

MANLY EXPECTATIONS: MEMORIES OF MASCULINITIES IN SCHOOL

by

Kevin G. Davison

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Author:

(Signature)

(Name)

July 5/96
(Date)

APPROVAL

NAME Kevin Graham Davison
DEGREE Master of Arts
TITLE Manly Expectations: Memories of Masculinities in School
EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Chair Lucy LeMare

Celia Haig-Brown
Senior Supervisor

Suzanne deCastell, Professor
Member

Dr. Blye Frank, Associate Professor
Department of education
Mount Saint Vincent University
Halifax, N. S. B3M 2J6
External Examiner

Date: July 4, 1996

ABSTRACT

Manly Expectations: Memories of Masculinities in School

This thesis examines the role educational institutions play in shaping and enforcing hegemonic masculinity. Boys and young men spend much of their adolescence within schools where the demand to conform to an “ideal” masculinity becomes central to social and educational dynamics. Those who do not conform to a stereotypically rigid definition of masculinity, or choose not to conform to it can face social isolation and even violence at the hands of their peers.

Fourteen participants, male, female, transgendered, gay and straight were interviewed about their memories of masculinities in schools. Their reported experiences revealed many conflicts between young men and masculinities, in the school environment. Physical Education was a common focus for the males interviewed. The lack of privacy in change rooms and showers contributed to the sorting of young men. The differences between the masculine “ideal” in school and some participants’ bodies often led to the construction of low self-esteem and poor body image. Sexual identity and homophobia are examined as important elements of masculinity in school. Participants experienced feelings of shame and humiliation of having been bullied at school that they had kept silent for years. The participants also shared memories of teachers modeling masculine behaviour. The female participants remembered helping to enforce a hegemonic masculinity.

This thesis argues that educational institutions need to examine the role they play in perpetuating a masculinity based solidly in inequality. If schools actively

participate in challenging hegemonic masculinity instead of perpetuating it, more students have a greater chance of leaving school with a better sense of self-worth, and with the knowledge that the inequity, homophobia and misogyny ingrained in masculinity can and should be challenged.

DEDICATION

John Stewart Davison
1923-1974

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Approval Page	ii
Abstract	iii
Dedication	v
Acknowledgements	vi
Chapter One - Introduction	1
Personal Interest in the Research	6
Outline	10
Chapter Two - Literature Review	12
Chapter Three - Methodology	36
Background	36
The Research Participants	40
Methodo/logically Sexual	42
Methodologically Comfortable	45
Interviewing - Positive Disruptions	47
Posing for Research	51

Chapter Four - The Experiences	57
Introduction	57
Physical Education — Establishing Status Among Men	58
Changing In Change Rooms and Coming Clean In The Showers	64
Body Image — The Shape of Masculinity	67
Assumed Hetero/Homo Sexual	69
Teachers Modeling Masculinity	75
Bullying — Teacher/Student and Student/Teacher	79
Bullying — Dreading Every Day	82
The Role of Young Women — The Enforcing Dance	87
 Chapter Five - Conclusion	 93
Suggestions For Change	97
 Bibliography	 99
 Appendix A	 104
 Appendix B	 105
 Appendix C	 107

Chapter One

Introduction

Many feminist scholars from Simone DeBeauvoir to Andrea Dworkin and bell hooks have critically examined how gender is socially constructed. These feminists and many others looked beyond biology to argue that sex roles and gender stereotypes are learned, acted upon, and ultimately play a part in the oppression of women. Building on a long history of feminist research and writings on the social construction of gender, my research will diverge from a focus on women in order to consider masculinity as a social construct. Specifically, I will examine the links between educational institutions and masculinities. Australian scholar Robert Connell has argued that the institutionalized structure of schooling creates one of the strongest effects on the construction of masculinity; schools are “agents in the matter” of this construction.¹ Basing my research in a qualitative methodology, I have interviewed people who were interested in recounting their memories of experiences with developing masculinities while they attended public school. The words of the interviewees serve as examples of how masculinities are in part shaped by educational institutions as well as illustrating the participants’ role in this shaping and resisting this masculinizing process. Most importantly of all, however, is the action of the participants’ telling of their experiences because there are presently few safe outlets for these experiences to be told. Yet, as this research partly illustrates, men share a variety of experiences regarding masculinity in schools that they do not speak about but carry with them throughout their lives. Much, if not all, of the masculinizing process that occurs

¹Robert Connell, “Cool Guys, Swots and Wimps: The interplay of Masculinity and Education” in *Oxford Review of Education* (Vol. 15, No 3, 1989) p. 291-292.

in schools is accepted as a part of the everyday reality of schools, and therefore, men rarely speak about or problematize their experiences. The men I interviewed had kept silent about experiences that included homophobia, shame, humiliation and violence as everyday experiences in attending school. The opportunity to present these experiences, and to examine critically the school as an important site for gender and identity formation, may help to create a legitimate and safe space for others to examine their school experiences and the role schools play in shaping masculine identity. This thesis seeks to challenge the hegemonic construction of masculinity in educational institutions and to add to people's understanding of the oppressive elements ingrained in its definition. Without further examination of the effects of hegemonic masculinity at work in the schools, these experiences will continue to be silenced.

I use the word "masculinities" because definitions of masculinity have changed over time, and will continue to change. 'Masculinity' thus does not have one unanimous, unalterable definition: its definition is shaped by social and cultural beliefs around men's sex roles and stereotypes of "appropriate" masculine behaviour.

Additionally, individual men may also embody multiple personal definitions of masculinity that may shift (within the present and over time) depending on the (social) context. The fluidity of these multiple masculine positionalities and subjectivities are often learned by men in order to, at the same time, both pass within the hegemonic norm of masculinity and to challenge it. For instance, a man may embody a particular masculinity around those whom he plays organized/team sports with, yet his outward expression of masculinity may shift when addressing his grandmother, his sister, or another gay man. Thus individually, men can combine different definitions of masculinity within their own embodied masculine identity.

Kenneth Clatterbaugh divides masculinity into three components, *the masculine gender role, the stereotype of masculinity, and the gender ideal*. The masculine gender role, according to Clatterbaugh, is "what men are", that is to say "a set of behaviours, attitudes, and conditions that are generally found in the men of an identifiable group."² The stereotype of masculinity is what people think men are. Clatterbaugh points out that the "stereotype of what men are and the role that men actually play need not agree; in fact, there is considerable evidence to suggest that gender stereotypes are inaccurate."³ The gender ideal is "what people think men should be."⁴ Clatterbaugh adds further that "Stereotypes and ideals are historically situated; they reflect the ideas of specific groups about what men (of specific groups) are and should be."⁵

Clatterbaugh illustrates that men are not a unified group of equals who act in solidarity with one another. However, regardless of the differences among men, the dominant definition of masculinity, within Western society, embodies heterosexuality exclusively and is also based in white privilege.

In recruiting interviewees I specifically asked for volunteers not from a white European background as well as those from the white European population of Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. I also advertised in a way that would reach gays and lesbians as well as the straight majority.

The masculine ideal is a hegemonic construct. While, individually, men's and boys' concepts of masculinity may differ, there is a very rigid, normative definition which is enforced by "common-sense" above all other masculinities. Because hegemony is based in "common sense", other definitions or alternative masculinities come to be seen as irrational, unnatural, unmasculine etc. Thus,

²Kenneth Clatterbaugh, *Contemporary Perspectives on Masculinity: Men, Women, and Politics in Modern Society*, (Boulder: 1990), p. 3.

³Clatterbaugh, p. 3.

⁴Clatterbaugh, p. 3.

⁵Clatterbaugh, p. 3.

many men have a knowledge of what is "supposed to be" masculine, while they often embody something different.

Antonio Gramsci stressed that hegemony is never total or uncontested. Hegemony, to Gramsci, "is a relation, not of domination by means of force but of consent. [...] It is the organisation of consent."⁶ This consent is constructed and organised in what Gramsci called "civil society". Civil society is also "the sphere where subordinate social groups may organise their opposition and construct an alternative hegemony —a counter hegemony."⁷ Gramsci's theory of hegemony is useful to this examination of socially constructed masculinity because hegemony allows room to "re-negotiate" the "normative" definition of masculinity that currently endorses homophobia, and plays a part in the oppression of women and that of many men. "Hegemonic masculinity establishes its hegemony partly by its claim to embody the power of reason, and thus represent the interests of the whole society."⁸ De-constructing and de-mystifying the power of hegemonic masculinity is an important step towards addressing the oppressive elements of masculinity which are not in the interests of the whole society.

Hegemonic masculinity is constructed at many nodes of Western society: popular media, the family, peer groups and educational institutions are but four⁹. Andrew Tolson in *The Limits of Masculinity* explains that these formal and informal institutional categories "make up the primary context of masculine 'socialization' - in which a boy's emerging sense of himself is directed into socially acceptable behaviour."¹⁰ Educational institutions, and the people in them, most commonly re-produce and legitimize hegemonic social values, as do

⁶Stuart Hall and Roger Simon *Gramsci's Political Thought: An Introduction* (London: 1991), p. 22.

⁷Hall and Simon, p. 27..

⁸Robert Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: 1995), p. 166.

⁹These "nodes" reflect Gramsci's foci of civil society. Gramsci adds churches, political parties, trade unions, and cultural and voluntary associations to the four mentioned above.

¹⁰Andrew Tolson, *The Limits of Masculinity* (London: 1977), p. 22.

the family, peer groups and popular media. However, educational institutions, while hegemonic in themselves, are also situated in Gramsci's civil society, in which traditional oppressive definitions, including the masculine gender ideal, can be deconstructed, re-negotiated and re-defined. In this way, educational institutions can be a place for both learning and unlearning. Thus, by this view, and as an example of a hegemonic node in Gramsci's civil society, institutions of learning have a potential to serve as an outlet for unlearning the hegemony of a oppressive masculinity.

Furthermore, as Connell points out "[s]chools do not simply adapt to a natural masculinity among boys or femininity among girls. They are agents in the matter, constructing particular forms of gender and negotiating relations between them."¹¹ While schools are agents in negotiating gender, this research will examine masculinities as they are shaped and negotiated beyond the explicit role of the school, for as Connell reminds us "it is the inexplicit, indirect effects of the way schools work that stands out in the long perspective on masculinity formation. [...] To put it in more familiar language, the 'hidden curriculum' in sexual politics is more powerful than the explicit."¹² Thus, in conducting interviews for this research I did not simply focus on curricular and pedagogic/institutional influences on the participants' masculinities. I also tried to explore the interaction between the implicit influences and the inexplicit forces within educational institutions that may have played a part in shaping men students' masculinities and ideas around masculine identity. This research examines the school environment, both the curricular functions as well as teacher-student and student-student relations that were reported to occur in this educational environment.

¹¹Robert W Connell, "Cool Guys Swots and Wimps: the interplay of masculinity and education" *Oxford Review of Education*, Vol. 15, No.3, 1989, p. 291-292.

¹²Connell "Cool Guys Swots and Wimps..." p. 300.

Personal Interest in the Research

Most Canadian young people spend thirteen to fourteen years in public educational institutions. Of the school's innumerable lessons, a great many shape views on gender and gender identity. My interest in this research lies with what boys and young men recall about the gender lessons they learned while in the schoolhouse. I am interested in the similarities and differences in these experiences, but most importantly I am interested in presenting these experiences in an attempt to de-mystify the hegemony that shapes gender, and specifically masculinities, in educational institutions.

Looking back on the thirteen years I spent in public school I recall many "lessons" that shaped my masculinity. I learned that a mincing step drew homophobic howls. Locker room talk taught me "what girls liked", and teachers, while very private beings, modeled adult gendered behaviours such as hegemonic masculinity and femininity. All of this happened in school where I spent my days, between 8:30am and 3:00pm. While there were many other places outside of school that modeled masculinity, school life played a central role. In school I learned long division, I learned how to look and act "straight," I learned about the Industrial Revolution, I learned racism, I learned how to silk-screen, I learned about masculinities, I learned English Literature, I learned homophobia, I learned electronics.

Coming from a post-secondary educational background that includes feminist theory and feminist research methodologies, I believe that the social construction of hegemonic masculinity plays an important role in women's oppression. Additionally, it breeds homophobia, misogyny and violence aimed at both women and men. The popular definition of masculinity, based in

homophobia, misogyny and violence partially reproduced within educational institutions, plays a strong role in shaping the interaction of young women and young men in educational institutions. As Carol Jones explains:

Schools do not exist in a social vacuum. They reflect and reproduce the power relations within a male supremacist society — a society in which the dominant group (men) ultimately maintain their power position through force. So, men/boys bring to school the values and experiences of a 'woman-hating' society, a society which promotes pornography and the expanding sex industry and belittles sexual violence in the family, i.e. sexual abuse of girls, rape, wife beating, as well as outside the family.¹³

Thus, because hegemonic masculinity also influences body image, self-esteem, misogyny, and violence, it can affect how the young men and young women learn and behave within these institutions. Beverley Skeggs points out that there are also "differences in how feminine and masculine sexualities are experienced within education which enable the participants to take up positions of power and powerlessness in relation to the opposite gender. [sic]"¹⁴ Furthermore, the masculinity lessons learned at school shape gender perceptions and beliefs into adulthood. My argument is, that because hegemonic masculinity is based in the oppression of others, and because it is shaped and legitimized by educators and within educational institutions, there needs to be an examination of masculinization as it occurs within educational institutions to counter and challenge this every day hegemonic oppression.

The masculinizing process involves fear, shame, and humiliation which enforces silence. Michael Kimmel states clearly: "Our fears are the sources of our

¹³Carol Jones, "Sexual Tyranny: Male Violence in A Mixed Secondary School" in *Just A Bunch of Girls* Gaby Weiner (ed.) (Milton Keynes: 1985), p. 33

¹⁴Beverly Skeggs "Challenging Masculinity and Using Sexuality" in *British Journal of Sociology of Education* (Vol. 12, No. 2, 1991), p. 129.

silences, and men's silence is what keeps the system running."¹⁵ The "system" Kimmel refers to is that of men's participation in the process of oppression of others. To challenge the hegemony of oppression that is ingrained in masculinity, requires challenging what has come to be seen as "common sense" ideas or ideals of masculinity. While Gramsci's understanding of hegemony allows for a re-negotiation, the "common sense" element leaves little room to begin to challenge hegemony. Thus, in order to challenge and de-mystify the oppressive hegemony of masculinity there needs to be a *safe* outlet to discuss and problematize school experiences, including the fear, the shame and the humiliation, that many men carry with them in silence throughout their lives. This outlet for discussion may begin to help to deconstruct hegemonic masculinity and de-mystify its perceived total, common-sense, definition.

However, Jeff Hearn reminds readers that "it is only in the possible disruption of a social phenomenon that it [common-sense] becomes apparent, just as one could argue that the very existence of feminism indicates that women's power is changing."¹⁶ If educators do not attempt to break the silence around masculinity in schools the hegemony will not be disrupted or challenged. As Skeggs points out that "masculinity is hegemonic as it is premised upon the consent that is given to it. Masculinity may only remain intact through its institutionalization."¹⁷ Therefore, the first step toward challenging hegemonic masculinity is demystifying its roots in common sense beliefs by illustrating a collective oppressive experience.

¹⁵Michael S. Kimmel "Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame, and Silence in the Construction of Gender Identity." in *Theorizing Masculinities* (Thousand Oaks: 1994), p.131.

¹⁶Jeff Hearn, *The Gender of Oppression: Men, Masculinity, and the Critique of Marxism*, (Brighton: 1987), p. 15.

¹⁷Beverley Skeggs, "Challenging Masculinity and Using Sexuality" in *British Journal of Sociology of Education* (Vol. 12, No. 2, 1991), p. 134.

This examination of some of the participants memories of masculinities in schools may help to de-mystify the process of learning a hegemonic masculinity that is based in inequality, homophobia, misogyny, and violence. This attempt at de-mystification may help break the oppressive force of hegemonic masculinities within educational institutions. Through the multiple voices of the participants involved in this research, I will explore the boundaries of hegemonic masculinity, as well as what lies outside of these boundaries. This study will provide some examples of the complex constructive and de-constructive processes surrounding the participants' masculinity and education. It will also serve as one of the few places that experiences of schooling and masculinity are presented, and it may help to clear a space to re-negotiate hegemonic heterosexual masculinity in educational institutions.

Andrew Ross reminds us, however, that "it is a mistake to think that the name of the game is simply about reforming masculinity — transforming old kinds of men into new kinds of men."¹⁸ Over time the definition of masculinity *has* changed due to the negotiation process that reforms it as cultural beliefs and values shift. What has not changed is its entrenchment in patriarchy and inequality that allows an ideal of masculinity to oppress many and privilege a select few. Homi K. Bhabha suggests that:

It must be our aim not to deny or disavow masculinity, but to disturb its manifest destiny —to draw attention to it as a prosthetic reality—a 'prefixing' of the rules of gender and sexuality; an appendix or addition, that willy-nilly, supplements and suspends a 'lack-in-being.'¹⁹

¹⁸Andrew Ross, "The Great White Dude," in *Constructing Masculinity* ed. by Maurice Berger, Brian Wallis, and Simon Watson (New York: 1995), p. 172.

¹⁹Homi K. Bhabha "Are You A Man Or A Mouse?" in *Constructing Masculinity* ed. by Maurice Berger, Brian Wallis, and Simon Watson (New York: 1995), p. 57.

It is my hope that this thesis, in presenting some experiences of students confronting hegemonic masculinity in school, will not simply re-negotiate, but will also begin to challenge the inequality that is profoundly rooted in its fundamental conceptualization. In order to achieve this goal it is important that the experiences of the participants presented in this thesis remain the central focus, for as Richard Fung points out "in seeking to confront privilege [...] men are forced to replay it."²⁰ Without a "replay" or a re-examination of privilege as experienced by the participants of this study, the privilege that hegemonic masculinity embodies will remain unchallenged and strong.

Outline

Following this introduction, the second chapter is a review of the literature regarding masculinities and educational institutions. It will begin by giving examples of background texts in critical masculinity research that help to illustrate the importance of examining hegemonic masculinity educational institutions. It will then examine the sparse, but vital research available in this area.

Chapter Three describes the methodology I used to conduct the research. It will also introduce the interview participants and some of the interview results that had an effect on my methodological process and my own understanding of the research area.

Chapter Four presents the experiences of my research participants along side my own and examines the commonalties and differences in the school experiences of all participants with regards to hegemonic masculinity. These

²⁰Richard Fung "Burdens of Representation, Burdens of Responsibility" in *Constructing Masculinity* ed. by Maurice Berger, Brian Wallis, and Simon Watson (New York: 1995), p. 297.

experiences presented in Chapter Four illustrate the position of students in relation to hegemonic masculinity in educational institutions.

Chapter five draws together the research, the methodology, the experiences and the critical theory of masculinity discussed throughout the thesis to point to the importance of examining hegemonic masculinity in educational institutions. Most importantly however it illustrates the role educational institutions play in shaping an “acceptable” gender role for young men and women that, for the most part, has gone unchallenged by students, educators and academics. The concluding chapter offers some suggestions that may allow those within educational institutions to question the role they play in perpetuating a masculinity that is based in the oppression of others.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

In conducting textual research I found that few researchers have explored the link between masculinities and educational institutions. One of the reasons that there is a lack of literature in this area is that masculinity is rarely a formal lesson in educational institutions. Hegemonic masculinity in schools, by definition, is based in common sense and is therefore usually taken for granted as an unchallenged and unquestioned norm. Thus, until recently, few educators have looked at, and beyond, hegemonic masculinity as an important influence when considering the experience of students, both men and women, in educational institutions.

Robert Connell points out in his article entitled "Cool Guys, Swots and Wimps: The Interplay of Masculinity and Education" that:

Most educational work concerned with changes in gender relations has been addressed to girls, justified on 'equal opportunity' principles, and governed by 'sex-role' theories. This framework is not very relevant to work with boys, yet gender issues arise here too.²¹

These gender studies, that, for the most part, focus on young women, have pointed out glaring gender inequalities, violence, sexual discrimination and harassment, and power relations at play in schools. Such studies encouraged further examination of some of the social and ideological forces at work within educational institutions. Connell acknowledges the irony of the overwhelming lack of focus on educational institutions by stating:

²¹Robert Connell, "Cool Guys, Swots and Wimps: the Interplay of Masculinity and Education" in *Oxford Review of Education* (Vol. 5, No. 3, 1989), p. 291.

though most of the people doing research on masculinity work in the education industry (as academics or students), there is surprisingly little discussion of the role of education in the transformation of masculinity. [...] [T]here is little discussion, informed by research on masculinity, about education for boys in modern mass school systems; let alone about the principles that would include girls as well as boys in an educational process addressing masculinity.²²

Without an understanding of the interplay between educational institutions and masculinities, research on gender and education only comes part way toward addressing gendered inequalities in educational institutions.

In addition to the literature on gender and education, there has been a new interest in the study of men and masculinities during the past ten to fifteen years. The growth of feminist ideas and scholarship and the rise of the gay liberation movement in the early 1970s sparked an interest in examining and critiquing the privileged position of straight men in Western society. Almost in response to the critique of privileged men, the mythopoetic men's rights movement, spearheaded by the success of Robert Bly's *Iron John*²³, became very popular in the late 1980s and early 1990s with those men who felt that they had lost some degree of power and privilege to feminism and the women's movement. Michael Kaufman describes the history of the mythopoetic men's rights movement as:

the latest expression of an approach dating to the 1970s that focuses on the pain and costs of being men or of a masculinist politic dating almost a hundred years that sought to create homosocial spaces as an antidote to the supposed feminization of men.²⁴

²²Robert Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: 1995), p.. 238-239.

²³Robert Bly, *Iron John: A Book About Men* (Reading: 1990).

²⁴Michael Kaufman, "Men, Feminism, and Men's Contradictory Experiences of Power" in *Theorizing Masculinities*. (Thousand Oaks: 1994), p.156.

The mythopoetic men's rights movement focuses on men's pain as central to changing contemporary definitions of masculinities.²⁵ Few authors from this stream have addressed schooling and masculinities, save for those that view female teachers as a feminizing force on young males.²⁶ This "movement" encourages re-examining masculinit(ies) through experience and ritual outside of formal institutional structures. Therefore, while this branch of the men's movement popularized the critical arena of masculinities, it appears to have had little to contribute toward an examination of masculinities and educational institutions.

However, during the same ten to fifteen years there existed another, less popularized, "movement" of men interested in examining men and masculinities. This stream of thought is considered by Kaufman and others as the profeminist men's movement. Kaufman describes the profeminist men's movement as a movement that starts "from the acknowledgment that men have power and privilege in a male dominated society."²⁷ He goes on to say that the profeminist men's movement focuses on "the social and individual expressions of men's power and privileges, including issues of men's violence."²⁸ Kenneth Clatterbaugh further divides the profeminist men's movement into liberal and radical camps that resemble the differences between liberal and radical feminisms.²⁹ My research will be grounded in a radical profeminist male

²⁵Other literature central to the men's rights movement includes:

Herb Goldberg *The Hazards of Being Male: Surviving the Myth of Masculine Privilege* (New York: Nash Publishing, 1976) and

Warren Farrell *The Myth of Male Power: Why Men are the Disposable Sex* (New York: Simon & Shuster, 1993).

²⁶See: Patricia Cayo Sexton, *The Feminized Male: Classrooms, White Collars and the Decline of Manliness* (New York: Random House, 1969).

²⁷Michael Kaufman, "Men, Feminism, and Men's Contradictory Experiences of Power" in *Theorizing Masculinities*. (Thousand Oaks: 1994), p.156.

²⁸Kaufman, p. 156.

²⁹Kenneth Clatterbaugh *Contemporary Perspectives on Masculinity: Men, Women, and Politics in Modern Society* (Boulder: 1990), p.38-39.

standpoint, based in a critique of men's power. An examination that focuses solely on men's pain or one that strives *only* to create a more equal educational environment, without challenging the power, and power inequalities, ingrained in how masculinity is defined is not a solution to the conflicts between hegemonic masculinity and educational institutions. This research strives to radically redefine masculinity.

The books and articles described below all contribute to a greater understanding of hegemonic masculinity and challenge its definition that embodies homophobia, inequity, and misogyny. Most of the books and articles either apply their analysis directly towards educational institutions or their analysis can be understood in relation to them.

One of the first texts that attempts to examine both masculinities and educational institutions was Peter Willmott's *Adolescent Boys of East London*.³⁰ Willmott used both a qualitative and a quantitative methodological approach to data collection that presents the opinions of schoolboys regarding teachers, the curriculum, and the "community" in the voices of the boys themselves. Willmott's text offers insight into school life for boys. While critically examining masculinity and gendered relations is left to the reader, Willmott's text is an important presentation of a very male-centred school culture.

Paul Willis' *Learning To Labor*,³¹ which was first published in 1977, examines a group of working-class boys in a school in the Midlands of the UK. Willis illustrates the conscious role students play in resisting hegemonic forces ingrained in educational institutions. His account offers many examples of young men's attitudes about schooling and attitudes about labour. *Learning to Labor* was

³⁰Peter Willmott, *Adolescent Boys of East London* (London: 1966).

³¹Paul Willis, *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs* (New York: 1977).

one of the first studies that examined the public school as a site where hegemonic masculinity reproduces societal (and specifically for Willis, class) expectations.

In a similar vein, in 1979 Paul Corrigan wrote *Schooling the Smash Street Kids*.³² Corrigan examines boys' in schools and on the streets in the UK. He considers the wider picture and looks at how the other influences in the boys' lives interplays with their life at school. Like Willis, Corrigan applies a class analysis and examines how schools in the UK attempt to teach a middle class ideal to working class kids. In this way Corrigan challenges the hegemonic ideal that is taught and replicated in the school. He illustrates through the boys he interviewed, how this replication occurs and how it affects the boys inside and outside of the classroom.

Julian Wood's article "Groping Towards Sexism: Boys' Sex Talk"³³ adds to Willis' and Corrigan's research by critically examining how the boys' attitudes help to perpetuate sexism and misogyny in the classroom. Wood examines the sexist behaviour and attitudes of boys and their interaction with girls in a separate "disruptive" unit of a school in London. Wood follows how the boys sexist talk and fantasies about girls becomes practice in their groping and sexually assaulting the girls in the classroom. He examines the girls' reaction to the boys' sexism and their coping strategies. Wood also illustrates how the boys' everyday interaction with the girls in the class and those outside of the class is based in violence (hitting, pushing, punching, groping) which secures their position of power and continually reminds the girls of their inferior status. Because Wood goes beyond simply presenting the attitudes and behaviour of the boys in schools, his analysis is an important contribution to literature on hegemonic masculinity and schooling. Wood's article actively challenges the

³²Paul Corrigan, *Schooling the Smash Street Kids* (London, 1979).

³³Julian Wood "Groping Towards Sexism: Boys' Sex Talk" in *Gender and Generation* Angela McRobbie and Mica Nava (eds.) (London: 1984), p. 54-84.

taken-for-granted power, control and outright misogyny ingrained in masculinity that is played out in the classroom.

*Louts and Legends*³⁴ by J.C. Walker is similar to Willis' *Learning to Labor* in that he focuses on working class boys in school. However, Walker's account of Australian boys is a study of the "culture" of the boys, both inside and outside of school. He pays careful attention the gender and "ethnic relations" of the boys and examines the divisions between different groups of boys: the "footballers," the "handballers," the "Greeks," and the more artistic "three friends." Walker's research follows the boys over a period of five years and traces their changing views from year 10 to the workplace. In addition to being a foundation stone in the wall of new literature on masculinity and schools, the methodological structure of Walker's research is carefully outlined and implemented and is a useful resource for others who are conducting similar research.

*Boys Don't Cry*³⁵ by Sue Askew and Carol Ross examines boys and sexism in schools. Askew and Ross begin by describing how masculinity is socially constructed and then illustrate how this construction is played out in the classroom setting. *Boys Don't Cry* also looks at how the structure of the school as an institution contributes to sexist practices that are ingrained in hegemonic masculinity. This text is designed for educators to offer an anti-sexist approach to the schooling of boys and includes teaching strategies and a teacher 'in-service' guide. In pointing out the sexist practices that are grounded in hegemonic masculinity, and by providing suggested alternative teaching practices that challenge the hegemony, Askew and Ross offer those interested in anti-sexist education and critical masculinity a valuable tool.

³⁴J.C. Walker, *Louts and Legends: Youth Culture in an Inner City School* (Sydney: 1988).

³⁵Sue Askew and Carol Ross, *Boys Don't Cry* (Milton Keynes: 1988).

Elizabeth Tuck's Masters thesis entitled *Where the Boys Are: Schooling, Violence Against Women, and Gender Reform* is an examination of the effects of hegemonic masculinity in schools. Through an extensive review of feminist literature on violence and existing literature on masculinity, Tuck illustrates the violence at school that is perpetuated from masculinity. She also points out that boys often do not have a safe place to challenge this violence at school. By challenging common place gender assumptions in schools, Tuck's analysis attempts to create a space to create a counter-hegemonic masculinity as a step toward creating a safer school environment.

Jeff Hearn, a scholar from the United Kingdom, has been involved in the profeminist men's movement for more than twenty years. He has taught anti-sexism, and anti-violence workshops to men, he has taught courses on men against sexism in education to teachers and lecturers in Britain and has published two books and several critical articles on men and masculinities. Additionally, he has co-edited two books: *Men, Masculinities and Social Theory* and *The Sexuality of Organization*. Hearn also teaches graduate seminars on men and masculinity. Hearn's research is important to the body of work on critical studies of men and masculinity because his research has helped to carefully construct a theory of masculinity that is, at the same time, self-critical without the effect of centering hegemonic masculine power dynamics. While his work is admittedly influenced and shaped by radical feminist thought, he is quick to point out that "men's relationship to feminism is inevitably *problematic*."³⁶ It is Hearn's cautious approach to the critical arena of men and masculinities that makes his research indispensable. Hearn's work was helpful to this research in that it reminded me

³⁶Jeff Hearn, *Men in the Public Eye: The Construction and Deconstruction of Public Men and Public Patriarchies* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 5.

to be cautious when applying a feminist analysis to a study of men and masculinities.

In Hearn's *Men in the Public Eye: The Construction and Deconstruction of Public Men and Public Patriarchies*³⁷ he examines "the way men are constructed through public visibility."³⁸ The key he uses to examine the power and dominance of men's (plural) position in the public domain is the relationship between men and the different patriarchies we inhabit. Hearn is very careful to acknowledge the diversity among men that places them in different positions relative to patriarchal power relations. While *Men in the Public Eye* does not directly address masculinities in educational institutions, it serves as a theoretical and critical background to such an examination. Hearn's examination of the construction of "public masculinities" offers insight to the display of hegemonic masculinity in public schools. Most importantly, in examining public patriarchies, Hearn's book emphasizes the hegemonic centering of men (as plural and yet as different) while reminding the reader of the dangers of re-centering men and patriarchy even as part and parcel of critiquing men and masculinities.

In co-editing *The Sexuality of Organization* Hearn draws together a collection of writers who examine how sexuality shapes organizations and their management. Unfortunately, none of the articles directly address sexuality in relation to educational institutions. However, the articles themselves, combined with Hearn's bookended introduction and conclusion, puts into perspective the powerful role sexuality plays in institutions. The issues raised in *The Sexuality of Organization* range from sexuality in residential care organizations to the "orientation" of lesbians in a corporate workplace; however, the thread that is woven throughout this book is an important stitch in the rather sparse fabric of

³⁷Hearn, *Men in the Public Eye*.

³⁸Hearn, *Men in the Public Eye*, p. 3.

research on masculinities and educational institutions. Hearn introduces the text by reminding the reader that:

The gendered nature of organizations and their management has not been a part of the dominant male stream traditions of theorizing on organizational activity. Until very recently, academia, in this case at least, has obscured life rather than reflected it.³⁹

Hearn expands upon this oversight by illustrating how oftentimes sexuality gets lost in popular "biological essences" ingrained in the way we speak and think about sex, sexuality, and gender. Hearn states "men's sexuality, the gender of men, and the male sex may be *conflated* so that the ways both the sexuality and the gender of men happen to be are explained away by the male sex (of 'men'). This is clearly so in much that counts as common sense ('men have natural urges, don't they?')"⁴⁰ Hearn and the other authors in this collection illustrate that common sense beliefs about gender, sex (biology), and sexuality (as ideology), play an important role in how sexuality operates in institutions. The articles within *The Sexuality of Organization* contribute to a greater understanding of sexuality in educational institutions, without specifically addressing them within the text itself. Hearn, and the contributors to *The Sexuality of Organization* challenge their readers to re-examine how sexuality is viewed in institutions.

Hearn's *The Gender of Oppression*:⁴¹, is a vital work that provides a backbone of theory, drawn from men's experience and practice of patriarchy, that allows for an understanding of the "fundamental problems of men's power

³⁹Jeff Hearn, Deborah L. Sheppard, Peta Tancred-Sheriff, and Gibson Burrell (eds.) *The Sexuality of Organization* (London: 1989), p. 1.

⁴⁰Hearn et. al. *The Sexuality of Organization*, p. 3.

⁴¹Jeff Hearn, *The Gender of Oppression: Men, Masculinity and the Critique of Marxism* (Brighton: 1987).

[...] and the lived complexities of men's experience."⁴² This in turn creates a space to examine masculinities in educational institutions. Hearn points out that:

No longer is it possible to take for granted maleness or masculinity. No longer is there one particular model for masculinity. And while men and masculinity are problematic, men are still powerful, and perhaps even more powerful.⁴³

Hearn believes that the act of questioning and doubting men and masculinity, doubting ourselves, creates the space to question the contradiction between a constructed gender of masculin(ity) and a fixed male biology⁴⁴. Hearn explains that this questioning begins at the personal level. I have to agree with Hearn when he states in his first chapter of *The Gender of Oppression* that:

To face other men is to face myself, and vice versa; to face the violence and to greet the love of other men is to see myself, and so realize more clearly what makes me personally and men collectively.⁴⁵

The act of conducting research for this thesis itself not only revealed much about my own concepts, beliefs, and positions toward the many definitions of masculinity but allowed for a greater understanding of the area through others' experiences. Collectively, the experiences presented in this thesis question a "tradition" of masculine behaviour in educational institutions.

The questioning Hearn conducts throughout *The Gender of Oppression* with regards to patriarchy, the organization of work, fatherhood, and sexist practice in the Social Sciences is important theoretical work that critiques men and masculinity and gives structure, through theory to allow future study in the area.

⁴²Hearn, *The Gender of Oppression*, p. xiii.

⁴³Hearn, *The Gender of Oppression*, p. 6.

⁴⁴It must be noted here however, that biological maleness is also a construction and not truly "fixed".

⁴⁵Hearn, *The Gender of Oppression*, p. 9.

Hearn's works helps to create a space within the hegemonic structure to not only contest hegemonic masculinity in schools but to challenge its power of oppression.

Additionally, Hearn and David Collinson co-wrote an article entitled "Theorizing Unities and Differences Between Men and Between Masculinities"⁴⁶ that de-mystifies masculinity as a "unitary voice of discourse."⁴⁷ They remind the reader that:

several commentators have recently pointed out, there is a danger in focusing on men and masculinities, even within critical work, in a way that *reexcludes* women and "femininities" (Brod, 1990).⁴⁸ One way to avoid this possibility is to consistently locate men and masculinities as power relations, including power relations with women, children, young people, and other men.⁴⁹

Hearn and Collinson's article is an important teaching tool. It is very carefully constructed in an attempt to deconstruct masculinities without re-centering masculine discourse. This lesson is central to all feminist or profeminist male research on men and masculinity, for to re-centre masculine discourse would defeat the purpose of critiquing it in the first place.

As the title of the article suggests, the authors also explore the unities and differences between men, and in so doing illustrate that these unities and differences "reflect and reinforce other social divisions."⁵⁰ Furthermore,

⁴⁶Jeff Hearn and David Collinson, "Theorizing Unities and Differences Between Men and Between Masculinities" in *Theorizing Masculinities* Harry Brod and Michael Kaufman (eds.), (Thousand Oaks: 1994) p. 97-118.

⁴⁷Hearn and Collinson, p. 97.

⁴⁸Footnoted by Hearn and Collinson as: Harry Brod, "Emasculated Masculinities: Jews and other others." Paper presented at Canadian Political Science Convention, Victoria, British Columbia, May 1990.

⁴⁹Jeff Hearn and David Collinson, "Theorizing Unities and Differences Between Men and Between Masculinities" in *Theorizing Masculinities* Harry Brod and Michael Kaufman (eds.), (Thousand Oaks: 1994) p. 97-98.

⁵⁰Hearn and Collinson, p. 105.

following in the footsteps of some radical feminists who have viewed women as a "class," the authors extend this view to men. They state:

*Men here refers to that gender class of people who so benefit from particular material relations around production, housework, sexuality, violence, or emotional/care work beyond early child work. Thus men may be seen as simply the class that benefits from particular material relations over women.*⁵¹

The plotting of unities and differences in this article also helps to deconstruct hegemonic masculinity and the belief that all men are the same, while at the same time illustrating how all men benefit from the power relations inherent to being a man. This deconstructive process helps to de-mystify hegemonic masculinity in order that one may challenge the common-sense notions embedded in within its definition.

The unities and differences between men are reflected in the different experiences of power among men. Michael Kaufman in his article "Men, Feminism, and Men's Contradictory Experiences of Power"⁵² is a very thorough exploration of men's "power and powerlessness, privilege and pain."⁵³ Kaufman also looks at profeminist males in relation to some of men's contradictory experiences of power and concludes by suggesting possible "counter hegemonic practices by profeminist men that can have a mass appeal and a mainstream social impact."⁵⁴

Kaufman's understanding of the importance of questioning men's power, hegemonic masculinity and his ability to place his questions within a feminist framework allows him, like Hearn and Collinson, to examine the difference in

⁵¹Hearn and Collinson, p. 106.

⁵²Michael Kaufman, "Men, Feminism, and Men's Contradictory Experiences of Power" in *Theorizing Masculinities* Harry Brod and Michael Kaufman (eds.), (Thousand Oaks: 1994), p. 142-163.

⁵³Kaufman, "Men, Feminism, and Men's Contradictory Experiences of Power" p. 142.

⁵⁴Kaufman, "Men, Feminism, and Men's Contradictory Experiences of Power" p. 143.

men's power without recentering the dominant male stream discourse.

Kaufman's look at men's contradictory experiences of power has much to contribute to research about masculinities and educational institutions together, for boys and young men in schools do not all experience power in the same way.

Hegemonic masculinity is defined in a heterocentric way. Sexuality is but one of the many differences among males and yet, at the same time, it is one of the greatest dividers of men. Michael Kimmel in his article "Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame and Silence in the construction of Gender Identity,"⁵⁵ discusses how sexuality shapes the definition of masculinity. Kimmel declares "All masculinities are not created equal, or rather, we are all *created* equal, but any hypothetical equality evaporates quickly because our definitions of masculinity are not equally valued in our society."⁵⁶ Homophobia is a vital component of hegemonic masculinity that divides masculinity into unequal camps. Kimmel explains that homophobia within a boy's masculinizing process is not merely a fear of homosexual men but is radically a fear of men. "Our [men's] fear is the fear of humiliation. We are ashamed to be afraid."⁵⁷ Kimmel continues:

Shame leads to silence—the silences that keep other people believing that we actually approve of the things that are done to women, to minorities, to gays and lesbians in our culture. [...] Our fears are the sources of our silences, and men's silence is what keeps the system running.⁵⁸

This silence then leads to violence. Kimmel uses an example of name calling on the playground. If one boy is called a sissy he will feel the need to convince the

⁵⁵Michael Kimmel, "Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame and Silence in the construction of Gender Identity" in *Theorizing Masculinities* Harry Brod and Michael Kaufman (eds.), (Thousand Oaks: 1994), p. 119-141.

⁵⁶Kimmel, p.124..

⁵⁷Kimmel, p 131.

⁵⁸Kimmel, p.131.

other boys that he is not, often through violence. Kimmel claims that "violence is often the single most evident marker of manhood. Rather it is the willingness to fight, or the desire to fight."⁵⁹ While Kimmel does not refer directly to educational institutions in his article, he offers valuable insights into peer relations and the development of an adolescent masculine identity. "As adolescents, we learn that our peers are a kind of gender police, constantly threatening to unmask us as feminine, as sissies."⁶⁰

Kimmel makes an interesting critique of a (unspecified, yet seemingly over-generalized) feminist definition of masculinity. Kimmel states that:

[The] feminist definition of masculinity as the drive for power is theorized from women's point of view. It is how women experience masculinity. But it assumes a symmetry between the public and the private that does not conform to men's experiences. [...] Feminism also observes that men, as a group, *are* in power. Thus with the same symmetry, feminism has tended to assume that individually men must feel powerful.⁶¹

Kimmel's article deconstructs hegemonic masculinity further along many fracture lines and illustrates how hegemonic masculinity begins to crack open, and how homophobia, to the degree of hating one's self, is central to the definition of hegemonic masculinity. Humiliation, negative perceptions of body image and homophobia were reoccurring themes in the experiences of the participants' interviewed for this research.

Eric Rofes' "Making Our Schools Safe for Sissies"⁶² is one of the few articles that reveals personal experience of a gay teen in school. Rofes discusses the everyday violence, abuse and torment of sissies in schools and the reaction

⁵⁹Kimmel, p. 132.

⁶⁰Kimmel, p. 132.

⁶¹Kimmel, p.136.

⁶²Eric Rofes "Making Our Schools Safe for Sissies" in *The Gay Teen: Education, Practice and Theory for Lesbian Gay and Bisexual Adolescents* Gerald Unks (ed.), (New York: 1995), p. 79-84.

and lack thereof by teachers. He reminds his readers that what happened in school was not forgotten by him or others. "We will never forget that we were tortured and publicly humiliated because we refused to be real boys, acted "girlish" or were simply different. This was the price we paid for being queer."⁶³ Rofes' article offers many suggestions to educators and administrators to protect sissies in schools. As a "long run" solution he suggests "an examination of the roots of power abuses between children (boy to boy, boy to girl, and girl to girl) must take place if we are going to end violence and harassment in our schools."⁶⁴ Rofes deconstructs everyday violence and homophobia in educational institutions by questioning his experience and presenting it as but one example of a sissy, or non-hegemonic masculine experience. His lived experience is an important resource to this research area.

In researching hegemonic masculinity that is based in heterosexism, sexuality becomes an important focus. Particularly helpful to this research is the recently published research that examines the lives of gay and lesbian teens. The collection of writings within *Challenging Lesbian and Gay Inequalities in Education*⁶⁵ addresses curriculum and pedagogical issues as well as recounting personal school experiences of lesbians and gay men. The span of this collection helps to build an understanding of how educational institutions are problematic (to say the very least) for lesbian and gay teens today.

Additionally, *The Gay Teen*⁶⁶ and *Joining the Tribe*⁶⁷ offer further insight into the lives of lesbian and gay teens that is not available elsewhere. *The Gay Teen* is a collection of articles that address lesbian, gay and bisexual identity, and

⁶³Rofes, p. 80.

⁶⁴Rofes, p 83.

⁶⁵Debbie Epstein (ed.), *Challenging Lesbian and Gay Inequalities in Education* (Buckingham: 1994).

⁶⁶Gerald Unks (ed.) *The Gay Teen: Educational Practice and Theory for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Adolescents* (New York: 1995).

⁶⁷Linnea Due, *Joining The Tribe: Growing Up Gay and Lesbian in the '90s* (New York: 1995)

educational theory and practice as it applies to sexuality. More than half of the book focuses on educational issues, from curriculum and sport to counseling and personal safety in the school. Many of the articles, such as that by Rofes' (mentioned above) draw attention to the intersection of the formation (and suppression) of gay identity with that of a masculine identity and examine how this "alternative" (non-hegemonic) masculinity plays out within the school system.

Joining the Tribe is a collection of frank experiences by lesbian and gay teens across the United States. Central to all of Linnea Due's teen participants is an almost collective loneliness and isolation. While *Joining the Tribe* does not focus on educational institutions, the teens interviewed by Due all referred to their experiences in schools. The experiences of the gay males that Due interviewed illustrates teens struggling against and challenging the oppression of hegemonic masculinity.

Hegemony and masculinity are examined in Robert Connell's two books *Gender and Power* and *Masculinities*. In *Gender and Power* Connell, like Hearn, attempts to build a theory of gender exploring historical roots of gender, psychological (psychoanalytical) theories of gender, sex-role theories, and gender as social practice. In examining the structure of gender relations Connell examines how class influences and shapes concepts of gender. In his chapter entitled "The Body as Social Practice" he begins to touch upon the act of *being* masculine and the embodiment of maleness. Connell points out that the "meanings in the bodily sense of masculinity concern, above all else, the superiority of men to women, and the exaltation of hegemonic masculinity over other groups of men which is essential to the domination of women."⁶⁸

⁶⁸Robert Connell, *Gender and Power* (Stanford: 1987), p. 85.

In conducting this research I have discovered that body image plays an important role for young men as they are forming their masculine identity. Connell examines the concept of the body as a type of clothes hanger for socially constructed ideas of gender.

That the body is intractable and recalcitrant is important. [...] But it should not imply that in general the body becomes a social agent as if from pure nature, from some standpoint outside the body. The body-as-used, the body I am, is a social body that has taken meanings rather than conferred them. My male body does not confer masculinity on me; it receives masculinity (or some fragment thereof) as its social definition. Nor is my sexuality the interruption of the natural; it too is a part of a social process. In the most extraordinary detail my body's responses reflect back [...] a kaleidoscope of social meanings.⁶⁹

Connell begins to explore the idea of body and body image but falls short of illustrating with his sample of interview participants, the importance of the physical image of the body as a mirror of gender legitimacy and illegitimacy.

In *Masculinities*, Connell furthers his gender theorizing and his explanation and critique of sex-role theory and psychoanalysis that he began in *Gender and Power* and he does so with a focus on masculinities, as opposed to gender in general. He states that "definitions of masculinity are deeply enmeshed in the history of institutions and of economic structures. Masculinity is not just an idea in the head, or a personal identity. It is also extended in the world, merged in organized social relations."⁷⁰ This statement illustrates the importance of examining institutions as a part of exploring masculinities.

Like Hearn, neither Connell's *Gender and Power* nor *Masculinities* directly address educational institutions in relation to gender, specifically masculinities. Nevertheless they both contribute to a theoretical, historical and class analysis of

⁶⁹Connell, *Gender and Power*, p. 83.

⁷⁰Robert Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: 1995), p. 29.

masculinities, which is important backbone to further research in the study of masculinities in schools.

*Constructing Masculinity*⁷¹ edited by Maurice Berger, Brian Wallis, and Simon Watson, is a recent text that examines masculinity from a cultural studies point of view. It is composed of articles by feminist activist such as bell hooks, feminist academics such as Judith Butler and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, not to mention scientists, artists and poets. Its multi-disciplinary focus draws together many different experiences and understandings of masculinity. While the focus is not on education, the insight on masculinity gained by this collection can and should be applied toward an examination of masculinity in educational institutions for it challenges oppressive definitions of masculinities and presents alternatives.

Blye Frank's article "Hegemonic Heterosexual Masculinity"⁷² explores the importance of examining and challenging hegemonic heterosexuality. Frank states that hegemonic heterosexual masculinity "should be seen for what it is—a political issue—a form of social control, a central organizing principle that supports present power arrangements."⁷³ Frank points out that "lived patterns of hegemonic heterosexual masculinity are patterns of power, and are a significant underpinning of patriarchal culture."⁷⁴ Frank's article pieces together the "fragments" of the literature on gender and sexuality to illustrate the power of hegemony and the power of heterosexual masculinity in Western society.

Although little of the literature on masculinity presents personal experiences of boys in schools, Frank's recent work illustrates the active role the

⁷¹Maurice Berger, Brian Wallis, and Simon Watson (eds.), *Constructing Masculinity* (New York: 1995).

⁷²Blye Frank, "Heterosexual Hegemonic Masculinity" in *Studies in Political Economy* (Vol. 24, Autumn, 1987), p. 159-170.

⁷³Frank, "Heterosexual Hegemonic Masculinity" p. 167.

⁷⁴Frank, "Heterosexual Hegemonic Masculinity" p. 163-164.

men students play in both the shaping of masculinity and the resisting of a hegemonic masculinity in everyday interactions within the school. Frank clearly illustrates, through the students' voices their understandings of masculinities and the roles that they are obligated to act out within a high-school environment.

Frank's article entitled "Straight/Strait Jackets for Masculinity: Educating for 'Real' Men"⁷⁵ is a result of interviewing fourteen gay (male) high-school students. Frank states that: "[t]hrough their voices, these students become the experts in describing their practice, their history in the making - indeed, what it means to be a young man."⁷⁶ Frank centers his research in the belief that "[s]exuality and masculinity are grounded in the social practices of institutions and their agents where a gender and sexual regime is imposed, encouraging particular forms of masculinity and sexuality while discouraging others."⁷⁷ Frank explains that:

Each boy, [in his research] like most men, was well aware of where he stood in relation to the social scale of masculine measurement used by these boys and men in general. The boys were well aware of the freedom and privilege that is gained from the practicing of a masculinity which is, or appears to be, heterosexual, misogynist, sexist and heterosexist. As well, they knew exactly what they had to lose if they did not engage in the practices that brought privilege.⁷⁸

Thus, Frank points out that while institutions are agents in enforcing a rigid gender and sexual regime, the students are not passive players in this process. Frank explains that the students even as agents of hegemony illustrate that hegemony can be and is being resisted, which, notes Frank, "is so important for

⁷⁵Blye Frank, "Straight/Strait Jackets for Masculinity: Educating for 'Real' Men" *Atlantis* (Vol. 18 Nos. 1&2) pp. 47-59.

⁷⁶Frank, "Straight/Strait Jackets for Masculinity..." p. 47.

⁷⁷Frank, p. 48

⁷⁸Frank, p. 49-50.

social change, individually and collectively.”⁷⁹ The words of one gay student Frank interviewed clearly illustrate the understanding of the rules of the game of heterosexual hegemonic masculinity that plays a part in protecting one’s self in the school environment.

I find it’s easy getting along if you play your cards right. You have to make strategies. First of all I got on a sports team to get accepted by the administration. If you’re on a sports team, you’re rewarded. You’re let off things. I did that at the first of the year so I wouldn’t be hassled as much throughout the year by both the students and the administration. I hang around bigger guys who also play sports, the more popular people. I have a girlfriend. Those things make life pretty safe.⁸⁰

Frank’s “experts” truly are the experts for their understandings of power and privilege are equal to the texts that theorize masculinities. The student’s everyday negotiation of hegemonic masculinity at school is a process that they undertake in order to protect themselves from the consequences of not conforming, which they also clearly understand. Frank notes that “[t]hreat, fear, intimidation and open, non-aggravated violence were the possibilities in most any social situation for some of the boys. Name calling, queer bashing, apartment trashing: these were the things of the everyday for some of the boys.”⁸¹ The article also examines some of the strategies the boys “operating outside of hegemonic heterosexual masculinity” perfected in order to protect themselves. One young man in Frank’s study stated:

The main way I can cope having an alternative appearance outside male culture is by appearing in public with a girl. If people know you have a girlfriend, then they say, “well, he must not be a homosexual.”⁸²

⁷⁹Frank, p 50.

⁸⁰Frank, p.53.

⁸¹Frank, p. 54.

⁸²Frank, p. 56.

The students in Frank's study understand that conforming to a hegemonic 'norm' of heterosexuality is, for the most part a requirement in the everyday reality of their educational institution.

Frank concludes his article by identifying the central problem is that "the alternatives to the practice of heterosexual masculine hegemony are seldom made visible, let alone acceptable as practice by other people or the institutions, such as schools."⁸³ At the same time, however, Frank reminds us that heterosexual hegemony is never total or uncontested, and "[i]n the end, it is that very site of marginality, that position of subordinated masculinity, that continues to allow for liberatory transformations to occur, including around sexuality"⁸⁴

Máirtín Mac an Ghaill begins his book *The Making of Men: Masculinities, Sexualities and Schooling*⁸⁵ with a paradox illustrating the sparse textual information available about masculinity and schooling:

In English secondary schools, as elsewhere in the social world, masculine perspectives are pervasively dominant. However, until recently, masculinity has tended to be absent from mainstream educational research. It has been assumed to be unproblematic, with gender issues focusing on femininity and girls' schooling.⁸⁶

Mac an Ghaill's book is the first book to fill this gap. *The Making of Men* sets out to examine "how school processes helped shape male students' cultural investment in different versions of heterosexual masculinity."⁸⁷ Part and parcel

⁸³Frank, p. 57.

⁸⁴Frank, p. 58.

⁸⁵Máirtín Mac an Ghaill, *The Making of Men: Masculinities, Sexualities and Schooling* (Buckingham: 1994).

⁸⁶Mac an Ghaill, p. 1.

⁸⁷Mac an Ghaill, p. 5

of this inquiry is Mac an Ghaill's belief that "heterosexual identity is a highly fragile, socially constructed phenomenon."⁸⁸ From this position he asks:

how does this fragile construction become represented as an apparently stable, unitary category with mixed meanings? It is suggested that schools alongside other institutions attempt to administer, regulate and reify unstable sex/gender categories. [These are] institutionalized through the interrelated material, social and discursive practices of staffroom, classroom and playground microcultures. In turn male academics have reinforced this institutionalization with their own representations.⁸⁹

Mac an Ghaill's book is a result of his research in a secondary school in England and interviews with many boys from the school. In his school he identified and named four groups of boys: The Macho Lads, The Academic Achievers, New Enterprisers, and the Real Englishmen.⁹⁰ Economic class and race seemed to be the greatest definer of these groups, however interest in sport and academics, was also a defining criterion. The geographic area where Mac an Ghaill conducted his research had a heavy population of Asian and African Caribbean families as well as a high unemployment rate, which necessitated an examination into racial and class tensions between the boys. Additionally, Mac an Ghaill explores the particular influences of race in schools in a separate book entitled *Young, Gifted and Black: Student—Teacher Relations in the Schooling of Black Youth*⁹¹ and in his article "The Making of Black English Masculinities"⁹²

⁸⁸Mac an Ghaill, p. 9.

⁸⁹Mac an Ghaill, p. 45.

⁹⁰Mac an Ghaill, p. 56-64.

⁹¹Máirtín Mac an Ghaill, *Young, Gifted and Black: Student—Teacher Relations in the Schooling of Black Youth* (Milton Keynes: 1988).

⁹²Máirtín Mac an Ghaill, "The Making of Black, English Masculinities" in *Theorizing Masculinities* (Thousand Oaks: 1994), p. 183-199.

* Also see: Máirtín Mac an Ghaill, "(In)visibility: Sexuality, Race and Masculinity in the School Context" in *Challenging Lesbian and Gay Inequalities in Education*, edited by Debbie Epstein (Buckingham: 1994), p. 152-176.

One of the interesting and important conclusions to come out of Mac an Ghaill's many interviews is that the students "Frequently returned to two connected issues: first that there was no safe space within which they could talk about how they felt; second that the absence of an emotional language greatly influenced the development of their sexual identities."⁹³ Mac an Ghaill's study illustrates the boys' need to discuss issues around masculine identity and at the same time reveals that there simply is no outlet for such discussion at school or elsewhere.

The Making of Men also includes an insightful chapter entitled "Young Women's Experiences of Student and Teacher Masculinities" wherein he interviews young women and examines their experiences in the school as it relates to the developing and exemplified masculinities. This chapter explores male—female relations both inside and outside the school yard. The "operation of sexual micropolitical power relations"⁹⁴ in school were also identified by the young women. Further, they revealed job discrimination in the labour market and in their vocational training; due to the high unemployment rate in the area the young men were favoured for any available jobs over the young women.⁹⁵ Interviews with teachers about "'good' and 'bad' girls" corroborated this discrimination in the schools.⁹⁶

In his chapter entitled "Sexuality: Learning to Become a Heterosexual Man at School" Mac an Ghaill looks at the importance of hegemonic heterosexual behaviour within the school. The young men he interviewed speak candidly about their developing sexualities and how they are played out or covered up at school. Mac an Ghaill comments on sex/gender regimes in the school by stating:

⁹³Máirtín Mac an Ghaill, *The Making of Men: Masculinities, Sexualities and Schooling* (Buckingham: 1994), p. 97.

⁹⁴Mac an Ghaill, p. 112.

⁹⁵Mac an Ghaill, p. 118.

⁹⁶Mac an Ghaill, p. 120.

The moral order was policed by visible and invisible processes of institutional and self surveillance that were pervasive throughout their schools and colleges. The sexual and gender imperatives of performing like a man found expression in the official and hidden curriculum — in classrooms, assemblies, counseling, cloakrooms, toilets, playgrounds and leisure activities.⁹⁷

Mac an Ghaill concludes *The Making of Men* by stating that “schools can be seen as crucial cultural sites in which, material, ideological, and discursive resources serve to affirm hegemonic masculinity, while producing a range of masculine subject positions that young men come to inhabit.”⁹⁸

Mac an Ghaill’s book is comprehensive in discussing masculinity and schooling in England. Other than Frank’s research, the stories told by the young men and women in Mac an Ghaill’s study are few and far between, and yet, I believe, the stories themselves are far from unique. This thesis will contribute to the small pool of experiences available.

⁹⁷Mac an Ghaill, p. 163.

⁹⁸Mac an Ghaill, p. 179.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Background

When I began formal Master's level research on masculinities and educational institutions I returned to the roots of my inquiry — my junior high school. I had many memories of attending that school. While I enjoyed learning and got along with most teachers, everyday was a struggle to "fit in." What I remember most was the difficulty I had "becoming" "acceptably" masculine, that is to say, adopting the hegemonic definition of masculinity as demonstrated and enforced by peers and teachers. From this experience I became interested in discovering how hegemonic masculinity worked within the school system and what effect it had on contemporary students in the school.

I spoke to a counselor in the school and found that my junior high school had developed a program that was taught to young men in grade ten entitled "Young Men Changing Roles." The school district mandated that this program be taught in every school in the district along with its counterpart "Young Women Changing Roles." Both programs attempted to widen the "traditional" roles of masculinity and femininity. I was invited by the school district to a 'teacher in-service' that taught teachers how to teach the two programs. I also submitted a proposal to observe the program and interview students, on a volunteer basis, after the program. However within one day of receiving my proposal the school district turned down my request. They stated in a letter that my research "had limited educational value to be gained by students" and "would best be dealt with by a qualified counselor."⁹⁹ The letter seemed to

⁹⁹Letter from School Board 43. April 18, 1995.

indicate that the issues raised in my proposal were serious concerns for students because of the insistence that such issues be examined by a "qualified counselor." However at the same time, the school district indicated that there was no educational value in the study. The proposal was discussed further with the head of the school district. The district head preferred that I "evaluate" the program itself and concentrate less on hegemonic masculinity in the school. However, the new proposal based on evaluation of "Young Men Changing Roles" was rejected by the male teachers who taught the program because they did not want to be evaluated on how they "taught masculinity."

My attempt to examine masculinities in schools became an impossible task. While this particular school district appeared to be making progressive steps toward changing hegemonic gender roles in the school, actually examining and/or evaluating the program was blocked to further study. While the existence of "Young Men Changing Roles" indicates the need for change and the possibility for change, my attempt to examine masculinities inside of educational institutions illustrates the limitations to progressive inquiry or evaluation from outside of the institutions themselves.

From this experience I resigned myself to work outside educational institutions and talk to people who had completed their public schooling about their memories of school experience as it relates to masculinity and masculine identity. As I began my research I was concerned that people would not see masculinity in schools as problematic. In casual conversations with both friends and strangers about my proposed research, many people told me that they saw masculinity and schooling as separate issues and that they did not see a link between the two. I often found it very difficult to explain how I saw schooling as central to masculinity. In telling people my own experiences in school and how my masculine identity was ultimately shaped by the years I spent in public

school I began to feel that my experiences were unique to me. The people I spoke to, for the most part, did not question their school experiences. For instance, some people remembered violence as an everyday part of their schooling, but did not question it as something that shaped who they are today. When I was discussing placing an advertisement in the newspaper my roommate asked me what I was advertising for. I told him that it was for my research and that I was asking for volunteers to share their experience of schooling and masculinity. His response was "Um... Can't help you there." I wrote in my research journal shortly afterward:

What did he mean? I didn't want to feel like I was recruiting him or pressuring him into an interview so I didn't respond. I just said OK. Did he feel he had nothing to share? Why? Two other people said the same thing. There seems to be something between my idea/concept of masculinity in schools and others' idea/concept of masculinity in schools. I feel like I have to explain, prompt or convince potential interviewees that there *is* a link. Is this due to hegemony or my own bias? How do I distinguish between these two? Will I have to convince my interviewees too?¹⁰⁰

I knew that I was not the only one in my school to struggle with hegemonic masculinity, and yet finding other people who were willing to talk about their school experiences with masculinity became an unexpectedly difficult task. As a result, I became somewhat discouraged and less confident as I began the research process and as I made contact with possible interview participants. Nevertheless, I posted advertisements in branches of the public library, community centres, the Vancouver gay and lesbian centre, Little Sisters bookshop,[†] and I placed an advertisement in a widely read and widely distributed local entertainment newspaper.*

¹⁰⁰Personal Research Journal 1995-1996.

[†] Little Sisters is a lesbian and Gay bookstore in Vancouver.

* See Appendix A

The first person to respond to my advertisement left a one word message on my voicemail: "Faggot." I felt I was immediately drawn back to high school again. I felt unsafe and I began to have fears that other "serious" callers could be potentially violent homophobes. These fears led me to begin by interviewing friends of friends and people who friends recommended I interview. After the one word message I felt that it would be ultimately safer to interview people who were recommended to me by friends.

My first few interviews however, followed a similar pattern to the friends to whom I casually spoke earlier. When I asked my interviewees about how schooling helped shape their concept of masculinity** they often could not recall examples of this. I attempted to explain my question by using examples from my own experience, but I was very conscious of shaping what they told me in the interview by my experience. I became frustrated that the friends of friends and recommended interviewees were not offering me insight with regards to masculinities and educational institutions. I doubted my questions, my interview style, and my whole research agenda.

Shortly after my first few interviews with friends of friends and recommended interviewees I began to receive calls from strangers who responded to my newspaper advertisement. Interviewing people I did not know seemed to change the dynamic of the interview. The people who responded to my advertisement expressed a great interest in my research area and were enthusiastic about participating in an interview. The interviews with strangers went more smoothly than those with friends of friends and recommended interviewees. I later came to the conclusion that the friends of friends and recommended interviewees had probably agreed to participate in an interview because they felt that it would help me out by doing so. However, the strangers

** For the full set of proposed interview questions see Appendix B

that called me did so because they were interested in the research and had something that they wanted to contribute.

The Research Participants

I interviewed fourteen people. The interviews were audio taped, and later transcribed, and most were approximately forty-five minutes in length. Of the fourteen people, three were women, ten were men, and one was transgendered. I wanted to interview women as well as men because the masculinizing process that takes place in schools does not take place in a vacuum of all men. I wanted to ask women about their experiences in school with regards to hegemonic masculinity and how they felt they played a part in the shaping of men students' masculine identity.

All participants seemed to come from a white Anglo-European heritage, with the exception of one person who stated that she was part Cree and another who stated that he was half Mexican. The lack of a non-white experience in my research is a significant drawback to the study. In designing the advertisement I made a conscious effort to name First Nations people and people not from European backgrounds. Only after the interviews were complete and transcribed and I had begun work on the textual write up of my research did I realize that the editor of the newspaper removed the specific request for people of colour from my ad-copy. I cannot even speculate why this decision was made but it may have contributed to the overall 'whiteness' of my study. The hand posted bills that I distributed in the community however did include the request for "First Nations, people of colour, as well as white folks." While issues of race were raised in every interview[†] the white participants considered it a non-issue for

[†] See proposed interview questions in Appendix B.

them. All stated that there were very few people of colour who attended their school, and therefore race and/or racism did not effect the development of their masculine identity. This belief that the relative absence of people of colour would automatically make race a “non-issue” seems to indicate that, according to the participants, it is the *presence* of people of colour that somehow creates issues of race or racism.

While it is rather problematic for a researcher to assume the socio-economic class backgrounds of all of the participants it is my impression that most, if not all of the participants seemed to come from a middle-class background. However, an examination of class structures in relation to masculinity in schools was not a focus in this research, therefore the participants were not asked about their class backgrounds or about how they felt class might have played a role. Partially due to the fact that class was not formally raised, none of the participants alluded to the role of socio-economic class in the interviews. This is not to say that class, and race analyses are unimportant or less important than a gender analysis. However, because this particular group of research participants seem to be homogeneous with regards to race and class, gender and sexuality became the prime analytical base of the study. The omission of an analysis that examines class and race is admittedly a limitation of this research.

It is also important to acknowledge that this study cannot be representative of the dominant white Anglo-European experience, any more than it can be representative of a non-white Anglo experience.

Methodologically Sexual

Sexuality is a major factor in masculine identity formation both in and outside of high school. In my experience, sexuality is central to my masculine identity and to how others define me as masculine. In high school, my peers concluded that I was gay based on gay stereotypes such as dress, speech, mannerisms, the way I hold my body, the shape of my body, the lack of physical strength or coordination etc. Being "seen" as gay in school made me a target for physical and verbal attacks. These in turn lowered my self esteem, radically affected my perception of body image, and made me feel unsafe everywhere I went. This mis-perceived (homo)sexuality continues to this day. I consider myself heterosexual but I do not follow the "acceptable" hegemonic definition of heterosexual masculinity which seems to have the effect of allowing people, gay and straight, men and women, to assume a (homo)sexual identity for me.

The importance of my identity and my mis-perceived sexuality has shaped the research process. Based on my experience I decided that in interviewing both men and women I would not ask them to declare their sexuality. Nor would I make assumptions based on my perceptions of their sexuality later in the analysis. In the interview I raised the question of sexuality, homophobia and heterosexism in schools and I allowed the participants the opportunity to discuss their own sexuality at their will. Some chose to reveal their sexuality and others chose not to.

The mis-perception of my sexuality also had an effect on the interview process itself. I became conscious of it when I interviewed a female participant. When we met each other at the public library we awkwardly talked a little about ourselves and our backgrounds, jobs, education etc. I told her that for my Bachelor's degree I majored in History and minored in Women's Studies, and I

told her that I worked as a full-time secretary. I was somewhat nervous about what she thought about my “non-traditionally male” background education and choice of employment.

In the interview I felt that she was being very open with me and was very comfortable discussing her heterosexual experience in school with me. I began to feel that her comfort rested in her belief that I was gay and therefore less threatening to her as a straight woman. I felt the need to “come-out” to her as a straight man, but I could not find the place to do so in our discussion/interview. I reflected afterwards in my research journal:

How would this [coming-out as straight] have changed my dialogue with her? Would she have ‘disclosed’ as much? Would she have been nervous? She talked about her sexuality openly but I concealed mine. What happens when half the dialogue is about sexuality and the other is mute? Which dynamics are preserved/silenced which are lost/stolen?¹⁰¹

It was not my intention to deceive her in order to gain more information from her however it is important to consider how the dynamics can shift and the experiences disclosed can change based on (perceived) sexuality.

After this interview, I interviewed a man who, part-way through the interview, revealed to me that he was gay, and I (nervously) ‘came-out’ as straight. He seemed to be somewhat taken aback. He admitted that he assumed that I was gay. There was a few awkward moments where I explained that many people make that assumption. He was not sure what to say next. While I felt more comfortable not hiding behind his assumption, I was conscious that the dynamic had shifted and he spoke to me differently as a straight man. He made a point of contrasting his experience as a gay man to my experience as a straight man. For example, in talking about Gym change rooms in school he made a point

¹⁰¹Personal Research Journal 1995-1996.

of stating that he preferred men undressed but women with their clothes on. He added, "I'm sure you preferred them undressed..." This awkward moment of two men objectifying the male and female body made me uncomfortable which contrasted with the comfort I felt when I 'came out' to him as straight.

Many of the interviews forced me to consider my position and status as a researcher. LeCompte and Goetz ask "To what extent are researchers members of the studied groups and what position do they hold?"¹⁰² I had to ask myself "How does being a straight white man, who looks like a gay white man affect the interviews I am doing and the data I am gathering?"¹⁰³ I asked myself this question because it became obvious to me that this straight/gay "status" was affecting the interviews. In the case of interviewing the woman described above, my position seemed to allow me access to experiences that she might not have told a man who she perceived as straight. Furthermore, it is important to consider, how my whiteness, that is not as ambiguous as my sexuality, shaped the way the respondents addressed gender issues. As it is, my curious (sexual) position and the resulting reaction to it by the participants, illustrates the impossibility of being a completely objective researcher who attempts to be separated from the "subjects" of study. For in almost all interviews who I was, or who I was perceived to be, became unavoidably entangled in the interview itself and made it clear to me that, as researchers "we are [undeniably] part of the social world we study."¹⁰⁴

It therefore becomes impossible for an interviewer to present her/himself "truthfully" in an interview setting. That is to say, because personal definitions of masculinity and femininity are contextually fluid and changeable, the interview

¹⁰²Margaret LeCompte and Judith Goetz "Problems of Reliability and Validity in Ethnographic Research" in *Review of Educational Research* (Spring 1982, Vol. 52, No. 1, p. 37.

¹⁰³Personal Research Journal 1995-1996.

¹⁰⁴Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson, *Ethnography: Principles in Practice* (London: 1983), p. 14.

process becomes a performance that determines how knowledge is negotiated between the interviewer and interviewee. Both interviewee and interviewer make presumptions based on their *perceptions* about each other. These presumptions, perceptions and mis-perceptions, in turn, become a part of the presented “results” of the research. Because it is impossible for either the interviewer or interviewee to present themselves fully and unconditionally, the research itself becomes a reflection of the negotiated performance of the interview. Thus, it must be noted that, regardless of how open and honest both research parties are with one another, the resultant knowledge cannot claim to represent a “truth” of the person interviewed, simply because the words were spoken by the interviewee.

Methodologically Comfortable

In general, I was very nervous interviewing strangers, especially men. My experience with hegemonic masculinity and growing up learning to be a man has taught me to fear and mistrust men. Many of the interviews were awkward at first due to this fear and mistrust. I found the interviews with men to be a conscious negotiation process between us. I reflected in my research journal after an awkward interview:

While I normally don't have a problem talking about my past and/or experiences, with Mike I held back. The interview was very much a negotiation process of who would disclose certain information from our past and how much. I think I was reluctant to reveal much to him and he reciprocated.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵Personal Research Journal 1995-1996.

I felt nervous with that particular interview participant and at times felt threatened by his presence which had an effect on the interview. Paul seemed to embody many of the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity that I could not and would not conform to. I was afraid that I was being judged by him as un-masculine and I felt very nervous. This illustrates, at the same time, both the difficulty and danger of researching masculinity and the inevitable result. As Jeff Hearn stated in *The Gender of Oppression*:

To face other men is to face myself, and vice versa; to face the violence and to greet the love of other men is to see myself, and so realize more clearly what makes me personally and men collectively.¹⁰⁶

The research process itself produced a discomfort in me. In one interview I had to face misogyny and homophobia from an interviewee that is a part of and often times a result of hegemonic masculinity. As a researcher I felt it was important to document the interviewee's experiences and views despite the fact that they were misogynistic and homophobic. However, at the same time, they made me uncomfortable. Yet revealing the dis-comfort or challenging the interviewees' views could change the dynamics of the interview and possibly silence the interviewee.

The interview was very strange. I felt comfortable at first [is this about comfort?] but some of his comments disturbed me, some were misogynistic and others were homophobic. I did not feel threatened or unsafe, but I felt the urge to shift the balance away from two men talking about women and gay men. I disagreed with him often but I did not contradict him or argue with him. He did not ask my opinion. His words were hard to take.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Jeff Hearn, *The Gender of Oppression: Men, Masculinity and the Critique of Marxism* (Brighton: 1987), p. 9.

¹⁰⁷ Personal Research Journal 1995-1996.

I think an important question was revealed in the reflection notes after the interview: "is this about comfort?" Beyond the general concern for safety, my first reaction would be to declare that no, the interviews are not about *my* comfort level, they are not about me interviewing who I feel comfortable with. Yet on closer inspection, comfort is central. Hegemonic masculinity can create a discomfort with those who do not conform to it, to coerce conformity. The interview sessions alone help to illustrate that hegemonic masculinity is shaped or defined around a dis-comfort based in a dis-trust and competing power dynamics. In interviews sessions I was conscious about my *embodiment* of masculinity, about how I sat, how I held my hands etc. Beyond mere self-consciousness or nervousness it illustrates the power of masculinity and masculine identity.

At the same time, the embodiment of masculinity (including sexuality), in turn, can shape the research process itself. How experiences are recounted can often depend upon the comfort or dis-comfort of both the interviewer and the interviewee.¹⁰⁸ It is, therefore, also important to take into account the position of gender and gendered perceptions in shaping the research process and in considering the results.

Interviewing - Positive Disruptions

Many of the interviewees took a dominant role in the interviews and broke the assumed interviewer/interviewee hierarchy. One interviewee began the interview by reading me a poem about herself. Another interviewee

¹⁰⁸For further exploration of gendered positioning and the research process see Karen Olson and Linda Shopes " Crossing Boundaries, Building Bridges: Doing Oral History among Working-Class Women and Men." in *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History* Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai (eds.) (New York: 1991), p. 189-204.

questioned me about my experiences in high school, and interviewed me, so to speak. Yet another gave me information about his church and asked me if I was interested in selling household cleaning products for him — I declined. All these examples illustrate the shifting dynamics of the interview process, but more importantly they illustrate power at play, specific to masculinity.

Predictably, all interviews were different. When I spoke with the participants to arrange a place to meet and to conduct an interview I left it up to the participants to choose a place that was both convenient and comfortable to them. Often times I would suggest the public library as it is a public space that can offer quiet corners for talking. Some interviews were conducted in my apartment, many were conducted in the participant's own residences, a few were conducted in the public library and one participant requested that she only be interviewed over the telephone.

Before agreeing to an interview, one participant wanted to make sure that my research was not based in any way in psychology. I assured him that I was not going to psychoanalyze the participants and told him that I do not have a background in Psychology, so my analysis would not draw from that discipline. Another participant asked me before we set up a time to meet: "What are you going to ask me?" I explained my research further over the telephone and read him some of my proposed interview questions.

When I showed the proposed questions to the transgendered participant she asked me why it was I had divided up the categories into questions for male participants and questions for female participants. At the time I explained to her why it was important to have two separate sets of questions. It was only when I began to transcribe the interview that I realized what it was she was trying to show me. It simply never occurred to me to consider the experience of transgendered participants. I had neatly divided up my questions into male and

female binaries without consideration for anyone in between. At the time, I had also not considered the difference between maleness and men, and femaleness and women. While the terms men and women are social constructs that define sex, the terms male and female define biological maleness and femaleness (and not sex). However, biology itself is also a social construction and is not unchangeable. That is to say, someone who is female could perform as or could be constructed as a man because of the social construction associated with defining sex.* As I conducted the interviews I had not made this distinction and as a result did not properly address the transgendered participant's question. Her question (if not immediately, in the long run) served to disrupt my adoption of essentialist sex, gendered, and biological categories.

Additionally, this positive disruption helps to illustrate that people do not live in rigidly defined unalterable gendered or sexual categories. Gender and sexuality reach far beyond the binary categories of men/women, and homosexual/heterosexual. Individual constructions of gender and sexuality are often constructed where the binaries overlap. Thus, this thesis does not begin from the essentialist, dualistic "categories" of men/woman, homo/hetero but grounds itself in the participants definitions of gender and sexuality that do not adhere to the binaries.

After one interview was complete a participant asked: "So, what is your thesis? What are you going to prove?" His question took me off guard. I wasn't expecting anyone to ask me what I wanted to prove. I assumed everyone knew. At the same time his question illustrated that I did not really know. At that stage of the research it was a difficult question to answer completely but it challenged

* Because this thesis examines masculinity as a social construct I refer to male participants as men participants, I use the term male only in reference to specific biological maleness. The exception, however, is often in quoted passages by either participants or textual sources where male is used when men is implied. I have not altered the original words or text, yet the reader should be aware of this distinction

me to think about where I hoped to take the research as the research was taking shape. After the interview I was happy to have recorded my thoughts on what I hoped my research would be about. At that stage I was very excited to hear the different experiences of my participants that were rarely talked about both by the participants themselves and as a part of contemporary education discourse. I told him that one of my main goals was to simply [naively] present these experiences with masculinity in schools as important for educators to consider.

While I had prepared proposed interview questions to give the interviews focus or direction if needed, not all of the areas were relevant to the participants, as in the question about race and racism. In many of the interviews the false-ness of some of the proposed questions often made the interviews awkward. One of the proposed questions was: "Do you remember any masculine 'rituals' that occurred in school?" Every time I asked the question I felt awkward asking it. In transcribing the interviews I heard myself almost dismissing the question by the tone of voice I used in posing the question. I didn't take my own question seriously. The question seemed to be simply false. As a result many participants did not answer the question. Those who did drew on stereotypes of masculine behaviour like fighting, driving cars, doing drugs and having sex (with women) that did not always directly apply to masculinities in schools.

In another interview, that was somewhat slow and involved me robotically referring to my proposed questions, the participant interrupted my awkward questioning by stating: "Do you want to know anything about my gay experiences?" I responded "Yah. Maybe I don't know the right questions to ask..." However, from this point on the interview became more relaxed and was more of a dialogue between us than a question and answer period.

In the interviews I often followed along the participant's experiences with verbal acknowledgments such as "uh-huh" or "yah." However in transcribing

the interviews I became very conscious of how my verbal listening could be seen as condescending. At the time of the interview I was not conscious of the way I was following the words of the participants. The process of listening to the interview tapes and transcribing the tapes allowed me to see, or rather listen to, many more interesting moments, missed opportunities and awkward moments that I was unaware of during the interview.

I attempted to approach the interviews with the idea that the interviews would not be a hierarchically structured so that a I, as (objective) researcher, would be questioning and gathering information from the (subjective) participants. However the interview process taught me that, as a researcher, this hierarchy is unavoidable. The participants of my research offered positive disruptions to this research process that made me more aware of my position as a researcher and oftentimes my naïveté in approaching the participants and their experiences.

Posing for Research

Methodologically, this research is shaped qualitatively. I began the research knowing that statistical accounts of say, who got punched and how often, would produce only a wallet-size picture of how masculinities are shaped within educational institutions. For a larger, and clearer picture, it is important to place personal experiences in the centre of the research snapshot.

An additional feature of the qualitative camera approach is the understanding that those who pose for the picture *are* the picture. That is to say, in conducting this research, I attempted to break down the hierarchy between the researcher and the researched or the academic and the non-academic. Because my research is based in the words, knowledge, and experiences of the

participants, it is/was difficult for me to think of myself as more knowledgeable in this specific area than those whom I interviewed.

I began my research from my own experiences with hegemonic masculinity in school. From this place I drafted proposed interview questions based on what I conceived were common areas that might encourage a dialogue between myself and the participants. In some interviews I added my own experience to help to explain the question(s) I was asking and, where appropriate, to corroborate the participant experiences. However I was conscious not to allow my experiences to overly influence the direction the participants chose to take when talking about masculinities in their school(s).

Besides taking field notes and making research journal entries before and after the interviews, I transcribed almost all of the interviews. I read the transcripts over and over selecting quotations which I felt illustrated how hegemonic masculinity operated in the school and the effect on the participants. When I first began to structure my analysis I kept the selected words of the participants within categories loosely structured around my proposed interview questions. However as a result, the "analysis" became merely a presentation of words of the participants organized by questions drawn from my own experience, not theirs. In rewriting my analysis, I re-examined the transcripts and attempted to select quotations that best described the experiences of hegemonic masculinity in educational institutions. From the selected quotations I grouped them under common themes that were woven throughout. While some corresponded to my proposed questions, others were simply experiences common to many participants. These groups, spawning from the central experience of hegemonic masculinity in schools, became the framework for my analysis in Chapter Four.

As the researcher I found it difficult to pick and choose and weigh the words of the participants as I shaped the textual image of what it was the participants shared with me. I became very aware of my role in censoring the words and experiences of the participants whether it be in order to keep the research brief or whether it be to my own personal decision of what words offer greater insight to the research area. It is important to remember that "all research, however exploratory, involves selection and interpretation."¹⁰⁹ That is not to say that researchers and readers should not be critical of the position of the researcher, but they should be aware of, and very cautious with their position in commanding the words of their participants. As Linda Alcoff reminds her readers:

Given that the context of hearers is partially determinant, the speaker is not the master or mistress of the situation. Speakers may seek to regain control here by taking into account the context of their speech, but they can never know everything about this context and with written and electronic communication it is becoming increasingly difficult to know anything about the context of reception.¹¹⁰

However, there are steps that the researcher can take to attempt to break down the power structure between researcher and the research participant. Careful and honest representation of the participants is the first step. As Haig-Brown believes "the printed word can convey much of the speaker's original intent if the writer places it carefully and sensitively in its new context and seeks approval for that placement with the person who spoke. This is a truth for which the ethnographer strives."¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹Hammersley and Atkinson, p. 12-13.

¹¹⁰Linda Alcoff, "The Problem of Speaking for Others," in *Cultural Critique* (Winter 1991-1992), p. 15.

¹¹¹Celia Haig-Brown, "Choosing Border Work" *Canadian Journal of Native Education* (Vol. 19, No. 1, 1992), p. 108.

A second step towards breaking down the hierarchy between researcher and the research participants is a process which Patti Lather calls "Face Validity." According to Lather, Face Validity is: "operationalized by recycling description, emerging analysis, and conclusions back through at least a sub sample of respondents [...]"¹¹² After I had interviewed the participants, transcribed their interviews, and created a rough draft of my presentation of their words, I met with some of the participants and showed them how I proposed to use what they told me in the interviews. A few of the participants were unreachable, one had moved out of province and two others had moved out of the city and did not leave a forwarding address at their old residences. Of those who I was able to contact, I assured them that they had the final say with their words and asked them for other suggestions for the text. In this way the research itself was literally re-shaped by the participants. Sometimes there was an awkwardness with the participants when I showed them how I proposed to use their words. Which illustrated that, despite the effort to break down the hierarchy, a few participants seemed uncomfortable with the idea that they could challenge how I presented their words. One participant did suggest that I change a word that somewhat changed the context of his quotation. We agreed that the misquoted word might have been a result of mishearing the word on the tape. I assured him that I would change the word in question and the surrounding text to reflect his statement. In checking back with another participant he felt that there was not enough in his quoted words to illustrate the point that was stressed by the surrounding text. I suggested he re-write an expanded version of his quote. I then incorporated his more precise quote into the revised text.

¹¹²Patti Lather, *Getting Smart: Feminist Research and Pedagogy With/in the Postmodern* (New York: 1991), p. 67.

Other participants were very pleased to see their experiences represented in text and enjoyed reading the experiences of the other participants. Some empathized with the other participants while others remarked that they had had very similar experiences. In returning the research to the participants it seemed to resemble the consciousness raising process practiced by early second wave feminists. Like myself before I began this research, many of the participants knew that their experiences with masculinity in school were not completely unique to them but, at the same time, they had never before heard or read the experiences of others. The presentation of these participants' experiences with masculinity offers an outlet for further discussion and understanding of common experiences that are rarely spoken about or problematized.

The process of face validity also helps to ensure that the participants are not mis-quoted or mis-represented by the researcher. Lather points out that "[r]esearchers are not so much owners of data as they are 'majority shareholders' who must justify decisions and give participants a public forum for critique."¹¹³ Haig-Brown adds to this by warning "failure to check back with the people can lead to inaccurate and unfair representations and to a sense of objectification on the part of the 'studied subjects'"¹¹⁴

Furthermore, presenting experiences that have often been silenced, and by allowing those voices to participate in the telling or presenting of their experiences, has the effect of preventing authoritative and hegemonic ways of knowing. This counter-hegemonic process embedded in the methodology is also linked to the research itself.

The flip side to the participants being central to this research snapshot is that my own experiences are also partially recounted alongside the experiences

¹¹³Lather, p. 58.

¹¹⁴Haig-Brown, p. 106.

of the interview participants. Therefore while I ultimately shape the picture as a researcher, I do not pretend to be invisible or outside of the picture itself. It must not go un-noticed, however, that this admitted dual position is to the advantage the researcher.

To conclude, in conducting this research I was not fueled by the need to produce and/or present bare bones "facts." However, I was continually conscious of the need to present public and accessible experiences of masculinity in educational institutions where there currently is a lack of this knowledge base. The validity of what I would like to contribute to counter-hegemonic production of knowledge is grounded in the words and experiences of the research participants, has been reviewed and shaped by them as well as the researcher, and is further supported by the textual resources available.

Chapter Four

The Experiences

He learned the rules as a normal boy
She learned them too, but they weren't quite the same
He learned how to fight, he learned how to win
She learned how to smile and to stand there by him
They called it common sense
They grew up so different
They were the typical children
Livin' in a myth

-“Sexual Intelligence”
The Parachute Club, 1984

Introduction

This chapter will present some of the experiences the fourteen participants who were interviewed for this research shared with me about masculinities and their schooling. It is important to note that the individual experiences of the participants cannot be generalized to represent the schooling experiences of Canadians at large. Each individual story recounted here can, however, serve as a glimpse into the school experiences of the participants that are rarely told. I have chosen to combine and intertwine the experiences of all research participants, as different as they are, together in order to produce a story that illustrates the many dimensions, and faces of masculinity in educational institutions.

Matt[†] stated “I think for most people probably school is one of the most primary, socializing agencies in growing up.”¹¹⁵ He added that schooling becomes even more important “especially when you get into high school and puberty, that’s when it becomes even more rigid and you have to conform to the

[†] The research was conducted with an assurance of anonymity within the written text. While most names are pseudonyms, a few participants requested that I use their real names.

¹¹⁵ Interview with Matt, January 8, 1996, p.1.

gender role, the gender stereotype that is set for us by society.”¹¹⁶ This chapter will examine some of the issues raised by the participants that were central to developing a masculine identity while attending school. It will also help to illustrate the importance of challenging hegemonic masculinity.

Physical Education — Establishing Status Among Men

I hated it. I really, really hated it. In fact, I think Physical Education was the subject I hated most. I think I dreaded it. -Jeff

Many of the most obvious “lessons” of masculinity in schools take place in the Physical Education class that is mandatory for all students in Canada until the end of grade ten. Of the men and transgendered participants I interviewed everyone recalled memories of overt “lessons” in masculinity that occurred within P.E. classes. As Matt pointed out “from kindergarten and onwards, it was in gym class where there seems to be that immediate gender conditioning for boys.”¹¹⁷ Matt stressed that “You could be very intelligent as a male student, you could have all kinds of other attributes, but if you don’t excel in gym class than you’re not going to have that same status.”¹¹⁸

The demand to be athletic and to “measure up” to a masculine standard was central to the participants’ experience. When I asked the participants what the masculine ideal was in their school, one of the most frequently used terms to describe the ideal was “jock.” Jeff remembered a particular person from his school that fit the ideal masculine image. “I think of this one guy, and he was definitely the most masculine because he could play hockey, and he could play soccer, he could play baseball. The girls loved him, he was well built, he was

¹¹⁶Matt, p. 1.

¹¹⁷Matt, p. 3.

¹¹⁸Matt, p. 3.

handsome... I guess that's the masculine ideal. An all round jock."¹¹⁹ Erica, the transgendered participant,* recounted that when she was growing up: "I knew very clearly what it was to be a man, and what it was, was: you got to be a jock, you got to be good looking, you got to be good in sport, a good athlete—much what it is today."¹²⁰ Ken, who attended public school in the late 1950s and early 1960, also described the ideal of masculinity as a jock. "They were called jocks at the time. You were supposed to be big and muscular and hairy. I was none of those three. And you were supposed to like sports and I didn't like sports either."¹²¹

Most of the men participants recalled that they did not measure up to what they described as the ideal of masculinity in their school. As a result, some told of being physically assaulted by other students, and dreading every day at school, others found ways to fit in to the ideal or "pass" as the ideal. Matt stated:

Although I didn't completely live up to the ideal, I found that once I started being able to compete in the P.E. classes, like I actually started to do better than some of the people in my gym class, you're looked at differently, and my life literally changed over night.¹²²

Pat Griffin in her article entitled "Homophobia in Sport"¹²³ outlines how sport for men serves five functions in "maintaining traditional gender roles and

¹¹⁹Interview with Jeff, December 19, 1995, p. 4.

* The subject of this thesis does not permit me to explain at length Erica's transgendered experience, and for the most part, I will not be drawing on how her unique transgendered experiences specifically affected her understanding of masculinities in schools. However, Erica's transgendered experience growing up as a boy and becoming a man/woman must be pointed out to the reader to both add a dimension to reading her experiences within this text.

¹²⁰Interview with Erica, December 13, 1995, p. 3.

¹²¹Interview with Ken, December 7, 1995, p. 2.

¹²²Interview with Matt, January 8, 1996, p. 3-4.

¹²³Pat Griffin, "Homophobia in sport: Addressing the Needs of Lesbian and Gay High School Athletes." in *The Gay Teen* Gerald Unks (ed.), (New York: 1995), p. 53-65.

power inequalities between men and women.”¹²⁴ According to Griffin, these five functions of sport are:

a) defining and reinforcing traditional conceptions of masculinity, b) providing a context for acceptable and safe male bonding and intimacy, c) establishing status among other males, d) reinforcing male privilege and perceptions of female inferiority and e) reifying heterosexuality.¹²⁵

While most participants would agree that P.E. reinforces “traditional” conceptions of masculinity, few found it a safe place for bonding or intimacy. In some participants it created a fear, of both the class and the instructor. Greg recalled:

I was not very strong. I was very sensitive and very dull. This thing about having to match me up in a football game with Joe Schmuck that’s ten feet tall... well it was very unfair and very weird when I look back at it.. I can’t say it [P.E.] gave me strength but it did instill a lot of fear in me. That’s the curriculum.¹²⁶

In P.E. boys are quite often simply thrown together at random to play one sport or another simply to fulfill a P.E. sport component. From elementary school through high school I don’t ever remember being specifically taught to “play” any sports. It was just assumed that, as a boy, you inherently knew the rules of baseball, or hockey, or volleyball, or football etc. P.E. was just a place/space to “play” the games. I never once asked the teacher to explain the rules of the games nor did I ever reveal to any other student that I hadn’t a clue what was going on for fear of humiliation over not knowing the rules that, it seemed, everyone else instinctively knew.

¹²⁴Griffin, p. 54.

¹²⁵Griffin, p. 54-55.

¹²⁶Interview with Greg, January 5, 1996, p 2.

Erica's experience helps to illustrate how boys simply accept the humiliation, pain and brutality of P.E. as common sense.

I hated rugby, even though when I was forced to play they would put me in the centre of the scrum as a hooker. You just sort of hang on the shoulders of these two groups and you have to hook the ball out with your heel and pass it back to the scrum. You end up with your shins hacked, but that is the place where the runts go because they're the lightest and they can just swing. I detested it, that closeness, sweatiness, but that was a part of the ritual of being a man.¹²⁷

Some of the participants, including myself, developed coping strategies in order to deal with the fear and humiliation of P.E. class. When Ken spoke about his experiences in P.E. he stated: "I despised it. I learned quickly though. We used to have shirts - red on one side and white the other - and you would change your shirt when your team was up. I always managed to change my shirt so that I wasn't playing."¹²⁸

Only two of the men participants were able to "pass" or somewhat conform to the masculine ideal through Physical Education classes. Brad explained how, while, being gay, he didn't completely conform to the hegemonic standard of masculinity, however, he managed to fit in to the P.E. classes which allowed him to pass within the hegemonic standard.

Well, regarding Gym, in junior high, Gym was where I wanted to be. [...] All through school I was always the fastest runner in the school. I've got first place ribbons and I was going to competitions. It was a place where I was sort of dealing with two things. I was this fast guy but I was also not one of the muscular guys. I was still sort of a geek but I was accepted as well. I was like the side kick I guess. Everybody liked me but everybody teased me at the same time.¹²⁹

¹²⁷Interview with Erica, December 13, 1995, p. 2.

¹²⁸Interview with Ken, December 7, 1995, p. 1.

¹²⁹Interview with Brad, December 5, 1995, p. 1.

The fifth function of sport outlined by Griffin is the reification of heterosexuality. Griffin states that the “[f]ear of being perceived as gay is a powerful social control in athletics. It keeps men safely within the bounds of traditionally masculine and heterosexual attitudes and behavior in an emotionally and physically intimate setting.”¹³⁰ Once again however, the “safety” of the traditionally masculine was questioned by the statements of some of the participants. Aaron stated that “[for] all of the gay men I know, and who I have talked to about this, high school Gym class was one of the most horrifying experiences. Again, there was outright brutality that was suffered at the hand of the Gym teacher, very often who was punitive, militaristic, [and] psychotic.”¹³¹

One of the things that I feared most, next to the inability to “measure up” to the other P.E. classmates, was the insensitivity of the instructor. There was an almost complete failure to understand of the development of young men on the part of the Gym teacher. As young men begin to deal with many new issues, like puberty, body image, and sex and sexuality they are literally *exposed* in the change room and often humiliated by the Gym teacher as a part of the daily P.E. routine. I used to dread every Gym class because it acted to continually remind me that I didn’t fit in to the masculine ideal, I was slim and un-muscular, and was not good at sports. Along with the general competitive “spirit” of P.E., I remember Gym class as an open struggle between boys to, in the words of Griffin, “establish status among other males.”¹³² Aaron remarked that P.E.:

continues to be a breeding ground of aggression and brutality. Not a lot has changed and I thought it would have to because what gym teachers got away with, and what I continue to hear that they’ve gotten away with, is abuse and assault and battery. I mean that’s all physical; that’s not even mentioning the

¹³⁰Griffin, p. 57.

¹³¹Interview with Aaron, January 11, 1996, p. 4.

¹³²Griffin, p. 54-55.

emotional assault and the spiritual assault that's done to these kids, because they're kids.¹³³

Some of the emotional assault that Aaron refers to is often in the form of public humiliation by the P.E. teacher. Ed recalled a particular P.E. experience: "a teacher had told another boy he should be wearing gym shoes instead of 'dress shoes.' 'What about Ed?' asked the boy. And the P.E. teacher replied 'He doesn't kick hard enough to do any damage.' And I was just mortified."¹³⁴ Ken recounted: "at one point in Basketball they passed the ball to me and I ducked. You're not supposed to duck. It wasn't dodge ball. And one whole side of the gym just cracked up. The whole class was just my nightmare."¹³⁵

While I did not ask the female participants about their experiences in P.E., in my interview with Linda she told me that after being a side-kick to the "jock crowd" for a while she quickly realized how destructive that particular ideal of masculinity was to her and to other women and she left that group.¹³⁶ Griffin points out that the foci of P.E. is really centred around the physical performance of male bodies and that "[e]xperiencing the body as powerful and as skillful is an important part of feeling empowered. Our society deems it to be essential for boys, but not for girls."¹³⁷ If P.E. acts to enforce hegemonic masculinity, based in power, power over, and competitive performance, it is important to consider how this in turn will affect young women and young men both in P.E. and within the educational environment in general.

Mandatory P.E. classes set and enforce a standard of masculine behaviour based on athletic performance. Students are then graded and evaluated on the degree to which they achieve these standards. What does it mean then to fail

¹³³Interview with Aaron, January 11, 1996, p. 5.

¹³⁴Interview with Ed, January 5, 1996, p. 1.

¹³⁵Interview with Ken, December 7, 1995, p. 2.

¹³⁶Interview with Linda, December 19, 1995, p.5

¹³⁷Griffin, p. 56.

P.E., or only get a "C" in P.E.? What effect does this have on men students. Jeff stated: "I always saw myself as lesser than, because I wasn't as athletic. [...] I think [P.E.] played a negative part because I never felt good enough. I never felt athletic"¹³⁸

Changing In Change Rooms and Coming Clean In The Showers

In addition to being subjected to humiliation by the P.E. teacher, boys often have to face humiliation by their peers in the change rooms before and after Gym class. Unlike most girls change rooms where there are private shower stalls, boys are made to shower in gang showers. In quite a militaristic tradition, boys are not granted privacy in the change room nor in the showers. At a time when boys and young men are going through puberty and can be quite conscious about their developing bodies, all privacy is removed. It is assumed that this lack of privacy is not problematic for the young men. Most importantly, in mandatory P.E. class, there is no recourse for young men who feel uncomfortable, ashamed, or unsafe in the change rooms or showers. Erica recounted a CBC radio show that discussed similar issues:

The things that we do to kids in school... I heard on Peter Gzowski that it is not uncommon in Ontario, in the boys washrooms, for the cubicles not to have doors. There is absolutely no privacy. In the class there is this strange homophobia. To remove the doors?! Are the boys going to masturbate in there or something? I suppose the girls can do it behind their doors I suppose. This is the stupidity of some of the new thinking. And you think of the poor boys who are self-conscious, who are very uncomfortable with who they are, who physically do not 'measure up.' I think it is the insane behaviour of some of these P.E. teachers.¹³⁹

¹³⁸Interview with Jeff, December 19, 1995, p. 3-4.

¹³⁹Interview with Erica, December 13, 1995, p. 10.

This lack of privacy, according to Allan Bérubé who writes about gay men and women in the military, often acts to protect the close relationships of men "from suspicion [of being gay] by preventing them from becoming overtly sexual."¹⁴⁰ With in the homosocial environment of the change room and the gang shower then, privacy is denied to young men in an attempt to enforce a hetero-normalcy and to deny that anything queer is going on between this group of naked young men.

Brad recounted his experience and his memory of one boy's frustration regarding showering and changing with other boys.

I remember the biggest guys would shower, and they would go in there totally naked. And I remember not showering. I never did. There was no way. I guess it was sort of a masculine thing. I was probably thinking, well, penis size and that sort of thing and freaking out. And I remember [other boys] bugging someone really bad because he went and took a shower but he took it in his underwear. They were totally bugging the shit out of him. It's like there was a desperate need to be with these guys but something else was telling him not to do it.¹⁴¹

Brad's passage illustrates that there is a need for boys to bond with one another and yet P.E. fails to provide a safe forum. In fact, it does the opposite by creating a very dangerous place for boys. Gang showers are a most vulnerable place for boys to be for many reasons. Boys may fear violence or bullying from other boys, they may fear either being exposed as gay, or thought of as gay, or they may be ashamed of their bodies if they do not "measure up" to the ideal masculine body type. Erica explains her experience (as a boy) showering in school:

The showers. The gang showers. They are the most horrible, disgusting, intimidating, torture pretty much. For a couple of years I had this teacher who raked into you, you'd turn part way

¹⁴⁰ Allan Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War Two*, (New York: 1990), p. 38.

¹⁴¹ Interview with Brad, December 5, 1995, p. 2.

round and he'd just turn it cold. I used to get changed last, I was so ashamed of who I was.¹⁴²

While I remember avoiding showering at school as much as possible, for some it was mandatory. As Anurag Jain stated in his article in the *Globe and Mail* newspaper, "After P.E. , students went to the locker room, got naked, went to the shower room, did their thing, then got their names checked off. If you did not get your name checked off, your grades would suffer."¹⁴³ In Jain's school, you were even graded on whether or not you could shower with the other boys. Jain adds "I showered quickly, trying not to stare too much for fear of being labeled a queer (or faggot, butt pirate, etc.) I felt the stares at my bulges, but I dressed quickly, ran up to class and exhaled."¹⁴⁴ Jain continues to describe in his article the cruelty of a particular bully who would shame him and other boys for not measuring up to the "ideal" body type. He recalls how this showering anxiety has lingered into his adult life.

The importance of maintaining an "ideal" heterosexual façade within a homosocial environment by denying young men privacy can have quite a disturbing "side-effect." At a time when men's bodies are developing at different rates, school change rooms and showers literally *expose* young men to their peers. Entrenched in our hegemonic, hetero-centric thought most people can understand the feelings of shame and loss of dignity experienced by a young woman being caught in a state of undress by a young man. However, young men *exposed* to each other on a daily basis as a part of mandatory P.E. class , is rarely viewed as problematic. Ironically, for boys in Physical Education, the issue of body image is not taken into consideration.

¹⁴²Interview with Erica, December 13, 1995, p. 2.

¹⁴³Anurag X. C. Jain "To The Showers! (The Anxiety Lingers)" *Globe and Mail* (Tuesday June 11, 1996), p. A20.

¹⁴⁴Jain, "To The Showers!..."

Body Image — The Shape of Masculinity

P.E. teachers, who focus on health, performance and the body, do not acknowledge important issues for boys with regards to the healthy development and appreciation of their bodies. Because there is a focus on a hegemonic ideal masculine body in P.E. class there is little room for *alternative bodies*; that is to say, bodies which do not fit with the norm. If you cannot shape yourself to the masculine standard demanded in P.E. class you are shamed by the P.E. teacher and by other students. One example of this is the common procedure of having to line up to be picked for a team. Those who are picked last are publicly displayed as the weaker, less fit, less masculine ones. There is little a student can do to escape from this humiliating position. P.E. class acts to categorize and sort bodies and reinforces the hegemonic ideal.

With regards to the physical *embodiment* of maleness, Connell states:

The physical sense of maleness is not a simple thing. It involves size and shape, habits of posture and movement, particularly physical skills, and the lack of others, the image of one's own body, the way it is presented to other people and the ways they respond to it [and] the way it operates at work and in sexual relations.¹⁴⁵

These elements of maleness are important within the school environment. If your body is smaller than other men's bodies you can be seen as a weakling and as an easy target for verbal or physical attacks. If you walk with a mincing step assumptions are made about your sexuality. If you are less coordinated in sport you are alienated and humiliated in P.E. class etc.

¹⁴⁵Connell, *Gender and Power*, p. 84.

The masculine ideal in school was embodied in a particular curricular element, P.E., while P.E., in turn, fed the ideal. I found that the focus on the body in P.E. both actively in sport and within the change room became central to the developing concepts of my masculinity and that of many of the participants I interviewed.

I remember being ashamed of changing in front of other students because I was so unhappy with the shape of my body. As a result, I would avoid taking showers completely because of my dislike of my body and because of a general fear and mistrust of the other boys. This type of shame is referred to by George Yúdice as "toxic shame," which, is "an unhealthy and self-disempowering indulgence in self blame."¹⁴⁶ As Erica's experience illustrates, "When you're late developing then you become ridiculed even more. As an adult I have no body hair. Then, I had nothing to remotely suggest masculinity. That whole essence of image is just so important and so powerful and it does stay with us for an awfully long time."¹⁴⁷ Only very recently have there been studies that take into account the importance of body image to boys and men.¹⁴⁸ P.E. itself is concerned with strengthening and "building" the body, male and female, and yet little consideration is paid to how P.E. can negatively affect students' body image and feelings of self-esteem.

I believe that one of the purposes of P.E. in schools is to teach or encourage group dynamics on teams, and to provide a space/place for healthy physical activity. However, as the experiences of the men I interviewed illustrate, there are many factors that prevent these goals from being achieved and can quite easily result in producing a very unhealthy environment for young men.

¹⁴⁶George Yúdice "What's A Straight White Man To Do?" in *Constructing Masculinity* ed. by Maurice Berger, Brian Wallis, and Simon Watson (New York: 1995), p. 275.

¹⁴⁷Interview with Erica, December 13, 1995, p. 10.

¹⁴⁸One book that does take on the issue of body image and men is: Sue Scott and David Morgan (eds.), *Body Matters: Essays on the Sociology of the Body* (London:1993).

The effect of P.E. on Aaron sums up some of the life long unhealthy effects of mandatory Physical Education.

It did continue its damage on me long after public school because for a whole combination of reasons, I've loathed my body and loathed myself for years, and after public school - it was all tied into my coming out experience too - I loathed my body and was self destructive. I was willfully negligent, I was careless and reckless. I got into binge eating, and reckless dieting. I was over weight for years. What I was doing at that time was actively rebelling against a fit and active life. Which is the greatest irony; a physical education trying to nurture and develop an appreciation for the body and for physical arts and it did diametrically the opposite for me. I was so repulsed by the whole experience.¹⁴⁹

The experiences of the men who were interviewed illustrate that there are many lessons in masculinity taught in mandatory Physical Education in schools. Some of the lessons in P.E. reinforce the ideals of hegemonic masculinity that the participants recognized when they were students and recalled in the interview. Other lessons helped to create an unhealthy masculine identity for the participants as boys and as young men that has remained with them throughout their life. However if these oppressive ideals are challenged by educators students may enjoy P.E. to a greater extent and, most importantly have a better respect for their bodies.

Assumed Hetero/Homo Sexual

You wouldn't want to be gay. - Paul

In schools today, as within other institutions, heterosexuality is hegemonically assumed. It is just assumed that students and teachers, for the

¹⁴⁹Interview with Aaron, January 11, 1996, p. 5.

most part, are heterosexual. Very few schools go out of their way to contest the heterosexual dominance or to make the school a safe place for lesbian, gay or bisexual youth. In fact, in the UK the Local Government Bill Section 28 forbids local authorities to: "intentionally promote homosexuality."¹⁵⁰ Even without officially government sanctioned rules regarding hegemonic heterosexuality Epstein and Johnson remind their readers that in "strongly homosocial situations, such as boys' schools and school-based cultures of masculinity, homophobia is often a vehicle for policing heterosexual masculinities."¹⁵¹ They add that "[t]he place of homophobia in school cultures testifies to this connection between the formation of heterosexual identities and the stigmatization of homosexual identities and gender ambivalence."¹⁵²

Homophobia and heterosexism at school was simply every day "common sense" in the lives of the participants I interviewed. Verbal and physical homophobic attacks and heterosexist coercion were also common sense and commonplace in many schools that the participants attended. "It was very clear if you were a sissy, whether you were a faggot, whether you were a wimp, or whether you were a 'girl.' All of these things that completely degraded our emerging sense of masculinity "¹⁵³

You don't have to look much further than the high rate of gay teen suicide¹⁵⁴ to know that being a homosexual man in a public educational institution can be at times a life threatening experience. Andi O'Connor refers to a

¹⁵⁰Gillian Spraggs, "Coming Out in the National Union of Teachers" in *Challenging Lesbian and Gay Inequalities in Education* Debbie Epstein (ed.) (Buckingham: 1994), p.188.

¹⁵¹Debbie Epstein and Richard Johnson "On the Straight and Narrow: The Heterosexual Presumption, Homophobias and Schools" in *Challenging Lesbian and Gay Inequalities in Education* Debbie Epstein (ed.) (Buckingham: 1994), p. 204.

¹⁵²Epstein and Johnson, p. 204.

¹⁵³Interview with Aaron, January 11, 1996, p. 11.

¹⁵⁴Andi O'Connor, "Breaking the Silence: Writing About Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Teenagers," in *The Gay Teen* Gerald Unks (ed.) (New York: 1995), p. 13.

Health and Human Services report from the U.S. when she reminds her readers that:

Gay and lesbian youth comprise approximately thirty percent of all teen suicides. One in three have reported committing at least one self-destructive act. Nearly half repeatedly attempt suicide. Gay and lesbian youth make up approximately one quarter of all homeless youth in the U.S..¹⁵⁵

Because adolescents are required to attend school until they are approximately eighteen years of age it is important to examine educational institutions with respect to suicidal youth, whether gay, straight, lesbian or bisexual. Two gay men participants directly linked the overt heterosexism in the school to suicidal tendencies, self-hatred and a significant postponement in coming out as homosexual. In his study of gay men students Máirtín Mac an Ghaill reminds his readers that "without a positive reference group, they [gay men students] tend to internalize ambivalent negative messages about themselves as gay men."¹⁵⁶ Heterosexism and homophobia as apart of hegemonic masculinity in schools is inflicting "daily misery and injustice"¹⁵⁷ on gay teens and is literally killing them. As Eric Rofes points out schools are simply not safe for "sissies."¹⁵⁸ He reminds his readers that "We will never forget that we were tortured and publicly humiliated because we refused to be real boys, acted 'girlish,' or were simply different. That was the price we paid for being queer."¹⁵⁹

Homophobia was central to shaping my masculine identity while attending high school. Because I did not look masculine my peers made the assumption that I was gay and as a result I suffered through physical, and verbal

¹⁵⁵O'Connor, "Breaking the Silence..." p. 13.

¹⁵⁶Máirtín Mac an Ghaill *The Making of Men*, (Buckingham: 1994), p. 161.

¹⁵⁷Mac an Ghaill *The Making of Men*, p. 169.

¹⁵⁸Eric Rofes, "Making Our Schools Safe for Sissies" in *The Gay Teen: Education, Practice and Theory for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Adolescents* ed. by Gerald Unks, (New York: 1995), p. 79-84.

¹⁵⁹Rofes, p. 80.

attacks. These homophobic attacks were constant reminders that I was not following appropriate masculine behaviour. In policing the masculine ideal those males who do not fit the rigid stereotype are simply considered outside of masculinity itself. They are considered feminine, effeminate, 'girlish' and therefore gay regardless of their sexuality.

For the most part the assumption of homosexuality often has little to do with actual sexuality. For example, in his discussion of U.S. Army draft boards, Randy Shilts states:

Ironically, authentically gay men also tended to be less successful than the gay deceivers in convincing draft boards that they were really gay. The trick to convincing the Army psychiatrist, after all, rested not in behaving the way gay men actually behaved, but acting in the way the psychiatrist imagined they did. Fulfilling the heterosexual fantasies of homosexuality was, of course an easier task for a heterosexual than for someone who was gay.¹⁶⁰

The example from the U.S. military helps to illustrate how *being* gay and being *perceived* as gay are two very different things. Both, however, are outside of the masculine ideal and are therefore an unsafe place to occupy in the school environment. As a result, "in order to survive in school, many gay and lesbian teens have to construct a false, heterosexual self."¹⁶¹

This heterosexual expectation can also lead students to construct a hyper-masculine identity to guard against the possibility of being assumed as gay. As Paul points out, "a lot of guys grow up, and they're chasing girls, and they go overboard because they are trying to prove that they're not gay. [...if you were seen as gay...] you'd lose friends."¹⁶² The pressure at school for young men to

¹⁶⁰Randy Shilts, *Conduct Unbecoming: Lesbians and Gays in the U.S. Military Vietnam to the Persian Gulf* (New York: 1993), p. 68.

¹⁶¹Andi O'Connor, "Who Gets Called Queer in School?: Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Teenagers, Homophobia and High School" in *The Gay Teen* Gerald Unks (ed.) (New York: 1995), p. 99.

¹⁶²Interview with Paul, December 5, 1995, p. 1.

prove they are straight (and therefore more masculine than the next guy), also creates a very sexist, patriarchal, unsafe environment for young women. As Siobahn clearly explains:

There was a lot of very casual acceptance of sexism and homophobia, well, I mean, acceptance of it was just the rule of the day. Guys would call each other fag, and that was this terrible, terrible thing that they would do to keep each other in line. Like the way they would call the girls sluts, it was a way of just controlling people's behaviour and sort of establishing the pecking order. This stuff was so much the fabric of our lives that we didn't even notice it the way you don't notice air when you are breathing it.¹⁶³

I chose not to assimilate to the "ideal" masculinity which further enforced the homophobic pressure by other peers to conform. Within the school I had no way of contesting the homophobia short of complying to the demands of my peers and the hegemonic definition of masculinity that I felt I simply could not live up to. Liam described an experience that was similar to my own:

Walking down the hallway ... having someone walk a meter behind you saying things like you fag, you freak, you fucking fag, and you just walk and you get thick skinned [...] You just take a big gulp and your skin gets pretty thick. I certainly made no effort to avoid these insults.¹⁶⁴

However, whether you are homosexual or not, homophobic comments are not designed to be refuted. They are reminders by your peers that you have stepped out of line and strayed too far from hegemonic masculinity. These comments can often lead to physical violence.

Unlike Liam, I remember, walking (and sometimes running) away from the homophobic comments, but I had no guarantee that where I was walking to

¹⁶³Interview with Siobahn, December 6, 1995, p. 12.

¹⁶⁴Interview with Liam, January 19, 1996, p. 4.

would be any safer than what I was walking away from. Nevertheless, I always had a mental floor plan of the school that outlined where I would be safer and where I would be unsafe. I had to make sure I wasn't walking a certain road, or I had to stay out of somebody's path, or make sure I did not pass someone's locker. This was an everyday action that I had to do, because I knew if I didn't there would be a confrontation somewhere. And I didn't want to have to deal with that.

While girls and young women can often find refuge from sexism and misogyny in the only female only space in the school — the bathroom¹⁶⁵ (that in itself clearly not a solution to sexism), boys and young men do not have a place of refuge to escape, bullying, violence, and homophobia. The power and privilege that even subordinated or counter-hegemonic men have over women must not be overlooked here, but it is important to acknowledge that issues regarding safety of men in schools are often overlooked. Jeff explains his search for a safe place and his way of dealing with the taunting of other boys:

There would be a whole pattern where I would walk, where there was some safety. I would definitely avoid areas that were dangerous. I remember that, especially in high school, very unsafe. There were just areas that you would avoid. But no one ever beat me up. Ever. They would just verbally taunt me. And I just felt humiliated, ashamed. And I think I would just hold my head down and drag my feet through the hall.¹⁶⁶

Many participants' experiences illustrate the degree of homophobia and the level of danger that existed in the participants' schools for those who were gay or were suspected of being gay.

¹⁶⁵Jones, "Sexual Tyranny: Male Violence in a Mixed Sex Secondary School" in *Just A Bunch of Girls: Feminist Approaches to Schooling* Gaby Weiner (ed.) (Milton Keynes: 1985), p. 36.

¹⁶⁶Interview with Jeff, December 19, 1995, p. 7.

It was expected that everyone was heterosexual. Apparently at a high school of 800 students there was one guy, maybe two, every few years that came out of the closet and proclaimed themselves. Otherwise you just kept your mouth shut because you'd get your ass kicked. It was hated.¹⁶⁷

This hatred is ingrained in hegemonic masculinity and is played out in the educational environment.

Hegemonic masculinity engages males to, as Epstein and Johnson call it, "enforce their own psychic 'resolutions' [about sexuality] on others."¹⁶⁸ The continual *prediction* of heterosexuality or homosexuality on a daily basis strengthens the dominant masculinity.

In presenting this research I have only indicated the sexuality of the participant if they clearly indicated it to me in the interview situation. I purposely have not made assumptions, guesses or predictions about the sexuality of the participants' sexuality in this research. In turn, I would hope that the reader of this text does not rely on stereotypes and ideological baggage about sexuality when interpreting the experiences of the participants, for to do so would only reinforce hegemonic masculinity which this thesis attempts to challenge.

Teachers Modeling Masculinity

From my experience in public school I had some teachers that I could look up to as role models and other teachers that quite often frightened me. Both types of teachers taught me lessons in masculinity. I remember feeling good about myself when I achieved some sort of loose bond with other teachers, either men or women. There was a feeling of acceptance. This wasn't necessarily an

¹⁶⁷Interview with Greg, January 5, 1996, p. 4.

¹⁶⁸Epstein and Johnson , p. 221.

acceptance of my masculinity but was often comforting against other teachers and students who challenged or doubted my masculinity.

Brad was frustrated with a gay teacher who was not out to his class and did not offer support to him as a gay student.

Everyday I would go into his class and would go, just give me a sign, give me a fucking sign. And I was upset because here was the role model that I wanted [...] but he had no idea.¹⁶⁹

Brad's role model was also outside of hegemonic masculinity but unfortunately, schools are not safe places for gay educators either and his teacher probably did not have many outlets to help gay teens like Brad, or to provide healthy modeling behaviour that was counter hegemonic. However, about the gay teacher Brad added, "[n]obody ever said no, I don't want to be in his class because he is a fag, or whatever. Nobody ever did that. Everybody treated him like a teacher. But there was still this rumour going around."¹⁷⁰ While students accepted the authority and power position of the teacher whom they assumed to be gay their rumour about his counter hegemonic sexuality was policed by them, and thus was probably one of the many reasons that he remained out of reach as a role model to other gay teens.

Aaron also believed that (men) teachers ultimately play a role in enforcing a hetero-centric, hegemonic masculinity in the school. Aaron stated that the "psychotic Gym teachers":

Were perpetuating the idea that being a 'girl' as a boy, or having feminine qualities was shameful, was humiliating, was degrading, was devaluing. [...] And I can't think of any other way that you get such a concentrated form of heterosexism and

¹⁶⁹Interview with Brad, December 5, 1995, p. 4.

¹⁷⁰Interview with Brad, December 5, 1995, p. 4.

homophobia than in Gym class. You are forced to perform in a very heterosexist and homophobic way.¹⁷¹

While teachers play active roles by modeling masculine behaviour they can also can assume a more passive role that also enforces the hegemony. For example O'Connor reminds her readers that:

Silence on the part of teachers and administrators also make schools unsafe places for gay and lesbian teens. While teachers often punish students who make racist remarks, homophobic comments are typically unchallenged, and sometimes even perpetuated by teachers themselves.¹⁷²

Linda remembered that "on the whole the male teachers were pretty good."¹⁷³ However she also recounted the exception to the rule, Mr. Angus.

I'll never forget a friend of mine, she was very developed, and would always wear tight knit dresses, and he [Mr. Angus] would just ask her for the stupidest things so he could see her walk up and down and back to her seat. And everyone would lift their heads, and know what he was doing, even the guys. But we were just speechless. I don't know, maybe the guys didn't sense it but the girls did. I'd look at Jean and she'd look at me and we knew that this was wrong. But we didn't know quite what it was. He continued this behaviour. He always remained very macho and very arrogant.¹⁷⁴

The power dynamics between woman students and men teachers allowed for the teacher to abuse his position to exploit the young women in his class but did not allow for her, Linda, or the other young women in the class to contest this behaviour. Linda's statement very clearly illustrates not only the sexist and harassing behaviour young women experience in the classroom but also presents

¹⁷¹Brad, p. 11-12.

¹⁷²Andi O'Connor, "Who Gets Called Queer in School?: Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Teenagers, Homophobia and High School" in *The Gay Teen* Gerald Unks (ed.) (New York: 1995), p. 99.

¹⁷³Interview with Linda, December 19, 1995, p. 5.

¹⁷⁴Linda, p. 4-5

itself as modeled masculine behaviour for boys and young men. I remember a particular grade eight teacher of mine (who also coached girls' volleyball) being very close and physical with the young women in the class. He had a reputation. That meant students talked a lot about it but no one was in a position to question or put an end to his behaviour. My niece is currently in his class. She says he still has that reputation (and he still coaches girls' volleyball). The position of power between teacher and student is ripe for abuse yet men teachers should be responsible for not abusing this power over their students. However, hegemonic masculinity that is based in power inequalities and misogyny can easily cater to justifying the "subtle" (and sometimes not so subtle) abuse of this power relationship over pupils.

The modeling of masculine behaviour is quite often a reflection of the teachers themselves. Erica, who was a teacher for about twenty years, recalled experiences with other male staff.

I wasn't a part of the staff room group that sat around and talked about this hockey game, or the group that talked about their cars. I wasn't a part of the group that talked about their women and their experiences in the pubs and things like that. I didn't associate with that. And because I didn't participate or *want to* participate it again reinforced the image that I *must* be gay. That was the only way out of it you know. Obviously 'real men' do these things, if you don't do these things you're not a "real man."^{175†}

The definition of masculinity is filtered throughout our beliefs. Therefore teachers who embody hegemonic masculinity will expect the same of the students in the classroom. Students may be unaware of what goes on in the staff room behind closed doors but, as Erica points out, what happens between

¹⁷⁵Interview with Erica, December 13, 1995, p. 6.

[†] For further reading on sexism and masculinity in the staffroom see Sheila Cunnison "Gender Joking in the Staffroom" *Teachers, Gender and Careers* Sandra Acker (ed.) (London: 1989), p. 151-167.

teachers in the staff room looks a lot like what happens in the classroom between teacher and student.

However, as Aaron states in the following passage, some teachers may not think to challenge hegemonic gendered behaviour.

I think in the primary grades, all of my teachers were women and I think they did little more than to perpetuate the misery that I was in. Because, to be fair to them, they didn't really know any other reality. And so if they saw a boy getting beat up on the playground, although that was brutal to me, for them it probably wasn't exceptional.¹⁷⁶

The participants' words help to illustrate that teachers do indeed model hegemonic masculine behaviour in schools. This is partly because the men teachers are themselves a product of hegemonic masculinity. Like their men students, the school does not provide a safe or "acceptable environment to challenge or contest this hegemony.

Bullying — Teacher/Student and Student/Teacher

Like bullying in the school yard, name calling from teacher to student can act to enforce the dominant masculinity over young men who do not fit this definition. The classroom is an environment where it becomes easy to exploit the unequal power dynamics between teacher/adult and student/child. Jeff stated:

The teacher would humiliate me. He would pick on me. Yes. Oh, he was awful. And the math teacher would pick on me too because I didn't know what the hell was going on. I didn't know what he was doing up there, and you know, I didn't even care! I was bored out of my mind. And the Chemistry teacher too. He said my writing was like verbal diarrhea. I'm now remembering all these things now that you've gotten me into this. And Math,

¹⁷⁶Interview with Aaron, January 11, 1996, p. 8.

he was so gruff, I think he called me dummy or numskull, I was just not into it.¹⁷⁷

In my interview with Jeff we discussed the effects of this name calling on students. Jeff remembers these men teachers, and still remembers how it felt to be called a "dummy" in front of the class. This humiliation does not leave students at the end of the day. When (specifically men) teachers, whom you are supposed to look up to, insult you, regardless of the context, you begin to believe and memorize what they say, just like you memorize mathematical equations, or irregular French verbs.

Liam also recounted experiences of both bullying and counter bullying men teachers at his school:

I was actually a lot worse to him than he was to me. I would really insult him in the hallway. In a joking way, like BO, you know. It was fun, and they laughed at me you know... but I never really saw teachers picking on students. Gym teachers used to whip the backs of my legs when I was running around the track and you certainly didn't get a good feeling if you weren't on the rugby team. Gym teachers were fucked.¹⁷⁸

Liam's statement illustrates that often the line between "acceptable" bullying and abuse can be blurred especially when you are within the teacher/adult student/child paradigm.

Aaron often felt powerlessness, and frustration in the face of men teachers who held and sometimes abused their power over students.

We had two psychotic, militaristic Gym teachers, and one of them was a Math teacher as well. We couldn't ever get far enough away from them. [...] There was this one that taught, I think it was Health and Counseling, and this was a guy that thought nothing of throwing basketballs at the heads of

¹⁷⁷Interview with Jeff, December 19, 1995, p. 7.

¹⁷⁸Interview with Liam, January 19, 1996, p. 13.

students, who were defenseless right? It just didn't make any sense.¹⁷⁹

Skeggs found that "when disciplinary issues are related to gender difference, it is often the male teacher who emphasizes the advantages of certain qualities of masculinity in the course of maintaining classroom control."¹⁸⁰ This gender based discipline becomes accepted as common sense. For example, in my interview with Aaron we both began to discover a hierarchy in how, we as students, perceived men teachers. The really tough, and sometimes violent men teachers I had in elementary school, were the ones that I respected the most. Where as the men teachers who were not as physically threatening were seen as "soft." Aaron explained that one of his science teachers, who was a man "was generally held in contempt because he wasn't aggressive and evil in the way we've been describing these other teachers." Aaron adds that:

I think one of the primary motives for this kind of contempt that students felt for him, both male and female, was that you had to push him really hard, and students did, to the point that he would crack down the pointer sticks and the yard sticks. You had to really provoke him unreasonably to get him to that point. But it was almost like the students had to. There was this irrational impulse, that he had to exhibit the same kind of masculinity in the classroom.¹⁸¹

As a teacher, Erica recalled a similar incident where she, uncharacteristically shattered a ruler on the desk, and later had to hide her laughter at the sheer ridiculousness of it all. However she spoke of this action as an act of regaining control from those who thought she was a soft-male teacher.¹⁸² Erica also spoke about how the students, both men and women, respected her for being a non-

¹⁷⁹Interview with Aaron, January 11, 1996, p. 8.

¹⁸⁰Beverley Skeggs "Challenging Masculinity and Using Sexuality" in *British Journal of Sociology of Education* (Vol. 12, No. 2, 1991), p. 131.

¹⁸¹Interview with Aaron, January 11, 1996, p. 9.

¹⁸²Interview with Erica, December 13, 1995, p. 8.

traditional man, or “soft” teacher. There was a greater sense of safety in the class, and as a result, the students, (more so the woman students), excelled in this environment.

To conclude, while bullying of students by teachers can act to reinforce and reproduce hegemonic masculine behaviour, students are not always passive players in the bullying game. Some of the participants interviewed admitted to bullying teachers back. This counter bullying may have been a response to the bullying they received elsewhere in the school. It might also have also been an extension of the bullying they participated in with other students. Regardless of the roots of the bullying, pushing certain teachers to their limit offers a sense of power to students that they may not be able to harness elsewhere.

Bullying — Dreading Every Day

“There was a toughness. [...] A lot of fighting. Guys would pick on me until I snapped or went squirly.” -Greg

Bullying was common to almost all of the men participants’ experiences in school. Whether the bullying was in the form of name calling and harassment, or in the form of outright violence, the memories of the messages behind the bullying have remained with the participants and has played a part in shaping the men participants’ understanding of hegemonic masculinity. In their examination of bullying, Askew and Ross point out that:

Bullying is a major way in which boys are able to demonstrate their manliness. Even though a boy might be physically weaker than another, to be able to ‘take it like a man’ is usually considered to be a good second-best masculine quality. In this sense, bullying can be seen as a manifestation of pressures put on boys [by other boys] to conform to male stereotypes.¹⁸³

¹⁸³Sue Askew and Carol Ross, *Boys Don’t Cry* (Milton Keynes: 1988), p. 38.

Bullying is the an act of coercion usually (but not uniquely) between boys. Essentially however, it is an example of boys practicing and *learning* the act of power-over. Askew and Ross remind their readers that as a result, bullying also “becomes one way of gaining or expressing power and dominance over women.”¹⁸⁴ The bullying practice that commonly occurs at school is much more than just rivalry between boys. It is a peer on peer punishment aimed at those who do not conform, whether men or women. Bullying, specifically in regards to policing gender expectations, is important to examine because the resulting power over is potentially harmful to gays and lesbians (and those assumed to be gay or lesbian), effeminate men or ‘sissies,’ and young women in relationships with young men.

While most participants spoke about their experiences of masculinity in school at the high school level, Aaron began by recounting his memories of bullying in elementary school.

In grade four the girls became alienated from me because I seemed different. I was called fairy very quickly and the name stuck for a long time. I was also alienated quickly from the boys because I didn't know how to play soccer, baseball, football, all of the organized sports that they went out to play every recess and lunch hour. And [because] I didn't understand how to get into that group, I was very quickly ostracized by both the boys and the girls and experienced bullying like never before from that point on in school.¹⁸⁵

Bullying in both elementary school and high school is a form of harassment that is often taken for granted by parents and teachers, especially when it is tied to the enforcement of gendered lessons by peers. Jeff helps to further explain the subtle cycle of bullying: “The boys would bully by calling you names or by just being

¹⁸⁴Askew and Ross, p. 39.

¹⁸⁵Interview with Aaron, January 11, 1996, p. 1.

aggressive, and I would get very afraid. And I never fought back, (which I think is a mistake) and I never told anybody about the experiences either, like my father or my mother. So that's where the isolation starts."¹⁸⁶

I also remember a dual fear of the aggressiveness of the boys on the playground and of the immense humiliation of telling my mother about getting beaten up by other boys. I, like Jeff, kept those humiliating feelings, with me silently all these years. Doug Weatherbee in his article "'You Gotta Learn to Take Care of Yourself'" states "I never ran away from fights because doing so would have been shameful. I would have been a 'sissy' to the other boys and to my father."¹⁸⁷ There is not a safe way of dealing with bullying, either within the school system or outside of it. Because this outlet to challenge bullying behaviour does not exist, students are quite often left with two choices. Students who are bullied can fight back with violence, which theoretically, is not acceptable in the school environment but clearly thrives there. Or they can accept, the physical and verbal violence of bullies and internalize the frustration, anger, and humiliation as common sense. Either option is unhealthy for students.

Jeff began our interview by stating; "I hated school ... because I was always picked on. So I don't really think I had any good experiences. In fact, I think I dreaded going everyday. It was just a miserable experience. From the school bus to the playground, to the classroom."¹⁸⁸ Jeff's solution was simply to shut down.

I think it probably taught me to isolate myself, and sort of go into my imagination. And I think I am fighting that isolation now but I think it had a very profound, negative, isolating effect. I think that socialization at school definitely isolated me, so

¹⁸⁶Interview with Jeff, December 19, 1995, p. 6.

¹⁸⁷Doug Weatherbee, "'You Gotta Learn to Take Care of Yourself'" *Men and Masculinities: A Critical Anthology* Tony Haddad (ed.), (Toronto: 1993), p. 101.

¹⁸⁸Jeff, p.1.

much that I would hide in myself just to protect myself, from all the attacks; because I felt very attacked.¹⁸⁹

This isolation and fear of not fitting in at school was shared by many of the men participants. Due to his extremely unpleasant school experiences, Ken stated that he remembered very few of the details of his school years. However he recalled "I can think of a number of school yard events, I mean to the point that I tried to kill myself in 1949, which I think was grade one [...] I was just trying to survive it. Actually, at that point I didn't even want to survive it."¹⁹⁰ Ken explained how he attempted to cope with the daily abuse he faced at school:

I was one of the little runts that was always picked on, beat up and all that, so I don't know how it shaped me but it sure cowered me for a couple of years until my senior year in high school. A particular gang of kids had been after me for several years, but they laid off because I got involved in another gang—you know 'don't make fun of him, he's one of us now.'¹⁹¹

Ken resolved that joining a rival gang was one way he could deal with the pressures and violent bullying at school.

While there are gender(ed) expectations of boys in elementary school, puberty adds another dimension to these expectations raising issues of sex and sexuality, body image, and physical performance, to name but a few. Ed did not recall pressure to be masculine in elementary school but found high school to be a different story.

There was sort of a moment in junior high school, I'd be about thirteen, and there was a way to hold your books, and I held them like a girl. Boy did I ever learn fast. That was probably one of the times I was increasingly aware of being homosexual, so I

¹⁸⁹Jeff, p. 1.

¹⁹⁰Interview with Ken, December 7, 1995, p. 1.

¹⁹¹Ken, p. 1.

probably tried to follow the rules, which I tried to follow until I came out.¹⁹²

These rules were based around hegemonic (heterosexual) masculinity. All of the men participants knew what this "norm" of masculinity was and knew the importance of "following the rules." For instance, Matt recalled that it "seemed that [the ideal masculine guy] would have to have been somebody who is physically capable. You're strong. Right away that is an immediate aspect that you have to live up to."¹⁹³ To allow yourself to be vulnerable was to open yourself to physical and verbal violence by other students that kept hegemonic masculinity in check.

Bullying involves peers sorting other peers. It is the action of policing hegemonic masculinity. It is also so common place that parents and teachers do not give it much thought unless there is a high degree of violence involved. Rofes states that most bullying occurs when the teacher's back is turned. However, in his experience "the rare occasions when teachers would witness bullying, they uniformly failed to respond, implicitly granting sanction to the persecution of nontraditional boys."¹⁹⁴ Furthermore, bullying incorporates humiliation and shame and can destroy self-esteem in boys and young men which acts to silence boys when they become victims of bullying. The experiences of the participants in this research illustrate that student on student bullying, is truly, to quote Rofes, "terrorism" that makes everyday at school one filled with fear.

¹⁹²Interview with Ed, January 5, 1996, p. 1.

¹⁹³Interview with Matt, January 8, 1996, p. 3.

¹⁹⁴Rofes, p. 82.

The Role of Young Women — The Enforcing Dance

Some of the men respondents stated that young women played more of a “passive” role in shaping their masculine identities. Young women were more pawns or sexual conquests that bolstered their masculinities. Other men respondents felt that the role of young women was much stronger. Young women often policed young men who strayed from the masculine ideal and expected that men conform to this hegemonic ideal of masculinity. Some of the female respondents remember playing a role in demanding young men live up to “appropriate” masculine standards; others ended up rejecting this masculine standard.

While boys and young men probably learn the bulk of their masculine behaviour from other men, the influence of and interaction with girls and young women plays an important role. Hegemonic masculinity is heterocentric and therefore *requires* interaction with and/or interest in women. But women are rarely passive players in this interaction and do help to shape masculine identities.

Linda remembered that she often expected “macho behaviour” from young men. Linda explained that macho behaviour was the:

idea of never to cry, the idea to act pretty tough on the outside and like the guys on the football team, not show any feelings whatsoever, not show any deep sentiment for the other person or show any empathy for any situation that's going on in the world.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁵Interview with Linda, December 19, 1995, p. 3.

When I asked Liam about the role young women played in shaping his idea of what it meant to be a man he contrasted women with his men friends at the time.

Yah, I thought women were a lot cooler than guys. Not once did I meet a hostile girl in high school. I think they were a lot more open to personality. There were always girls that you thought were the coolest thing to be around. But that's on a friendship level. In terms of as a man... I think they were a passive influence [...] They were less judgmental, more tolerant, more supportive... letting you be what you wanted to be. [...] They didn't freak me out.¹⁹⁶

What Liam calls a "passive influence" allowed him a wider space to define his personal masculinity. They were not hostile, were less judgmental, and more tolerant. These values that Liam found in women were welcomed by him.

Aaron, on the other hand, viewed the influence of girls in elementary school in a negative light.

The overt brutality of being beat up a lot, was definitely mobs of boys, but the girls were just as cruel in a different way. I mean their method of hurt was through conversation and was more cerebral but it was just as effective. Just making me feel completely degraded and devalued. Dehumanized.¹⁹⁷

Being "dehumanized" by young women shifts the gender power dynamics. To be humiliated by a young woman can be devastating to boys and young men who are attempting to conform to a hegemonic standard of masculinity. Being humiliated and dehumanized can lead to feelings of frustration and the immense feeling of disempowerment. This frustration only strengthens the goal to achieve a very patriarchal and strongly misogynist masculine identity.

¹⁹⁶Interview with Liam, January 19, 1996, p. 7.

¹⁹⁷Interview with Aaron, January 11, 1996, p. 1-2.

At a young age, Billy was under a lot of pressure to date young women and found the whole ritual very frightening.

I remember it took me two and a half years to get the courage to ask this girl I liked out... and I didn't have a car then because we were in grade seven. In grade eight I finally asked her out. So we had to get on the bus to go to the theatre. I really liked her and she had a good time but I was still so scared I didn't get a chance to ask her out again. I remember those kinds of fears. Nothing was scarier.¹⁹⁸

The pressure for young men to date women or to have sex with them is a component to "proving" one's masculinity. Paul stated that young women "played a role, but not a conscious role. You tried to get laid, and you had to impress them or 'be masculine'"¹⁹⁹ He added that it was important to "have sex with other girls too."²⁰⁰ Here we can see the layers of masculinity as it is constructed for as Paul points out, an expectation of "being masculine" is to "get laid" in order to "be masculine." His statement also illustrates one of the (many) requirements in attaining hegemonic masculinity is objectifying women.

Dana explained that after being sexually objectified by a football player she quickly found out that she was not attracted to the masculine ideal but rather, she "pined for the wimpy type."²⁰¹ She added that she was attracted to intellect rather than brawn that gave [her] no respect."²⁰² Linda also recognized after being assaulted and nearly date raped that she was no longer attracted to the "macho" behaviour that made up hegemonic masculinity.

I saw in myself this intense machoism. I started to see this very masochistic attitude toward myself, and at times I saw myself say quite macho things and I thought, I'm obviously enforcing

¹⁹⁸Interview with Billy, December 7, 1995, p. 3.

¹⁹⁹Interview with Paul, December 5, 1995, p. 1

²⁰⁰Paul, p. 1.

²⁰¹Telephone interview with Dana, December 18, 1995., p. 1.

²⁰²Dana, p. 1

this behaviour in the men I'm around too. And we do this enforcing dance you know?²⁰³

Once again, some of these women's expectations also help to enforce an ideal of hegemonic masculinity. In an interview Siobahn reflected upon these expectations:

I think that the girls did have expectations of ways that the boys should behave. [...] I can only speak for myself but I think that there was this desire for guys to be tough and strong and so on. [...] I think that probably the girls had more to do with shaping the behaviour of the boys than we realized or would even admit to. Guys were like this force of nature, and you couldn't control them but on the other hand, I think that there were certain expectations that guys would behave in certain stereotypical masculine ways.²⁰⁴

These expectations of masculinity are again multi-layered, for young men were expected to be interested in young women who were only interested in them if they conformed to a particular definition of masculinity. Of course while all this is happening with young men, young women are also shaping their own definition of femininity of attempting to fit into the distorted hegemonic ideal of femininity.

I expected that if a guy wanted to have sex with me it proved that I was desirable therefore it proved this, that, and the other thing. And if he didn't want to then it was like a rejection and it was all devastating and so on. This is part of the set of stuff that we expected guys to be just in terms of—to make the first move, ask you out, buy you things. That was a big deal, guys were supposed to buy you things. They were supposed to take you out shopping and buy you stuff.²⁰⁵

²⁰³Interview with Linda, December 19, 1995, p. 3.

²⁰⁴Interview with Siobahn, December 6, 1995, p.7-8.

²⁰⁵Siobahn, p. 8-9.

The female participants' experiences illustrates the expectations that they had for the young men while attending school. These expectations played a part in strengthening the definition of hegemonic masculinity that in turn objectified women and enforced hetero-centric relations. It must be noted that young women also actively aided the policing of hegemonic masculinity by participating in bullying and humiliating young men. This in turn, can result in the development of stronger misogynistic attitudes in young men.

However, with this said, it must not be forgotten that the learning of hegemonic (and therefore heterosexual) masculinity and the performance of masculinity is partly played out on the bodies of young women. As Katherine Popaleni reminds her readers:

Within the context of hetero-reality, adolescent courting relationships in this society are characterized by the domination of young men over young women: they demand a young woman's dependence, and they necessitate her servitude to, and identification with young men. They are relationships in which young men establish the rules in their interests and young women accommodate.²⁰⁶

For the most part, men interviewed did not comment on their position of privilege and power over women regardless of their subordinate or counter hegemonic masculinity. This is probably due, at least in part, to the power of hegemony that helps to mystify male privilege and power-over within "common-sense" notions of masculinity. Additionally, as Alison Thomas remarks in her research on men's accounts of gender identity: "even where there is a feeling of not matching up to normative standards of masculinity, this often appears to remain suppressed, as a private dissatisfaction, rather than leading on

²⁰⁶Katherine A. Popaleni, "Violence Against Young Women in Heterosexual Courtship: Teaching Girls to Resist." *Canadian Woman Studies*, (Vol. 12, No. 1), Fall 1991, p. 85.

to a questioning of the gender role expectations themselves..."²⁰⁷ Once again, this illustrates that men's silence, oftentimes out of shame, does not allow a safe place to challenge hegemonic masculinity that privileges men over women.

Furthermore, the power of hegemonic ideology, makes it difficult for men to recognize their privilege and to contest the supposed common-sense nature of this male privilege.

²⁰⁷ Alison Thomas, "The Significance of Gender Politics in Men's Accounts of their 'Gender Identity'" *Men, Masculinities & Social Theory* Jeff Hearn and David Morgan (eds.) (London: 1990), p. 158.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

Actually the reason I'm interested in all this is because it's not something I've really thought about or discussed and I think it's about time to think about it. You're definitely opening up a part of my life I want to look at. - Jeff

This thesis has presented a small collection of experiences that help to illustrate how masculinities and masculine identities are shaped in educational institutions. I found that there are few published works that address this issue. As I began interviewing people I found that the subject of masculine identity formation in schools is a rarely spoken about, shrouded in common sense, shame, humiliation, homophobia and fear. The interviews also offered many insights into some of the ways educational institutions and the people within them enforce a hegemonic definition of masculinity that is based in homophobia, violence and misogyny.

Understanding the role educational institutions play in shaping gender(ed) identities, specifically masculinities, is important for, in Valerie Walkerdine's words: "we need to understand the relationship between those practices which not only define correct femininity and masculinity but which produce positions to occupy."²⁰⁸ The participants in this research have illustrated how schools have been major players in producing and reproducing hegemonic masculine and feminine positions to occupy. Mac an Ghaill confirms that "schools can be seen as crucial cultural sites in which material, ideological and

²⁰⁸V. Walkerdine as quoted in Máirtín Mac an Ghaill *The Making of Men*, (Buckingham: 1994), p. 46-47.

discursive resources serve to affirm hegemonic masculinity, while producing a range of masculine subject positions that young men come to inhabit.”²⁰⁹

This research has also revealed many negative experiences surrounding schooling and the shaping of the masculine identity of the participants. Poor self-esteem, and negative perceptions of body image have resulted from the participants’ experiences with masculinity in school. However, the majority of these experiences are not discussed either within the school or outside of it. Nevertheless, these memories of gendered lessons at school have remained with the participants all their lives and have shaped their personal definition of masculinity.

This research is an attempt to break the silence about masculinities in educational institutions. Schools themselves are also silent about their role influencing, shaping and policing hegemonic masculinity.

What school is mainly doing [...] is arbitrating among different kinds of masculinity and femininity. Perhaps we should say that since much of this occurs outside of the scope of any conscious policy, the school provides a setting in which one kind or another becomes hegemonic...[The school] produces other masculinities but marginalises them, while giving most honour and admiration to a tough and dominant virility.²¹⁰

The experiences of the participants have illustrated that this “tough and dominant virility” is unhealthy to both young men and young women inside and outside the school.

It must be noted, however, that there was an absence of discussion by the participants as to how masculinity was acted out in curricular subjects outside of P.E.. This may be due, in part, to the fact that P.E. was the physical and curricular space where obvious lessons of masculinity are taught. Outside of this

²⁰⁹Máirtín Mac an Ghaill *The Making of Men*, (Buckingham: 1994), p. 179.

²¹⁰S. Kessler, D.J. Ashenden, R.W. Connell, and G.W. Dowset, “Gender Relations and Secondary Schooling” in *Sociology of Education*, No. 58, p. 42., 1985.

exaggerated masculine setting it was more difficult for the participants to recognize the presence of hegemonic masculinity and masculine privilege.

Just after I completed writing up the bulk of my research I had a nightmare. In it, A Chinese boy from my high school who was often picked-on with reference to his race, his body type, and lack of strength, sat on me in front of others in my school and everyone laughed (remember, this is a dream, so anything goes). He would not get off of me when I asked him to. I could not fight him off of me because I did not know how to fight. I continued to raise my voice and shout at him to get off of me. At the point of screaming, he got off of me and I awoke. This nightmare reminded me of the amazing feeling of empowerment one gets when in the act of disempowering, especially if you feel disempowered yourself. For the boy in my dream, who in real life was often reminded of his (supposed) inferior position, seemed to enjoy dis-empowering me in the dream. Boys and young men who strive to achieve the ideal, hegemonic masculinity, are striving for a position of power — power over. When hegemonic masculinity is tied to feeling good and powerful by disempowering others most boys and young men will attempt to disempower others in order to get closer to the ideal masculinity. Empowerment by power over and disempowerment is central to hegemonic masculinity and can create a vicious circle of violence. I believe that this circle of violence must be interrupted by challenging what has come to be an accepted version of masculine behaviour, often dismissed in the words “boys will be boys.” Challenging common sense notions that are wrapped up in hegemonic masculinity can be a difficult task, that can put many young men at risk of further violence that often results in a safety based in silence. This silence extended, via hegemonic masculinity, to the men who were interviewed for this research, for they could often critically examine how hegemonic masculinity disempowered them, yet, at the same time they did/could not recognize the

position of power that they embody by simply being men. It is important to acknowledge the lack of a direct challenge to privilege and power on the part of the participants because there is a danger that lies in the participants' counter-hegemonic practices ultimately re-centring masculine privilege by shifting and re-negotiating hegemonic masculinity without radically challenging the privilege in its definition.

This thesis attempted to create both a safe space to discuss these experiences and to present them as examples that problematize hegemonic masculinity in educational institutions. While the participants' experiences challenge hegemonic masculinity they also reveal a need to completely and radically redefine masculinity itself, to widen the hegemonic definition so that it is no longer defined by male-female, man-woman power relations, homophobia, misogyny and inequality.

Educational institutions have the capacity to validate masculinities that are currently outside of the accepted hegemonic norm. However, "education is often discussed as if it involved only information, teachers tipping measured doses of facts into the pupils' heads; but that is just part of the process. At a deeper level, education is the formation of capacities for practice."²¹¹ I believe that educational institutions can and should encourage healthier definitions of masculinities and femininities in order to make the educational environment a safe place to learn and in order to enhance the learning experience for the students.

²¹¹Robert Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: 1995), p. 239.

Suggestions For Change

To begin, many of the participants in this study remembered having particularly cruel and insensitive Physical Education teachers. The focus on physical activity/performance and health can and should be separated from the gendered lessons that focus on hegemonic masculine values such as strength and power over others. The goal of teaching students how to keep the body "fit" and "healthy"²¹² and to appreciate the dynamics of the human body has been overshadowed by a focus on strength, competition and performance. As some of the participants have illustrated this can have the opposite effect of creating self-hatred for one's body and low self-esteem. If their concern is indeed to encourage bodily health and fitness, P.E. teachers need to be more sensitive to students' developing sense of body image at a time when young men are at different stages of physical development and growth.

Additionally, this research helped to illustrate that schools are not safe places for young men who do not conform to hegemonic masculinity. If schools are attempting to deal with issues of violence in the school by implementing safeguards such as "zero-tolerance" rules, they surely need at the same time to examine and actively challenge the reasons young men choose to be violent. If a part of being "acceptably" masculine means being violent, homophobic, and misogynistic, then educators should play an active part in challenging these assumptions as a step toward a safe environment. It is often overlooked that in requiring students to attend school we also require them to endure an unsafe environment.

²¹²It is important to note that the concepts of being fit and healthy are also socially and culturally constructed and must not be seen as possessing essential properties/definitions.

Recognizing the ways in which schools perpetuate a masculinity based in inequality can be the first step toward changing an oppressive masculinity in young men. The second step is for educational institutions to challenge the values deeply embedded in the definition of masculinity that young men are supposed to embody. The third step is to make the school environment a safe place for young men who are defined outside of the masculine hegemonic norm. Of course, every student who has faced violence at school knows that whatever measures are taken by the school to protect them, only apply on the school grounds. However, if schools actively participate in challenging hegemonic masculinity instead of perpetuating it, students may leave school with a better sense of self-worth, and with the knowledge that the inequality, homophobia and misogyny ingrained in hegemonic masculinity is not acceptable inside or outside the school. Just as we remember our multiplication tables years after we leave school, students can carry with them from school positive definitions and images of masculinity and femininity that are not based in inequality, power over, homophobia and misogyny.

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Tough Guys, Geeks, Bullies, Wimps and Sissy Boys: Schooling and Becoming A Man

Boys and young men learn many lessons during the years they spend in school. Some of these lessons, both inside and outside the classroom, help to shape the men they are today. What were some of the lessons you learned? What happened in school that gave you your definition of manhood? As an SFU student conducting research for my Masters Degree I would like to interview men, women, straight, gay and lesbian, who are interested in sharing school experiences that helped shape their understandings of manhood. I am interested in interviewing First Nations persons, and visible minorities as well as white folks.

If you are interested in participating in a confidential interview please call Kevin at 253-0136 and leave a message.

Appendix B

Proposed Interview Questions

Due to the qualitative nature of my research these questions below can only serve as proposed questions or possible direction for dialogue within an interview setting. The questions themselves are open ended and allow for each informant to shape their answer from their own personal experience. At the same time however, I feel these questions serve to outline discussion areas within which I can ground my research.

It will be stressed at the beginning of each interview that participants may choose not to answer questions which they feel uncomfortable with, or would prefer not to disclose.

Questions

Male participants only

How do you feel school has helped to shape the man you are today? If so, in what way?

Mandatory Physical Education classes in high-school taught me many lessons that shaped my masculine identity. What role did P.E. play in shaping your masculine identity, if at all? (have example ready)

What do you think the masculine ideal was in your school and how did you relate (or measure up) to it?

What role did young women play in shaping your masculine identity?

What role did teachers play in shaping your masculine identity?

Do you remember any masculine "rituals" that occurred in school?

What role did homophobia or heterosexism play in the shaping of masculinity in the school(s) you attended?

What role did racism play in the shaping of masculinity in the school(s) you attended?

Female participants only

Because masculinity is not constructed in a vacuum of men only I am interested to learn about the school experiences of young women with regards to

masculinity. What was the masculine ideal in your school and how did it affect the time you spent at school?

What role did masculinity play in the school(s) you attended?

How do you feel masculinity is shaped in schools?

What role do you feel young women play in the shaping of masculinities in schools, if any?

Do you remember any masculine "rituals" that occurred in school?

What role did homophobia or heterosexism play in the shaping of masculinity in the school(s) you attended?

What role did racism play in the shaping of masculinity in the school(s) you attended?

Finally, to conclude:

Are there any other questions that I have not discussed that you would like to talk about?

Appendix C

Kevin Davison
Apt. 401-1549 Kitchener St.
Vancouver, B.C.
V5L 2V8

October 15, 1995

Dear Participant,

I am a Simon Fraser University student conducting research for my Masters of Arts Degree in the Faculty of Education. My current research examines how masculinities are shaped in educational institutions.

I would like to interview men and women who are interested in discussing their experiences with masculinities while attending public schools in Canada. With your permission, the interviews will be audio-taped and partially transcribed. Selections from the transcripts that I propose to use in my thesis will be returned to those interviewed and will only be used if the informant agrees to let me use their selected words. The participant's identity will be anonymous when represented in all textual formats. Interviews will be one-on-one and the information gathered in the interviews will be completely confidential. After all research is completed transcripts will either be returned to the participants or will be destroyed upon request.

Furthermore, participants, as volunteers, have the right to withdraw from the project at any time. If there any concerns, complaints or questions about this study they can contact either myself, as the principal researcher, at home at 253-0020 or Dr. Robin Barrow, Dean of the Faculty of Education at 291-3148.

In order to insure consent of participants and to indicate that you understand the terms and conditions of the research project, I would like to ask you to sign in the spaces provided below.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and for considering granting consent to participate in my research.

Sincerely,

Kevin Davison

Statement of Informed Consent to Interview

Having been asked by Kevin Davison of the Faculty of Education of Simon Fraser University to participate in an interview, under the terms and conditions stated above, I _____, agree to so participate.

Name (please print) _____

Address _____

Signature _____ Witness _____

Date _____

As the principal researcher I, Kevin Davison, agree to respect the decisions of the participant named above with regards to all information disclosed in the interview session including any information not audio-taped or transcribed. I agree, to the best of my knowledge and ability, not to mis-represent the participant in any way and will check with the participants before any information they have disclosed to me is used in the final draft of the research.

Signed _____ Date _____

Once signed, a copy of this consent form will be provided to you.

If you would like a copy of the research upon completion please do not hesitate to contact me at 253-0020 or at the address given above.