothing choices, activities, and interests of the individual or group. I still do this somewhat to this day, this being a habit I wish to abandon.</i></p> <p><i>One example in particular of how I have 'gender policed', is by mocking my brother Adam. My brother has developed a love for cooking, cosmetology and fashion (something often associated with women) over the years. Not so much trying to discourage him as so much, laugh at him, I have called him a housewife more than once. My brother also enjoys a variety of female singers, and listens to more softer, trendy music, something I have made fun of. Not only have I questioned Adam based on himself, but also on the friends he keeps. He is friends with students of many groups, but I have seen him associate with the most are the “emos”, which has now evolved into the “scene kids”¹³. These scenes wear tight colourful clothing, pants low, and relatively act what can be considered 'feminine' by society standards. As I see him associate with this group, and become more feminine when he does, I cannot help but feel a little disgusted, insulted by what I believe to be an</i></p>

¹² David is referring to a classroom discussion/verbal altercation where he and another student discussed inter-sexed people. Uni-sexual is not the appropriate term, but the one that David himself used. He used it in an oppressive way, challenging or questioning the so-called normalcy of inter-sexed people's lives.

¹³ Emos and Scene Kids are two distinct, but related, groups of students in this context. Emo is short for emotional. Emos, therefore, are seen as teens who are very emotional (often depressed), they wear dark, fitted/tight clothing, wrist bands (sometimes to cover wounds from self-harming) and listen to indie/punk music. It is not a flattering term and is often used in a pejorative way, as an insult. Scene Kids are similar to emos in terms of their so-called “emotional” state, they also wear fitted/tight clothing except their clothing is brightly coloured. They listen to music from the techno/house genre and are perceived as being more privileged and superfluous in their interests than emos. One student articulated succinctly that scene kids are “emos who wear colour and spend all their time at the mall”.

inwards quite often.” (CO, RS, Dec 1/09)

unoriginal, pathetic trend, and cannot help expressing this to him.

The act of 'gender policing' is arguably wrong, yet it is something that is likely never to die for better or for worse.

Perhaps children oughtn't be 'policed' by societies standards, but rather, encouraged to grow how they see fit in an unbiased setting, controlled, predominantly by neither masculinity nor femininity. I myself must learn to stop, something which will take time.” (WR, LE/PS, Nov 27/09)

Analysis

David presents his gendered conception of himself as *‘balanced’*. He shows here how there are parts of himself that he considers to be more feminine and other parts more masculine. He also reveals both implicitly and explicitly some of his assumptions about [normative] masculinity/femininity. For example, his final statement seems to connect sarcasm, cynicism and apathy as masculine traits while being emotional, prone to mood swings and unstable is associated with femininity.

Analysis

David's reflection about gender policing focuses on the occasions where he has policed his brother Adam (instead of a situation where he may have been gender policed by peers/friends). This stance is unique amongst the other four participants. The three other participants discussed situations only where they had been gender policed, not the gender *policer*.

Furthermore, unlike the other participants, David also reflects on his own actions and indicates a desire to change his own interactions (not wanting to gender police his brother). He also reveals his own assumptions about the gendered nature of certain tasks and interests. So-called feminine interests/hobbies that his brother pursues include cooking, cosmetology, softer music and friendships with emos/scene kids; a group often seen as not conforming (clothing, emotional predisposition) to norms of masculinity.

David: Classroom Performances	
<i>Overall Role/Response</i>	<i>“Well I thought it was interesting a lot of the time, and there was some interesting discussion, but I couldn't help but feel that a lot of the time we were pretty much just rehashing kind of the obvious. And maybe that's just me, cause...I don't want to toot my own horn or anything, but I think I'm a little bit more perceptive and a bit more of a critical thinker than a lot of people. I just tend to notice these things and observe these things from time to time. But, like I</i>

	<p><i>have strong opinions on the whole philosophy of aesthetics and you know sort of masculinity and femininity, complex whatever. I don't know, it was interesting discussing it with other people...students, and some of the games...or whatever you want to call them – activities that we did. I mean, sometimes I failed to see the logic or value at first, but generally by the end I could at a least get an idea of what we were trying to accomplish.” (Q1, RP, Dec 1/09</i></p> <p><i>“I can't just take on this whole sort of leadership role very easily and say „Listen, I think we should do things this way”; or „We need to do things this way” or...cause a lot of the time I feel like...I don't answer well to authority. That's not to say I'm some „anti-establishment, screw the system” kind of nihilistic person...who claims to be anarchist but doesn't even know what it means.” (PQ2, PS, Dec 1/09)</i></p>
Analysis	<p>In these two comments (both discussed in whole or part above) David discusses his own ability to think critically and his enjoyment of the sub-unit. The second comment identifies David's perspective on leadership – he is reluctant to see himself as a leader because of his own opposition or discomfort with authority.</p>
Interactions with participants	<p><i>“Stacy: if David had been more positive, his really good idea would have been better received</i></p> <p><i>Blair: I feel like you need to give David an opportunity to respond to that</i></p> <p><i>David: hmm, oh what? Oh I was just tying my bandana</i></p> <p><i>S: Because you are sarcastic on most days</i></p> <p><i>D: because its funner that way...maybe that's because that's the only way I can get people's attention, because I don't have the same commanding respect and authority and I don't like using authority because authority pisses me off so I use that other tone to catch people's attention...yes sarcasm, because everyone pays attention to sarcasm</i></p> <p><i>B: So David...because you can't or don't garner people's attention by using the same commanding, controlling voice you use sarcasm to do that?</i></p> <p><i>D: That wasn't the intent, but I suppose it turned out that way</i></p> <p><i>B: Alternate techniques to gain access to participation?</i></p> <p><i>D: it wasn't really sarcasm...I didn't use 'high technical words', I mean I didn't swear so I guess that's an improvement” (CB, Nov</i></p>

	30/09)
Analysis	This conversation between David and Stacy (a female classmate) about his use of sarcasm as a tool/strategy to assume a position of authority in the classroom. He articulates how this strategy works for him in a classroom setting because it balances out the fact he does not command respect or authority (a concept/relationship he troubles above). Sarcasm is a vehicle for David to accomplish tasks and/or have his voice heard.
Role in Colour Blind	<p><i>“Mark [to his friends]: I just lost the game, sorry guys</i></p> <p><i>David [to Mark and friends]: You're all retarded for playing the game!” (CB, Nov 30/09)</i></p> <p><i>“David [hand up, exasperated to Blair]: What colour is this?</i></p> <p><i>Blair: That is green David</i></p> <p><i>D: (sighs, exasperated) ok.” (CB, Nov 30/09)</i></p> <p><i>“Mark: Is everyone in the room confident in saying it’s a green bat and a gray...what is it? A triangle with a curve</i></p> <p><i>David (raises voice): It was a pizza slice!...this is bloody painful!... You know, we don't even...</i></p> <p><i>Amy: “David it’s okay, just relax”</i></p> <p><i>D: You know, we don't even need to know everyone's colour, we just need to count and it would save us all a shitload of trouble – if there aren't 6 then we know</i></p> <p><i>Robert: But David we also need to figure out what colour it is...</i></p> <p><i>D [loudly]: Well first, its quicker if we figure out if we have all 6 and then if we don't we can figure out what colour it is!</i></p> <p><i>A [to David]: You don't have to scream...David shut up!</i></p> <p><i>D: You can't tell anyone to shut up!” (CB, Nov 30/09)</i></p> <p><i>“Mark: Okay guys, guys, guys, I want to try something its David's method, make him happy, cause he doesn't sound very happy</i></p> <p><i>David: Yes, humour me [students quickly solve problem using David's solution] ...That too way too much effort...we could have</i></p>

	<p><i>gotten this done in two minutes if everyone had listened” (CB, Nov 30/09)</i></p> <p><i>“Blair: Whose voices did we hear?</i></p> <p><i>Robert: ...David...But David came up with a really great idea so don't...[interrupted]</i></p> <p><i>Mark: Yeah, and I used it!” (CB, Nov 30/09)</i></p>
Analysis	<p>In this series of conversations, David’s fractious relationship with his classmates, particularly his power struggles with Mark is evident. It also shows Robert challenging David in the second conversation, and then changing his tone to validate David’s idea/solution once it was successful.</p>
Interactions with Teacher-researcher	<p><i>“L: So the point we're trying to make or the connection we [Blair and I] were hoping to illustrate is when a decision gets made in a school, does it happen in consultation where everyone is asked their opinion and everyone's opinion is gathered and the best course of action is decided?</i></p> <p><i>D: That’s the way it should be...</i></p> <p><i>L: or is it them [students with dominant voices] who make those decisions</i></p> <p><i>R: “It is them [those with dominant voices] who makes those decisions</i></p> <p><i>D: You know the funny thing is, I think that everybody who really, well not everybody, but at least the ones who spoke up, or you know what even the ones who were quiet about cared about it to some extent, because even myself, I really didn't care for this project, I hated it, I wanted it to end but...yes, indeed</i></p> <p><i>L: and I could see that it your body language” (CB, Nov 30/09)</i></p> <p><i>“David: I feel like this antagonistic figure...</i></p> <p><i>After class, David, Mark & Robert are chatting with Blair and I about issues, life experiences. Mark leaves, my conversation with David continues</i></p> <p><i>D [discussing intention of action and choices]: Well I could choose to not come to school, I could choose to drop out tomorrow and then spend the rest of my life complaining about being a drop-out and how society failed me as an individual when really I failed</i></p>

<p>Analysis</p>	<p>myself.</p> <p><i>L: So did you ever think that maybe you as an individual when you're using sarcasm, like you were discussing with Stacy, that maybe you're subverting that power by doing that?</i></p> <p><i>D: I don't know, they don't seem to notice me much.” (PO, CS, Nov 30/09)</i></p> <p>These conversations show David’s interest in discussing, debriefing and analyzing classroom dynamics. In the second conversation, David discusses his role in the classroom as antagonistic and also marginalized; someone who goes unnoticed by Stacy and her friends (including Mark).</p>
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<p>Interview Responses: Mark</p>	
<p><i>Normative Masculinity</i></p>	<p><i>“I don’t think it’s so much the schooling, as much as the students in the school[that influence/impact students]...I just think that...say for example, someone is gay...Or whatever the term is...”</i></p> <p><i>Blair: Gay is fine.</i></p> <p><i>“Okay. And, you know, they’re not going to be as accepted, if you ask me, in a school setting like this [if you are gay]. You know, they may think, other people may think differently of you. I mean, yeah, sure, there’ll be some people that...for me, I don’t really care and it’s not a big deal to me, but for some people that is a big issue. Like I know personally for my father, homosexuality is a really big no-no for him. Like, he’s just...I, I can’t even talk to him about it. Whereas, you know, for me it’s whatever... it’s not a big deal. So that’s how I think...not so much schooling, but the students in the school will kind of...go against that.” (Q3, RO, Dec 1/09)</i></p> <p><i>“I see myself as a typical male, hopefully...I like sports...I like being with my friends...I like being with my girlfriend. I love everything like that. You know, I have a deeper voice. I don’t sound like a mouse. Um, I’m bigger than the majority of kids. Um, I don’t know...however else you can typically think of a male...there [are] qualities to me that are feminine or whatever...my feelings, yeah, I’ll admit that, I have very feminine feelings.” (PQ1, RS, Dec 1/09)</i></p>
<p>Analysis</p>	<p>Mark’s first comments about the impact that being gay would have on a young man’s social status in schools is helpful in understanding the perceptions students in general have toward other students who may be (or are perceived to be) gay. The indirect way in which Mark articulates this statement is interesting and revealing of a particular phenomenon about literacy/word choice. Mark seeks assurance from Blair that the term gay is an acceptable term to use. He then goes on to</p>

	<p>speak vaguely about they”, “them” and how they” will be treated. I would argue that this use of language is deliberate and also a function of the interactions in schools. For example, students so often use the term gay in a pejorative way, that when the occasion arises to use the term in an appropriate and respectful way, Mark (in this instance) is concerned it is the wrong” term to use. Even after being reassured it is an appropriate term to use – he does not use it again. Furthermore, Mark articulates his own feelings about peers being gay by couching it in the opinions of others in a circular way. After dancing around the point for a few statements, Mark finally says that it’s no big deal” for him if someone is gay.</p> <p>Mark’s final comment above reveal his developing sense of self that he is the typical male – <i>hopefully</i>. This insecurity is present in the way Mark navigates classroom life and interactions with peers. He presents himself (through his body) as the typical male, but then reveals some complexities (or perhaps, deviance, in his conception) from this norm through his interactions with his male friends and his so-called feminine emotions. This statement reiterates David’s normative gender assumptions above, where he associates being emotional with femininity.</p>
Relationships	<p><i>“Gender and sexuality. For gender, I...I have a mother who “sa counsellor – an addictions counsellor – so I’ve always kinda grown up where you know...not to judge people for what they are – like how they look...how they seem on the outside. Kind of...you know, before you make that first judgment, know the person first...know what they’re like...actually have time to sit down and talk with them. You know, ,cause that tends to change a lot of your perspective on someone.” (Q2, FA, Dec 1/09)</i></p> <p><i>“Daniel¹⁴, in this class, is my best friend that is male. And I mean, for him, he couldn’t care less, I mean...You know there’s days I’m having a bad day, first thing he’ll do, he’ll come up and give me a big hug. I mean, that’s just the way he is. You know... he’s trying to make me feel better...he’s not trying to like pick me up, or you know, trying to hook up with me, he’s just trying to make me feel better. He’s just trying to be nice...he’s trying to be sincere. And whereas everyone else in my group, they all know what I’m like, I mean, they all know what everyone else is like. Just because I act a certain way, doesn’t mean I’m actually like that...</i></p> <p><i>Say like, hugging Daniel for example...just because I hugged another guy, doesn’t mean I’m gay...it’s not a big deal...And even if I was gay, I mean, I’m pretty sure all my friends would accept that. I mean, it’s not a big deal.” (Q4, FR, Dec 1/09)</i></p>

14 Name changed

Analysis	<p>Mark's comments about his relationship with Daniel (and other friends) connect to Mark's notions of normative and acceptable masculine performances. In this statement he articulates an understanding that touching and hugging one's same sex friends (for males) is not a widespread practice, nor is it acceptable. Another important component of this comment is the [perceived] implications of same sex hugging and affection: being gay. He disassociates himself from this stigma by saying that his friends know him and the way he is, would accept him. The subtext/tone of this comment is that Mark is persuading Blair that he is not gay, despite this deviant" behaviour, but if he was, it's" no big deal".</p> <p>Mark's comment about his mother, her profession and her non-judgemental perspective are significant and included here because of the way they contrast with Mark's reflections on his father in his interview as well as below in his gender policing reflection.</p>
Reflection	<p><i>"I'm trying to think – it takes me awhile to do these things." (Q3, PS, Dec 1/09)</i></p> <p><i>"the whole sport [body-building] is pretty much based on looks... the size of the certain muscles, the symmetry, you know, how well they're proportioned to the rest of the body and stuff like that. I mean sure, there's nutrition and stuff like that, but ...when you're actually out on the stage, it's all about looks...it's all about how you look...for me personally, a lot of people think it's weird and they'll think that it's ,gay" to do that, where, you know, it's just my personal opinion. Like to me, you know, I play hockey as rec [recreation], and I did that for baseball, and I played baseball for a cardio workout. And you know, a lot of people like hockey and think it's [body-building] weird, but I think it's weird to play hockey competitively, just because of some of the things that I've heard that go on...I don't really think it [body-building] has a big impact [on self-perception]. I mean there's probably some things that I do that impact it, but not very much. You know, I think everyone is who they are to themselves. Like I have a thing on my wallet that says um ,,The only thing that truly matters is how you see yourself". And I find that to be extremely true." (PQ1, MC/SP, Dec 1/09)</i></p>
Analysis	<p>Mark uses athletics/sport and self-deprecating humour for reflection. These two components complement each other in Mark's presentation of self because if he is an athlete (read: jock) then he must also be unintelligent thereby reinforcing the <u>dumb jock</u> persona.</p> <p>In discussing his athletic pursuits Mark, reflects upon his physical self, a great source of pride and identity. He articulates that he does not see how his athletic pursuits, particularly body-building would have on his masculine identity. He concludes by emphasizing that only his opinion matter and those of others do not, however, his discussions and classroom conduct reveal a Mark who is very concerned with the</p>

opinions of others.

Mark: Student Artefacts	
<i>Normative Masculinity</i>	<i>Relationships</i>
<p>“ M---3-----2--4-----5----1-----F¹⁵ 1) Personality: I tend to be kinda sensitive as well I can also be raw 2) Appearance: I have size and not really girlish features. 3) Hobbies: Obvious!!!” (student emphasis) [positioned closer to “male/masculine”, Mark is referring to body-building as a masculine hobby] 4) Voice: I don't sound like a mouse. 5) Shoe Size: I have rather large feet.” (CO, RS, Dec 1/09)</p> <p>Analysis</p> <p>Mark's gender continuum indicates his normative assumption that larger size equates to masculinity and as such, he represents this. Significantly, however, he sees his personality as the most feminine of all his traits. He does not use the word feminine, unlike David, in reference to his mannerisms, but does indicate that sensitivity (femininity) instead of “awness” (masculinity) dominates his emotions.</p>	<p>“When I was about 12, I was an extremely overweight child. As a joke I would always make fun of myself to get others to laugh; and I would do this by means of making fun of my weight, especially my 'boobs'. One of the things that my father used to tell me was 'real men don't have boobs, they have pecs'. At the time, I thought this was a hilarious saying because anyone who knew me, knew I didn't have pecs, I clearly had boobs. But now as I look back at this, I realized that my father was stereotyping males to a whole other extreme. This is my example of G.P. [gender policing] towards males in our society.” (WR, FA, Nov 27/09)</p> <p>Analysis</p> <p>Despite the fact that Mark demonstrated a good level of self reflection, making connections amongst himself, the sub-unit topic, peers, friends, and family, he did not see the potential negative impact of some of these influences. One instance is the case of his father. Mark made reference to this in his interview and in his reflection about the gender policing role his father played in his life. He quoted his father, “real men have pecs, not boobs,” in reference to his self-described overweight adolescent body. In turn, he did not see any connection or impact (positive or negative) to his current focus, indeed a strong fixation on his physical self. In addition, Mark indicated that his father is one of the primary influences in his athletic pursuits, first in soccer, then baseball, and finally</p>

15 Mark's explanation of his gender continuum was built into his self-identification. A reproduction is necessary in order to understand his explanation.

	body-building, the latter echoing a sport that his father enjoyed as a young man.
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Mark: Classroom Performances	
<i>Overall Role/Response</i>	<p><i>“A lot of people see it the same way I did...like I do, and...most aspects. And I thought that was really interesting because I kinda thought I had my own little...like I was in my own little world for that, and I was completely off with that...Like, the way I believe what masculinity is, is the way that other people see it as well – well, the majority of people – I found at least in this class. And I thought that was kinda cool...thinking I’m not alone on what I think....that there’s other people around that...”</i></p> <p><i>B: So how is it you characterize what you believe about masculinity</i></p> <p><i>R: You know, like aspects like ah, the way you sound, the way you look, how you dress – all those things you know....general things...I don’t know how to explain it but...in general.” (Q1, RP, Dec 1/09)</i></p>
<i>Analysis</i>	<p>Similar to Jamie, Mark seems to express a sense of relief in focussing on and discussing masculinity and gender with his peers. He is happy that his opinions and ideas (though he does not articulate exactly what components make up these opinions and ideas) are shared and therefore, validated by his peers.</p>
<i>Interactions with participants</i>	<p><i>“ Mark: So we, so just let me just clarify then, we’ll all get an individual set and we all get the same thing</i></p> <p><i>Camera is roaming, students are discussing shapes</i></p> <p><i>David: (inspecting his shapes) ya, okay, this is easy</i></p> <p><i>Mark: (to his friends) “I just lost the game – sorry guys</i></p> <p><i>David: (to Mark & friends) “You’re all retarded for playing the game”</i></p> <p><i>Student continue to discuss their shapes, the texture, trying to determine the characteristics of the shape</i></p>
<i>Analysis</i>	<p>This conversation/dialogue between Mark and David shows the power struggle between these two participants during the negotiations to find a solution to the Colour Blind Initiative. It is also significant that this power struggle goes on with no interference or much notice by their peers.</p>
<i>Role in Colour Blind</i>	<p><i>“Mark: Hey Blair, are the sets by colour?...I just want to know in general if the sets are by colour...but how do we know what the set is then?”</i></p>

	<p><i>M: Blair? Are the sets by colour?</i></p> <p><i>Blair: The sets are by colour and by shape” (CB, Nov 30/09)</i></p> <p><i>“Mark: ok, who has the teddy bears?...Guys! One at a time!...Ok what are the colours does everyone have?</i></p> <p><i>“Mark: Ok guys, guys, guys, I want to try something its David's method, make him happy, cause he doesn't sound very happy</i></p> <p><i>David: Yes, humour me (students shush him)</i></p> <p><i>Students then use David's method to solve the problem (and solve it in under 1 minute this way) led by Mark and his friends. Mark makes the final guess and the students are correct. (1:02:15)</i></p> <p><i>David: That took way too much effort...we could have gotten this done in two minutes if everyone had listened”</i></p> <p><i>“Robert: yeah, and David...David came up with a really great idea so don't...</i></p> <p><i>Mark: Yeah and I used it!</i></p> <p><i>Blair: Who's voices did we hear?</i></p> <p><i>M: I also heard Nicole, she was trying to shut the class up, along with everyone else”</i></p>
Analysis	<p>These conversations amongst Mark, his peers and co-facilitator Blair, reflect Mark’s position in the centre of the decision making in the Colour Blind Initiative. His self-imposed leadership role and his attempts to discipline his peers in order to complete the task are also recorded here. His authority went unquestioned, except by David. Despite initial resistance, Mark employs David’s method to solve the problem successfully.</p>
Interactions with Teacher-researcher & Facilitator	<p><i>“Mark: Ms Potvin, no secrets in class!</i></p> <p><i>Blair and I were having a quiet conversation about our discussion questions</i></p> <p><i>Leigh: What I was asking was...if I might ask it now Blair because they noticed us talking about it...when we're talking about strategies and skills, we've listed about 5 people whose voices we heard, I think we can safely agree that there are more than 5 people in this classroom so for those people whose voices we didn't hear; what strategies and skills did you use to get your voices heard and/or how was that experience of not having the heard voices...I heard [students say]: 'didn't talk', 'tried to be cooperative', 'tried to stay quiet so that</i></p>

Analysis	<p><i>you didn't frustrate anyone"</i></p> <p><i>M: I was going to say, I may be completely off with this and correct me if I'm wrong, but um when we were saying when we were using David's idea of saying who has a teddy bear and we started counting them off, it was kind of like everyone had to say something sooner or later, just because you didn't say at the very beginning meant that you were going to get sometime else"</i></p> <p>This interaction recorded on video and in my PO notes, displays Mark's attempt to assert authority over me and Blair. In this first half of this comment, Mark asserts himself by policing the side conversation Blair and I were having about the Colour Blind Initiative and our next steps in the classroom as co-facilitators. In the second half, Mark discusses his opinions about the way the Colour Blind Initiative transpired.</p>
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