John C. Landreau
Nelson M. Rodriguez   *Editors*

Queer Masculinities

A Critical Reader in Education

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Queer Masculinities

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John C. Landreau · Nelson M. Rodriguez
Editors

Queer Masculinities

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In loving memory of Joe L. Kincheloe, a queer educator of radical hope, love, and possibility.
For my mother Laura and my husband Damian, without whom not. (NR)

Acknowledgements

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Cage (1977), are chilling instances of the dystopian, mid-1970s childhood experience, while Kenneth Gatland and David Jefferis's educational text, *The Usborne Book of the Future: A Trip in Time to the Year 2000 and Beyond* (1979), is a prime example of utopian childhood hopes and dreams as the 1980s dawned.

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Chapter 1
Queer Masculinities in Education: An Introduction

John C. Landreau and Nelson M. Rodriguez

Introduction

In discussing the range of political and theoretical positions within masculinity politics, Chris Beasley (2005) highlights that critical masculinity studies—the progressive arm of masculinity politics—occupies a rather limited space within the whole of masculinity politics.[1] As she notes, "masculinity studies is really the intellectual voice of only a distinct part of masculinity politics—most obviously the pro-feminist part . . . What is called masculinity studies is not, I suggest, especially representative of the features of masculinity politics" (pp. 186–188). It is also the case that, within critical masculinity studies itself, queer-oriented forms of masculinity theorizing and politics garner the least amount of attention and occupy the least amount of space. This is true despite the widespread discussion within the writings of mainstream masculinity studies that gay and/or queer masculinities are central to the construction of hegemonic or dominant (heterosexual) masculinity. This "rhetoric of significance" (Beasley, 2005, p. 212) is simply not matched by the presence of scholarly discourse production *about* queer masculinities, both within and outside the field of (teacher) education.

We begin with this observation about the location of masculinity studies within masculinity politics, as well as the location of queer masculinities within the field of critical masculinity studies, to highlight at the outset three points. First, *Queer Masculinities: A Critical Reader in Education* is situated as a theoretical and political intervention against backlash reassertions of hegemonic forms of gender/masculinity and sexual/heteronormative identities, practices, and politics,

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[1] By "masculinity politics," Beasley refers to what she conceives as a broad range of academic and nonacademic discourse production about masculinity that can be understood as situated on a continuum between backlash/reassertions of masculinity, on the one hand, and profeminist, gender justice–oriented discourse that is concerned with the reform of masculinity, on the other.

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especially within the context and concerns of schooling and education. In short, *Queer Masculinities* aligns itself with profeminist masculinity studies (as it does with both queer theory and critical studies of gender and sexuality in education). Second, because knowledge production about queer masculinities occupies such a marginal space within masculinity studies (and within educational studies), we hope that our book, with its cross section of scholarly attention to the complexities and contradictions of "queer masculinities in education," will diversify—methodologically, theoretically, and politically—the overall fields of masculinity studies and (teacher) education. Third, we believe that, taken together, the essays in this volume demonstrate that any serious study of masculinity—hegemonic or otherwise—must consider the theoretical and political contributions that the concept of queer masculinity offers for a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding and study of the category of masculinity itself.[2]

The essays in this volume offer a range of scholarly approaches from empirical studies to theoretical reflections and are bound together in the shared enterprise of contributing to the fields of critical masculinity studies, educational studies, and queer studies by specifically engaging in knowledge production about the meanings and practices of queer masculinities across three spheres of education: at the K–12 level, at the collegiate level, and within popular culture as "cultural pedagogy." Taken together, the essays affirm and advance the thesis that the gendered body is a highly significant site of information, knowledge, and politics within educational contexts. In addition, although variously defined and described, almost all of the essays, in one way or another, frame their analysis in terms of Raewyn Connell's influential notion of hegemonic masculinity, viewed as the visible/invisible authority within, against, or from which all significant identities and identifications are made. That is to say, the contributors are also generally concerned with the meaning, significance, and influence of queer performances and representations of masculinity within the larger context of heteronormative educational practices and logics. Some, for instance, explore queer sites of masculinity such as representations and practices of female masculinity, or transmasculinity, while others seek to queer some of the familiar haunts of heteronormative masculinity. By taking up in these different ways the conjunction of queer(ing) with masculinity, collectively the essays offer an antiessentialist approach to gender and sexual identity that echoes and reinforces the main theoretical arguments of queer theory.

One useful way to frame the different versions of queer masculinity that emerge from the essays in this volume is by looking at how each author, in articulating the concept of queer with that of masculinity, cites, interprets, and appropriates the work of Judith Butler. Almost all of the authors quote or cite Butler (Heasley and Jachimiak are exceptions, but then again, some of their source texts are Butler inspired), which is clearly a testament to the force and significance of her ideas

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[2] For an earlier treatment of what an analysis of gay masculinity might offer to critical masculinity studies, see Dowsett (1998).

within queer theory. Most significantly, virtually all of the authors refer to Butler's influential idea of reiterative performance—or citational practice—as a model for describing and explaining gender as it operates in micro- and macro contexts. However, at the same time, the reader will find great variation in the way these authors interpret and use the idea of reiterative performance. To apply a notion of Mikhail Bakhtin's that David Ruffolo introduces in his chapter, some writers emphasize the *centripetal* aspect, and some the *centrifugal* aspect, of the notion of gender as reiterative performance. By centripetal, we mean an emphasis on *reiteration,* that is, on the regularities of culture in discourses, practices, and institutions that form a dominant heteronormative masculinity around which and against which various marginal and queer masculinities operate (see Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination,* 1981, pp. 269–275). This is what Judith Butler (2004) calls the "*regulatory* operation of power that naturalizes the hegemonic instance and forecloses the thinkability of its disruption" (p. 43). By centrifugal, we mean an emphasis on performance—that is, on what Butler thinks of as the political and affective possibilities inherent in a logic of repudiation, the possibilities, in other words, inherent in "risking the incoherence" of nonidentity (Butler, 1997, p. 149).

In the first group, the centripetists, queer masculinities tend to appear in the form of counterpositions or counteridentities that have disruptive ideological and political potential in relation to dominant masculinity. Crane and Heasley, for example, in their chapter, define queer masculinity as "the disruption of those normative attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors evidenced in the curriculum, classroom, and school culture that reinforce hegemonic heterosexuality and gender conformity." In the chapters by Martino, McCormack, Crane and Heasley, and Jachimiak, all emphasize some form of hegemonic masculinity against which queer masculinities stage their protests, fight for their truths and their legitimacy, and suffer their marginality.

In the second group, the centrifugalists, queer masculinities tend to appear as performances that make visible the gaps and fissures of a binary system of gender norms and thus open them to the possibility of transformation. The difference between this emphasis and that of the centripetists is that here the essays are deconstructive in that they emphasize the inherent vulnerability and incoherence of dominant masculinity in terms of the binary gender code that constructs it. Thus, these authors tend to frame queer masculinities in terms of what is legible and illegible in relation to the dominant code, and then go on to analyze instances of queer masculinity from a perspective that struggles methodologically to interpret *against* that code. So, for instance, Bobby Noble, in his chapter, thinks about the teaching of masculinities at the university level in terms of "unmapping" knowledge or a "project of incoherence." In his chapter, Rodriguez underscores a similar project that he frames around the notion of the "queer imaginative becoming body."

The centripetists tend to see queer in terms of its capacity to make visible and critique heteronormativity. The centrifugalists tend to see queer in those terms as well but are inclined to focus their attention not on the oppressive regularities of heteronormativity but rather on the multiplicities of gender and how those multiplicities orient the imagination away from the binary formulations of gender (including the

notion of normative heterosexual masculinity vs. nonnormative, queer masculinities, and the denigrated feminine). In that context, the centrifugalists tend to focus on the problem of how to queer assumptions and methodologies; that is, the centrifugalists tend to see queer as a transformative, transgressive mode of thought and practice rather than a position or identity.

The above remarks must be qualified. To render the perspectives and attitudes articulated in this volume as solidly centripetal or centrifugal is clearly an exaggeration. We appeal to this distinction to begin rather than end this conversation about queer masculinities in education. While the distinction is precarious, we believe it is at the same time useful for naming the tension inherent in Butler's notion of reiterated performance and for pointing toward the productive force that tension has on academic inquiry in the field of gender and sexuality studies. The truth is, as the reader will discover, if plotted on a continuum, the chapters in *Queer Masculinities* would occupy a variety of theoretical positions, ranging from a fairly conventional use of inherited identity categories to the utopian promotion of the endless possibilities of incoherence. However, one also finds many perspectives located quite queerly in between.

Part I: Queer Masculinities at the K–12 Level

Situated at the intersection between empirical study and conceptual research, in Chapter 2 titled "Queering Masculinities in Male Teachers' Lives," Wayne Martino utilizes a case study to explore the process of negotiating teacher identity in relation to challenging structures of hegemonic heteromasculinity within education. Specifically, Martino draws on queer theory to analyze how "Jamie"—a straight-identified male teacher education student—reflects on, and disidentifies with, hegemonic heterosexual masculinity by way of a complex process of cultivating embodied queer masculinity within, and against, the heteronormative culture of schooling. In this way, Martino's case study emphasizes the pedagogical significance of the body as a site of information and politics about gender and sexuality that (straight) teachers might engage for an "interventionist" gender politics that challenges and disrupts norms of heteromasculinity. Martino's discussion of practices of queer masculine identification in Jamie's case is further contextualized within the broader project and critical language of "queering heterosexuality" as a form of gender and sexual politics in education.[3] Indeed, Jamie's case highlights the need for

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[3] See Rodriguez and Pinar's (2007) *Queering Straight Teachers: Discourse and Identity in Education* for a recent example of a collection of essays that takes up the topic of queering heterosexuality and heterosexual identity within the context of the field of (teacher) education. On a more general level, it should be mentioned that the relationship between queer theory and heterosexuality marks a site of ongoing intellectual and political tension and debate. Indeed, can or should heterosexuality be included within a queer(ing) critical project? For a significant essay representative of the discourse on queering heterosexuality, see Calvin Thomas's (2000) "Straight with a Twist: Queer Theory and the Subject of Heterosexuality." For a critical response to Thomas's

teachers to be provided access to a conceptual vocabulary capable of illuminating the significance of the regulatory apparatus of heterosexuality since his politicized understanding of straight and queer masculinity came from his university training in gender studies.[4]

As with Martino, Mark McCormack, in Chapter 3, "Queer Masculinities, Gender Conformity, and the Secondary School," is interested in the complex ways that queer-oriented students and teachers negotiate institutionally regulated, dominant heteromasculinity. McCormack's study, based on participant-observation, interviews, and auto-ethnographic data, examines the issue of queer strategic resistance to gender and sexuality norms while thinking about how to best undermine the reiterative force of heteronormativity and hegemonic masculinity—or in Butler's terms, to grasp the insistence of the norm at the moment of its iteration and refuse its power—in the life of a high school. Offering three "case portraits" to think with, McCormack considers whether queer politics might be more efficacious when combined with certain forms of more traditional identity politics in challenging the regulative institutionalized modes of gender and sexual hegemony within the culture of the secondary school. In this way, his position is an intermediate one that, in Beasley's formulation of the position, "shows signs of both contributing to and retreating from identity politics as well as queer theory's 'extreme constructionist' criticisms of identity" (2005, p. 144). By working out an analysis that calls for a combination of queer subversion with identity politics, McCormack illuminates the violence inherent in the ways heteronormative masculinity is enforced (e.g., by closeting gender expression among gay men)—a violence that is largely invisible to straight students, teachers, and administrators, but whose effects McCormack argues are apparent at the level of institutional practice and ideology and at the level of student behavior and emotion.

In Chapter 4, "Phallic Girls?: Girls' Negotiation of Phallogocentric Power," Emma Renold and Jessica Ringrose contextualize queer bodies and queer discourses by way of an analysis of "the impossibility of the fantastical figure of the 'phallic girl'" within what they call "the abiding regulative rhythm of phallogocentric power" in schools. Based on three case studies the authors did with girls in southeast England and southwest Wales, and responding to previous work by Judith Halberstam and Angela McRobbie, Renold and Ringrose are particularly interested

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essay, see Annette Schlichter's (2004) "Queer at Last? Straight Intellectuals and the Desire for Transgression." For an essay that takes up both Thomas's and Schlichter's work within the context of a discussion of queer theory and pedagogy, see Rodriguez's (2007) "Queer Theory and the Discourse on Queer(ing) Heterosexuality: Pedagogical Considerations."

[4] Within the field of education, a number of scholars have been introducing a broad range of queer discourse. Earlier treatments, for example, include Deborah Britzman's (1995) highly influential essay "Is There a Queer Pedagogy?: Or, Stop Reading Straight" and William F. Pinar's groundbreaking (1998) *Queer Theory in Education*, the first collection to be published on the topic. Following these two publications, a number of scholars have produced a constellation of works that take up in various ways the relationship between queer theory/studies and education; see, for example, Blaise (2005), Kumashiro (2001), Mayo (2007), Rodriguez and Pinar (2007), and Talburt and Steinberg (2000), among many others.

in girls who do very well in school and/or who are tomboys because of the threat these girls seem to pose to the distribution of phallic power. Renold and Ringrose, in other words, are interested in mapping "some of the complex ways girls are negotiating phallic-centered sexual regulation in their everyday performances of 'girl' at school." Renold and Ringrose's observations of "phallic girls" lead them to the conclusion that these girls do not always simply reject femininity in exchange for male power (by mimicking masculinity) or masquerade as feminine while simultaneously acquiring and manipulating phallogocentric power (the top girl who is both feminine and aggressive), as many have argued; instead, these girls are often engaged in something much more interesting that cannot be contained by binary formulations of gender nor reduced to simplistic explanations that cast girls' "engagement with and taking up of masculinity or phallogocentric discourses as either mimesis or simply a renewed sexism." Rather, the girls Renold and Ringrose studied may be engaging in complex identity formations and practices that can be read as examples of queer(ing) masculinity in ways that enable, as Renold and Ringrose point out, a "more capacious theorization of femininity." They appeal to, and revitalize, notions of multiplicity that they find in Irigaray, Kristeva, and Cixous as a way of challenging any simplistic notion of the phallic girl as a return to the natural order of male supremacy. Renold and Ringrose emphasize the multiplicity of femininities they find among the girls, and citing Butler, they argue that we ought to think of those performances not as copies but rather as citations that often work to disrupt and destabilize hegemonic masculinity—that queer it, in other words—rather than reiterate its normative power. From this perspective, Renold and Ringrose argue that we miss much of the complexity of how girls are negotiating patriarchy when we assume that forms of power and authority constitute an appropriation of the phallus. This approach assumes what may not be the case: in fact, the girls they studied seemed to have a much more flexible narrative at their disposal with which to narrate their specific behaviors and attitudes.

Flexibility is a key issue for Máirtín Mac an Ghaill and Chris Haywood. In their case, they challenge researchers to approach the process of knowledge production with more flexibility of thought regarding their assumptions about, which in turn impact their analyses of, the dominant categories of heterosexuality and masculinity. Specifically, in Chapter 5, "The Queer in Masculinity: Schooling, Boys, and Identity Formation," Mac an Ghaill and Haywood present boys whose behavior seems to challenge the assumption that heterosexual boys' masculinities are always and everywhere formed based on a heterosexual matrix in which masculinity is based on a code of homophobia and denigration of the feminine. On the contrary, Mac an Ghaill and Haywood illustrate that in real boys' lives today masculinity as heterosexual performance can be misleading and have little purchase in their feelings and practices. This observation, in tandem with Renold and Ringrose who raise a similar methodological question with regard to how researchers interpret "phallic" girls' discourse and behavior, brings to the fore an important theoretical and methodological question concerning the assumptions about gender that researchers bring to their observations and reflections. In this way, Mac an Ghaill and Haywood echo Judith Halberstam's point that even "normal" (heterosexual) masculinity may *already* be queer. In this way, they focus our attention on what

may be overlooked when scholars approach the research process with assumed ideas about the constituent elements of masculinity and heterosexuality. In turn, this raises a theoretical and political dilemma at the heart of the notion of queer masculinity. On the one hand, if researchers assume the heterosexual matrix as their primary interpretive context for empirical data about boys' gender performances at school, the researchers' framework itself limits their ability to see and understand the actual variety of gendered embodiments that the researchers confront. While this is a standard methodological problem (the frame predicts the finding), it has a particular resonance in the context of a queer politics that seeks to radically destabilize the regularities of normative gender. To what extent do research methods and theoretical assumptions reiterate the power/knowledge of heteronormativity? On the other hand, if one relinquishes the theoretical and methodological assumption of the heterosexual matrix in order to queer the researcher and the research, and to better perceive what is made invisible by that matrix, then what purchase can one have on the political and emotional effects of those quite real regularities as they operate in all of our lives? Mac an Ghaill and Haywood emphasize this point more specifically as a methodological problem in a characteristically interpretive field of study and argue that in fact without a queering of methodology, and the gender categories of our analysis, we cannot see/hear what students are up to.[5] As in Renold and Ringrose's case, the students in Mac an Ghaill and Haywood's study articulate a vocabulary of gender and sexuality that is more flexible, more interesting, and more queer than might appear under the light of straight educational research.[6]

Also reflecting on the complexities, contradictions, and possibilities of particular kinds of identity formations and practices, Cris Mayo, in Chapter 6, "Tangling with Masculinity: Butchness, Trans, and Feminism," critically engages one of the key elements in queer theory: the potential for contestatory identities to challenge or disrupt the gender order. In her discussion, Mayo tracks the complexity of attempts to create more capacious gender categories and identities, such as that represented by Halberstam's notion of female masculinity, from the perspective of debates and problems that have a long history in feminist and lesbian theory and practice. From this vantage point, she critiques the notion of female masculinity as contradictory in that it levers its critical power in terms of the very gender order female masculinity means to undermine. In other words, she problematizes the identification of female masculinity with masculinity based on its perhaps inextricable connection to a politics of domination implicit in the very notion of masculinity itself. In addition, by privileging a reclaiming of masculinity, Mayo argues that female masculinity

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[5] An excellent study that complements Mac an Ghaill and Haywood's work here is C. J. Pascoe's (2007) *Dude, You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*. Utilizing poststructuralist perspectives, as well as theoretical insights from queer theory, critical masculinity studies, and sociology, Pascoe's study significantly recasts the meaning and deployment of the fag epithet within homophobic social interactions, mostly among adolescent boys in high school settings.

[6] On the topic of straight educational research, Louisa Allen explores the issue of whether straight-identified researchers can produce antinormative knowledge in her (2010) article "Queer(y)ing the Straight Researcher: The Relationship(?) between Researcher Identity and Anti-Normative Knowledge."

often depends ironically upon an absent, unreclaimed femininity and/or a disavowed butchness for its constitution. In the end, hers is a cautionary tale about the ways that identities, even new, innovative queer identities, constitute themselves in a relational field of gender and identity and how an opening here can often produce a closing there. She encourages educators to look beyond easy characterizations and easy answers when dealing with questions of student identities. Instead, she believes that educators must engage the complex "tangle" of masculinities and other gender identities by paying close attention not only to their specific forms but also to their crossings and simultaneities.

In Chapter 7, the last in this first section of *Queer Masculinities*, Robert Heasley and Betsy Crane pay close attention to the topic of heteronormativity and its impact on masculine identity formations and practices within school culture.[7] From this vantage point, Heasley and Crane make an argument for the benefits and advantages of queering the classroom in their chapter contribution titled "Queering Classes: Disrupting Hegemonic Masculinity and the Effects of Compulsory Heterosexuality in the Classroom." They begin their chapter with a review of the research on the deleterious effects of rigid adherence to heteronormativity for school-age boys, effects that include lower emotional intelligence, high rates of violence, a reduced range of human possibility especially for those boys who "hide in the shadow" of masculinity but do not themselves participate in heteronormative masculine violence, and of course highly negative effects on "un-masculine" boys. Normative expectations and projections on the part of teachers and administrators unnecessarily reinforce the values and behaviors of heteronormative masculinity, creating an institutionalized loop that disciplines masculinity. At the same time, and for this very reason, schools represent an opportunity to "provide a setting where a broader menu can be introduced and gender/sexual meanings, expressions, and experiences boys encounter can create new possibilities of what it can mean to be male." Queering the classroom, Beasley and Crane argue, has to go way beyond simply protecting girls, and soft boys, from abuse. This does nothing to unmoor heteronormative masculinity from its secure footings. Queering the classroom has to involve providing leadership for radical cultural change.

Part II: Queer Masculinities at the Collegiate Level

Exploring the university dance floor as a potentially transgressive cultural space for unmooring—that is, for destabilizing—heteronormative masculinity is the general theme taken up by Grant Peterson and Eric Anderson in Chapter 8, "Queering

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[7] For examples of recent research that have attempted to illuminate the workings of heteronormativity in educational contexts, see Endo, Reece-Miller, and Santavicca (2010) and Rudoe (2010). Useful studies that utilize popular culture to illustrate the entrenched force of heteronormativity in the school culture include studies by Esposito (2009) and Richardson (2008). For an illuminating study that takes up the topic of heteronormativity by examining the issue within the context of teacher education research, see Stiegler (2008).

Masculine Peer Culture: Softening Gender Performances on the University Dance Floor." Their chapter, the first in this second section on queer masculinities at the collegiate level, begins with an intellectual history of masculinity studies and queer studies that runs parallel to an abbreviated social history of homophobia and gay oppression. The point of the parallel social and intellectual histories is to highlight "today's new cultural formations of gender and sexual categories [and practices]" that have made possible what the authors call the "homosexualization of hetero-sexual men." What historical shifts, in other words, have helped to facilitate the emergence of queer identity formations and practices among straight guys; and, within the context of educational locations—such as the university dance floor of masculine peer culture—how do we make sense of these forms of queer mas-culinities as a gender and sexuality politics? Are they a reflection, for example, of wider evolving nonhegemonic forms of gender and sexual embodiments among young straight men that, in turn, have been significant in creating new pathways for transformative social and intimate/erotic relations between them?

Specifically, Peterson and Anderson argue that the increased homophobia in the 1980s and early 1990s, on the heels of the AIDS epidemic, brought with it an increase in heteromasculinity and social distance between men. Today, they argue, we live in an age of decreased cultural homophobia that engenders an opening up of physical and emotional contact between straight men.[8] Signs of this decreased homophobia are newly possible masculinities such as metrosexuality, as well as the blithe existence of the choice of sexuality that one makes on Internet sites such as Facebook. Their observations of straight men dancing erotically together on the university dance floor seem to substantiate this claim and to argue for a greater emphasis on agency and the possibilities of social change. In the "excessive repeti-tions" of rhythms and lyrics on the dance floor, space opens up for kinds of gender agency among heterosexual men that transgress the boundaries of heteronorma-tivity and creates a space for new formulations of masculinity and new narratives for same-sex desire and expression. Thus, drawing from gender, queer, and per-formance theories, Peterson and Anderson suggest that the behavior of straight men on the dance floor highlights the transformative possibilities that embodied queer masculine identity formations and practices offer for moving beyond restric-tive and orthodox gender and sexual identities and ways of being. Such behavior also illuminates the ongoing shifting meanings and everyday lived experiences of

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[8] Such a decrease in cultural homophobia may be understood as connected to, and partially the result of, a broader global trend in what Jeffrey Weeks (2010, p. 102) refers to as the "challenge of 'detraditionalization,'" whereby "the fixed points which seemed to organize and regulate our sexual beliefs and morals—religious, familial, heterosexual, monogamous—have been radically undermined during the past century." This has meant, in turn, that a growing number of people are turning to themselves, rather than to tradition, to work out their personal morals and ethics on a range of different issues, including on matters related to sexual and erotic life. According to Weeks (2010), this new individualism has generated "a new pluralism of beliefs and behaviors abroad, going beyond a diversity of sexual activities to a wide range of patterns of relationships reflecting generational, cultural, ethnic, communal and political difference" (p. 102).

gender and sexuality that necessitate a newly theorized appraisal of "inclusive" masculinity.[9]

In Chapter 9, "Does Masculinity Have a Race?: Queering White Masculinities," Bobby Noble takes up the *overinclusive* white, nontrans subject as the hegemonic site of analysis and emphasis within contemporary masculinity studies. Noble specifically focuses his reflections on a graduate seminar on masculinity that he taught in the Graduate Program in Women's Studies at York University, Toronto. The general aim of his course is to queer masculinity in the classroom through a kind of crisis-producing approach to the very notion of masculinity and identity. That is, drawing on Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's idea that ignorance plays a vital role in the production of meaning, Noble describes his pedagogy in the class as using his own transembodiment of masculinity and whiteness as a lever with which to pry open a Pandora's box of questions and problems. In other words, he uses the unintelligibility of his trans-body with the aim of decentering normative fictions based on notions of the real, the true, and the authentic. He describes the aim of his pedagogical approach as rendering "visible the racially overdetermined hegemonic subject of masculinity studies." In this way, Noble taps into an important general critique of masculinity studies that has been made by feminist, gay/queer, and/or race studies scholars: namely, that it is still largely centered on white, straight men. Noble's chapter highlights and critiques the prevailing whiteness of masculinity studies while rendering visible, in a critical way, the subject of transsexual masculinities. More specifically in terms of his pedagogical project, Noble engages in a strategy that entails a queering, or making incoherent of the universal masculine subject— who is both white and nontrans—by way of a process he calls "unmapping." One of the most difficult things for white, nontrans students, at least in Noble's experience in this seminar, is to be able to visualize and speak about their own subject positions in terms of the colonial, racialized, and gendered histories and social structures in which they are embedded. The rendering-incoherent of whiteness and masculinity makes visible what was invisible and thus makes it impossible to continue doing business as usual. This is the political force and significance of queer masculinity in the sense that Noble uses it. One of the interesting questions Noble contends with is how to "stage" racial incoherence in a mostly white classroom. His answer to this challenge is to queer the gendered and racialized logic of the languages of masculinity through a pedagogy of unmapping—a pedagogy that uses the language of white masculinity against itself in the form of the transgendered masculinity of the professor himself and in the form of a self-reflexive focusing on the intersectionality of whiteness and masculinity.

John C. Landreau, in Chapter 10, "Queer Listening as a Framework for Teaching Men and Masculinities," also focuses on "the languages of masculinity," but in his

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[9] For a discussion of the topic of "inclusive" masculinity within the context of an analysis of the construction of masculinity among college-age heterosexual male cheerleaders, see Anderson's (2005) study "Orthodox and Inclusive Masculinity: Competing Masculinities among Heterosexual Men in a Feminized Terrain." For a more recent and extensive treatment of the topic, see Anderson's (2009) book *Inclusive Masculinity: The Changing Nature of Masculinities*.

case by comparing the languages utilized in three versions of a course on Men and Masculinities taught by three different professors at his home institution, The College of New Jersey. Unlike Noble (and later Waite), Landreau contends with the problem of how to queer masculinity and gender pedagogy from the perspective of what one might call, with purposeful irony, the stolen authenticity of straight, white masculinity. As a result of his comparative analysis of the course, he proposes a pedagogy of "queer listening" that combines an attention to queer theory and to rhetoric. As an approach to pedagogical practice, the idea of queer listening begins with the intention to dislocate the familiar and the hegemonic through critical reading practices that characterize "superordinate studies." However, queer listening deepens and expands that intention through a course orientation that places queer texts at the center of knowledge-making about masculinities. It is particularly effective, Landreau argues, when a straight, white professor uses his privileged subject position, and the precedent trustworthiness of his syllabus, to embody this kind of material commitment to the epistemological value of nonhegemonic voices for the construction of knowledge about masculinity. A parallel commitment to academic rigor is also crucial, he argues, if students are to develop the motivation, conceptual tools, and modes of thinking to overcome resistances in order to be able to listen to the familiar with unfamiliarity and to listen to the unfamiliar without insisting on identification as the only context for communication and meaning. In sum, he argues that the best way to advance a transformative feminist agenda in a course on men and masculinities is to actively queer the knowers and the knowledge of masculinity in this way.

As with Noble and Landreau, Stacey Waite in Chapter 11, "Becoming the Loon: Queer Pedagogies and Female Masculinity," reflects on the question of queer masculinity and gender pedagogy in the university. She is keenly interested in the theoretical and practical questions concerning education and the performance of the body. What does the body say and teach? How is the body interpreted? What bodies are legitimate, and how do bodies function to legitimate pedagogical practice? In particular, Waite uses Kristeva's notion of abjection and Butler's notion of melancholia to think about how an "impossible" teacher body, such as one performing female masculinity, can disrupt student orientation. One of the most compelling aspects of Waite's chapter is that she embodies her theoretical concern with carving new pathways of queer learning by disrupting the analytical mode of academic prose with a poetic, personal narrative in italics. Through the metaphor of the loon (that most unusual bird), she tells bits and pieces of her own story of female masculinity. In this way, Waite's gender-ambiguous trans identity, embodied both within her writing style and genderqueer(ing) pedagogy, can be described as "someone whose embodied self [exists] in a netherworld constituted by the margins of overlapping identity categories. Such a position involves recognizing that identity categories are permeable, undecidable, constantly shape-shifting" (Sullivan, 2003, p. 116). Waite's "shape-shifting" prose that shuttles back and forth between narrative and theoretical discursive modes serves to keep the reader off balance but also, quite cannily, to orient him or her in a shifting space between solidities. Waite explores the pedagogical problems and opportunities that emerge from embodying a "stolen" masculinity by

challenging her reader to imagine those issues from somewhere between the theoretical and empirical space of the classroom and another place, narrated lyrically, in which she grapples with the specific, lived effects of inhabiting the awkward, beautiful body of the loon.

In Chapter 12, "Trading Gender: University Spaces as a Facilitator for Transgressive Embodiment of Women in Male-Dominated Trades," Louisa Smith focuses not on the disruptive possibilities that queer performances of masculinity have for the dominant gender order but rather on the disruptive pressures the dominant gender order can have on queer lives. In this sense, she is somewhat less sanguine than many of the contributors to this volume about that strand of queer theory that celebrates disruptive and incoherent performances of gender in terms of their ability to destabilize the gender order. Smith's research focus is on queer life stories and, for this introductory chapter, on the life stories of "Zadie" and "Lisa," two women in the building trade in Australia. Smith's retelling of Zadie and Lisa's stories is preceded by a review of significant theoretical approaches to queer gender embodiment—queer theory and sociological theories of gender embodiment—that then makes possible her use of their stories in two important ways. First, it enables Smith to apply influential models of queer masculinity and gender embodiment to both cases, and second, it allows Smith to use their cases to reread (and criticize) those theoretical models from the point of view of their embodied experience. Zadie does not self-identify as masculine, or male bodied. However, because she became a skilled laborer in a profession that, prototypically, is a privileged site of male embodiment, she is often subject to misinterpretation, derision, and threat because she is identified by others as a masculinized woman. Thus, the primary gender challenge for Zadie is not how to embody queer masculinity or femininity, or how to self-identify, but rather how to negotiate a social world that identifies her as a gender contradiction and how to deal with the problems and issues that result from that identification. In Zadie's testimony, she experiences her laboring body in contradictory ways not because she is internally conflicted or confused about her gender, but because of the cultural presuppositions about gender that make her body into a problem. Interestingly, Zadie's insights into the ways gender works on the body, and the ways the queer experience of the body provides a frame of reference for understanding the force and effects of gender on the social world, are enabled principally by her experience at the university where she was politicized by radical feminism and socialism.

Lisa's story is similar to Zadie's, except that she worked in the building trades before going to university and was subjected to constant harassment and discrimination during her four-year apprenticeship for being wrong bodied. After attending university, she fashions a retrospective analysis of her experience based on the critical skills and knowledge about gender that she gained in school. She now attributes her inability to stand up to harassment and discrimination to her lack of intellectual tools to understand and cope with the situation. Smith perceptively uses Zadie and Lisa's stories to argue that what is most important about gender embodiment, especially in educational contexts, is neither the sociological insight that socially imposed gender identifications are constraining and inevitable nor the queer theory

insight that gender identifications simply don't match the way people actually conduct their lives, but rather that "one is enabled with the skills, knowledge and resources to recognize what gender is doing so that you can do something with it." Queer masculinity, she argues, is a question of attaining the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively engage in bodily practices that transgress the dominant gender order. This is the value of gender education: to prepare students not to "be" queer but rather to engage in queer bodily practices that enable them to disrupt the gender order while keeping hold of a sense of self.

Part III: Queer Masculinities and Cultural Pedagogies

In this last section of *Queer Masculinities*, the focus shifts from the more traditional educational locations of K–12 schooling and the university to another equally significant site of teaching and learning: namely, that of (popular) culture. The chapters here examine the complex intersections between pedagogy and cultural politics in a range of cultural forms that extend from literature to television and documentary film. In Chapter 13, Jeffery Dennis explores his coming of age as a gay man by considering the role that popular TV shows played in his imagination in "Fighting Fairies, Gazing at Men: How to Become a Queer Reader." Quite provocatively, he takes us on a tour of the shows that meant so much to him in 1969–1970 and provides us with a vision of how he read same-sex desire in those shows. One of the most interesting aspects of his exploration is how he demonstrates the reading and learning strategies of an adolescent boy who "knows" that opposite-sex desire is the truth, but who secretly finds same-sex desire embodied in hegemonic texts. Implicitly, this opens up a realm of study concerned with the range of knowledges and pedagogies possible in the context of the texts of popular culture, and by extension of any text whatsoever. Dennis's chapter encourages us to think about how to read against the grain and about the reading experience of someone who does not easily or comfortably belong to a hegemonic interpretive community. He also demonstrates the importance of cultural context to interpretation by asking how queer readings are possible in a culture where interpretive communities are shaped by hegemonic representations of heterosexual desire. How do queer readers learn to listen and remember selectively? How do they do queer decoding? How do they learn to construct counternarratives that enable them to "misread" the popular culture whose dominant message is that they don't exist? Dennis argues that queer reading comes about through an interaction between text and expectation, between text and reader desire. He describes the popular culture texts that were amenable to queer reading in his childhood as having one, or some combination of, the following three qualities: male beefcake, lack of heterosexual interest, same-sex plot lines. At the same time, he argues that queer reading is not a matter of content per se but rather requires desire and expectation on the part of the reader. By implication, when this kind of desire is given concrete representation, the pedagogy of queer reading can then take place outside the privacy of the closet as well as inside.

In Chapter 14, "'Please Sir! Can I Come Out of the Closet and into the Classroom?': British Low Culture and Representations of Queer Masculinities in Education," Peter Jachimiak provides an interesting contrast to Dennis's chapter in that Jachimiak emphasizes the heterosexist force of English pop culture texts from the same period. In his research, he investigates the "pedagogical role of both the *presence* and, perhaps more importantly, the *absence* of queer masculinities in the cultural representations of schools, schooling and schoolchildren." He concludes that, in general, these texts "implicitly reproduce the heterosexual status quo, while, simultaneously, suppressing homosexuality." He sees queerness in films about schools in England in terms of different, or off-center, masculinities that are portrayed. Jachimiak's main point is that unhegemonic masculinities are portrayed as camp or queer but that the representations are constructed for a heterosexual implied reader, one that reads camp/off-center, as queer (in the old sense of odd, not right, etc.). At the same time, he argues for a rereading of British Low Culture texts in order to highlight the queer masculinities that are, indeed, always there but covered up. Indeed, he insists "that, with its proliferation of queer 'all-boys-together,' 'softies,' 'teddy bears,' 'pooves,' and so on, British Low Culture should be reconceptualized along the following discursive lines: 'We're queer, we were here all along, and we're here to stay.'" From this perspective, for Jachimiak, taking up a range of queer masculinities *as* queer masculinities can provide one way to contribute to a public pedagogy about gender and sexuality that potentially offers a more capacious understanding of the complexity, contradictions, and forms of these categories. Such a broadening of understanding may be more pressing now, Jachimiak suggests, in light of a multiplying of changing embodiments globally. As he explains: "there is an urgent need to reexamine these British Low Culture texts if there is any hope of encouraging a radical overhaul of public perceptions of gender and sexuality."

In Chapter 15, "Coming Undone: James Baldwin's *Another Country* and Queer Pedagogy," Dennis Carlson is also interested in examining queer masculinity as an enabling concept to think with, though in his work he deploys the concept as a critical, analytical tool to illuminate the political promise of attending to the overlapping "messiness" of identity categories and struggles. Specifically, Carlson offers a provocative rereading of James Baldwin's *Another Country* in terms of its nuanced portrayal of queer masculinity as always imbricated with other identity categories such as race and class. In this context, Carlson sees Baldwin's work not only as a forerunner of queer theory but also as an important work that can be usefully read to address and build on an important criticism aimed at queer theory: namely, that queer theorists have failed "to deal adequately with how sexuality and gender intersect with other facets of our identities: race, ethnicity, nationality, (dis)ability, age, class, and religious affiliation. This [critique] has had the positive effect of spurring on intersectional analyses" (Giffney, 2009, p. 3). Carlson shows in his analysis of Baldwin's important novel, and the three "queer" characters in it, that Baldwin eschewed identity politics and liberal humanism in favor of those "who advanced a form of intersectional democratic cultural politics that is generally consistent with the queering of masculinity, and with the queering of one-axis, binary

oppositional identity struggles." Baldwin's characters, Carlson argues, embody the negative effects of internalized oppression, and the "human consequences of systems of oppression organized around binary oppositional identity." Thus, Carlson argues that Baldwin's novel is a meditation on the terrible, damaging effects of internalized oppression, and on the severe limitations of a self constructed in the mirror of the other, or, to use Carlson's own words, the limitations of "the tightly-scripted logic of . . . a relational production of identity." As significant, and related, it can also be read as a meditation on the pedagogical importance of imagining spaces and opportunities for lives lived queerly, not utterly bound to the norms of dominant, binary identities. In this sense, Baldwin's novel, by way of Carlson's analysis, can be read as situating and problematizing a discussion of identity (categories) within both a language of critique and a language of possibility by linking that discussion to an important qualifying point that has been made about queer theory. As queer studies scholar Noreen Giffney puts it: "queer project's aim is [not] to rid the world of identity, rather queer theory seeks ways in which to think about the following question posed by Judith Butler: 'how to use the [identity sign] in such a way that its futural significations are not *foreclosed*?'" (2009, p. 6). In Carlson's case, he utilizes the "identity sign" of queer masculinity as a concept through which to read Baldwin's novel as offering a critical yet, in the end, hopeful queer commentary about the ontological possibilities that open up when thinking about the self constituted *as intersectional*: a self, as Carlson notes, that is "forged out of an ensemble of race, class, gender, and sexual identities that are dynamic and open rather than closed and fixed."[10]

Nelson Rodriguez continues the conversation about the complexities, yet promise, of dynamic, open-ended identities in Chapter 16, "Queer Imaginative Bodies and the Politics and Pedagogy of Trans Generosity: The Case of *Gender Rebel*." He analyzes the documentary *Gender Rebel* (2006) as an example of a text that can be read as participating in a cultural politics that expands the terms of "gendered humanness" by challenging normative understandings of what constitutes the "proper" gendered body for biological females. In his analysis, Rodriguez focuses on the lives of two "women" whose genderqueer embodiments can be read as a complex personhood under the sign of the masculine (Halberstam, 2001) that enables the "women" to work on undoing restrictive gender norms, as these have played out on the site of the body, in order to inaugurate more livable lives. From this perspective, the narratives about genderqueer embodiments represented in *Gender Rebel*

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[10] The sense of multiplicity, fluidity, and dynamism associated with a self constituted intersectionally—that is, a self that continually emerges at the intersection of any number of overlapping discursive categories—suggests that any one aspect of social identity, such as gender or sexuality, is, in ongoing fashion, impacted by some other aspect, such as race or class. From this perspective, the intersectional self can be understood within the terms of the category queer. To borrow Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's well-known and often-cited queer statement, the intersectional self, defying as it does the notion of unitary and static identity, represents "the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality aren't made (or *can't* be made) to signify monolithically" (1993, p. 8).

become one way to "relate the problematic of gender and sexuality to the tasks of persistence and survival" (Butler, 2004, p. 4). Rodriguez's specific analysis is situated within the broader context of what Judith Butler refers to as the "New Gender Politics that has emerged in recent years, a combination of movements concerned with transgender, transsexuality, intersex, and their complex relations to feminist and queer theory" (2004, p. 4). Along these lines, by drawing from the theoretical insights of queer and trans (gender) theories, his chapter explores the notion of the "queer imaginative body," in which queer imagination is understood as a form of "embodied criticality" functioning as a politics that undermines the hegemonic terms of gender arising from a system of bigenderism. Situated within a discussion of the politics and pedagogy of trans generosity, the chapter concludes with a critical reflection on the pedagogical significance of taking up queer masculine embodiment (e.g., the body of the female-to-male [FTM] trans man) as a site of generosity within the women's studies classroom. In this way, Rodriguez advocates what he refers to as a pedagogy of trans generosity. He argues that, because the queer masculine embodiments of biological females run the risk of being positioned across any number of cultural and social locations as a threatening "Other," especially in relation to delimited understandings of the category woman, a pedagogy of trans generosity becomes a necessary critical intervention to challenge this viewpoint. Such a pedagogy, Rodriguez attempts to initially work out in his chapter, provides an opportunity to situate queer masculine embodiments within a language of possibility that draws attention to the innovative quality of these embodiments as sites of generosity. That is, by way of their ongoing processes of becoming, they generously expand the meanings, as well as the possible range of lived experiences, of the (female) body and of gender/sexual identity in ways that queer these concepts so that they provide greater sustainability to a broader array of bodies and identities. From this perspective, a pedagogy of trans generosity opens up the possibility of framing queer embodiments more generally as forms of "bodily generosity" that can potentially become a resource for students in terms of imagining their own bodies and identities as sites of "endless becoming."

In the final chapter of *Queer Masculinities*, David Ruffolo also explores the potentialities of queer identities and bodies by specifically using a number of Bakhtinian concepts in "Educating-Bodies: Dialogism, Speech Genres, and Utterances *as* the Body." He begins with a short intellectual history of queer theory from its dual beginnings in gay/lesbian political activism and poststructuralist theorizing in academia on gender and identity (Warner and Sedgwick) whose overall purpose is to disrupt what Butler calls the "matrix of intelligibility" between sex, gender and sexuality. The major insights and political moves of queer theory are as follows: (a) to move from accepting gender/sexuality minorities to critiquing the production of the majoritizing/minoritizing practices; (b) a parallel critique of the logic of binary identity structures in terms of the fact that the binary structure means that identities are dependent upon what they are not to be what they are; (c) the proposition of queer as a kind of third space outside binaries: not fixed to an "other" for its intelligibility but rather committed to a kind of flexibility and fluidity, queer as verb not noun, an open materiality; and (d) Butler's notion of performativity

that uses a Foucaultian genealogical approach that conceives of gender and sexuality as produced by discourse: a performed reiteration of norms, a copy with no original. Gender precedes sex. He also reviews some newer reflections on queer theory (Noble and others) that argue the necessity for queer theory to think not only against the matrix of intelligibility of sex, gender, and sexuality but also race, class, and the global political economy. With this theoretical background in place, Ruffolo frames his contribution as an extension of Butler's notion of performativity through an appeal to Bakhtin's dialogical theory of language. If gender is discursive, Ruffolo argues, Bakhtinian notions of dialogue, heteroglossia, chronotope, utterance, and speech genre are a more productive and insightful way to think about the discursivity of identities. If the metaphor that dominates a Butlerian vision of gender is the copy, the metaphor that dominates a Bakhtinian vision would be the quotation. The notion of a copy (a reiteration of norms) Ruffolo argues is more limiting than the idea of a quotation in dialogue with larger patterns (norms or genres of speech and practice). In this setting, Ruffolo takes up an analysis of (queer) masculinity that shifts from a focus on performative masculinities to masculinities dialogically negotiated in highly contextualized moments. Identities, bodies, and educational processes can all be imagined under the sign of dialogue as a kind of unfinalizable relating-to that *happens* in time. As quotation, identities are always becoming, always new creations based upon their use and appropriation of norms/genres. In this way, queer masculinities, including those operating within educational locations, are, as Ruffolo notes, educating bodies in the sense that the "body does not reiterate existing forms of queer masculinities because queer masculinities are produced in the dialogical moment." Education, then, is not something that happens to the body; rather, education *is* the body. The advantage of this approach, according to Ruffolo, is its more useful, more mobile conception of agency as a potential that happens in relation to others and in relation to the specific centrifugal and centripetal historical forces that give shape to any particular moment, interaction, or institution.

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Part I
Queer Masculinities at the K-12 Level

Chapter 2
Queering Masculinities in Male Teachers' Lives

Wayne Martino

Introduction

In this chapter, I draw on queer theory to elaborate an analytic framework for making sense of one male teacher's experiences of masculinity. I illustrate both the application of the theory and its potential for interrogating, more broadly, the norms governing male teachers' identity management strategies in schools (see Griffin, 1991; Martino & Frank, 2006). This focus on one male teacher's negotiation of his identity serves as the basis for teasing out the pedagogical significance of embodied masculinity. In other words, I am interested in examining how questions related to embodied subjectivity inform one male teacher's reflections on his own pedagogical practice as a high school English teacher. This teacher's critical reflection on his own enactment of masculinity and what this means in terms of treating his own body as a text raises crucial questions about the relationship between identity and pedagogy within the institutionalized and heteronormative context of schooling. Queer theoretical frameworks are posited as enabling a deeper understanding of the "discourses that produce teachers' own subjectivities and epistemologies" and, in this sense, are deployed to foreground how male teachers' reflections on the limits imposed by hegemonic heterosexual masculinity can become "a source of constructive insight about resisting heteronormativity" (Petrovic & Rosiek, 2007, p. 217). Hence, what is highlighted are forms of identification that govern male teachers' very refusal to "properly normalize themselves" within the terms set for them by the heteronormative limits for determining *acceptable* masculinity and a legitimate male teacher identity (Britzman, 1995, p. 157).

It is in this sense that queer theory provides an analytic framework for making sense of one male teacher's commitment to queering heterosexuality by a process of disidentification with the heteronormative apparatus for determining what is to count as legitimate and desirable embodied masculinity. This is consistent with

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Britzman's (1998) assertion that "queer theory proposes to think [of] identities in terms that place the problem of production of normalcy and that confound the intelligibility of the apparatuses that produce identity as repetition" (p. 81). Thus, the focus in this chapter is on examining the identificatory structures that govern how one prospective male teacher makes sense of his own masculinity and the pedagogical significance of this for engaging in "a critical practice of queering heterosexuality" (Rodriguez, 2007, p. 290). In other words, the focus is how this teacher's understanding of his own identity is structured by his particular access to discourses about the gendered body as a potential signifier for queering masculinity and heteronormativity. The implications of this case for queering masculinities more broadly in male teachers' lives are elaborated in terms of the pedagogical significance of embodying masculinity as a site for interrupting heteronormativity.

The Significance of Queer Theory

By drawing on both Britzman's (1995, 1998) and Butler's (1990, 1993) understanding of queer theory and performativity, I present an analysis of the struggles of one straight-identifying male teacher candidate.[1] The subject, Jamie, was chosen from a cohort of interviewees because he displayed a concerted commitment to entertaining identificatory possibilities that challenge the imperatives of normalcy governing his understanding of the limits of enacting hegemonic heterosexual masculinity. By drawing on this interview, I tease out the significance of Jamie's attempt to re-think his performative repertoires as a teacher vis-à-vis the pedagogical significance of embodying masculinity (see Petrovic & Rosiek, 2007). As Britzman (1998) argues, the problem in education relates to "how one comes to think, along with others, [about] the very structures of signification in avowing and disavowing forms of sociality and their grounds of possibility: to question, along with others, one's form of thinking, one's form of practice" (pp. 84–85) (see also Rodriguez & Pinar, 2007; Pinar, 1998). The decision to include a focus on a straight male teacher's lived experiences of masculinity in this chapter, therefore, is central to understanding his attempts to resist heteronormativity and, as Petrovic and Rosiek (2007, p. 217) point out, can provide constructive insights into the relationships among knowledge, teaching, and sexual identity. They further argue that:

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[1] This interview is drawn from a small-scale research project funded by Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia, in 2000. The study involved interviewing 6 teacher candidates in Canada and 10 in Australia. The subjects were asked in the interviews to talk about why they had chosen to become a teacher, whether they thought there were any issues that influenced them as males training to be teachers, and what they had learnt about being a teacher from their practicum experiences. Toward the end of the interview, the subjects were also asked specifically to reflect on specific issues of masculinity, how they defined it and what they saw its significance to be in their lives as prospective teachers.

...a conception of teacher knowledge is required that addresses the way heteronormative attitudes among teachers interact with teachers' professional, moral, and religious identity; the way these identities enable and constrain teaching practice; and the way teachers negotiate these dynamics. (p. 227)

This conception of teacher knowledge pertains directly to the political project espoused by Rodriguez (2007) vis-à-vis queering heterosexuality. He encourages a critical practice that involves straight-identifying subjects responding to and understanding the basis of their own heterosexual subjection and what this might mean in terms of how they might relate differently to themselves and to GLBTQ (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer) others (p. 282). In other words, by providing male teachers with the opportunity to critically analyze their own gendered and sexual identities, further insight into the identificatory possibilities for disavowing and troubling the grounds of intelligibility upon which hegemonic heterosexual masculinity is coalesced, solidified, and recognized can be gleaned (Butler, 1990). This in turn provides the basis for developing a deeper understanding of the ways in which gendered subjectivity is connected to male teachers' pedagogical practices and relations with their students in schools (see Martino, 2008a, 2008b; Martino & Frank, 2006).

Butler's theoretical account of gender performativity vis-à-vis the regulatory apparatus of heterosexuality is also significant in helping to make sense of the male body as a signifier within the pedagogical space of the classroom/school. According to Butler (1993), this grid of intelligibility through which bodies, genders, and desires are naturalized needs to be understood in terms of a logic of repudiation, as signified by a disavowal of the feminine and, hence, a forcible iteration of specific norms:

The practice by which gendering occurs, the embodying of norms, is a compulsory practice, a forcible production, but not for that reason fully determining. To the extent that gender is an assignment, it is an assignment which is never quite carried out according to expectation, whose addressee never quite inhabits the ideal s/he is compelled to approximate. Moreover, the embodying is a repeated process. (p. 231)

However, as indicated above, the process of embodying masculinity cannot be understood as a fixed, stable, or complete process; there are always negotiations, slippages, and, indeed, interruptions. In this sense, I am concerned to examine how one straight-identifying male teacher consciously reflects on his embodiment of gender and attempts to disrupt the repetition governing the citation of heteronormative ideals of hegemonic masculinity. The significance of the materialization of such critical reflection as it relates to both his own identity management and pedagogical practices as a male teacher is the focus of the case study presented in this chapter. In other words, what can we learn from a straight male teacher candidate about the *critical practice of queering heterosexuality* once the epistemic regime of presumptive heterosexuality that underscores the constitution of idealized hegemonic masculinity is brought into question (see Rodriguez, 2007, p. 290)? It is this materialization of this teacher's commitment to confronting the necessary limits of an

identity politics that is grounded in "a heterosexual matrix for conceptualizing gender and desire" that warrants further investigation in light of developing a deeper understanding of the pedagogical significance of the critical practices governing the resignification of masculinity as a bodily category (Butler, 1990, p. xii).

In this sense, the focus is on the symbolic power and the norms governing the formation and negotiation of a corporeally enacted masculinity for male teachers and what this actually means in terms of enabling and/or constraining their teaching practices (Petrovic & Rosiek, 2007). As Butler (1993, p. 232) highlights, given that gender identity is not so much "the product of a choice [as it is] the forcible citation of a norm, one whose complex historicity is indissociable from relations of discipline, regulation, punishment," what does it mean for male teachers—in terms of their identity management and pedagogical practices—to be refusing the citation of gender norms that would otherwise lead these teachers to qualify as acceptably masculine subjects? This relates to the commitment as outlined by Butler to addressing the regulatory apparatuses of compulsory heterosexuality governing the policing and shaming of gender as a heteronormative project of identity stabilization and solidification. However, Butler (1990, p. x) foregrounds the fiction and illusion of such stability in her theoretical account of troubling gender categories that support gender hierarchies and compulsory heterosexuality:

> It is important to emphasize that although heterosexuality operates in part through the stabilization of gender norms, gender designates a dense site of significations that contain and exceed the heterosexual matrix. Although forms of sexuality do not unilaterally determine gender, a non-causal and non-reductive connection between sexuality and gender is nevertheless crucial to maintain. Precisely because homophobia often operates through the attribution of damaged, failed, or otherwise abject gender to homosexuals, that is calling gay men "feminine" or calling lesbians "masculine," and because the homophobic terror over performing homosexual acts, where it exists, is often also a terror over losing proper gender ("no longer being a real or proper man" or "no longer being a real and proper woman"), it seems crucial to retain a theoretical apparatus that will account for how sexuality is regulated through the policing and shaming of gender. (Butler, 1993, p. 238)

As will be illustrated in this chapter, the reiteration of norms governing the construction of sex/gender identity categories, while often culminating in producing an overall naturalized effect, are always undermined by potential instability:

> Crucially, then, construction is neither a single act nor a causal process initiated by a subject and culminating in a set of fixed effects. Construction not only takes place *in* time, but is itself a temporal process which operates through the reiteration of norms; sex is both produced and destabilized in the course of this reiteration. As a sedimented effect of a reiterative or ritual practice, sex acquires its naturalized effect, and, yet, it is also by virtue of this reiteration that gaps and fissures are opened up as the constitutive instabilities in such constructions, as that which escapes or exceeds the norm, as that which cannot be wholly defined or fixed by the repetitive labor of that norm. (Butler, 1993, p. 10)

In this sense, what it means to embody normative and desirable masculinity can never be entirely fixed or stabilized, as manifested by the fear and anxiety underlying the disavowal of the feminine that drives the desire of so many men to prove that they are acceptably masculine (Martino, 2006). Thus, the reiteration of norms governing the corporeal signification of embodied straight-acting masculinity, while

secured through identificatory practices that are governed by the regulatory apparatus of heterosexuality, are not "timeless structures," but, rather, are open to being revised and altered (Butler, 1993, p. 14). What follows are insights into one male teacher's identity management practices in light of these queer theoretical perspectives on interrupting heteronormativity and the logic of repudiation that constitute hegemonic masculinities.

Introducing Jamie: Initial Reflections on Heteronormativity

Jamie is aged 21 and identifies as straight. At the time of the interview, he was enrolled in a Bachelor of Education program at a Canadian university in Ontario. He is studying to become a high school English teacher and has a particular interest in gender and sexuality. Such an interest has led him to take courses in Women Studies dealing with these topics. He also joined a masculinities discussion group at his university, which involves meeting with a small group of men on a monthly basis to discuss topics related to men's lives and identities. This has provided him with a theoretical and critical basis for interrogating gender binary restrictions and asymmetries that are imposed because of a regime of heterosexuality that structures particular modes of identification for both men and women. For example, early in his interview, he focuses on the gendered body as a site of differential power relations:

> I often have sensed that male teachers are treated differently because of their sex, or gender, by female students. And with male students, there's almost a higher respect for male teachers than female teachers, and this is a problem because it's removing the identity from what the actual teacher is doing and placing it into their body . . . there's also the stereotypes of male teachers being gay in primary school, or things like that.

Teachers' bodies thus emerge for Jamie as a site for the materialization of "a masculinist signifying economy" that is governed by the norms and workings of a heterosexual hegemony. This, as he intimates, is grounded in a disavowal of the female body in terms of its delegitimized status. For example, he feels that female teachers are not as respected as their male counterparts. Jamie also notices that male primary school teachers are subject to a similar logic of repudiation that confers on them an abject status. This is once again tied to the disavowal of the feminine within the context of teaching young children, which gets casts as women's work according to the norms governing the regulatory apparatus of heterosexuality. He shows an understanding of such regulatory norms informing differential identificatory processes for male and female teachers as these norms relate to teaching children:

> There are so few male teachers in Kindergarten to Grade 6 . . . it seems like there's far fewer male teachers, and often being gay is something that the students think you are because you often have to be, like, really gentle with young kids and you have to be, like, really playful and fun. Like, these are things that are often just seen to be homosexual characteristics of a person.

Being gentle and relating to young children in playful ways are relegated to a domain of abjection vis-à-vis a heteronormative economy of signification that invests male and female bodies with differential capacities in terms of what qualifies as a conformation of a legitimate or viable heterosexualized masculinity.

It is within this context that Jamie talks about the issue of homophobia in schools and his desire and commitment to addressing this issue. He recalls homophobia as "one of the biggest hate problems" resulting in violence for students at his own high school. This reflection on the prevalence of homophobia and its effects leads him to comment further on the limits imposed by a regulatory regime of hegemonic heterosexuality in which one's entire identity is reduced to an expression of one's putative deviant sexual orientation, thereby foreclosing any consideration of the multi-dimensionality of an individual's life:

> Being out is a very strange thing because then you identify yourself with this group of people . . . I mean if your name is John and you come out as being gay, then all of a sudden everyone sees you as being gay John. It's like that becomes something that's inseparable from your identity. The other students stop seeing you as just another person; they see you as a specifically different person, and a lot of students don't want to come out in school environments and rightly so, because they don't want to be cast into this group of people who are going to be recognized for their sexuality. It's ridiculous because there are so many things which make up a person, and, like, their sexual orientation is just one part of it.

Jamie appears to be aware of the limits imposed by such a normalizing imperative to essentialize non-heterosexuality. Moreover, his experience of witnessing homophobic violence as a high school student ignites a political commitment to embrace a critical practice of queering heterosexuality.

A Commitment to Gender Bending

These initial reflections on the constraining impact of heteronormative regimes of gender and sexuality on both teachers' and gay students' lives in school prompt Jamie to talk further about his commitment to addressing the binary restrictions that are imposed by such systems of thought. In short, a realization of the constraints imposed by regulatory practices appear to incite him to embrace a critical practice designed to address the limits imposed by a compulsory order of sex, gender, and desire built on enforcing a hierarchical and binary system of gender identification:

> I'm really looking at strategies which are going to break down the gender distinctions in the classroom, the gender stereotypes and things like that. That's the biggest thing that I'm looking to focus on because if we can have equality between men and women I think that's the most important thing, because that liberates it for the gay people and lesbian people and all kinds of people, everyone.

In his own life, he has started to wear nail polish as a means by which to disrupt the normative masculinity that he embodies. He sees this practice as a sort of rupture within the heterosexual economy of identification with all of its "normativizing injunctions that secure the borders of sex through the threat of psychosis, abjection,

psychic unlivability" (Butler, 1993, pp. 14–15). When I ask him about this practice, he indicates that it is a deliberate attempt to challenge normative masculinity:

> With me, my experience as a man in the school system in culture in general, like I've often been taken for someone who, because I'm a man, I have this persona which has this identity attached to it … so I guess I started wearing nail polish as a way to kind of give out a different image as [a] man to people, and as a man wearing nail polish, it's like people see me and the question of my sexual orientation is immediately prevalent, and that has been really helpful for me. It's been a really good move for me to attach myself to the fingernail polish because that way I found people are less affronted by me as a man. I mean, being a man is something that is attached to this higher order of power, and your dynamic in culture is somewhat heightened by masculinity. The expectations of being a man is being red blooded and aggressive and all these things which I don't identify with as a man. So wearing nail polish is a way to physically say, "hey this is a way that I feel differently from other men, and it's gender bending." It's about erasing the distinctions as in to create equality, and wearing nail polish is kind of a fun way to get people to question their ideas about me and then in turn their ideas about masculinity.

Wearing nail polish for Jamie is thus a potentially destabilizing strategy and in this capacity functions as a means by which he is able to queer heterosexuality through a bodily resignification of corporeal masculinity (Rodriguez, 2007). In this sense, as Butler (1993, p. 231) argues, Jamie is calling into question the very norms that sustain "the abjecting power" driving the constitution of hegemonic heterosexual masculinity.

Pedagogical Significance of Gender Bending in School

However, Jamie is hesitant about wearing nail polish as a teacher. He does feel some degree of vulnerability and stresses the need for being strategic in terms of how he sees himself managing such a corporeal interruption of queering masculinity:

> I mean, I can see myself doing that with a class that I'd be able to get to know and get to explain to them what it's about, encouraging them to question gender. And, yes, I think that as a man who has kind of a masculine body I feel like I'm in a privileged position to destabilize the gender roles. In the classroom, I think, of course, it's kind of a dangerous thing, and this is where I'd be putting myself somewhat at risk of being, I guess, lumped with homophobic threats and things like that. I haven't done it for my practicums yet, but the reason for that is because they've been only a couple weeks long, so I haven't really felt I could go into a classroom with nail polish on. It's too short, there's not enough time to get the students to get comfortable with me before this. Do you know what I mean?

Jamie highlights here that embodying a straight-acting masculinity constitutes a degree of male privilege in that it enables him to install himself in the classroom as a viable gendered subject in the eyes of his students. In this sense, he believes that he must claim and establish gender normalcy in order to secure the approval of his students. The implication is that failure to establish a viable embodied masculinity would jeopardize his chances of destabilizing gender identity because he would risk being dismissed by his students. It is this terror of the homophobic attribution of a damaged or failed masculinity through contamination with the feminine that he is

conscious of the need to contain. His strategy involves needing to get students on his side before launching into any gender bending practice that might compromise his credibility as a viable masculine subject. In fact, part of his rationalization for delaying the application of nail polish relates explicitly to avoiding any opportunity for his students to classify him as a freak and, by extension, a feminized faggot:

> I would like them to get to know me and the nail polish being a part of me but if I'm only there for a short period of time, then it's like that guy who wears nail polish, he's this freak. And what I don't want is to be cast to be exiled as a freak or to be labeled as something that's different, because I'm very much inside of the culture and I want to show that I'm a part of it and different from the normatives. I mean because as soon as you say someone is a freak or an outsider, then it's okay then we can just incorporate them into our mind as something that's a freak, or something that's different. But if you can say, "Oh well that person is normal and they're doing this thing which is different," then it's a much better and more positive way to understand.

This does raise important questions about the signifying potential and the pedagogical significance of the male body in terms of the status that is attributed to the necessity of (re)presenting oneself as a "normal or proper man." Failure to do so can lead to a delegitimation of one's authority as a male teacher, particularly given that there already appears to be a differential status attributed to teachers based on their gender. Robinson (2000), for example, found that female teachers experienced sexual harassment on a daily basis in schools and that male teachers who did not conform to students' perceptions of authority, which appeared to be associated with hegemonic masculinity, were also subjected to harassment and had their sexuality targeted by male students (p. 78).

Queering Masculinity as an Everyday Pedagogical Experience

Despite what Jamie sees as its pedagogical limitations, he is committed to applying nail polish in his life outside school as a performative embodied act that he believes is capable of unsettling the hegemony of heterosexual masculinity and the regulatory apparatus that installs it as a form of domination. He talks at length in the interview about how wearing nail polish has actually created the opportunity for him to engage with other men in a critical dialogue about the homophobic policing and regulation of masculinity (Martino, 2000):

> I mean the homophobic response comes up a lot even with people who would not normally think of themselves as homophobic. Because it's easy to say you're not a homophobic person and then when you see something and you feel something different and you react to it, it's quite a different thing. But, I mean, a lot of men have been totally welcoming to any kind of stylistic changes, and it's not been a big deal at all. Like a lot of people just assume that I'm gay, really because of it, and then there's a range of people who are fine with that. Then there's a range of people who are not so fine with that. But I've always felt pretty safe and not really at risk.

In this sense, Jamie highlights the extent to which he conceives of his own body as a pedagogical site for simultaneously disrupting gender binaries and queering

heterosexual masculinity. Moreover, he invests the signifying potential of the body with a capacity to equalize power relationships between men and women:

> Women see me as someone who has kind of erased the barriers of power between them, as a man. Sorry, I'll explain that better. Women see the nail polish, and it's like something which immediately erases the typical masculine image, and so I kind of take myself onto equal ground with them. A lot of women are more comfortable with gay men than straight men because they're not threatened by them and they don't feel objectified by them. In a way, wearing nail polish is kind of like beautifying, like it's cosmetic and this kind of thing which is typically allowed for women, and so for a man to do it it's kind of like making them feel more comfortable perhaps. So [this] in turn allows a lot of women to become more attracted to me or something. But then there are a lot of women who see me and then they see my nail polish and then are kind of instantly disappointed, that they think, "Oh he's gay," or something like that.

In one sense, Jamie conceptualizes the effect of nail polish as building a form of gender alliance with women who he believes are not threatened by him because of the polish's capacity to erase the typical masculine image and perhaps, by implication, any vestige of violence or aggression that might be signified by a straight-acting embodied form of hegemonic masculinity. He also believes that the anomalous practice of using cosmetics establishes a comfort level in that it signifies the willingness of a man to engage in an activity normally associated with women. He implies that such women understand that he is a straight man engaging in a gender bending practice. This is suggested by the fact that he distinguishes these women from those who feel instantly disappointed at the sight of his nail polish, which they immediately misrecognize as a signifier of his supposed gay identity.

The extent to which he treats his body as a pedagogical site for provoking and initiating dialogue about gender construction is further revealed when he mentions a family wedding that he attended:

> I went to a wedding actually wearing nail polish. I did that just as an experiment, and all these uncles were kind of like, "So are you gay? Really, are you?" But it was kind of refreshing because they were overt about the questions they had, so it was really off putting at first, but then it just worked out well. People like my aunt talked to me a lot about it and she was like, "Well, what are you doing with this?" So I got to talking to her about what gender construction has done to her and me, and how I'm trying to break away from that. So it's been a fun project.

Thus, Jamie is conscious of how his body as a signifier can be deployed in his everyday life to interrupt the norms governing the naturalization of gender binary systems of thought. When I ask him what has really motivated him to take on this critical project of queering masculinities, he states that he was "just really bored with the typical masculine way of being," which he experienced as deeply unsatisfying. He also adds that he "was looking to change the way people thought about" him and attributes this to his own awareness, as a high school student, of the restrictions imposed by gender hierarchies and heterosexual imperatives in conferring a particular status on being a certain sort of male:

> Like in high school, I was kind of like this rugby player, this kind of prom king. A lot of bullshit was made up about my identity because of the way I appeared to other people. I had a lot of popular girlfriends and things like that which made me seem like somebody

that was unreal. It gave me this kind of image, this masculine image, which I got frustrated with because I found myself surrounded by other men who were sexist and who had very demented ideas about women. I felt like in order to change that I had to show that I thought differently about people, and I guess that's kind of what started it.

Thus, a fundamental and visceral disaffection with the sexist behavior and attitudes of his peers at school is acknowledged as being at the heart of his concerns about the performative aspects and projection of hegemonic masculinity. Moreover, he indicates in the interview that taking gender courses at school has equipped him with a language for making sense of his experiences of men and masculinity. For example, he considers masculinity to be a fiction in the sense that, for him, masculinity is a cultural phenomenon and one that cannot be anchored in the body in a biologically deterministic sense:

I don't think masculinity exists. I think masculinity is this façade put on by men who absorb this idea of what it means to be a man and how to culturally behave as a response to what's in between your legs. Masculinity is this creation of body techniques, of walking a certain way, of talking a certain way, and thinking a certain way, which is completely fabricated by the world. I don't know who is to blame, but it's all a part of our culture which falsely interpolates the male sex into this kind of behavior technique which is disturbing. I've really been frustrated with our culture's insistence on a battle between the sexes and kind of men's magazines which give you advice about women and then there's the women's advice about how to get your guy to do this. I mean our culture has dichotomized ideas about men and women. Femininity, I think, is just as much of a creation as masculinity . . . as far as gender construction . . . I think masculinity is also a masquerade, a kind of performative façade in order to feel comfortable with yourself . . . I mean there's a lot of things about women which I identify myself with. I don't think men and women have this set of traits which they choose between . . . I don't think it's related to your body as much as it's related to the way you've been socialized.

Such access to discourses and social vocabulary about the social construction of gender (and, specifically of masculinity as an embodied practice) has contributed, in a significant way, to Jamie's articulation of an interventionist politics. This sort of knowledge has clearly influenced his understanding of the complex and contradictory ways in which, as a straight-gendered subject, he has come "into being by way of performativity" (Rodriguez, 2007, p. 291). Moreover, Jamie appears to have some understanding of the processes "by which gendering occurs [within highly regulatory frames that govern] the embodying of norms [as both] a compulsory practice [and] a forcible [reiterative] production (Butler, 1993, p. 231). It is his disidentification with the normative apparatus of hegemonic heterosexuality that allows for a critical pedagogical space to be opened up in his everyday life. In this sense, he conceives of the project of gender identity formation as a constant reiterative practice that is not an inevitable consequence of one's biological makeup:

I've definitely met a lot of men who live repressed lives and that's the big thing. So most of them wouldn't even admit to identifying with my problems with the categories because of the way they're so close to them. A lot of men use things like sports to deal with their erotic desires. That's one thing that I've noticed with a lot of men. I definitely think there's underlying dissatisfaction in a lot of people . . . I feel like a lot of men who have very masculine façades are not comfortable with their bodies and with themselves. I definitely know of a lot of women who are uncomfortable with their bodies as a result of all this

media portrayal of the female body. I mean that very pragmatically has caused anorexia and bulimia and all this stuff. But with men there's kind of a silenced dissatisfaction with bodies and in the same way, as a result of the same kind of media portrayal of the really strong, carved chests and things like this. I mean it goes through all ranges. I was just going to say, like, men are just as uncomfortable.

These insights have led Jamie to embrace a pedagogical practice that involves deploying his body to interrupt the familiar reiterative norms governing the compulsory practice of embodying straight-acting masculinity. He wants to incorporate such a pedagogical enterprise into his own classroom practices as a teacher, but is aware of the heteronormative limits that are imposed in terms of the socially sanctioned norms that compel a certain citational practice necessary for producing a viable and legitimate masculinity. In this sense, he is committed to the politics of gender deconstruction and destabilization in his own classroom and has begun to think about how this might be executed and realized in a way that does not compromise his credibility as both a legitimate masculine subject and a teacher who is subject to the normalizing judgments of both his students and the wider school community (see Martino & Frank, 2006). This negotiation involving how to pedagogically navigate his critical practice of queering masculinity as part of a broader project of degendering within the heteronormative context of schooling, however, results in the necessity of invoking the very normative categories that he wishes to dismantle:

> Well, I think my objectives in school [are] in terms of deconstructing gender roles and kind of challenging the masculinity [and are] going to be met with resistance by the typical male, people who are insisting that football is for boys and things like this. I mean I think . . . trying to figure out a way to be egalitarian and degendering is a real problem. It can be a real problem in the classroom when it comes to people who are going to be immediately dislocated from their previous ideologies. I want to function in the classroom and I want to change the masculine identities or depower them, but working all within the system and working within the classroom and culture as a "normal" person, as a part of it, not as an outsider, not as someone who is different, but as someone who is the same and who has the same kind of ideas about life that other people who will identify with . . . The challenges that I'm going to face are going to be in recreating an idea about masculinity which the students will feel comfortable with, and which gets them away from a forced presentation of themselves.

Interestingly, while espousing a commitment to challenging hegemonic masculinity, Jamie feels compelled to present as "normal," and in so doing denies the full significance of such a "forced presentation" in the pedagogical sense for those queer students who are already disidentifying with the normative presentation of gender that is constituted by the very set of disavowed attachments that require problematization (see McNinch & Cronin, 2004; Sears, 2005; Sykes, 2004; Wyss, 2004). However, it needs to be emphasized and acknowledged that Jamie himself is aware of the temporality of such a normative presentation of embodied masculinity in the pedagogical sense, which, he argues, is a necessary threshold or scaffolding bodily technique for securing his credibility and safety in the classroom. In short, he believes that embodying straight-acting masculinity is central to warding off homophobic surveillance and policing of his gendered body, which would detract

ultimately from his project of queering heterosexual masculinity. This, however, does raise important questions about male heterosexual privilege that is accrued to the embodiment of a normative or straight-acting masculinity that is clearly constituted by a set of disavowed identifications organized around the repudiation of the *feminized faggot* (see Martino, 2006; Bergling, 2001; Bersani, 1995).

Implications and Conclusion

The focus on the case of Jamie's project of queering masculinity and his straight teacher identity raise important questions about the imperatives and normative injunctions governing what is to count as a viable masculinity and what the pedagogical implications of this might be (see also Martino, 2008b). It also points to the significance of the body as a pedagogical site for destabilizing the compulsory order of sex, gender, and desire (Butler, 1990, p. 6). In fact, Jamie's musings and reflections on the importance of queering heterosexuality, as central to the political project of destabilizing hegemonic masculinity, support Petrovic and Rosiek's (2007) call for teachers to be "presented with opportunities to recognize and critically analyze their own positions in those [racially privileged, class dominant, and heterosexually oriented] constructions and how their positions affect the ways in which they respond to students" (p. 225). Moreover, in seeking to explore the ways in which teachers make sense of their own gendered subjectivities, Jamie highlights the need for teachers to be provided with access to a conceptual vocabulary and, hence, to queer analytic frameworks and research that are capable of illuminating the significance of the regulatory apparatus of heterosexuality. Such frameworks, as illustrated in this chapter, illuminate the extent to which regulatory sexual regimes draw limits and set boundaries for implementing pedagogical practices that are committed to equity and social justice. As Britzman (1998) argues, critical practices that are capable of interrogating "the means by which normalcy becomes the great unmarked within classroom sites and the means by which pedagogy itself might intervene to agitate the limits and fault lines of normalcy" are necessary for imagining forms of identification and communities that are not hampered by binary restrictions motivated by both repression and normalization (p. 80).

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Chapter 3
Queer Masculinities, Gender Conformity, and the Secondary School

Mark McCormack

Previous research has shown that school-aged boys are hierarchically stratified according to a hegemonic mode of masculine dominance (cf. Connell, 1995). Here, boys are compelled to conform to orthodox gender norms by exhibiting homophobic, misogynistic, and aggressive attitudes and behaviors (Epstein, 1997; Mac an Ghaill, 1994). These masculine behaviors are found throughout educational institutions (Plummer, 1999; Salisbury & Jackson, 1996), not least because schools are complicit in the reproduction of these dominant gender norms (Thorne, 1993).

Scholars have also illuminated the structuring effect of discourse on gender and sexual identities in schools (Davies, 1993; Rasmussen, 2006; Youdell, 2005). Although a multitude of social forces create and regulate hierarchies of sexuality and gender, language is a prime mechanism in their (re)production (Butler, 1997; Cameron & Kulick, 2003; Kiesling, 2007). Indeed, Foucault (1990, 1991) argued that discourse literally creates the rules and identities by which we live. He suggested that people inhabit the "real world," but that their experiences, thoughts, and desires can only be interpreted and understood through the discursive tools available in the culture at the time. The use of language therefore has a direct and material effect on peoples' subjectivities and lived experiences. While I have since turned away from the use of poststructuralist theory, in this chapter, to understand the regulative power of discourse within schools, I turn to Judith Butler's theory of subjectivation.

Butler (1997) combines Foucault's (1986, 1991) conceptualization of power with Althusser's (1971) concept of interpellation to present subjectivation theory as a way of understanding the discursive construction of identities. Althusser (1971) illustrates the constitutive power of discourse by using the example of a policeman who hails an individual. As the individual responds to the call from authority (by turning to face the policeman), she is made a subject, a process Althusser calls "interpellation."

A key component of interpellation is that it cannot be avoided. In other words, if "hailed" there is no reaction that is not a form of response. However, being

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interpellated is a continual process, and Butler (2006, p. 532) states that "the norm is applied, but the norm is always about to happen again." She argues that we can contest the norm at its next iteration; indeed, we can respond to calls differently, and that this can change the norms in a given setting. For Butler, a person's agency resides in their ability to contest the norms that have created and structured their "self" in the first place. Accordingly, agency is primarily expressed through resistance.

While seemingly wilfully inaccessible, Butler's theorizing highlights the power and resilience of normative masculinity. Yet she also shows its fragility, as her work enables analysis of the fissures in normative masculinity, and how these are highlighted and emphasized by queer performances. Accordingly, it is argued that her work maintains the possibility for subordinated identities to be reconstituted (Youdell, 2004). Here, it is suggested that norms are best challenged by responding to them in unexpected (i.e., queer) ways. It is argued that it is through queer subversion that one can change the nature of one's own interpellation (Butler, 1997).

However, this form of political action is notably different from identity politics, forged in the 1960s and 1970s (cf. Bernstein, 2005). Indeed, in an influential essay, Stein and Plummer (1996) argue that queer theory calls for the "rejection of civil-rights strategies in favour of a politics of carnival, transgression, and parody which leads to deconstruction … and an anti-assimilationist politics" (p. 134). Yet, the efficacy of competing political strategies is a contentious issue, with some scholars arguing that anti-assimilationist politics evacuates the possibility of wider social change (cf. Kirsch, 2000; Nussbaum, 1999; Walters, 1996).

In this chapter, I argue that anti-assimilationist subversion is fundamentally *necessary* for those who feel trapped by heteronormative institutions, an idea that Butler captures in her scholarship. I employ the poststructural concept of queer masculinities to examine the utility and power of individual, transgressive acts against the dominant sexual and gender discourses at a school in the United Kingdom, called Evergreen High. The concept of queer masculinities shows that these acts are both liberating and necessary to students who do not conform to gender and sexual conventions.

However, by examining these moments for their broader effect, I also argue that there are limitations to an anti-assimilationist form of politics, and that this can be overlooked because of the pleasure that is felt in subversive acts. Indeed, my analysis of queer masculinities at Evergreen shows that these acts do not substantially impact on the dominant discourses of sexuality and gender in this setting. Accordingly, I argue that if gender and sexual equality is to be achieved, this subversion needs to be allied to a program of institutional and cultural change that embraces identity categories and builds on the established work of identity politics (cf. Bernstein, 2005; McCall, 2005).

As Long As You Are Like Us

I now present data from one school, Evergreen High, from which I examine the possibilities for and utility of queer masculinities. I collected data during the 2006–2007 school year, as part of a larger ethnographic research project on the intersection of

gender, sexuality, and education. Evergreen is a particularly pertinent case, as it is recognized as a very good school. The UK school inspectorate, OFSTED, praises the school's "unshakeable focus on the . . . personal development of the students," and Evergreen's prospectus places emphasis on offering a safe space for all students. Exam results are excellent, and students are well adjusted and report being happy with their schooling. Given this, the issues discussed throughout this chapter are specific to sexuality and gender, rather than just another failure of an underperforming school.

In the seminal article "Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies," Joan Acker (1990) explicated the ways in which organizations are gendered, where structures and operational systems privilege men over women. Similarly, Epstein and Johnson (1998) have illuminated the institutionalization of heterosexuality within schools. Often unintended by individual members of organizations, heterosexuality and masculinity are institutionally privileged at the expense of other sexual and gender identities (Ferfolja, 2007). Before discussing examples of queer masculinities at Evergreen, I present an institutional analysis that highlights the ways in which heterosexual masculinity has been normalized in the school procedures. Clearly, this influences the possibilities for doing masculinity differently in this setting.

Like in the broader culture, gender and sexuality are conflated at Evergreen. This means that a male student who acts in ways deemed unmanly will also be coded gay. In this paradigm, a dominant masculinity is automatically assumed to be heterosexual; Pronger (1990) has usefully called this heteromasculinity, a more accessible framework than Butler's (1999) heterosexual matrix. This privileging is found throughout the institution of education (Epstein & Johnson, 1998; Martino & Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2003), and the wider culture more generally (Anderson, 2005; Butler, 1999; Skidmore, 2004); although my more recent research documents schools where homophobia is condemned and some aspects of heteronormativy are challenged (McCormack & Anderson, 2010; McCormack, 2012). Therefore, if we are to understand how masculinity is policed, we must examine the institutionalization of sexuality, too (Ferfolja, 2007).

There is no explicit, holistic policy on sexuality at Evergreen, so each department decides individually and independently how to address such issues. Formal discussions pertaining to sexuality occurred in the English, Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), and Religious Education subject classes, but not elsewhere. The head of the English department said that it was an informal department policy to discuss homosexuality only if it was brought up by a student. Pragmatic reasons were given, the main being that whenever sexuality was discussed, the students "placed too much importance on it." She gave the example of *Lord of the Flies*, where "all they end up writing about is the homoerotic overtones, because they think it is a novelty." Yet she admitted that this meant sexuality was very rarely discussed in English lessons, not recognizing it was this form of silencing that kept sexuality "novel." Indeed, in this framework, heterosexuality is the unmarked norm, while homosexuality is stigmatized and excluded (Atkinson, 2002).

The only time formally allotted to the discussion of sexuality is PSHE. At Evergreen, PSHE is taught daily for 20 min; staff members record attendance for the day and make announcements during this period as well. These activities diminish the lesson, making it of secondary importance (Mac an Ghaill, 1994), a

fact understood by teachers and students. The lessons are taught by all staff to their own tutoring group (i.e., classes), and most teachers resent having to do so. Dan, an experienced Math teacher, says, "I don't like teaching PSHE. The kids see it as a waste of time; I see it as a waste of time." Julie, who teaches Science, showed equal disdain for the subject, commenting that "the best thing is that the lessons are 20 minutes—I don't have to prepare." When teaching specifically about sexuality, staff members are given a DVD to play. Regardless of the quality of this teaching aid, it heightens the sense that the topic is difficult and dangerous. Sexuality, it appears, is not to be discussed.

Indeed, the questions one can ask in PSHE are limited. Questions have to be hypothetical, be on "appropriate topics," and use "appropriate language." Independence of thought is promoted but only within restricted and restrictive parameters. Yet there is inconsistency and tension here. The school foregrounds students as independent thinkers, yet at the same time, its policies operate to remove student individuality. For example, a stringent uniform policy is prescribed and enforced, with "extremes of fashion" not permitted. Individuality expressed outside certain ways of looking (uniform, hairstyles, no piercings, etc.) and ways of being (deportment, maturity, appropriateness of language)—all of which are gendered—is not tolerated.

Indeed, Evergreen expects male students to behave in traditionally masculine ways (Anderson, 2000, 2009; Mac an Ghaill, 1994). These restrictions on individuality privilege traditionally masculine behaviors, with markers of difference from this gender norm banned by the uniform and behavioral codes (cf. Healy, 1996). Furthermore, just being assigned to feminized settings was enough to be a gender transgression for boys, which I discuss in more detail later. Of course, the double bind for boys is that valued masculine behaviors are based on "aggressiveness, competitiveness, power and assertiveness" (Wellard, 2006, p. 109), yet boys are punished when they behave in this manner (Ferguson, 2000).

Evergreen does, however, follow several best-practice guidelines in its policies and procedures pertaining to sexuality. Anti-bullying and equal-opportunity policies reference sexual orientation, with homophobic language expressly forbidden. There is also a computerized system in place where commendations and sanctions are logged, meaning students' performance can be monitored and trends in behavior analyzed. Yet while the system explicitly recognizes racism as an issue necessary to be catalogued, there is no systematic way to record homophobic bullying.

This is particularly problematic given that while I never heard racist abuse, I heard homophobic words on a daily basis. When I discussed this with Doug, an assistant head teacher, he commented, "Yeah, it's everywhere." Doug then said, "When I hear homophobic name-calling, I always stop and address it, because otherwise you give tacit approval." A pastoral manager (non-teaching staff who deal with student support and serious misbehavior) confirmed this approach, saying that she knew of staff dealing with homophobic incidents in lessons, but no case had warranted her intervention. Racism is not treated the same way; according to Doug, incidents were "always dealt with, always flagged up, recorded, done." Homophobic abuse meanwhile was dealt with by individual members of the staff, with no formal procedure to resolve or record such issues. This (lack of) recognition of

homophobia locates it as an anomalous, individual problem rather than an endemic and structural one.

Indeed, gender and sexuality are presented as pertaining to individuals, even as these issues are institutionalized in the school. This is the source of further dissonance at Evergreen. After I commented to Doug that there were no openly gay staff or students, he made it clear that anyone who wanted to come out would be supported in so doing. Yet it was also evident that, for teachers in particular, they would have to do so in a particular manner—as long as they did so for "personal" and not "political" reasons. With this problematic statement, it seems that Evergreen is trying to achieve its inclusive principles while maintaining the institutionalized heteronormative gender regime.

The requirement for gay teachers to come out in ways that were non-political shows how sexuality becomes the prime way of categorizing somebody who is known to be gay. Evergreen wanted to support teachers being open about their sexuality with students, yet there was a fear of ulterior political motives. In this context, however, political motivation can refer only to the contestation of sexual or gender norms. Sexuality is not the issue, because a "non-political" coming out would be acceptable. Instead, in an environment where sexuality and gender are conflated, contesting gender norms is the contention. It seems that Evergreen would support someone coming out as gay as long as normative gender behaviors were not challenged.

With heteromasculinity normalized, it is not recognized that sexuality is inherently political in school (Butler, 2006). Nor is it recognized that this privileging also silences gay identities, something evidenced by homosexuality being regarded as a "novelty" in English lessons. Evergreen has implicitly made heteromasculinity normal and ordinary for boys but won't tolerate deviations from this norm. The school ethos seems to be: "we don't care who you are as long as you are like us."

The requirement for gay teachers at Evergreen to come out in ways that are "non-political" exemplifies how openly gay people's behaviors are interpreted with reference to their sexuality, by their difference. But in this setting of gender conformity, coming out may not be enough. While the argument Gregory (2004) makes that there is an ethical duty for gay teachers to be open about their sexuality is important, this becomes problematic if they present only an orthodox version of masculinity. While being openly gay and assuming a queer or inclusive masculinity might be seen (erroneously) as reinforcing stereotypes of gay men, it is better understood as the contestation of both sexual *and* gender norms. Whatever one's sexual identity, men's gender should not be closeted. Men who are feminine or camp or fail to conform to orthodox masculinity in other ways should be open, out, and proud.

Re-enforcing Gender Norms

It's the start of the 2006 autumn semester, and I sit with a group of students who are new to Evergreen School. The class is boisterous, and students are being assigned extracurricular classes that they have to attend for half an hour each day. The

students (aged 11) have already made their preferences, and they are chatting anxiously as they wait to see what classes they get. The teacher announces the classes, laughing and joking with the students about their choices. When it gets to Alan, a quiet and pleasant boy, the options allocated to him include cooking, dance, and artwork. In fact, Alan has only one of his preferred options—computer games. As the teacher reads out the activities, he laughs and sympathizes with Alan for getting such "girly" options. The class joins in the banter, which Alan finds funny.

As I ask John and Cathy why they are laughing, it becomes apparent that the courses are particularly gendered. There are some courses that the students understand to be "for boys" and others "for girls." When Becky, one of Alan's friends, commiserates him, I ask if Alan hates cooking and dance. She replies, "No, but boys shouldn't do that." These understandings were supported by an examination of the course lists: ones that were coded "girly" or "for boys" consisted almost entirely of that sex. This joking clearly fostered goodwill in the classroom, and Alan did not want to take the classes he had been given. However, the immediate reaction of the teacher and the unanimous response of the students dictated that Alan *should* be upset by these choices. This effectively shut down any possibility of Alan, and potentially any male student, wanting to take these classes without also being stigmatized for that desire. Indeed, there was a specific legitimate and esteemed masculinity available here—one where boys do not cook, dance, or paint. While this bonded the new students together, this masculinity simultaneously and unintentionally reinscribed dominant gender norms. With Alan, the orthodox version of gender persisted because no one felt the need to challenge the dominant understanding of gender in the class at that time.

From Institution to Individual

It is clear that privileging certain types of masculinity is deeply political, and this necessitates examination of how subordinated and marginalized groups react to their status. Connell's (1995) concept of hegemonic masculinity has been applied to the study of *groups* of men at a macro level of analysis. To theorize the individual transgressive contestation of dominant masculinity at the micro level, I utilize the concept of queer masculinities. The study of queer masculinities focuses on individuals who contest dominant gender and sexual norms, yet who do not maintain institutional or majority peer support for their behaviors. If they did, it would not be queer.

I define queer masculinities here as types of behavior located in the masculine realm but that subvert institutional conceptions of masculinity. That is, queer masculine behaviors will employ subversive or parodic behaviors that question or trouble the heteronormative and homophobic gender norms of an institution. Clearly, a prime concern of gay and straight men who enact queer masculinities will be to contest homophobia and misogyny.

Under these terms, queer masculinities will maintain utility as a theoretical tool only for as long as the institutional conceptions of gender exclude people because of

their gendered or sexual behaviors. When (or if) the dominant form of masculinity becomes a set of esteemed behaviors that does not rely on control, domination, misogyny, and homophobia, there will be no need to challenge their positioning. While some may question if this is nothing more than a chimerical ideal, recent empirical research gives reason to believe that this political aim may well be achievable (Anderson, 2008, 2009; McCormack, 2011, 2012; McNair, 2002; Weeks, 2007). Accordingly, the political aim of queer masculinities must be to reach the time when the concept is theoretically redundant.

Queering Masculinity

I am teaching Math to a top eighth-grade class (aged 12 and 13) on a crisp winter morning. They are bright and friendly, and work and talk enthusiastically. Dominic is one of the dominant boys in the class; he is good looking, popular, and pleasant, yet he regularly breaks small rules for no apparent reason. Dominic often noisily arrives in class a couple of minutes late; today he arrives on time but has "forgotten" his books. I send him out to get them.

Dominic returns 5 min later, with his tie tucked into his shirt. I am by the door, and turn to face him. I notice his tie, which he regularly dishevels. "All right, sir," he says in a jokey and provocative manner. I smile, reach toward him, and pull out his tie from his shirt. I straighten it for him and camply say, "There, that's much nicer!" as I pat his tie on his chest. Some of the class laugh. As I guide him to his seat, gently touching his back, Dominic blushes. He sits down quietly, and behaves for the rest of the lesson.

This was not the first time Dominic had misbehaved. He often came into class with his tie knotted too short or tucked into his shirt. These were breaches of the uniform guidelines, about which Evergreen was very strict. I had reprimanded him and detained him during break several times for this, yet he continued to purposefully dishevel his clothes. Indeed, rather than changing his behavior, he often seemed amused by the detentions. After this episode, however, Dominic always wore his tie correctly.

This episode is illuminating in two ways. First, it demonstrates the utility and effectiveness of queer strategies in disrupting heteromasculine attitudes. By casting off territorial and macho disciplining techniques, my response to Dominic subverted his expectations of how I should react as a teacher and also as a man. My behavior was assertive but not aggressive. I did not punish Dominic, nor did I shout or monopolize space in an antagonistic or confrontational manner. Similarly, no one was excluded through or by my actions. The dominant masculine behaviors were rejected, with power used in a different, less domineering way. And, importantly, it worked.

However, the moment is complicated when one considers the laughter of the class. It could be argued that I was parodying the breaking of dominant notions of masculinity to embarrass the student, or that Dominic was embarrassed for me that

I should act in such a way. While this was not my intent, it seems highly likely that at least some students were laughing at my actions, and not at Dominic. Accordingly, it is difficult to evaluate this incident and the impact it had on the gender norms of Evergreen.

This episode highlights the incalculable effect of subversion (Osborne & Segal, 1994). A variety of interpretations of the event will exist among the class, and these will all maintain at least some validity. However, my concern is that the pleasure I experienced in subverting the norms and successfully reprimanding Dominic blinded me to the more negative consequences of my actions. Because of my immediate success in stopping Dominic's misbehavior, I did not consider how my actions were interpreted by the class; whether my queer action contested or consolidated the heteromasculine norms of the school. Instead, I assumed that these transgressions had no ramifications beyond their immediate success. Accordingly, it is possible that the utility of this kind of political action is exaggerated, while the potential damage is underplayed. This is a concern to which I return later in the chapter.

However, it is also important to recognize that subversion is not just pleasurable—we continue to be interpellated by norms even as we contest them. Evidencing this, I worried that I would get into trouble for touching Dominic. Would this behavior be deemed inappropriate by the school administration? I also questioned what the class would think of my behavior. Even though I recognized the immediate success of my actions, and even though this behavior is more like my gendered self outside school life, I feared some negative reprisal. Here, the double transgression of being both gay and gender non-conformist (Pascoe, 2007; Rofes, 2000) made me aware of the threat felt when contesting institutional norms.

This moment of interpellation documents the power that structures and confines the ways of being a teacher at Evergreen, and shows the resilience of norms to queer subversion. The bombardment of norms, which is a founding part of identity, caused me to worry about the consequences of my gender transgressions. Even as I successfully resisted these norms, asserting my agency, they continued to operate on me.

The Power and Limits of Subjectivation Theory

I am leading a discussion on friendship with my tutoring group (aged 15). Most of the students get on well together, but there are a few who seem somewhat ostracized from the group. Jack is one such student. Even though he has a large group of female friends at Evergreen, he is quiet and reserved in classes where they are not present. Jack is feminine and camp, and I often have to reprimand male students for making homophobic comments in his direction.

In the middle of a boisterous debate about what it means to be someone's friend, Kate asks, "Why is it that boys are friends with boys, and girls only with girls?" Sarah responds, "But that isn't always true. Look at Jack—he's only friends with girls." There is an awkward silence in the room, and Jack looks extremely

uncomfortable about what has been said. Because of this, I steer the discussion on to another aspect of friendship.

The comment about Jack's friendship group was accurate. I had already noticed that Jack's friends were all girls, and when he was with them (on the playground and in the corridors), his behavior was entirely different; he was assertively camp, flamboyant, and extroverted. I often saw Jack in the middle of this group, the center of attention, joking and laughing. At the same time, these girls protected him from the more aggressive and violent boys who taunted him in the classroom. Like a jellyfish, whose tentacles sting its enemies, Jack's female friends protected him with verbal put-downs from the unwanted attention of his male peers.

With this protection, Jack literally created a space where he could behave in the ways he desired. While this space was transient and dependent on others (i.e., he did not behave in this manner in class when separated from his friends), radically different gendered behaviors were available to Jack at these particular times. Sheltered from the policing norms, Jack behaved far more effeminately and colorfully than the other boys.

Relying on the support of his female friends, Jack practiced a queer masculinity that was arch, loud, and non-conformist. Jack helped girls with their hair and makeup, joked with and about his friends, and spoke in a high-pitched, piercing voice. Here, Jack could and did do masculinity differently.

At these times, Jack could be said to be enacting a gay masculinity, drawing on stereotypes of how gay men act. This concept has been used to explore how groups of gay men engage with, contest, and transform heteromasculine notions of masculinity (Nardi, 2000). Yet by using the lens of queer masculinities, it is possible to provide a micro-level analysis of his behaviors. Doing this highlights both the rewards and dangers of these displays for Jack. It was in these limited settings that Jack could act as he desired, yet by doing so he distanced himself from other boys, and made himself a target of homophobic abuse. Jack's behaviors were not condoned by his male peers or the school. He was low down the masculine hierarchy, and his behaviors were transgressive and hazardous to him. Nevertheless, Jack contested the gender norms and dominant masculinities evident at Evergreen.

Jack's story is of particular interest because it shows a queer form of agency operating within Evergreen (cf. Blackburn, 2004; Rodriguez, 1998). Jack was able to assert and embody his gendered identity at moments when he was with his friends, where the surveillance of the official school was reduced. For Jack, the power of his female friends, not teachers, in protecting him from macho boys facilitated his non-normative behaviors. Indeed, most teachers were unable to provide an environment in the classroom where Jack could enact his desired masculinity—it was instead down to Jack and his friends to contest the heteromasculine dominance, and the group frequently did.

Of further interest, Jack's story highlights the power of sex in gendered behavior—Jack's behavior is recognized as masculine primarily because he is a boy and his friends' behavior as feminine because they are girls (Schippers, 2007). Even though their actions were more typically associated with the other gender (e.g., the girls were aggressive and occupied far more space than Jack), their sex determined

the gender type of their actions. This highlights the categorical power that sex maintains, being of central importance in the recognition of Jack's behavior as masculine. This might suggest queer masculinities are viewed as masculine not through the style or type of gendered act, but because of the sex of the gendered actor.

Queering Subversion

Jack is a particularly useful example for exploring the discursive construction of identities. The interplay between his contestation and submission shows both the power and the limits of poststructural theorizing of identity. The effect of discursive norms on Jack is clear. Jack is marginalized by the construction of a dominant heteromasculinity, and the subject positions available to him are limited and stigmatized. Furthermore, the institutionalization of this dominant masculinity at Evergreen means that Jack cannot be sheltered by the school. Jack was interpellated by his peers in class as "gay" (with pejorative intent), and he could not contest these norms in that location; he could not change the meaning of these calls.

Yet Jack did resist. With the assistance of his friends and outside the classroom, he took the offensive calls and *re*interpreted them—as something to celebrate. Even with other boys' conformity combining with Evergreen's distaste for difference, Jack proudly and vociferously paraded his own version of masculinity. Jack is an agentic subject, at once subordinated and liberated.

At one level, Jack's bravery and imagination in the face of heterosexism and homophobia is deeply heartening. It provides an example of the power of having a queer masculinity at Evergreen. Jack and his friends asserted their agency to create a space where they could behave in ways they desired. Gender regulation was far less influential at these times because of the powerful allegiance between Jack and his friends. While school culture is powerful in restricting and regulating people, Jack and his female entourage show how agentic individuals can contest and subvert these rules.

However, Jack's story also brings questions about the political potency of queer theory and anti-assimilationist ideals. Jack's subversive re-interpretation of his interpellation at Evergreen enabled him to contest the norms, but he was still not able to *change* them. Jack's queer agency was vital in making his life bearable at Evergreen, but it was unsuccessful in contesting its heteronormative structure. Although it is possible that Jack's actions have impacted on the norms in unimagined ways, the central point remains that Evergreen remains deeply mired in heteronormative attitudes and practices.

While Jack's life is perhaps bearable in school because of his actions, it is difficult to examine how he has affected the broader school culture. This issue coalesces with my concern about the effect of my disciplining of Dominic. My concern that the pleasure gained from subverting norms (and observing others subvert them) impacts negatively on the ability to reflexively analyse such events, means that I am perhaps more inclined to see the *individual* benefits that arise from queer contestation at the

expense of the ineffectiveness of these strategies in changing institutional practices. With this in mind, Jack's story becomes less positive, and anti-assimilationist politics become a problematic strategy when used alone (Kirsch, 2000; McCormack, 2012). Accordingly, I call for a combination of queer subversion—necessary for non-normative students in heterosexist and homophobic environments—with identity politics, which has proven to be the most effective way of achieving social equality (Bernstein, 2005; Brickell, 2006; McCall, 2005).

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Chapter 4
Phallic Girls?: Girls' Negotiation of Phallogocentric Power

Emma Renold and Jessica Ringrose

Introduction

In opposition to the largely liberal feminist concerns to address issues of self-esteem and vulnerability in girls during the 1980s and 1990s, in the new millennium we have been faced with an onslaught of discourses about "girl power" and the increasingly commonsense "presumption" of gendered equality in education, work, and sexual politics (Foster, 2000; Gonick, 2004; Harris, 2004a, 2004b; Jackson, Paechter, & Renold, 2010; McRobbie, 2004; Taft, 2004). Harvard psychologist Dan Kindlon's (2006) book *Alpha Girls: Understanding the New American Girl and How She Is Changing the World* suggests the "alpha girl" is poised to change the world, economically, politically, and socially, as a new hybrid that embodies the best traits of masculinity and femininity. According to the *Sunday Times*:

> These are the alpha girls, the new breed of American schoolgirl growing up free of gender stereotyping and ideological angst. They are the daughters of the feminist revolution, but they see no need to become feminists themselves because they know they are smarter than boys. (Allen-Mills, 2006)

While Kindlon suggests this new hybrid is somehow confident, assertive, competitive, autonomous, future oriented, risk taking, as well as collaborative, relationship oriented, AND NOT obsessed with boyfriends or her physical appearance, in this chapter we want to ask questions about how girls are to miraculously balance the masculine with the feminine. What has happened in this manic formulation of successful femininity to issues of embodied sexual difference?

In this chapter, we return to questions and theorizing about phallogocentrism, particularly in the educational contexts of schools where we conduct our empirical research. We explore ongoing fears over the symbolic castration of boys/masculinity and educational anxieties over a free-floating phallus that in individualized, neoliberal discourse can be taken up by girls, hence the title of our chapter—"Phallic

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Girls?: Girls' Negotiation of Phallogocentric Power". Rather than girls being able to easily occupy a lived subject position of "phallic girl," however, we will argue that girls are increasingly demanded to display a whole series of contradictory characteristics—those ascribed to femininity (nice, nurturing, passive, sexually desirable via hyper-feminine embodiment and display) as well as those ascribed to masculinity (rational, competitive, sexually assertive—bearing the phallus). Our empirical data thus underscore the impossibility of the fantastical figure of the "phallic girl" and illustrates the abiding regulative rhythm of phallogocentric power in schooling. We will also, however, map some of the complex ways girls are negotiating phallic-centered sexual regulation in their everyday performances of "girl" at school. But rather than understand girls' attempts to take up masculinity as mere mimicry of the phallus, as has been promoted in recent feminist theorizing, we suggest, drawing on Butler, Braidotti, and others, that many of these girls' practices indicate radical disruptions and displacements of phallogocentric power.

Postfeminist Educational Panics: Castration, Impotency, and Fear of the Feminine

> After God created Adam, who was alone, He said, "It is not good for man to be alone." He then created a woman for Adam, from the earth, as He had created Adam himself, and called her Lilith. Adam and Lilith immediately began to fight. She said, "I will not lie below," and he said, "I will not lie beneath you, but only on top. For you are fit only to be in the bottom position, while I am to be the superior one." Lilith responded, "We are equal to each other inasmuch as we were both created from the earth." But they would not listen to one another. When Lilith saw this, she pronounced the Ineffable Name and flew away into the air. (Genesis 2:18, cited in "The Lilith Shrine")[1]

> Lilith also vowed "to attack men in their sleep. She would steal their semen to give birth to more demon children."[2]

We have argued elsewhere how the educational discourse regarding "failing boys" has directly contributed to a reactive, celebratory postfeminist discourse on *over*-successful girls (Renold & Allan, 2006; Ringrose, 2007). Hammering home what Foster (2000) calls a "presumptive equality," the failing boys discourse produces new commonsense understandings or assumptions that women have achieved equality with or even surpassed men in society. An international media frenzy feeds these anxiety-provoking truth claims with headlines such as "Girls Top of the Class Worldwide: Women Have Overtaken Men at Every Level of Education in Developed Countries around the World" (BBC News, 2003) and "Girls Beat Boys at School, Now They Get Higher Pay" (Rozenberg & Bennett, 2006). The cover story, "The New Gender Gap: From Kindergarten to Grad School, Boys Are Becoming the Second Sex" in *Business Week* (Conlin, 2003), suggests "girls have built a kind

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[1] The Lilith Shrine, http://www.lilitu.com/lilith, retrieved July 13, 2008.

[2] http://virtual.clemson.edu/caah/women/ws301/ppt/Lilith/Lilith.PPT, retrieved July 20, 2008.

of scholastic Roman Empire alongside boys' languishing Greece." Girls' educational successes are represented as the dawn of a brave new "post-feminist" world in which gender inequality no longer exists (Harris, 2004a, 2004b).[3] In this brave new world, feminism has won the battle for equality and treats boys and men as victims of the cultural shifts that have established the new "gender order" (Connell, 1987). As Angela McRobbie (2004, p. 4) argues, postfeminist discourses

> actively draw on and invoke feminism as that which can be taken into account in order to suggest that equality is achieved, in order to install a whole repertoire of meanings which emphasize that it is no longer needed, a spent force.

U.K. developments in policy documents and guidance suggest that the seductive discourse of successful girls and failing boys continues to hold. For example, in the recent 134-page U.K. government document *Gender and Education: The Evidence from Pupils in England*, there is systematic acknowledgment of the ways gender, class, and ethnicity intersect that, one would think, should ultimately explode the myth of gender as the main predictor of differential attainment. The document states clearly that

> the focus is not solely on the "gender gap" and "boys' underachievement" but also acknowledges that, on the one hand, boys are also high attainers, and on the other hand, that many girls face significant challenges. (Department for Children, Schools and Families [DCSF], 2007b, p. 6)

In schizoid fashion, however, the very next set of guidelines issued specifically targets young boys and achievement (3–7 years). The instructions, titled *Confident, Capable and Creative: Supporting Boys' Achievements* (DCSF, 2007a), are a series of prescriptions (with supporting case studies) for early years' practitioners to re-masculinize boys and "unlock," through careful diagnosis, their academic potential by drawing out their innate masculine learning styles. Once more, the fantasy figure of the academically successful supergirl haunts her gendered other, the failing boy (Epstein, Elwood, Hey, & Maw, 1998) robbed of confidence and mastery (Walkerdine, 1998). The two figures continue to rub alongside each other to produce a gendered binary framework of achievement that extends beyond the field of education to fuel the fears about wider contemporary moral panics over the symbolic redistribution of phallic power from boys/masculinity to girls/femininity. To our minds, these anxieties harken back to age-old myths of women robbing men of phallic potency. These are writ large in the biblical figure of Lilith, who refused to "lie beneath" Adam and then stole men's semen in their sleep. Fears of castration—mythological references, symbolic aspects and fantasies—were explored at length by Freud in his famous treatises on castration anxiety (e.g., Freud, 1924/1991). The way contemporary fears and anxieties fold back into these cultural motifs

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[3] For a more extensive media analysis of international panic over "overly successful girls," see Ringrose (in press).

and anxieties over feminine power and masculine loss has proved instructive for us in analyzing the contemporary context and enduring phallogocentric discourses regulating the lives of young girls and women.

Top Girls, Phallic Girls, and the Postfeminist Masquerade

Responding to the particular anxieties, fears, "repudiations," and "repressions" of feminism that orient the contemporary postfeminist terrain of wider popular culture, feminist cultural studies theorist Angela McRobbie (2007, 2008) considers the effects of a new sexual contract for girls and women, which she calls the "postfeminist masquerade." This masquerade is a pernicious form of inscription and entrapment, exercised through a discourse of compulsory choice, where young women entering the symbolic (i.e., traditionally male sphere of power) are required to perform a hyper-femininity and submissiveness in order to negotiate the terrain of hegemonic masculinity without jeopardizing their "heterosexual desirability" or being positioned as "aggressive and competitive . . . as they come to inhabit positions of authority" (2007, p. 726). The postfeminist masquerade is a "containment strategy adopted on behalf of the (patriarchal) symbolic faced with possible disruption to the stable binaries of sexual difference" (2007, p. 723) and operates as the "new cultural dominant" in advanced Western democracies regulating the lives and experiences of girls and young women. McRobbie thus insists that there is a "renewed institutionalization of gender inequity" and a "restabilization of gender hierarchy" that reorders the heterosexual matrix with a "double movement":

> Its voluntaristic structure works to conceal that patriarchy is still in place, while the requirements of the fashion and beauty system ensure that women are still fearful subjects, driven by the need for complete perfection. (Riviere, 1929/1986, p. 42; McRobbie, 2007, p. 726)

Recent research is critically exploring how girls are navigating the neo-liberal "top-girl" discourses of success (Jackson et al., 2010; McRobbie, 2007; Renold, 2005; Ringrose, 2007) that demand both academic excellence and public projections of highly stylized hyper-femininity. This research is beginning to explore the gendered, classed, and raced contradictions that make negotiating these subject positions impossible: being the "nurturer and aggressor," the "hetero-feminine desirable and successful learner"—"the sexy, assertive and high achieving 'super-girl'" (Archer, Halsall, & Hollingworth, 2007; Renold & Allan, 2006; Ringrose, 2006; Ringrose & Walkerdine, 2007; Walkerdine, 2007; Youdell, 2006). Much of this research points not only to McRobbie's "fearful subject" negotiating the disciplinary gaze and capillary power of phallogocentrism but also to a wider fear and anxiety of a displaced phallus.

Pivotal here, and of specific interest to us for this chapter, is McRobbie's (2007, p. 732) reconfiguration of "the phallic girl," a subject position that "bears the superficial marks of boldness, confidence, aggression and even transgression (in that it refuses the feminine deference of the post-feminist masquerade)." We have found

this figuration particularly seductive and productive to make sense of the simultaneous regulative grip of, and resistance to, phallogocentric power and the paradoxical re-figuration of femininity (from lack to capaciousness) within the symbolic. We find the motif of the phallic girl instructive because it reinvigorates an older feminist language of phallogocentrism (Cixous, Irigaray, Kristeva), which offers important symbolic and metaphorical ways of exploring masculine power. The joining up of such disparate terms as "girl" and "phallus" is also usefully posed as a series of questions: Is a phallic girl possible? How are girls navigating what Lacan called the "master signifier" of the phallus in contemporary contexts? Drawing on four analytic case studies, we explore girls and young women's resistances to the postfeminist masquerade, as complex negotiations within an enduring phallogocentric heteronormative sexual matrix and a social and cultural context of what McRobbie has called "resurgent patriarchalism" (2007, p. 736).

Problematizing the Phallicism of the Phallic Girl

For McRobbie (2007), the "phallic girl," within the terrain of neo-liberal post-feminist culture, is a politicized subject who mobilizes power from the "almighty symbolic" by joining her male counterparts in hegemonic masculine pursuits (e.g., from educational achievement to violence) and pleasures (e.g., from drinking cultures to sexual agency). However, according to McRobbie, the phallic girl (McRobbie offers examples of the career girl and "laddette") exhibits a "licensed and temporary form of phallicism" (2007, p. 732). Whether the girl takes on masculine success or violence, the condition of these newfound freedoms is the withholding of any critique of the regulatory dynamics that sustain hegemonic masculinity (i.e., "the almighty symbolic"):

> These re-configurations of normative femininity restabilize sexual identities which might otherwise be disrupted as a result of these new occupational positions, educational achievements and control of fertility available to young women, and of course the spectral presence, or the lingering aftermath of feminist politics. (McRobbie, 2007, p. 734)

The phallic girl is theorized through discourses of mimicry—a temporary formation that does not actually disturb the hierarchy of the symbolic (i.e., girls/women as always already Other).

While the figuration of the phallic girl is productive in pointing to the impossibility of doing/being "the successful girl," and shores up the anxiety induced by the fantasy that she can rock the patriarchal boat *and* attain phallic power, the binary logic of sexual difference that constitutes the phallicism of the phallic girl as impossible subject needs problematizing. We would like to contest the assumption that girls who perform what Judith Halberstam (1998) has termed "female masculinity" are simply rejecting femininity for a slice of male power or that when girls attempt to perform those practices ascribed to masculinity, this somehow serves only to reinforce the gender binary in the symbolic!

This problematic of the phallic girl/woman is, of course, not unique to McRobbie or Halberstam. Rather, this figure lies at the heart of queer/feminist theory and debate and is apparent in Judith Butler's (2004) and Rosi Braidotti's (1994, 2003) elaborations of Luce Irigaray's radical deconstructive critique of phallogocentrism (i.e., the theory of hierarchical sexual difference in which the masculine is the privileged signifier and the feminine is constituted as object, as lack, and always enslaved to the phallus). In this binary opposition, masculinity and femininity are each locked into respective and unequal relationships of power and powerlessness in which "the feminine is too narrowly defined as an instrument of phallogocentrism" (Butler, 2004, p. 197). Indeed, Butler raises an important question in her critique of the sexual difference that upholds phallogocentrism:

> Must the framework for thinking about sexual difference be binary for this feminine multiplicity to emerge? Why can't the framework for sexual difference itself move beyond binarity into multiplicity? (2004, p. 197)

Butler's (2004) description of the pathologization of "butch desire" as a consequence of defining femininity too narrowly can be equally applied to the ways in which "tomboy" in the feminist academic literature is frequently rendered as the ultimate phallic girl, as we will explore below, a girl who takes on masculinity through a misogynistic ditching of femininity and desiring of masculinity (see Reay, 2001; Renold, 2006, 2008). Discursively trapped in its own binary logic, girls' appropriation of masculinity is, in these analyses, seen to be entrenching the social power of gender norms, valorizing masculinity (power), devaluing femininity (lack), rather than exploring butch desire, the tomboy subject position, or indeed the girls' negotiation of the phallus as "another permutation of feminine desire," a view, that, as Butler argues, "seeks a more open account of femininity, one that goes against the grain of the phallogocentric vision" (2004, p. 197).

However, as many empirical studies and our own case studies illustrate below, the anxiety produced by a mutating phallus that can move from body parts to any/Other bodies (see Butler's chapter, 'The Lesbian Phallus' in her book 'Bodies That Matter', 1993) incites some aggressive reterritorializations as we have illustrated in the powerful educational discourse, public anxieties, and truth claims about failing boys as a consequence of the phallus's decoupling from the naturalized link to male morphology. In the case studies below, we critically explore the ways in which the phallus is differently taken up by girls (by feminine morphologies) and explore the extent to which appropriating the phallus (as "disavowed identification," Butler, 1993, p. 87) within brutal disciplinary regimes of phallogocentrism effects a "castrating occupation of that central masculine trope, fuelled by the kind of defiance which seeks to overturn that very degradation of the feminine" (1993, p. 87). Quite unlike what we would see as the impotency of McRobbie's phallic girls (who simply take on the phallus temporarily and never disturb the "almighty symbolic"), we explore empirical moments of girl subjects who have the potential to rupture, displace, and ultimately castrate the privileged signifier and reconfigure normative femininity. Or do they? To what extent, as Butler (1993, p. 89) poses, can the plasticity of the phallus (as imaginary effect) open up "a site of proliferative resignifications ... recalling and displacing the masculinism by which it is

impelled" and what are the costs and consequences of such resignificatory practices and the shaking up of sexual difference itself in the lives of young tween and teenage girls? Moreover, how do Other differences, which make a difference (e.g., class, ethnicity, religion, age) and which act as markers upon feminine subjectivity, feature in this process?

We draw upon three different research projects from our empirical research with diverse groups of tween and teenage girls in England (southeast) and Wales (southwest) (Renold, 2005[4]; Renold & Allan, 2006[5]; Ringrose, 2008a, 2008b[6]). In the analysis that follows, we focus on 5 girls from our respective research: Eric/a, Jo, Nyla, Libby, and Faiza. Eric/a and Jo are both white, English, middle-class (Eric/a) and working-class (Jo) 10-year-old girls who participated in a yearlong ethnography exploring gender and sexual relations and identities in the elementary school. Libby (white, Welsh, middle class) and Nyla (Welsh Pakistani) are two 10-year-old girls from different schools (see footnote 5) who participated in a series of group interviews and ethnographic conversations (including audio diaries) in a pilot study

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[4] This project was a yearlong ethnographic study exploring the construction of children's gender and sexual identities in their final year (Year 6) of elementary school. This research was conducted during the academic year 1995–1996 in two contrasting elementary schools situated in a small semirural town in the east of England. Jo went to Tipton Primary (white, working-class, and middle-class geographic area) and Erica to Hirstwood Primary (white, predominantly middle-class geographic area). Alongside ongoing participant observation, one of the main methods to get close to the children's social worlds was through unstructured exploratory group interviews. These interviews often took off in some quite unexpected directions, including discussions and disclosures in more sensitive areas such as bullying, homophobia, sexual harassment, boyfriends and girlfriends, as well as talk about schoolwork, play, friendships, music, popular culture, fashion, and appearance.

[5] This project explored girls' and boys' perceptions and experiences of how they feel about and perform academic success in Year 5 (9- and 10-year-olds). This research was carried out over a 6-week period in June and July 2002, in three Year 5 classes, by Sandy Allan and me in three schools in a city in South Wales, U.K. Nyla went to Riverbank Primary (multiethnic, working-class geographic area) and Libby went to Allbright Primary (predominantly white, middle-class geographic area). We adopted a multi-method approach, integrating friendship group interviews, participant observations, and pupil diaries. While the interviews predominantly explored children's views about school and schoolwork, and specifically the gendering of children's relationship to school/schoolwork, a significant part of the interview involved encouraging children to talk about gender relations and gender identity work more widely.

[6] Jessica's data draw upon narrative interview research with girls' friendship groups from a recently completed pilot study funded by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, "Girls and the Subject of Aggression and Bullying." The data for this paper draw on three successive interviews with a friendship group of girls (5 girls, aged 12–14) attending Herbert Secondary, an inner-city school in South Wales, with high proportions of ethnically and economically marginalized students, and with student performance well below national averages. Jessica's research, however, was not based at/in school. She drew on work in cultural and youth studies, which have developed strategies for working with girls outside the regulative institutional context of schools (Hall, 2000; McRobbie & Garber, 1976). After meeting the mother of one of the girls during research in the local community center, Jessica conducted two successive focus group interviews with this group and then in-depth individual interviews with each of the girls at this mother's home. The interviews focused on a range of issues related to friendship and conflict at school and beyond.

exploring the relationship between academic achievement and gendered and sexualized bullying. Faiza (age 13) is Welsh Iraqi and has participated in a small group and individual interview-based study on teen girls and issues of femininity, masculinity, and aggression. Faiza was interviewed three times over 6 months to explore her responses to and experiences of gendered and sexualized bullying at school.

Girls and Sexual Regulation: The Continuing Terrain of Phallogocentric Power

Girls continue to be very aware of the objectification and surveillance of their bodies in everyday contexts of schooling. A number of ethnographic educational research studies have powerfully illustrated the ways in which being an "intelligible girl" (Butler, 1993) involves investing in cultural markers that signify dominant notions of heterosexual femininity (Aaopola, Gonick, & Harris, 2004; Driscoll, 2002; Gonick, 2003; Griffin, 2005; Harris, 2004a, 2004b; Hey, 1997; Walkerdine, Lucey, & Melody, 2001). Research has also explored how the compulsory sexualization of "older" femininities is increasingly operating as a defining feature of young contemporary girlhood[7] (Allan, 2009; Ali, 2003; Epstein, Kehily, Mac an Ghaill, & Redman, 2001; Kehily, Epstein, Mac an Ghaill, & Redman, 2002; Kehily, 2002; Mellor, 2007; Reay, 2001; Renold, 2005; Ringrose, 2008a; Russell & Tyler, 2002). We have argued elsewhere (Renold & Ringrose, 2011; Ringrose & Renold, 2008) how girls continue to face fierce heterosexualized competition and real (e.g., physical heterosexual harassment) and symbolic phallogocentric violence (e.g., discourses of young compulsory heterosexuality) within everyday schooling environments and within the dynamics of their relationships with girls and boys. These practices find expression through the highly regulative discourses regarding the sexuality, appearance, and behavior of other girls in the private spaces of their friendship groups as a mode of constructing categories of self and other (Duncan, 2004; Hey, 1997). This is particularly evident in comments such as the following from our previous research with elementary and high school girls:

Carrie (age 10): I'm not being horrible but have you seen Trudy's skirt, it's her five-year-old sister's and it's like up here (draws an invisible line well above her knee)… when she bends down you can see her bum… some people say she's a tart. (Renold, 2005, p. 46)

Faiza (age 14): At one stage, Katie was dressing up in skirts the length of her knickers dressed like that, with like nothing there and she would be all really weird, in other words, she made herself small. It was like, O she walked past a boy and she goes, "O he fancies me."… [And] Amy Turner[.] She's kind of

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[7] See Egan and Hawkes (2008), Albury and Lumby (2010) and Renold and Ringrose (2011) for critical engagements with the recent explosion in governmental, NGO and media moral panics over girls, sexuality and sexualisation.

[a] slut if you think of, in my perspective, it's not like she's fat and she's like, she looks horrible, she has got a nice figure but like she shouldn't do it, she shouldn't show it off to everyone.

Elizabeth: She wears skirts about that big.

Faiza: Because having a reputation isn't a good thing, it's a bad thing because . . . will go, "Oh don't go out with her," she'll go out for a week and then.

Safa: No, but [she'll] go out with them because she'll do anything with him and stuff like that.

Faiza: In other words, the boys are taking advantage because . . . the only reason they start going out with her is because they think she'll do stuff with them.

(Ringrose, 2008a, p. 247)

As we, and others (Hey, 1997; Kehily, 2002) have shown, there is a delicate balance to be negotiated between performing heterosexualized femininity and regulating the self and others, that is, being sexually attractive but not too available and closely regulating one's sexual identity and reputation (Griffin, 2004).

Renold's (see 2005) early research in the late 1990s highlighted and discussed at length these pressures upon all girls to invest in their bodies as heterosexually desirable commodities and noted a careful balancing act, reported particularly by high-achieving elementary schoolgirls in their negotiation of "being clever" with "being feminine" (i.e., heterosexually desirable and desiring). At the turn of the millennium, in a pilot project specifically conducted to explore the relationship between academic identities and gender/sexual norms in the elementary school years, Renold and Allan (2006) confirmed earlier findings of the ways in which girls not only continue to struggle with competing notions of "cleverness" and "femininity" (Walkerdine, 1990) but negotiate the compulsory performance of the "sexy, assertive, high-achieving supergirl." While "having it all" (brains, beauty, and confidence) was not a desirable subject position for the majority of girls (middle or working class, white or ethnic minority), two girls, Nyla and Libby, openly reported striving to be the best academically: Nyla, to secure a better future, and Libby, to maintain and reproduce her own classed academic privilege. Each girl produced her success through a discourse of power—actively seeking out ways to promote and maintain her academic standing as a high achiever and embrace and take pride in her achievements. However, the girls did so in strikingly different ways and with very different effects. For Libby, sexualized hyper-femininity seemed a necessary partner to the pursuit of academic excellence. Nicknamed by her class teacher as leader of the "knickers and bra brigade," Libby and her friends invested heavily in dominant sexualized girly culture, "obsessing" (Sally, aged 10) about their underwear and boys. Libby described their collective femininity as being "just normal girls"—constructing "girly" identities in relation to and against Other femininities ("we don't like geeky girls," "tomboys," "mosher girls," and "smelly" "disgusting girls that fanc[y] another girl . . . a lesbian"). Given that Libby and her friends were pushing the boundaries of acceptable ways of performing clever (Libby was one of the only girls to be described by teachers as "confident" and "assertive"), perhaps troubling normative femininities was too much of a risky enterprise.

This regulatory twinning of "bright and beautiful" becomes increasingly visible in the decoupling of clever from normative configurations of femininity in Nyla's classed (working class) and racialized (Muslim) reconfiguration of "girl" and her open contempt and rejection of emphasized hetero-femininity. Unlike her white and South Asian Welsh peers, Nyla constructed her femininity in direct and critical opposition to emphasized "girly" femininities. Nyla's ambivalent femininity as strong-minded, autonomous, antigirly, antiboy, clever, traditional (in her sartorial expression), and moody pushed the normative boundaries of "doing girl" (see Renold & Allan, 2006). Although Nyla was supported by her immediate and extended family (particularly her grandmother) in doing femininity and cleverness in the way that she did, she was increasingly marginalized and subjected to verbal bullying and severe social exclusion, as the following quotes illustrate:

AA: What about being picked on or teased for doing hard work or anything? Does anyone ever get that?
Sue: Well, Nyla. A lot.
Shamilla: Nyla[,] yeah[,] she always goes off[,] and she is really moody[,] yeah[,] and she rushes her work[,] and then she gets a sticker. She then goes out to play and says[,] ["O]h no one can do those sums and everything[,] and I can![,"] and she always shows off. We call her Moody's Point! . . .

. . .

Deepak: That's the one I don't like [points to Nyla who has just let us know we need to get back to class] . . . look when she walks past, yeah, she is like mad [crazy]! She acts like a man really!

Consequently, representing the gendered and a/sexualized Other Nyla seemed to confuse her classmates and was multiply positioned (in their struggle for classification?) as "a boy," "man-like," "a nightmare," "a bully," "weird," and "mad." Renold and Allan (2006) have struggled in their theorizing of Nyla's academic success in radically reconfiguring emphasized heteronormative femininity—against the odds (given the high social and emotional costs of sustaining her position) opting for a conceptual language of "different," "liminal," and "ambivalent" femininities (see Gonick, 2004; McLeod, 2002). Nyla's positioning by her classmates as a "man," however, illustrates the abiding impossibility (Youdell, 2006) for some subjects to embody phallic power without simultaneously embodying an intelligible and recognizably sexualized embodied femininity. It reminds us of the stark gendered and sexualized norms operationalized through daily practice at school and the consequences of usurping the postfeminist masquerade demanded of girls and women. We want to move on from this illustration of harsh, regulative gendered and sexualized power, upon which McRobbie's thesis pivots, to further examples where we found greater ambivalence and strategies for navigating and possibly disrupting the binary gender symbolic and the phallogocentric power that underpins it, through an exploration of alternative figurations.

Disrupting Phallogocentric Power: Empirical Episodes as Alternative Figurations

> Alternative figurations consequently are figural modes of expressing affirmative ideas, thus displacing the vision of consciousness away from the phallogocentric mode. (Braidotti, 1994, p. 113)

> What is needed is not a new body part, as it were, but a displacement of the hegemonic symbolic (of heterosexist) sexual difference and the critical release of alternative imaginary schemas for constituting sites of erotogenic pleasure. (Butler, 1993, p. 91)

There are an increasing number of queer and feminist appropriations of Deleuzian philosophy within the empirical social sciences (Coleman & Ringrose, 2012; Hickey-Moody & Malins, 2006; St. Pierre, 2000; Tamboukou, 2004) and a growing critical educational literature on girls' subversive and resistant practices to hegemonic gendered and sexual discourses in which normative masculinities and femininities are queered (e.g., Jiwani, Steenbergen, & Mitchell, 2006; Hickey-Moody & Rasmussen, 2009). We take our own inspiration from Rosi Braidotti's philosophical writings and specifically her notion of nomadic consciousness as "a form of political resistance to hegemonic and exclusionary views of subjectivity" (1994, p. 23). Of particular interest in terms of applying often abstract theorizations of subjectivity, power, and desire is what she calls the philosophy and practice of "as if," which operates as a strategy to rescue ideas from the past to trace paths of transformation in the contemporary moment. Our own practice of "as if" is returning to and reworking the theoretical tools of Irigaray and Kristeva to explore or make maps, not simply tracings (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 13), of our empirical data of girls' micronegotiations of the "scattered hegemonies" (Kaplan, 1987) of phallogocentrism. The "as if" mode allows us to speculate upon what we identify through our ethnographic conversations, observations, and narrative interviews with girls, practices that can "open up in-between spaces where new forms of political subjectivity can be explored" (Braidotti, 1994, p. 7). The data episodes that we draw upon below are a purposeful selection of empirical moments that we feel offer up a range of potential alternative figurations and allow us to excavate and revitalize old schemes of thought and critically explore girls' social and cultural negotiations (i.e., their identifications, attachments, and detachments) to the everyday normative violences within the phallogocentric symbolic.

Girlfriend: Beating Back the Phallus?

This first alternative figuration revisits an episode that Renold (2002) has previously briefly outlined and theorized as a form of sexual harassment and a gender reversal of girls' appropriating male power. This episode is revisited not just to highlight the ways in which girls are actively subverting McRobbie's postfeminist masquerade in ways that are not neatly subsumed through the subject position of

the masculinized phallic girl but also as a potential powerful rupture of the normative girlfriend discourse in school-based tween culture. To contextualize, such norms pivoted around practices of physical intimacy (girlfriends pushing for sexual intimacy through kissing or holding hands) to physical distance (girlfriends in name only) and wider discourses of performing girlfriend and emphasized femininities (i.e., the ways in which young femininity is frequently inscribed in discourses of submission and subordination to the heterosexual matrix/male gaze). While heterosexual harassment may describe the behavior of the episode to follow, Jo's playful violence toward her boyfriend, and thus radical departure from acceptable modes of courtship and ways of being and doing girlfriend, takes on an interesting twist when it is not pathologized as Jo performing aggressive violent masculinity (Ringrose, 2006). Rather, it could operates as potential rupture to a phallogocentric system and a heterosexual matrix through which femininity is only ever positioned as servicing masculinity/the phallus. What begins as straightforward resistance to male violence unravels into a more complex relationship to and performance of the pleasures and pains of female violence and aggression:

(Note: Jo is at least a foot taller than William.)

ER: So, Jo, how are things with you and William?

Jo: All right (smiling).

Amanda: She whacked him the other day, and he had a red mark like a hand shape.

Jo: That's because he comes round my house and he does this thing with a pipe cleaner . . . he takes these little bits off and goes like that (strokes her hand across her cheek) and I got these cuts straight down here (laughing).

Jane: Eeer.

ER: He did that to your face?

Hayley: You always hit him, all, all the time.

Jo: Yeah (giggles).

ER: So you slapped him?

Jo: Yeah, I slapped him.

ER: Coz he made a mark on your face?

Jo: Yeah, coz.

Hayley: He had a hand mark on his back (almost defending William).

Amanda: She slaps him all the time.

Jo: He hits me (defensive tone, but weakly executed).

ER: So if he hits you, you hit him back? Or do you hit him, and he hits you back?

Jo: Yeah . . . no, he hits me, and I hit him back.

Amanda: If he thumps you though, you don't think you'd want normally to keep hitting him, do you?

Jo: (Laughs and nods)

ER: You like that, do you?

Jo: He doesn't, but I do. I do (laughs).

ER: You like hitting him?

Jo: Yeah (wide grin on face).

Jo's playful violence (scratching, slapping, hitting, and kicking) involves episodes performed within, not outside, femininity and girlhood and involve a range of complex interplays of psycho-social power relations that this article hasn't space to explore further. What we found particularly interesting are the ways in which unpopular (within gender and sexual hierarchical peer group relations) middle-class and working-class[8] girls rupture their "good girl" pupil identities (in classroom contexts, Jo was quiet, conscientious, academically able) to "bad girl" identities in playful and pleasurable ways with a radical, if temporary, and transitional subversion of normative romance relations with boys made available by an ambivalent tweenage boyfriend/girlfriend discourse and physical size (taller and stronger than romantic partners).

Faiza, an Iraqi Welsh girl from Jessica's recent research on girls and aggression (Ringrose, 2008b), also managed desire in ways that involved episodes of physical (slapping, hitting, kicking) violence toward boys in part through Faiza's embodiment of being "sporty" (Renold, 2005). This mode of embodiment and practice seemed to enable Faiza to physically engage with and enact physical violence back upon boys.

> Faiza: Boys in my school go around smacking girls' arses . . . A girl got smacked on the arse, she turned around and said ha, ha and laughed. If a boy done that to me, I would turn around and slap him one, kick him[,] and slap him again.
> JR: Why would that girl just be like[,] oh ha, ha, ha?
> Faiza: Because she'll probably be like um . . . oh he fancies me, I'm not going to do anything to that. There's a boy in my sister's year, he was walking past me and saying my name and coughing and saying things like that, it just gets on my nerves. So one day I slapped him, so then he went, ran and went behind his friend and said it again. So I went up to his friend and [he] goes [to] move out of the way[,] and he goes, "No." So then his friend started saying my name. And ever since like that day[,] which was about November, that boy comes up to me, says my name, hits me[,] and expects me to run after him. He just hits me, because the first couple of times, I started running after him, smacking him one and then running back [,]and now he expects me to run after him again. I just can't be bothered anymore.
> JR: So it's like a form of flirtation then, this hitting?
> Faiza: If they call it that, yeah.
> JR: Do you think?
> Faiza: I don't know. I wouldn't think he fancies me.
> JR: You don't?
> Faiza: Because me and the boy done [soccer] together, and I wouldn't think he fancied me.

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[8] The terms "middle class" and "working class" are not adopted unproblematically. Sensitive to the ways in which cultural, social, material, and discursive resources all play a part in the production of privilege (Skeggs, 2004), we use these terms here primarily as a heuristic device to identify contrasting cultural/socioeconomic backgrounds.

Like Jo, Faiza attempts to constitute her own desires somewhat differently from those of the sexually aggressive to other girls, yet ultimately compliant to males, version of the feminine, embodied by girls like Libby, mentioned earlier. Faiza attempts to mark herself as an actively desiring agent (in control), as well as the recipient agent of male desire, capable of enacting desire and violence back upon the male aggressor in ways that disrupt dominant heterosexualized scripts. Indeed, our respective ethnographic and narrative data with girls in schools suggest rather that normative femininity (in the latter case, "girlfriend" subject position) is being radically disrupted in the name of and through aggression and violence (hence our subtitle, "Beating Back the Phallus") that rupture the normative stasis of femininity as it is configured through the hegemonic heterosexual presumption of phallogocentrism. This is not, however, a simple taking on or mimicry of the phallus on the part of girls but rather a highly complex negotiation, as we explore below.

Tomboy: Taking on or Displacing the Phallus?

Recent research has drawn our attention to the diversity of tomboyism. "Tomboy" can be something that girls can exclusively invest in or can be a more fluid and mobile enterprise where girls might talk about being a "bit tomboy." It is the latter that appears most common in the latest empirical research (see Paechter & Clark, 2007). However, the case study of Erica we illustrate below (and is elaborated further in Renold, 2008, and Renold & Ringrose, 2008) is an exploration of the tomboy subject position as girls' negotiation of and resistance to the everyday modalities of hyper-sexualized gender performativity, embedded within a phallogocentric heterosexual matrix as it operates within the local preteen school-based environment.

Erica strongly identified with the subject position tomboy (see Renold, 2008, for a full discussion of Erica) and spent much of her elementary school years accessing the boy-dominated soccer culture. She also became an honorary boy and used to be known as Eric—a seemingly unproblematic and thus intelligible identity in her white, middle-class school. At age 9, Eric returned to "Erica," but in no simple reversing of gendered subject positions. Indeed, rather than conceive of Erica's deployment of tomboy where girls devalue and ditch femininity and girlhood (see Paechter & Clark, 2007; Reay, 2001), Erica stressed the ways in which she was a girl doing tomboy (e.g., "I'm still a girl," or "It doesn't make you a boy," "I'm a girl without all the make-up"). What Erica refused was engaging with and performing the dominant heterosexualized hyper-femininity much like her "top-girl" peers (see Renold, 2005). Erica's deployment of the tomboy discourse seemed to queer and rupture the heterosexual matrix, which allowed her to carve out distance from heteronormative practices. She was overtly critical not only of the routinized boyfriend/girlfriend culture ("I hate all that boyfriend talk") but also of the seemingly innocent games of kiss chase and other sexualized games prevalent throughout the school:

> Near the pond, I notice Sam, a Year 3, chasing Trudy and Tina (Year 6). He then starts to pinch their bottoms and pokes his fingers up and in between the cheeks. Two of his friends join in, and Sally and Hannah, who are standing nearby, are also chased and get their bums pinched. They are all laughing and screaming, and others begin to watch, particularly some of the Year 6 boys. The shrieking and screaming continues, [*sic*] and the boys seem to be almost grabbing their girls now, rather than just pinching and poking them. Erica watches with a look of distaste on her face. She glances over and sees me watching[,] too. She eventually walks over to me and says, eyes still fixed on the boys, "Look at them … it's disgusting, the little pervs."

Erica's distancing in this moment and others constitutes a significant challenge to the normative discourses of "heterosexualized play" (Blaise, 2005). Resisting the penetrative, phallogocentric performances in operation, Erica mobilizes a powerful discourse of moral degeneracy to pathologize the boys as "disgusting little pervs." Indeed, of particular significance, for this chapter, are the ways in which Erica's body through time, her longitudinal performative investment in tomboyism, and queering of gender, age, and sexual norms from tomboy Eric to tomboy Erica seemed to shield her from a number of heterosexualizing processes within her local school-based peer culture. Such practices ranged from sexual harassment and innuendo to coercive romantic positionings within an increasingly compulsory boyfriend/girlfriend culture (see Renold, 2006; Renold & Ringrose, 2008). The distance she achieved was in stark contrast to other girls in the study, located as she was at a nexus of temporal and spatial discourses that disrupted the coherence of sex, gender, sexuality, and desire. Erica seemed to be making alternative figurations possible and, as Butler (2004, p. 217) states, a mode of becoming Otherwise.

Eric/a's story of how some girls are doing tomboy is a phenomenon far removed from any simple imitation of masculinity. Erica's investment in tomboyism doesindeed undermine and mutate the heterosexual male gaze in ways that, in her tweenage years, rework and reconfigure normative femininity as it operates within girls' local elementary school–based cultures. Her tomboyism also operates in ways that linger and endure, providing her with a critical vocabulary and insight into (and thus refusal to be positioned by) the everyday violences of sexualized name-calling and harassment within and beyond the school gates. A similar dynamic of critique was evident from Faiza, who turned her critical awareness on the performance of hyper-sexualized femininity throughout her interviews:

> Faiza: Cleavage. There is a girl in my class, every time she bends over she pulls up her thong.
> JR: Really?
> Faiza: When she is walking past a boy, she'll suddenly start talking about how her thong is bugging her.
> JR: Really? What do you think of that?
> Faiza: It's disgusting. I wouldn't walk past a boy and say, "Ah, my thong is giving me a wedgey."

Crucially, like Erica, Faiza's resistance is both regulatory of the "girl" and critical of the "postfeminist" hyper-sexualized masquerade, evident in her "disgust" signified by the sleazy femininity of the thong that holds condensed sexualized and performative meanings in contemporary culture (Gill, 2007). This led Faiza to some very important disruptions of phallogocentric power, including her ability to critique masculine surveillance of her and her constitution as a "boy":

> Faiza: Ever since I have started playing [soccer], because my dad has always said that it's boys' sport and my brother has always called me, "Oh you boy, you play [soccer]," . . . but . . . really, girls aren't becoming like boys. [Soccer] isn't a boy's game anyway. It shouldn't be called a men's game . . . I don't know, girls aren't becoming boys . . . in the Victorian times you wouldn't, you'd never see a girl playing [soccer] or anything like that, you would always see girls in dresses, and if they were in trousers that would just look wrong and everyone would start staring at them. But now, girls wear trousers, girls play [soccer], are they becoming like boys? Not really, wearing trousers and playing [soccer] doesn't make you a boy. Like the pizza adverts, drinking beer, and watching [soccer] on TV doesn't make you a man.

Faiza's critical insights—her criticism of her dad's pronouncements about soccer as a boy's sport, her brother calling her a boy, and her questioning of the gender order that is so threatened by girls' entrance into phallic power—are apparent. This critique culminated in a more radical disruption of phallic-centered desire below:

> Faiza: I don't want to get married to a man. I don't want to get married. But I want children, but I don't want to get married.
> J: Why is that?
> Faiza: I don't know, I always see marriages with problems, you break up, money problems, something problem. I want it to stay to myself.
> J: Okay, so that's why you want to have your career and . . .
> Faiza: Because if I get married . . . I'd be like not worried about my career but worried about what he wants to worry about and things he'd want to do. He wouldn't worry about my career exactly, would he?
> J: So how do you think you would do that then? Have children but not be married?
> Faiza: I wouldn't mind adopting a child.
> J: So tell me your whole scenario then that you have worked out, like ideally, it doesn't have to really happen but . . .
> Faiza: When I grow up, first of all, I want to live in a house with Lucy. We want to live in a house together. We both want to be doctors. I don't know and then I don't want to get married, I might adopt.

In interpreting this passage, we have struggled with the questions: Is the phallus displaced, or is it claimed by Faiza in this passage? Is she a phallic girl who will get the means to produce a child by other means? Or is a separate space of desire opened up? A compulsory heterosexual identity, which will lead to marriage, is usurped in Faiza's aspiration to have children without a phallus. The bonds of friendship are not severed through primary commitment to heterosexual desirability and ultimately conjugal bonds of marriage. Phallic-bound service is thoroughly disrupted,

as Faiza also goes against her constitution as a racialized and economically dependent Muslim "minority" girl, to imagine herself as economically powerful and independent doctor. We would like to suggest, therefore, that Faiza's narratives operate with the dual momentum described by Butler (1993, p. 91) earlier, as "displacing the hegemonic symbolic" (the phallus) and offering a "critical release of alternative imaginary schemas" that in turn offers Faiza moments of "pleasure."

Conclusion

This chapter illustrates the continuing relevance of Lacan's (1977/2002, p. 321) deliberations upon the phallic-deprived woman, and his pronouncement (and worry?!) that "in order to be the phallus . . . a woman will reject an essential part of femininity, namely all her attributes in the masquerade." Part of our project is to continue to challenge the constitution of girls as either inherently lacking *or* as able to unproblematically take on the mantle of phallic power. Our goal has also been to find spaces in everyday practice where girls' narratives disturb and unsettle "the ostensibly originating and controlling power of the Lacanian phallus, *indeed its installation as the privileged signifier of the symbolic order*" (Butler, 1993, p. 73, emphasis added). Luce Irigaray (1997) gave feminists an alternative vocabulary of sexual desire, which reorients the feminine toward active and multiplicitous desire in challenge to unitary, phallogocentric, one-penis-organ-bound desire that grounds the binary oppositions that constitute the feminine as lacking against the masculine. Helene Cixous (2000) has offered the image of Medusa to express this nonphallic multiplicity and to counter Freud and Lacan's reduction of women to lack, this metaphor also capturing the horror we experience at the opening up of the repressed feminine. Kristeva (1982) in turn offered us the notion of jouissance (something connected to the revolt against norms) to try and articulate the multiplicity and complexity of erotic and psychic pleasure and abjection in the feminine, which we need to find and cultivate. We find these articulations of multiplicity important to return to in challenging any simple notion of a phallic girl. It helps in deconstructing the mythological object of fear—the top, alpha supergirl—who is presumed to be taking up and wreaking havoc with the masculine appendage, reversing the natural order of male supremacy in the worlds of school and work (see Baker, 2009). It also offers a way to complicate the too-simple notion that girls who take up masculinized practices are simply mimicking boys.

Integral to this more capacious theorization of femininity is envisioning the ways in which masculinity is spoken by and emerges from girls' bodies but NOT as any simple or straightforward copy or mimicry (such is the frequent conceptualization of how being a tomboy involves ditching femininity, or how physical violence in girls is masculinized as analogous to femininity). As Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p. 12) have insisted:

> Mimicry is a very bad concept, since it relies on binary logic to describe phenomena of an entirely different order. The crocodile does not reproduce a tree trunk, any more than the chameleon reproduces the colors of its surroundings.

Interpreting the ways in which girls' engagement with and taking up of masculinity or phallogocentric discourses as either mimesis or simply a renewed sexism misses the ways in which girls manipulate norms, exceed them, and rework them "and expose the realities to which we thought we were confined as open to transformation" (Butler, 2004, p. 217). This interpretation also misses how "these norms can be significantly deterritorialized through the citation" (Butler, 2004, p. 218) and the complexity of the process of negotiating power. Drawing on Irigaray, Butler argues for a critical mimesis to suggest that the working and reworking of norms, the performing of norms by different bodies, may well appear to "echo the master discourse" (particularly when other girls are referring to each other as being or behaving "like boys"). However, as Butler suggests, "something is persisting and surviving, and the words of the master sound different when they are spoken by one who is, in the speaking, in the recitation, undermining the obliterating effects of his claim" (2004, p. 201).

In the examples of alternative figurations, we explored how girls like Jo, Erica, and Faiza are taking up aspects of violent or sporty masculinity; however, this is not a simple temporary seizure or copy but rather offers new formulations and possibilities for rupture and critique. We find these moments provide evidence of alternative figurations and are important insofar as such moments illuminate how reconfigurations of normative femininity can destabilize rather than restabilize what McRobbie calls the postfeminist masquerade (sexual identities—hegemonic masculinity, femininity, and heterosexuality) and thus disrupt what might remain undisrupted in light of new achievements (McRobbie, 2007, p. 734). Braidotti (1994, p. 197) argued that the future symbolic is one in which femininity has multiple possibilities, "released from the demand to be one thing, or to comply with a singular norm, the norm devised for it by phallogocentric means." This chapter and our alternative figurations are, we hope, a contribution to these debates, drawing on our empirical research with girls (and boys) about the status and effects of the past, present, and future symbolic.

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Chapter 5
The Queer in Masculinity: Schooling, Boys, and Identity Formation

Máirtín Mac an Ghaill and Chris Haywood

Introduction

Studies of schooling and masculinity have provided highly productive insights into young men's identity formations, subjectivities, and social practices (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998; Lingard & Douglas, 1999; Mills, 2001; Martino, Lingard, & Mills, 2004). Such research has identified schools as cultural arenas where masculinity has become an important concept to describe and explain issues such as under-achievement, sex education, peer group cultures, language use, sexual violence, and pedagogy (Francis & Skelton, 2001; Martino & Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2003; Keddie, 2007). This work has contributed to an analytical and political engagement with the field of gender and schooling by disputing the pre-given nature of social ascriptions of biological sex (male/female) and identifying the importance of social and cultural formations. This chapter argues that although such work has been productive in exposing the gendered nature of schooling, a concept of queering can identify the theoretical and conceptual limitations embedded in educational research on masculinity. More specifically, it is argued that queering is potentially a transgressive intervention that may disturb, contest, and challenge some of the basic assumptions that underpin the concept of masculinity. This involves resisting a conventional identity politics logic that secures and approximates identities through the collection of educational experiences, processes, and practices. Rather, this chapter conceptually scrutinizes the (commonly ascribed) constituent elements of masculinity and, as Sedgwick (1991) suggests, 'twists' the concept of masculinity in order to undo it.

Conventional theorizing of masculinity provides the boundaries through which the possibility of queering masculinity can be mobilized and has significant implications for how we see the relationship between gender and sexuality. If masculinity is queered, whereby the constituent features of the gender category become soluble and sexual object choice becomes dislocated, the edges of masculinity become less

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defined. Popular TV shows such as *Will & Grace* and *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* (Clarkson, 2005; Linneman, 2007) suggest that the elements through which masculinities can be made have become increasingly disentangled from their traditional locations. Thus, as Clarkson (2005) suggests, the adoption of stylistically different masculinities results in the erasure of the lines that define heterosexual and homosexual gender performances. It is argued here that masculine identities in schooling can be understood in a similar way. More specifically, it is suggested that when educational research is conducted on boys and young men, the dominant theoretical and conceptual frames in the academy too easily insist on a masculinity that is constituted by and dependant on heterosexuality and homophobia. In reflecting on research on primary school children's gendered and sexual identities, Thorne (1993, p. 108) maintains that "[a] sense of the whole, and the texture and dynamism of interaction, becomes lost when collapsed into dualisms like large versus small, hierarchical versus intimate, agency versus communion, and competitive versus co-operative." It could be claimed that masculinity and femininity also operate as a dualism that through its deployment simplifies the complex specificities and intricacies of boys' and young men's social and cultural worlds.

Heterosexual Masculinities and Schooling

Bhabha (1995, p. 58) argues that "[m]asculinity, then, is the 'taking up' of an enunciative position, the making up of a psychic complex, the assumption of a social gender, the supplementation of a historic sexuality, the apparatus of a cultural difference." It has been suggested that one of the key constitutive factors of the complex of masculinity is heterosexuality. Butler (1995) claims that masculinity and femininity are embedded within the heterosexual matrix, where the demonstration of coherent masculinities and femininities operates to secure this matrix. Such a perspective has been adopted in studies of gender and schooling. Recent educational research has suggested that the concept of masculinity can be considered as a way of explaining boys' sexual practices in schooling institutions. Epstein (1997) uses Butler's argument to suggest that gender and sexual identities in schools work through a framework of compulsory heterosexuality; sexist gender relations and heterosexuality are mutually informing. She contends that "[t]he dual Others to normative heterosexual masculinities in schools are girls/women and non-macho boys/men. It is *against* these that many, perhaps most, boys seek to define their identities" (Butler, 1995, p. 113). Similarly, for Garlick (2003), the historical configuration of heterosexuality provides the parameters through which male sex and masculinity can emerge. The subject that requires masculinity for its coherence is a heterosexual subject.

   Work by Renold (2000, 2003) has sought to identify how masculinity is lived out in primary schools. Drawing upon Mac an Ghaill's (1994) explanation of how masculinities in secondary school are constituted, Renold (2000, 321) claims that boys in primary schools constitute their masculinities through "misogynistic and

homophobic discourses, and heterosexual fantasies." Thus, to achieve masculinity, boys are involved in symbolic sexual exchanges, public sexual innuendoes, sexual storytelling, and sexual objectification of girls. This corresponds to a broader cultural rule in English gender identity formations, in which sexuality operates as an important component in constituting men's identities. Thus, for Renold, operating within the English cultural logic of masculinity, boys continually tried to secure a hegemonic masculinity that resulted in the tenuous production and projection of their heterosexuality. Blaise (2005) also draws upon Judith Butler's notion of the heterosexual matrix in order to explain gender relations in kindergarten classes. According to Blaise, the heterosexual matrix operates to maintain gender divisions and thus informs the lived-out gendered performances of children. As Blaise (2005, p. 60) suggests: "The concept of genderedness becomes meaningless in the absence of heterosexuality as an institution, which is considered the normal and 'right' way to be either a girl or a boy." The heterosexual institution therefore produces regulative heterosexual norms that configure gendered identities.

The issue that needs to be considered is whether masculinity can exist outside the heterosexual discursive repertoires that generate possibilities of gender. Heasley (2005) argues that gendering can exist outside heteronormativity, and in many ways, challenge hegemonic masculinity that depends upon heterosexuality. More specifically, he claims that straight men can exhibit queer masculinities where "straight sissy boys," "social justice straight-queers," "elective straight-queers," "committed straight-queers," and "males living in the shadow of masculinity" describe men's practices as moving beyond the perceptions and ascriptions of masculinity and male heterosexuality. These include identifications with femininities, participation in gay/lesbian identity politics, adoption of gay lifestyles, the taking up of same-sex intimacy, and those who align with aspects of the above but are generally reluctant to be publicly identified. This non-linear and non-hierarchical typology of queer masculinities of straight men highlights instances where men's practices disrupt the gendered boundaries that facilitate masculinity through the performance of heterosexuality. However, Whittle (2002) suggests that current work on gender and sexuality may simply be contributing to a proliferation of identity categories. In effect, there is a multiplication of gendered sexual identities rather than a reconfiguration of the material that constitutes them. Furthermore, we may need to take seriously the issue articulated by Solomon-Godeau (1995) that suggests that the shift toward reconstructed masculinities, such as those constituted through effeminacy, might entail a colonization of the feminine. Of key importance is a shift toward masculine cultural forms that suspend codes of violence, homophobia, and misogyny, but remains constituted through that very suspension. In effect, the emergence of alternative idioms of masculinity may continue to depend upon a re-articulation of men's power over women. Thus, a recalibration of masculine identities to that of queer masculinities may not simply be the breaking down of the normative contours of traditional Western masculinities; it may, at the same time, be the re-alignment or re-establishment of a collective masculine order. The suggestion is that queering gender may actually result in the removal not only of the conceptual power of masculinity but also gender itself as Delphy (1993, p. 9) suggests: "perhaps we shall only be able to think about gender on the day that we can imagine non-gender."

Methodology: Conceptualizing the Empirical

It has been highlighted that research on masculinity that uses queer theory unproblematically uses "straight" methodologies (Haywood & Mac an Ghaill, 2003; Popoviciu, Haywood, & Mac an Ghaill, 2006). A similar issue arises when queer theory is used in the research on boys and masculinity within schools. The main issue is that the queering appears significant only at the moment of data analysis. It is argued that, in addition to explaining identity formations, queering can have implications for methodologies; it questions how evidence is constituted and what counts as validity/reliability, the status and practice of interviews, and the applicability of ethics. The implication is that an analytical intervention into the conceptual constitution of masculinity also has implications for the methodological processes. More specifically, the concern here is that the empirical does not speak on its own terms; the meaning of the empirical is configured by its ascriptions about how it can speak. Therefore, a complex relationship exists between the empirical and the theoretical, where the empirical cannot speak independently, and that conceptual frames are refracted by that which is known as the empirical.

The process of queering masculinity is based upon research undertaken in the northeast of England with pupils aged between 9 and 13. A class of 28 pupils was shadowed over the period of one year, and interviews with the students and their teachers were carried out. As a result, semi-structured and unstructured interviews were conducted with 12 male and 16 female students. Twelve staff members, primarily those who were the students' subject and pastoral tutors, were interviewed. The interviews lasted from 20 minutes to an hour. Classroom observations, in addition to break and lunchtime observations, were supplemented by a number of informal conversations with staff and pupils both inside and outside classes. The pupils also kept a number of audio diaries that were drawn upon. Although located in an affluent part of town, Walcote West was described by teachers and pupils—past and present—as a tough school. "Tough" in this context meant that the school fed the local secondary school with "hard" (male) pupils—who were from working-class backgrounds. With a critical reflexivity and an awareness of the produced nature of social research, the following themes were explored.

Moving Beyond Heterosexuality

The following exchange, between the researcher and the teacher at the research site, provides a useful catalyst in considering approaches that insist on gender being constituted through heterosexuality:

CH: Do you think that this generation of pupils [is] growing up faster?

Mr. Fraser: People say that, don't they? Children grow up faster. Because they hear the kids say "lesbian" or "masturbate," they jump to the idea—they must be doing it. In their magazines, it's something to talk about. Of course, they're not. Just that kids are like sponges. I don't think it's the case.

CH: What about Carol Ann and Pearce, Andrew Pearce?

Mr. Fraser: Well. . . there's an exception. Like she has problems that I can't really discuss, but what. . . I can say, what I will say, is that some things are bound to have an effect on them and what they do.

CH: But [weren't] she and Andrew Pearce caught in giving oral sex?

Mr. Fraser: That made me laugh. It wasn't just them; there were two other couples doing it! Mrs. Stephenson walked round the trees and caught them. That wasn't.. . . though; I mean they weren't *really* doing anything. Do you know what I mean? That was just kids' stuff, lads messin' on and that. Five minutes later, they were playing tag.

Interview

In this extract, "messin' on" is a rhetorical device that desexualizes and thus re-signifies the meaning of the practice. Thus, that which is culturally named as sexual practice is re-signified as a childhood practice. From the teacher's perspective, a pupil's desire can only exist within the category of childhood. Sexual practice is re-coded as a childhood desire, as the use of the term "lads," by the teacher, is a mechanism that insists on a childhood desire. Mac an Ghaill (1996) has productively argued that within schools the sexual is institutionally denied. This work exemplifies how conceptual sensitivity functions to open up such sexual silences. In the context of the above extract, such silencing is achieved by naming young people *as* children. This can be called infantilization, and it is used here to describe the process where institutions establish, through their practices, particular cultural understandings of adult/child relationships (Pye, Haywood, & Mac an Ghaill, 1997). A pervasive theme that surfaced during interviews with the teachers was an understanding of childhood as a developmental process, where we start with a 'simple' child who develops into a more 'complex' adult. Threaded through such accounts is a notion of innocence that insists on the absence of sexual experience (Hendrick, 1997; James, Jenks, Prout, 1998). Sexual in relation to this understanding tended to force the teachers to rename that which is known as legitimately sexual as nonlegitimate. Returning to Butler (1999), she insists that sexuality and gender identities have to be closely linked to objects of desire that depend upon and are stabilized by the heterosexual matrix. From the teachers' account, the stabilization of being "lads" depends on the *absence* of an authentic heterosexual desire. Dennis (2002) usefully maps out, through an analysis of the representation of boys and adolescents in television programs in the United States, how the media construct a binary between pre-teens and teenage boys. Pre-teen boys are generally deemed to lack sexual desire and are marked by an overt homosociality. In contrast, the teenage boy is represented as an overly eager hyper-heterosexual. A similar technique is operated by the teacher where the boys are reconceived as pre-teens and prepubescent.

However, not only is the possibility of heterosexuality institutionally marginalized, but fieldwork, interviews, and audio diaries also point to pupil cultures that did not actively appeal to a heterosexual matrix. In other words, projected and intrajected identifications were not cohered through discourses of heterosexuality (Hollway, 1998). Therefore, practices of being boys did not depend upon—as

Renold (2003) argues—publicly pronounced heterosexual fantasies. It is of key importance that, at Walcote West, this inter-connection between masculinity and heterosexuality did not operate in a similar fashion. This is not to suggest that heterosexual styles, ideas, representations, and practices were not operating in the school; they were. Nor is it to suggest that notions and types of masculinity (such as those demonstrated by groups of girls and teachers) were not available. Rather, the social relations at Walcote West suggest the possibility of alternative ways of considering the nature of boys' (gendered) identities in primary schools that does not resort to masculinity. For example, there was a popular group (a mixed group of male and female pupils in lower grades), who "played football [soccer]," were loud, and "got into trouble" that included two boys who were "going out" or "seein'" girls. However, for these boys, understanding their identity formations through a coherently organized heterosexuality was not appropriate. What appeared salient was a number of boyness identifications that operated outside an adult-led, English socially acceptable masculinity. These boys' identification with particular masculine-oriented practices, such as knowledge of cars, competence at soccer, ability to use computers, and understanding of wrestling did not include a 'boyness' subjectivity that was premised on conventional heterosexual codes.

Thus, the demonstration of heterosexuality was not always a conditional access to "boyness," and boys' identities did not depend on the demonstration and projection of heterosexuality. The implication here is that constituting "boyness" through a heterosexual masculinity may be conceptually simplistic or based upon adult-led categories. As Frank, Davison, and Lovell (2003, p. 129) suggest:

> Rather than yet another attempt to explain why boys and men do what they do, and a re-determination to "fix up" the practice of masculinity, with much of our own work (Frank, 1987, 1990, 1991), we want to begin to tease apart some of our contracted ways of knowing which continue to organize and regulate our thinking and our action as men (Kimmel, 1987), giving a certainty to boys' and men's lives that is, in fact, not there.

What was also interesting is that the majority of the boys in this research did not speak through or invest their identities through a heterosexual lexicon. Moreover, other boys tended to label such talk as "immature." In this context, the non-popular and the popular boys performing 'heterosexuality' acquired little social value from male and female pupils. For example, Harpal asserted that he was not into all that "love shit," and Paul argued that going out with girls was boring. Furthermore, in an interview that focused on romantic relationships, Stephen distanced himself from heterosexual practices:

Stephen: . . . and then there was Morrisson's birthday. Rochi and I were watching Kentucky Fried Chicken [bestiality video] and that where all the women were fucking ponies. . . but. . . I just take the mick [make fun] out of girls and stuff and that is the usual thing. . . cos I like football [soccer].

CH: So. . .

Stephen: I just don't bother. . . I mean. . . like. . . don't bother going out with them. . . they are just not interesting.

Of note is Stephen's use of pornography, while at the same time dis-identifying with heterosexual investments. If the identities of the popular were not formed through their performance of heterosexual codes, then the notion of otherness as supporting and consolidating the heterosexual matrix needs also to be problematized. The sexual was present, but it was not contained within the dynamics of a heterosexual or homosexual identity. This is not to suggest that the boys did not articulate masculine forms and styles, but rather that a *masculinity* identity based on the demonstration of heterosexuality provides limited explanatory purchase.

Homophobia, Homoeroticism, and Sexualization

The main dynamic for the interrogation of the conceptual foundations of established approaches to gender and schooling is the argument that concepts are not neutral objective instruments. It could be argued that "[c]oncepts are the means of grasping a problem, without the necessary concepts some problems are unthinkable, without them we (literally) do not know what we are talking about" (Marsden, 1982, p. 233). At the same time, concepts operate through a politics of privilege, where at the point of representation, conceptualizations are involved in defining and cohering the privileged ways of seeing. As a result, as concepts generate, determine, and create coherency with the empirical, they are involved in the production of power relations. In response, queer theory is concerned with "'gender fuck' which is a full-frontal theoretical and practical attack on the dimorphism of gender- and sex-roles" (Whittle, 2002, p. 67) and therefore involves the problematization, even rejection, of gender/sexuality. It is argued that a conceptual challenge to the received notions of gender enable a recalibration of research inquiry. In short, knowledge and understanding that are available to make sense of gender have become part of a conceptual scaffolding that supports and gives structure to the development of further insights. Furthermore, the conceptual development in this field of inquiry has sanctioned forms of interpretive closure.

One of the areas to engage with possible closure is through work that suggests the centrality of homophobia. Nayak and Kehily (1996) in their research on masculinity in secondary schools highlight an extreme dis-identification with homo-eroticism and demonstrate how boys in that study used homophobia as a means to construe the stability and authenticity of their heterosexuality. For example, pupils linked homo-eroticism to metaphors of disease and contagion. Touching and being in contact with that which is deemed homosexual were highly policed by the students and others. Nayak and Kehily (1996, p. 17) argue that "[t]he complex social make up of masculinities sees many young men using homophobias to conceal uncertainties and attempt to assert a cohesive identity." In a similar way, Kimmel's (2001) theorizing of masculinity takes up Freud's understanding of masculinity through the Oedipal complex. Boys have to negotiate the law of the father by rejecting the desire for the mother and excise feminine features such as nurturance, compassion, and tenderness. This, Kimmel argues, means that men are involved in a lifelong rejection of

these traits and the devaluing of women more generally. Alongside this, masculinity is formed through the main emotion of fear of homoeroticism. Homoeroticism must be suppressed, and there is a rejection of the homosexual within. Kimmel (2001, p. 277) argues that "homophobia is a central organizing principle of our cultural definition of manhood." Central to this definition is the fear of emasculation and the threat of the feminine. The implication is that homophobia is a foundational factor in the formation of masculine identities.

At Walcote West, with the absence of a publicly defined link between homophobia and heterosexuality, the boys appeared to take up and speak homoerotic positions. Although the functions of the talk may be varied (in a mode of institutional resistance, consolidating friendships, or humorous performance), they demonstrate the possibility of occupying a homoerotic discursive position and continuing to be deemed "normal" and popular. For example:

Brett: Sir, I think I am in love with you.
Andrew: Yeah, sir, sir, Brett has got a crush on you.
No response from teacher
Brett: (in a soft quiet voice) Please don't dump me, not after all we have been through. . .
No response
Andrew: He's a right one, isn't he? Build you up, knock you down. . .
Brett: Yeah. . . fucked and chucked. . . Who's next? Hey Achiou. . .
Teacher: Brett, can I help you? (Class laughs) Will you stop messin' around? Have you completed your homework diary?
Field Notes

Screams from the back of the library
Thomas: (laughing). . . help. . . help. . . help he's trying to wank [masturbate] me. . . arhhg. . .
Richard: . . . It is so small. . . has anyone got any tweezers. . . giv' it 'ere!
Field Notes

Thomas: Oh Richard—let me suck your toes. I need to suck your toes.
Richard: Please do, please do oh god, you are sooo good.
Richard and Thomas Audio Diary

The implication of this talk is that relations between the different sexed pupils did not circulate through adult-defined categories of masculinity and femininity. The following incident, which took place during the latter weeks of fieldwork at Walcote West, enables us to further explore the centrality of homophobia to masculinity. During one of the final weeks of the last semester, a number of male pupils continually referred to an incident that involved Lisa. Lisa turned out to be an older female pupil from the nearby high school. It became apparent that the pupils were referring to an incident that had recently taken place. The following extract emerged during a conversation with David and Craig at lunchtime. We were talking at the school gates, while watching for teachers:

CH: So what happened round Lisa's then?

David: I'm not sayin'. . .

Craig: Go on. . . go on. . . Chris won't tell anyone. . .

CH: You don't have to tell me.

Craig: No. . . no. . . let me tell you. . . but we *do*, go on, Davey. . .

David: Nah, it's mingin' [gross]. . .

Craig: You weren't sayin' that at the time. . . when you had my cock in your face. . .

David: Fuck off, Craig. . . it weren't like that. . . see. . . There's a lass who goes the high school.. . . The other day, Wednesday. . . we were laughing and walking wiv' her, followed her home. . . Jamie, Ash, and Seb. . . stayed outside her house. . .

Craig: . . . She goes in her bedroom and starts getting her kit off! Stripping in front of us. . .

David and Craig start laughing.

David: We kept asking. . . how far. . . how far would she like go. . . to show us. . . You could see it all. Bra and everything.

Craig: She leans out the window, sayin' that she ain't doin' anymore unless we show her. . . .

CH: So. . .

Craig: . . . Davey. . . Davey did it first. . . you did it first. . .

Davey: So we did. Full stop. End of story. "Le end."

Craig: He gets his pants down, on his back tugging himself. . . in front of us.

Davey: So did you!. . . You did, too. . . You came up. . . you did. . . and started looking. . . and everything. . .

CH: What were you feeling?

Craig: Randy. . . horny. . .

CH: . . . Cos of. . .

Craig: . . . Erm. . . but it was like good fun, good laugh wiv' us all pulling in front of each other. . . didn't mean we wanted to get off wiv' each other. . . we're not poofters. . .

Davey: . . . No way. . . Yeah, he couldn't jizz though. . . his balls ain't dropped.

Craig: You know, yeah?

Davey: And I *would* know.

Craig: And you did?

Davey: I nearly did. Seb did.

Craig: Yeah, Seb did. He got it on his hand and asked her to come and get it.

CH: . . . Go on.

Craig: Her fucking da' came in the room. . . I'm not joking. . . we all fucking dived in the bushes. . . pants round our ankles. Fuckin' scream.

Field Notes

In talking about the incident, the boys made available a different kind of sexual subjectivity that was marked by, but not dependent upon, a 'sexuality' identity.

The conversation therefore illustrates a shift from a standard and legitimate sexual subjectivity to a subjectivity that did not fit easily within the categories of heterosexuality and homosexuality. It has been argued that it is not predictable what constitutes the sexual as it is not only culturally variable, but that culture may also understand sexual practices in phenomenologically distinct ways (Plummer, 1975). Davis (1983) asserts that the sexual consists of a different reality from the everyday world. In this way, the sexual can be understood as outside the normal everyday experiences. Thus, "[l]ike certain psychedelic drugs, sexual arousal alters people's consciousness, changing their perception of the world. Sex, in short, is a '*reality-generating activity*'" (Davis, 1983, p. 3). In other words, the preexisting sexual narrative of the pupils that secures what is normal is reconfigured by the very possibility of sex-desire. It is the boys' negotiation of existing sexual sanctions that enables an alternative sexual subjectivity to emerge.

An interesting aspect of this extract is that it sustains a sexual legitimacy about what is socially appropriate and acceptable. Nayak and Kehily's (1996) notions of performance and the re-iterative notion of identities, in this context, do not make analytical sense. Furthermore, the story is not necessarily a resistance to schooling as an institution. It signals the possibility of sexual experiences between boys without the presumption of homosexuality. Of significance is the need to resist an analysis that collapses same-sex experience into a logic of (homo)sexuality. This extract produces a particular conceptual disturbance. Watney (1993) has cogently framed the nature of desire by describing it as infectious. Thus, desire moves from being an interiority to a context that shapes subjectivity. Similarly, McWhorter (1999) insists that sexual identities are not simply about objects of desire; rather, sexual identities contain a series of social and cultural relations and practices that produces a mobile desire. In relation to the above extract, it is argued that it is through an imagined sense of the mobility of desire that warrants the reclamation that the students are "not poofters." At the same time, such a claim is *against* the public investment of desire in the object of a male body even though it is constitutive of the resulting pleasure.

The emerging narrative of sexual subjectivity appears to be contained within an opposition to the emotional investment and desire for the male body that is simultaneously not dependant on the female body. The boys' talk of not "getting off"/"not poofters" suggests that the episode and the narrative involve a process of constituting the possibility of a different kind of sexual experience. Without conjuring connotations of development, the text opens up an embryonic discursive position. One way to make sense of this might be to consider a use of articulation. The concept of articulation demands that concepts are not intrinsically linked. Stuart Hall (1996, p. 141), in explicating this idea, suggests that articulation is a practice of coherence. In other words, articulation brings disparate ideas together and coheres them:

> It is a linkage which is not necessary, determined, absolute and essential for all time. You have to ask under what circumstances can a connection be forged or made? The so-called "unity" of a discourse is really the articulation of different, distinct elements which can be rearticulated in different ways because they have no necessary "belongingness." The

> "unity" which matters is a linkage between the articulated discourse and the social forces with which it can, under certain historical conditions, but need not necessarily, be connected.

In these boys' narratives of the shared experience and mutual masturbation, the boys participate in an articulation or, more appropriately, a re-articulation of sexual legitimacy. The power of the articulation is that it can disturb an existing logic. In this case, a knowledge of the male body that might threaten pupil identity becomes the cultural resource that is used to contest Craig's sexual maturity. In this way, the newly legitimate space of knowing the male body provides its own terms of sanctioning. In other words, it appears that, in the conventional literature on schooling, the possibility of questioning a boy's identity (in this example, maturity) based on an active observation is very rare. The authoring of a legitimate erotic experience outside a discourse of homosexuality that disturbs a heterosexual logic potentially signals a sexual alterity.

Chris Skelton's (2001) research on two different primary schools presents an account that suggests that the sexual may be present or absent according to the social context in which the schools exist. She suggests that boys in one school that was situated in a socially deprived area were seen to be taking on masculinity codes of older "lads" in the area. She argues that the boys in this school operate forms of sexual abuse and sexualizations. These primary school boys were "working" themselves into older forms of masculinity, where the versions of heterosexuality operated as an important constituent of identity. She describes this as an apprenticeship in "laddishness." Thus, the dominant forms of masculinity were coming from the broader community. In contrast, Skelton's research at Deneway School, situated in a high-status neighborhood, found little evidence of sexual harassment or sexualizations.

Unlike Skelton's position, where the absence of sexualization and sexual harassment is interpreted as an absence of the sexual, at Walcote West, other erotic possibilities appeared to be present. Indeed, what appears prominent is a series of sexualizations that do not appear to give coherency to an underlying masculinity premised on a normative adult masculinity. Of interest is that the sexual visibility of the boys' practices tended to be articulated through other deviant sexual forms—such as sex with animals and incest. For example:

> The art teacher starts giving out sheets for the pupils to work from. This assignment is based on producing self-portraits.
> Gary: Sir, can I take this home? It is just that I don't have a mirror so can I use my best friend? (Baa, Baa)
> Most of the pupils look up. Teacher ignores him.
> Gary: No, no... listen. I'll see myself in the eyes of the sheep that is gobbing me off.
> The class laughs.
> Rachel: (laughing) Sheep shagger! Sheep shagger!
> Teacher: Will you just get on with it? Come on—it is not the hardest thing to do... grow up, will you.
> *Field Notes*

Charles: Come to bed now. Ah, ah, ah, ooh.
Gavin: I have got an erection, a hard-on. Come to Daddy.
Charles: Oh yes, oh, yes.
Charles and Gavin, Audio Diary

Achiou: I am going to shag yer mam, yer dad, and yer sister.
Khaled: I am going to shag yer mam, yer dad, yer sister, and yer brother.
Harpal: Nah, yer gonna shag yer mam, yer dad, yer sister, and yer brother first. . .
Khaled: O.K. and then I am going to shag you both as well. . .

Two interesting interconnections emerge here: first, the school operated with an imagined notion of childhood with the sexual being illustrative of immaturity; second, immaturity configured through the interplay of definitions of childhood and gender was decoded as one means through which lessons could be disrupted. With dominant gender regimes underpinned by notions of childhood, the use of the sexual appeared as a means of institutional resistance and consolidating friendships rather than performing coherent identities. It appeared that sexual codes could operate outside normative (adult) emotional structures of how and what the sexual means. As is evidenced above, the boys' talk was littered with sexualizations that did not appear to contribute to a conventional adult sexual identity. Although there is an explicit focus on the sexual, the performance of the sexual does not tie into a conventional adult understanding of masculinity, where heterosexual desire operates to consolidate subjectivities.

Beyond Gender Categories: Towards Post-Masculinity Studies

Although some studies of masculinities have been highly productive in thinking through gender identities and schooling, the epistemological status of the concept has become increasingly unclear. Most studies that use masculinity tend to deploy it without critical evaluation. More specifically, there is a tendency to use masculinity as a descriptive concept rather than an analytical one. Considering the importance of exploring childhood and gender, Cranny-Francis, Waring, Stavropoulos, and Kirkby (2003, p. 245) state that "[a] too-ready (adult) belief in the formative power of socialisation. . . can blind us to the many opportunities which do exist to unsettle familiar assumptions." This is because studies tend to provide descriptive accounts of dominant and subordinate characteristics. In other words, such studies tend to work with a notion of masculinity that is located within identity traits. For example, Francis (1998) suggests that masculinity is structured through masculine traits. However, she offers very little explanation of why such traits and characteristics are patterned in particular ways. Moreover, the explanation is tautological because these traits are caused by a masculinity that is constituted by these traits.

Refusing to explain masculinity through a heterosexual and homosexual identity framework is not without its dangers. Butler (1999) argues that a refusal of gender

and sexuality results in a number of political ramifications. For example, gender and sexuality have become important tools in understanding the dynamics of social (in)justice, such as heteronormativity. Thus, a shift to an arrangement of bodies and pleasures "works in the service of maintaining a compulsory ignorance, and where the break between the past and the present keeps us from being able to see the trace of the past as it re-emerges in the very contours of an imagined future" (Butler, 1999, p. 18). This underlines one of the more important political questions generated by a queering of masculinity: by rejecting the use of heterosexuality and homophobia as an explanatory framework, is there a disruption to the existing modalities of power? In doing so, there is the sense that social and cultural inequalities that are used to explain the effects of sexuality are no longer useful. In turn, this affects the conceptual frameworks that have been developed to analyze masculinity as much work in the area of sexuality, gender, and schooling suggests that social relations are marked by power and inequalities. Butler argues that once sexuality is marginalized, the possibility of contesting such power relations is also displaced. The conceptual shift toward explaining sexual and erotic behaviors outside the conventional conceptual frameworks could simultaneously disengage the potential to challenge and contest normative and regulative practices that are enmeshed within a gendered and heteronormative nexure.

Judith Butler (1999) has criticized Foucault (1980) for this attempt at moving outside the regulatory regime of sexuality. In Butler's critique, the dynamic of her argument rests upon the juxtaposition of one stance that is defined against the other. In other words, understanding a gender without masculinity can take place only because of masculinity-defined identities. In doing so, the oppositional force of the two positions generates an impossibility of an alternative to masculinity. This means, according to Butler, that in order to apply the concept of pleasure and bodies, it has to have conceptual proximity to sex-desire. Thus, the regulatory mechanism of sexuality—premised on sex-desire—regulates pleasure/bodies. Butler suggests in her critique that it is impossible to separate gender from sexuality. Part of Butler's refusal to consider the possibilities of something beyond sexuality is an insistence on the fluidity of identity categories and the immutability of desire. This is demonstrated in later work where Butler suggests that in order to work beyond sexual categories there is a need for transgression to occur within them:

> Even within the field of intelligible sexuality, one finds that the binaries that anchor its operations permit for middle zones and hybrid formations, suggesting that the binary relation does not exhaust the field in question. Indeed, there are middle regions—hybrid regions of legitimacy and illegitimacy that have no clear names and where nomination itself falls into a crisis produced by the variable, sometimes violent, boundaries of legitimizing practices that come into uneasy and sometimes conflictual contact with one another. (2002, p. 20)

Of importance is that Butler's psychoanalytic framework does not allow the possibility of the complete negation of desire. In terms of sexual experience, the linguistic forms change, rather than the dynamic of desire itself. As a result, desire thus operates as a force, impelling itself onto the categories of being. This means that desire has to negotiate identity categories and articulate itself through the available sexual

possibilities. Therefore, Butler's (1999, p. 19) concern about the absence of sexuality is about the attendant absence of desire: "To deny the sphere of desire, or to call for its replacement, is precisely to eradicate the phenomenological ground of sexuality itself."

Conclusion

Sullivan (2003, p. 50) suggests that "[q]ueer... comes to be understood as a deconstructive practice that is not undertaken by an already constituted subject, and does not, in turn furnish the subject with nameable identities." Refusing gender and conceptually letting go of masculinity may reduce the explanatory value of gender. In short, the knowledge and understanding that we have available to make sense of gender have become part of the fabric that binds the current moment of educational research. As a consequence, the interplay of gender and schooling appears to stabilize what we already know about sexuality. The implication is that a popular gender intelligibility that links biological categories of sex to traditional gendered social roles is reinforcing existing understandings of sexuality. For different groups of pupils at particular ages, the use of the concept of masculinity is highly productive. It can reveal the social continuities and differences among boys, girls, men, and women. However, in doing so, the dynamics of age in securing a gender are underplayed. More specifically, as Britzman (1997, p. 36) argues, "Research might be that space where what is at stake is not the ontological claims of identity, but the conceptualization made possible precisely because of what is unthought." This suggests a more philosophical tension that centers on the interrelationship between conceptual tools and the empirical world. In established studies in the area, there is an emphasis on boys' and girls' experiences being shaped by the conceptual tools employed, rather than the empirical shaping the conceptual tools. The implication is that the possibility of an over-imbrication of pre-existing concepts onto empirical evidence may be limiting how we can develop further knowledge and understanding in this area. These understandings intersect with boys' identifications and their cultural expressions of the sexual. Furthermore, such cultural identifications generate an important re-engagement with the currently 'taken for granted' concept of masculinity.

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Chapter 6
Tangling with Masculinity: Butchness, Trans, and Feminism

Cris Mayo

This chapter examines relatively new theoretical work on female masculinity in conversation with the experiences of gender transgressive students, especially young butches, in public schools. I argue here that new queer forms of masculinity need to be seen in closer relation to gender bias and that the project of new masculinity ought to consider its ambivalent relationship to the disparaged feminine. By examining this link between the derogation of femininity and the reconstitution of masculinity, I hope to show that there is more to undoing a binary than reconfiguring one term. Rather, the tangle of masculinity and femininity remains in the tension of innovation and response.

I take what may seem to be an unusual route through historical and theoretical work on arguably the precursors to contemporary genders in schools. However, I do so to show that the same tensions around gender and sexual identities that contemporary students are grappling with were also daunting issues for earlier critics of gender normativity. Showing that these conversations about gender and sexuality have been ongoing and have had long-standing effects on communities, identities, and political formations can help students, educators, and administrators understand that new gender identities are part of enduring and shifting traditions and practices. As it continues to be evident that genders and sexualities have histories (and new iterations), keeping a cautious and thoughtful eye on past conversations can help us to better understand new genders and sexualities, as well as the obstacles they encounter. Moving further back into the debates over butch femme in the early years of the lesbian political movement can help, I think, to situate female masculinity in an uncertain space, occupying, as I hope to show it does, both the place of possibility for femininity and the space of perverse attachment to what might be masculinity.

Taking this relatively long view of the debates over gender performance in lesbian feminism intertwined with work on female masculinity helps to show that the questions about gender and sexuality and the binary terms that describe them have

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slid about in a complex relationship for a good long while. Genderqueer (Nestle, Howell, & Wilchins, 2002) and other gender and sexuality transgressive youth may not, of course, have a full sense of these histories of interventions and recuperations, but these youth undertake their actions in a context that does have a long history, so understanding the vacillations and tensions surrounding any form of gender performance is crucial.

Resisting Girls: Why Isn't Butchness Femininity?

Contemporary advice for female-to-male (FTM) transsexuals desiring to live as men reminds them not to frequent areas where there are lesbian bars as the transsexuals might be misrecognized as butches and thus be known as female. This advice reinforces a problematic norm that transsexuals want to pass and reinforces a hierarchy of gender—certainly they don't want to be feminine and definitely not the femininity and/or masculinity associated with butchness. Indeed, this particular advice, whether a reasonable indication of the complexities of gender or an especially cogent reminder of the instability of which form of gender is masculine and which feminine, helps us to see the contextually bound instabilities of all forms of gender. This is a reminder that terms of gender are relative, that claiming butchness as a form of female masculinity relies on a particular history of masculinity and sexuality, a history that might as easily, by FTM activists, be represented as a history of femininity. Given that most understandings of gender are either relational or at least situated within a binary conceptual relationship, however actually varied the various terms are, shifting the meaning of any key term without also shifting the term in relation to it—that is, deciding to radicalize masculinity without also deeply troubling femininity—leads to more than just conceptual trouble. Whenever we attempt to refigure normative gender, it is difficult to determine exactly which previously normative gender we start at and which we wind up at. It is clear, though, that each of these conversations—or, as Roberta Angela Dee (2006) describes, "wars"— mobilizes a normative sense of gender or sexuality to critique another version of gender or sexuality. These gender disputes, then, even in the midst of trying to push definitions of gender and sexuality into more capacious forms, castigate other forms for their exclusions. I argue here that these disputes often do so by misreading the possibilities of one form of gender or sexual transgression, while exaggerating, in comparison, the possibilities of other forms.

Specifically, I am suspicious of motives for reclaiming masculinity that are not simultaneously involved in reclaiming femininity. The apparent lack of attention to butchness as femininity marks out entrenched ideas about gender that have yet to be adequately examined. Indeed, there is something potentially anti-feminist and even anti-queer about recent attempts to render transgressive forms of gender and sexual identity as forms of "masculinity." This move toward masculinity is indicative of the kind of value given to masculine identity in a gender system structured by consumerism and desire for status. As queers of all varieties of sexuality and gender

mark their sexual practices and subjectivity through consumable signs, in a context where urban gay men were the fashion standard, masculinity is valued. In the midst of theoretically careful examinations of the permeable boundaries of gender, the embrace of masculinity feels both arbitrary and predictable. If gender is constantly in play as well as constitutive, to suggest that masculinity does not belong to men is to ignore the very large extent to which the following occur: (1) Masculinity does literally belong to men, that is, they buy it and consume it. (2) Few self-consciously transgressive lesbians appear to care to buy femininity, which indicates only its disparaged status as a commodity, at least for women. (3) This is all too predictable as play has come to be viewed as the purview of queers and not everyone else, so what everyone else is doing, that is, gender regular, especially femininity in women, has no particular appeal and no transgressive potential.

The answer to why butchness isn't femininity is that no one wants to be a woman if "femininity" means ineffectuality (especially for women but also clearly for "sissy boys" as well). Female masculinity, in other words, reinforces the bias against femininity by allying butchness and female masculinity with men, not women. As an intervention into the too simplistic rendering of bodies as similar along lines of "sex," this has some merit—as much as I may be critical of attaching butchness and "female" gender transgression to masculinity, those interventions against normative gender are just as tenuously attached to femininity. In other words, trying to untangle masculinities and femininities from normative gender inevitably ties those transgressions back to a norm or becomes an occasion to critique one gender norm but not the other. But the unintended, one hopes, consequence is to minimize the social bias against bodies that are in any way recognized as having the taint of the feminine, be they bodies who engage in nonconformist gender behavior or not. Recent attempts to masculinize what might just as well be forms of femininity must be historicized, and the best way to do that is to look at butch femme, one of the most enduring sites of gender critique. Butch femme always seems to be invented anew for new purposes.

If we historicize butch femme, we can also historicize the ongoing concern with female masculinity. The difference between fiction and political essays is the difference between social recognition and political recognition. One way to historicize the drive toward masculinity centralizes butch femme as private, not sexual, not social, but a private property relationship. So butch femme, as we will see, is aggressively critiqued by women in the homophile movement and lesbian/radical feminists for its anti-political stance. Critiques of butch femme were concerned that it was a conservative style disinterested in the status of gender: its pliability, its continuity, and its potential for transgression. When lesbians begin to make assertions about their identities and gender status in a register that is not always politically inflected or politically astute, gender identity moves into a different relationship to the public. And recognition of those new takes on gender are situated at once in a presumption that transgression works as an implied critique and in a presumption that the ways people organize their interior lives must, at some level, be legible without explanation. In other words, the thorny difficulties that attend political recognition fade into the presumption that one will be read correctly in public, without much work, and

that one's private—now facilitated by commodity culture—style can stand on its own as a statement of desire for recognition. But where and how is this recognition to take place? If female masculinity is not fully political, then is it another facet of the commodity culture's facility at turning political critique into stylist investment?

Recall a common criticism of butches wearing men's clothes: Why are you invested in those clothes or that role? This criticism, though shortsighted in its inability to interrogate all style as a kind of investment in an appearance, indicates the degree to which clothes, like normative gender roles, are bound with status. So the new butch femme, oscillating as it does, as Sally Munt puts it, between epistemological and ontological registers, can make that oscillation only through the good graces of commodities and the way they are read. Epistemological and ontological butch femmes are interior reads, as Munt suggests, with femmes more likely to conceive of their identity as the former and butches as the latter. Or, as Del Lagrace Volcano cites Storme Delaverie: "The male impersonator 'has to take things off' while the female impersonator has to add things" (Volcano & Halberstam, 1999, p. 35). Feminist theory would, of course, beg to differ and instead point out that all investitures bear investments and then ask exactly what kind of use to which one's investment capital was put.

The nagging sense of this question might explain why feminism and lesbian feminism have been so castigated of late for their lack of style, sex, and wit. One suspects that this criticism comes as a first-strike tactic to avoid looking at the potential shortfall of transgressive political action that focuses too much, oddly, on intentionality and not enough on historical context and relationality among identities. As Jacob Hale puts it:

> Disputes about contested category placement are one of the arenas in which contemporary categories and their boundaries are articulated. Such articulations, of course, have consequences for the living: they matter for decisions about who is included in and who is excluded from contemporary categories in accordance with or contrary to individuals' desires. (1998, p. 319)

These category disputes include not only female masculinity, butchness, and FTM but also more intentionally politically valenced terms such as "transgressive," "retrograde," and so on. Categories, of course, carry their own normative weight of belonging and recognition, but in the discussions over the place of butch femme or misrecognitions of multiple forms of gender and sexuality innovation, judgments over which category does the most political work also implicitly and explicitly make judgments over the relative power of other forms of sexuality and gender, often with, I think, willful misreadings of social power, especially the social power of femininity.

Work on female masculinity often frames itself as a critique of lesbian feminist repudiation of butch femme. So the re-embrace of butchness and masculinity is in part grounded in a criticism of the shortsightedness of feminism and feminism's sex negativism. The story seems to be that earlier attempts to untangle masculinity, femininity, and sexuality were all too steeped in the gender, class, and sexuality-related prejudices of their time. Thus, the turn to female masculinity is, in a way,

a tactic to distance the new genders from older, feminist-based and lesbian-based critiques of gender. I think this tactic is misguided and oversimplifies the history of radical lesbian feminism's and the homophile movement's gender critique, and so I now turn to a re-examination of documents from *The Ladder* and radical feminism. While Joan Nestle's work on the sexism and racism of this denigration are crucial for understanding the clash between working-class bar culture and assimilationist/professional/academic/political movements, there is more to the Daughters of Bilitis's (DOB) and lesbian feminism's criticisms of butch femme than class and race bias or sex negativity. Some writers in and to *The Ladder* disparage butch femme for its old-fashioned conservatism, arguing that the practice solidifies the normative gender binary rather than opening space to re-envision gender possibilities. Some lesbian feminists critique butch femme for its relationship to property values based on the normative gender binary. These critics suggest that practices such as non-monogamy can disrupt the linkage between gender binary, hierarchy, and monogamy. In their account, butch femme's reliance on monogamy and thus property meant that butch femme was a sex negative practice.

1950s: Mild Transvestites

When writers and readers of *The Ladder*, the first lesbian magazine distributed by the Daughters of Bilitis, an early lesbian advocacy group, grappled between assimilation with norms and rebellion against norms (entailing education of heterosexuals), butch/femme occupied a particular kind of problem. It was at once the conservative element in the lesbian community, sticking to outmoded ways of relationships that included public derogation of femme's "womanly" abilities and was also perhaps a more public showing of sex than many lesbian homophiles were comfortable with. As Lorraine Hansberry observed in a letter:

> Someday, I expect, the "discreet" Lesbian will not turn her head on the streets at the sight of the "butch" strolling hand in hand with her friend in their trousers and definitive haircuts. But for the moment, it still disturbs. It creates an impossible area for discussion with one's most enlightened (to use a hopeful term) heterosexual friends. (1957, p. 27)

One other complication of the supposed derogation of butch femme as a political rallying point—and essays in *The Ladder* largely indicate that the only use of butch femme was as something to struggle against, a relationship that needed to learn how repressive it was—is its prevalence in fictional short stories. That butch femme continued to have relevance for the readers of fiction, who were presumably the same readers of political essays, suggests that butch femme continued to have erotic possibilities that would endure beyond political critique. Indeed, the prevalence of butch femme in romantic fiction also indicates a particular line drawn between kinds of butch femme. The fictionalized butch femme created possibilities and tensions whereas the tradition-bound butch femme indicated unthinking assimilation and conformity to norms. Anti-assimilationist writers could plausibly critique butchness

or embrace it. Some letter writers were concerned that giving up non-normative genders, such as butchness or transvestism, was itself a form of conformity. In the June 1957 issue, Barbara Stephens's "Transvestism—A Cross-Cultural Survey" cautions against enforcing conformity in the lesbian community:

> Transvestism is the tag that labels the Lesbian. Conformity has been recommended as a solution, but too often forced conformity is the mother of further neuroses. . .One long-term proposal would include a revision of the traditional dominance-submission pattern among the sexes (and classes as well). That aim is out of reach for our particular group, but seems to be one that's already transforming American society. (1957, p. 13)

A letter in the same issue continues discussion on the political implications of clothing. A. C. (1957) from New York writes:

> I consider myself (and my roommate also considers herself) a mild transvestite—that is, we wear slacks almost always [during] our off-work hours. We are comfortable in them and we have no problem adjusting to the stares of the passersby. We consider dresses, high heels, and stocking holders the most uncomfortable contraptions men have invented to restrict the movements of women so they cannot walk very far, lift many things, or sit with their legs apart in warm weather. (pp. 27–28)

Stephens furthers sees "no fault in a woman wanting to be clean-cut, dignified or courageous; but the error is the assumption that these qualities are the monopoly of the male sex" (1957, p. 12). In other words, butch behavior and identity are extensions of what womanhood and femininity could mean. Gender transgression and butch/femme occupied the contributors and letter writers to the *Ladder*: almost all linked gendered possibilities to political critique, whether concerned that butch style was a forced form of conformity or that refiguring gender was a challenge to problematic norms. By January of 1967, the clause in the DOB's statement of purpose "advocating a mode of behavior and dress acceptable to society" had been replaced by the charge to provide "the Lesbian a forum for the interchange of ideas within her own group" (*The Ladder*, 1966, inside cover). The conversation about butch femme, however, was not settled at that point, but more importantly, the conversation had never been disconnected from broader issues regarding assimilation, gender, and sexuality.

1970s–1980s: Gender Is Unnatural

By the 1970s, building on the kind of critique begun in *The Ladder* but also extending it, lesbian feminism called for an analysis of the contours of power that shaped gender as it was known, at the same time recognizing that gender did have a normative, problematic, hierarchically defined meaning in the present. Lesbianism functioned as a critique of that female normative gender and, thus, was a critique based in and against a norm that was (hopefully) soon to be challenged and changed. Some lesbian and radical feminist analysis called for the dismantling of gender entirely since it was the root of all women's oppression and the root of other

forms of oppression as well. For some writers, this meant that toppling the patri-archy would initiate a turn toward androgyny, a combination of the best qualities of male and female. Indeed, the Radicalesbians argued in "The Woman Identified Woman" that lesbianism is possible only "in a sexist society characterized by rigid sex roles and dominated by male supremacy" (Radicalesbians, 1973, p. 241). For others, this meant an eventual blindness toward gender-related differences: even if they remained, they might no longer be attached to particular bodies. But this would be the outcome of a political process, not a foregone conclusion. In "Loving Another Woman," an anonymous interviewee argues:

> There is a problem to me with focusing on sexual choice, as the gay movement does. Sleeping with another woman is not *necessarily* a healthy thing by itself. It does not mean—or prove, for that matter—that you thereafter love women. It doesn't mean that you have avoided bad "male" or "female" behavior…On the one hand, male roles are learned, not genetic; women can ape them too. On the other hand, the feminine roles can be comfortably carried into lesbianism, except now instead of a woman being passive with a man, she's passive with another woman. (quoted in Koedt, 1973, p. 93)

For others, like Joyce Trebilcot, restructuring one's desires might require ignor-ing one's genital responses and instead thinking and acting in ways that take responsibility for one's place in a heterosexist structure. She argues:

> it is not unusual for a feminist to claim that although the weight of reason, for her, is on the side of lesbianism, her feelings (perhaps as expressed in her fantasies) are irredeemably heterosexual, for she is sexually aroused by men but not by women…The peculiarity of this position is the assumption that one's feeling must determine one's sexual identity, that is, genital twinges must determine whether one is lesbian, or heterosexual, or both. (1984, p. 425)

In short, the analysis of gender systems required an analysis of desire and the body in a thorough going critical way that would alter forms of relationship and notions of identity that would end gender distinctions and thus gender. That some lesbian feminists doggedly held onto women while attempting to dismantle gender is an indication of the difficulty of the task and an early indication of the tension in theoretical rebellions against poststructuralism that frustratedly declare theory's intention to deconstruct a subject that is only just finding her voice. In other words, the frustrations against theory are the same inclination to live in the world even as the world is made a problem that allows *The Ladder*'s readers and writers to argue against butch femme in political essays while enjoying the play of desire in butch femme fiction.

Even so, not all lesbian feminism is critical of butch femme. As the Furies explain, butch femme is sometimes used as an excuse by other feminists not to engage with lesbian issues:

> Some feminists divert lesbian politics by criticizing lesbian role-playing (you know, butch-femme) as anti-feminist. Most role-playing comes out of the past oppression of lesbians who had no other role models (including the social necessity to pass for a straight couple) or is a result of women's efforts to get out of female passivity…Even so, lesbian role-playing doesn't compare to that of heterosexuals where most women *are* femme and considered "natural," not anti-feminist, even by many feminists. (1975, pp. 11–12)

Further, the Furies contend that "criticism of 'butch' lesbians is a criticism of any woman who steps *out* of her role" (1975, p. 12). The Furies seemingly held open the possibility that butch femme was not beyond the pale for lesbian feminists; as the Furies contend, in the context of discussing butch femme and male female, "lesbian feminist politics is not primarily concerned with sex-roles but with sex power; it is not the roles themselves. . ., but the power behind those roles that is oppressive" (1975, p. 12).

1990s and Beyond: New Butch and FTMs

Now that all women are "mild transvestites," masculinity for the new butch faces new challenges and poses new challenges to other gender formations. Andy in "FTM Passing Tips" warns, "Go for a very conservative, short-back-n-sides cut, but avoid getting an all-over crewcut or a way-out 'punk' style as these are often sported by the butch lesbians you are trying to distinguish yourself from" (ca. 1998). Andy also suggests that the choice of a new barber is an essential break from past recognition as female: "A lot of guys keep going to the person who cut their hair 'before'—don't, especially if they perceived you as a lesbian. Even if you're not passing yet, get a new hairdresser or barber who'll help you look male, not shock the patriarchy" (ca. 1998). Further distancing from butches includes the warning:

> If you live in a cosmopolitan area where there are a lot of butch lesbians then it's going to be much more difficult for you to pass. One way to help distinguish yourself from them is to dress preppy and conservative—leave the leather motorcycle jacket at home for a while. (ca. 1998)

Another indication of shifts in style of masculinity is the following warning: "Ties are of course a great way to pass, though there are many situations where you'll look too out-of-place in one" (ca. 1998). Hale describes this border policing as partially the difficulties involved in shifting among categories that are themselves complex and porous, especially in communities that refuse to see the possibilities of inhabiting many of those categories simultaneously: "many a formerly lesbian ftm who no longer identifies (even partially) as a lesbian has trouble ridding himself of a lesbian present—it sticks like recalcitrant camouflage face paint" (1998, p. 331).

The antagonisms over identity run in all different directions. New butch writing occasionally also seems decidedly less interested in shocking the patriarchy than in embracing forms of masculine behavior implicated in structural inequality. This is not to argue that butches will ever join the male club (nor that all butches want to), or that all males can even join the male club, but nonetheless there appears to be some desire to understand the possibility of some sort of masculine bonding, often couched in fairly politically problematic terms. While I will shortly be critical of what I take to be lingering moments of problematic understanding of femininity, Judith Halberstam is very careful to distinguish female masculinity from dominant masculinity and to assert that female masculinities and other minority masculinities need to be recognized without putting femininities into a disparaged position.

Yet that slip into conceiving of femininity as itself more powerful than female masculinity has the effect of erasing feminist critique of gender relations as a whole and positing normative femininity as culturally valued. This, I think, is a problematic slip.

Halberstam's comment that "social rewards do accompany the presentation of appropriate femininity" sounds remarkably and presumably willfully ignorant of the degree to which doors being held open do not translate into safety, economic well-being, and so on (Halberstam, 1998a, p. 58). She reinforces this lack of critique of sexism faced by normatively gendered women, pointing out that, while butches seem to move through the public with ease as men, until discovered, femmes "line up with gender appropriateness when it merges sufficiently with heterosexual womanhood, but it diverges from such conformity at the moment that a potentially dangerous non-desire for men is revealed" (Halberstam, 1998a, p. 59). That women, recognized as women, face potential dangers, gets lost in the rush to separate how the femme transgresses differently from the butch, and again, the danger for femmes, in Halberstam's analysis, is tied to their relationship to butches—or any women—as opposed to their social status as women. Missing in her account is the trans argument that, in fact, the difference between butches and FTMs is that a butch refuses the misrecognition of "sir" and, instead, "says (or perhaps barks) 'I'm a ma'am'" (Hardwell, 2008). The view from a different gender transgression, in other words, shifts female masculinity and butchness into a kind of gender style unwilling to pass as male because butches ultimately want to be recognized as bodily females and thus occupies a space of relative normalcy. In this transman account of butchness, then, transgression lies in forms of gender passing that are more committed than the stylistic performances of butchness can produce. Other works on the boundaries—or not—between butchness and FTM argue that as transactivists demand that trans identity be de-linked from surgery and hormone use, FTM can be defined as "female towards male" (Weiss, 2007, p. 204).

There is a further lack of understanding of the place of masculinity, regardless of who is actually embodying it, in keeping most women extremely uncomfortable in public. This feminist commonplace is missing from almost every recounting of that butch peril, the women's room. Account after account theorizes that, for instance, women appear more uncomfortable with butches in women's rooms at highway rest stops and in airports. Sally Munt suggests that in places where travel makes national boundaries uncertain, women are more likely to police gender boundaries (1998). This is an interesting theoretical read, but the quicker answer is that women away from home fear strange men, and when women see someone enter a women's room, they perceive that they may be in danger. Women in the women's room don't all respond, as the example in Leslie Feinberg's *Stone Butch Blues* (1993), in a way that indicates they realize they are not in danger and in a way that indicates they mean to be harassing of gender non-conformity. Some do, but many of the women criticized for "gender policing" in butch accounts are older, less savvy about shifts in gender formations and style, and much more insecure in public. This is an important reminder of the difference between one's own intentions regarding one's gender display and the persistent role of masculinity in carrying a threat to many women.

"[F]ailing the women's room test" (Halberstam, 1998b, p. 27) is not only an indication that "a large number of feminine women spend a large amount of time and energy policing masculine women" (Halberstam, 1998b, p. 24) but is also an indication of the drag of structures of gender on attempts to refigure gender. To answer Foucault with the assertion that "power may inhere within different forms of refusal: 'Well, I don't care'" (Halberstam, 1998b, p. 9) is not particularly an improvement on saying no to power, nor does it elucidate the power effects one has on others. Not caring about power means one does not care about "the things [that] accumulate around your name" such as gender, gender inequality, and fear. The fear that female masculinity generates is often not the fear of transgressions and the way they so upset the system but the fear engendered by appearing, in public, and being read by others to be part of a gender system that does bad things to women, transpeople, and men, for that matter. Continuing to build cases for transgression and innovation on claims that other forms of gender and sexuality do not entail their own internal and external critique severely limits the possibilities for recognizing gender transgression and making associations across gender and sexual difference.

Young Butches and Gender Transgression, Sexism, and Barriers to Alliance

The above histories show the damages wrought by making distinctions among gender and sexual identities, distinctions that simultaneously castigate some forms of innovation for a shortsightedness they may not, on closer scrutiny, have and distinctions among identities that force people to choose. Even beginning to sort out whether gender transgression is different from sexuality innovation and is distinct from forms of identity that might occasionally travel under the "trans" or "butch" are a near-impossible set of distinctions to live with any certainty. Especially, as youth live with and through categories of identity that shift with community, technological, and political possibility, it becomes all the more crucial that the various normative pressures do not accumulate around terms that would do better to circulate and provide a rich vocabulary for sexual and gender differences. Indeed, as I will show in a moment, the pervasive sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and butchphobia that curtail possibilities in public schools have all had the effect of making what might be useful alliances across gender and sexual categories challenging. In essence, the divisive histories of even terms of sexual difference that may seem to invite community, in the already hostile and competitive atmosphere of some public school encounters, simply generate cross-identity antagonisms.

The tangles of masculinity, femininity, and gender norms are far more complex than the theoretical move to separate female masculinity from sexism allows, and thus butchness and other forms of gender transgression need to be put to a complex and tangled analysis. Indeed, surveys of young gender transgressive youth understand the need for simultaneous interventions from feminist and queer activism—young butch girls report harassment for being women, butch, and queer,

sometimes simultaneously, sometimes in discontinuous and seemingly nonsensical combinations, including near simultaneous harassment for being female and for being male (C. Mayo, personal communication, 2004–2006). Gender normative young women report similar forms of sexual harassment that move from unwanted sexual attention to disparagement of their purported lesbianism in one encounter that starts with flirtation and ends with calling the young woman either a dyke or a butch. When I teach pre-service teachers about homophobia in schools, the teachers often don't immediately make the connection between their own experiences of sexual harassment in middle or high school and the fact that so many remember being accused of lesbianism when they turn down the attentions of young men. Young normatively feminine women identify with the struggles of young gay men as well, reporting that they are all harassed by the same straight male students in the same terms of gender disparagement, whether harassed as women or harassed as if they were gay (Bochenek & Brown, 2001).

There are many reasons not to start a discussion about gender transgression with the topic of harassment, but the line between normative and nonnormative genders is often limned by disapproval of any innovation. Indeed, for young women, every activity is defined simultaneously by gendered activities that would be nonnormative, and while that sounds true about any gender, excessive femininity, normative femininity, and nonnormative femininity/female masculinity are all open to similar forms of harassment. Unlike masculinity for men, where the excessive form does not lead to harassment—men are rarely hassled for being too manly, whatever other stresses may accompany that gender style—women of all genders, including trans and butch, start at similar baselines of sexual harassment. Masculine young women, with their combination of nonnormative gender and experiences of harassment that simultaneously draw on normative gender harassment and nonnormative gender harassment, experience the baseline (the disregard of their particular gender identity and presentation) and simultaneously experience the derogation of their supposed femininity and their presentation of masculinity. For the moment of that harassment, they are left with no gendered ground on which to stand, as each disparagement folds back on the other. They are not female enough to be able to find refuge with other young women, and they are not male enough to always be able to pass as male. Indeed, if they are found to be passing or if their masculinity or queerness has an intermittent quality that is discernable, violence and harassment spike considerably (Mayo, personal communication, 2007).

By suggesting this simultaneity, I intend in no way to suggest that there aren't similar difficulties for gender normative young women. They, too, are as likely to be harassed because they are assumed to be compliant, passive, and feminine and then have the harasser switch to a disparagement of their purported lesbianism or gender nonnormativity. Gender normative lesbians, too, experience the combination of gender and sexual harassment, even if it takes a different form from that experienced by young butches or transmen (who also have different experiences from butches though they may share some). Bochenek and Brown (2001) point out:

There is a perception that lesbians who are "femme" are punished less than their peers, largely because the harassment takes the form of boys wanting to "watch" and then "join" the girls. Girls perceive this harassment not only as an invasion of their privacy but also as an implicit threat of sexual violence. When adults downplay or ignore this type of harassment, they are downplaying the harassment as merely an expression of desire rather than a threat of violence. (p. 51)

For young people who remain interested in working gendered possibilities and expressing gendered identity beyond normative boundaries, the lack of support from gender normative gay and lesbian youth indicates that gender and sexuality critique is not necessarily linked in lesbian and gay youth culture. Young butches report that they get little support from young gay men or from young women and are even rejected by gender normative lesbian peers (p. 52). As popular culture begins to reflect youth interest in normatively gendered girls kissing normatively gendered girls, young butches and other styles of gender transgressive lesbians remain outside the circuit of acceptable girl-on-girl action. Bochenek and Brown (2001) argue that "[y]oung lesbians do not experience sexism and homophobia as separate events; instead, the two forms of harassment are mutually reinforcing" (p. 50). The twinned histories of gender nonnormativity and gender possibility recounted above show that this inextricability has a long history of pressures and innovative responses. The way young people now reject terms defining gender and sexuality is part of a longer history of dissatisfaction with normative pressures associated with gender and sexuality. Despite the histories of innovative gender and sexuality-related concepts, subjectivities, and activities, for some young people it seems better to give up on any stable attachment to gender and/or sexuality entirely.

Either gender can be used against young women, butches, and transpeople working to find their way. Butch young women report feeling that normative girls largely deride them, and boys attempt to show that butch masculinity is insufficient or insignificant (C. Mayo, personal communication, 2005). When young butches, never ones to back down, do date openly, the hostility continues because now the young men who disapprove of young butches are confronted with the additional information that there are other young women who find female masculinity more appealing than boys. Another aspect to the rejection of normative masculinity by young women may also be found in young women's preference for feminine heterosexual men (C. Mayo, personal communication, 2006). While this is not the same as butch masculinity, the young feminine men who date young women find themselves pressured by normatively masculine peers because their gender is wrong and are also the object of jealousy because they are successfully involved with women who prefer the feminine men's form of masculinity. For young people moving between thinking of themselves as butch, trans, and/or passing young men, the moment of discovery of their birth gender, especially when they are actively dating young women, can be when harassment spikes (C. Mayo, personal communication, 2005). However, another cause of harassment is also based in a dogged determination to put young people into one category of identity, to demand that they choose: lesbian, trans, passing.

What this all means for educators is that we must look at gender with more complexity and seriousness. Seemingly new forms of gender and sexuality have long histories of contestation and new moments of innovation, which are often quickly followed by dispute and border positioning. To teach about sexuality and gender invites new possibilities, and if we take our pedagogy and our politics seriously, we will not only make spaces for new and old forms of gender and sexuality, but also ensure that when they arrive in our classrooms they do so in an environment sensitive to their complex histories and aware of the kind of antagonisms the forms may have to face. This means greater attention to the specificity of identity and greater understanding of the simultaneity of forms of identity.

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Chapter 7
Queering Classes: Disrupting Hegemonic Masculinity and the Effects of Compulsory Heterosexuality in the Classroom

Robert Heasley and Betsy Crane

Boys learn more in school than their ABC's. Boys also learn about the acceptable ways to perform their gender and present their sexuality. While such learning takes place for both girls and boys, males receive a uniquely confining set of messages that prepare them to conform to a particular type of male heterosexuality. No formal learning objectives state that male students will learn not to cry, hold hands with other boys, or prefer pants over skirts. However, schools, like other social institutions, are a powerful setting for learning scripts about gender performance. Such scripts are built on a patriarchal history that embraces a type of heterosexual masculinity that devalues the feminine and, along with it, anything perceived to be associated with homosexuality.

For this volume that explores the intersections among the categories of "queer," "masculinity," and "education," we focus on what happens to boys in school and the implications of queering the classroom and school culture. The classroom and school environment are settings where queering masculinity has opportunity and benefit for students, teachers, and administrators, particularly as related to boys and the learning environment. However, we assert, males and females of all sexual orientations benefit from queering masculinity. The use of queer theory as applied to education (Pinar, 2003) leads to a reconsideration of the assumptions of teachers and school administrators, based on a destabilization of the assumed binaries of male/female and straight/gay. Queering is defined here as the disruption of those normative attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors evidenced in the curriculum, classroom, and school culture that reinforce what Connell (2005) calls hegemonic masculinity, the socially dominant form of masculinity. Such disruption makes possible a view of masculinity and sexuality that has a plurality of potentialities and expressions without hierarchical discrimination based on a presumed superiority of one way of being masculine over another. This discrimination affects subordinated masculinities that are marginalized due to racial, ethnic, religious, class, and other differences. This

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discrimination calls for systemic change that addresses, models, and supports ways of being masculine that might otherwise be devalued because of association with and meaning given to homosexuality and femininity.

When considering queering the classroom, we must first problematize the lessons about masculinity and male heterosexuality being learned at school, lessons that receive little if any critical examination (Town, 2002). Masculinity, in its traditional hetero-normative form, is as taken for granted as the air we breathe. Saying "boys will be boys," or "he is such a boy," or even "you know how boys are" reinforces an essentialist notion of gender that sees hegemonic masculinity as natural, thus requiring accommodation rather than critical examination.

Recent psychological research and sociological analysis regarding gender and sexuality indicate that both sexuality and gender are more fluid than once thought (Bem, 1995). Historical and cross-cultural analysis indicates a wide variation in gender expressions for males and females, and what is normative in Western culture, that is, strict adherence to the binaries—male vs. female and straight vs. gay—can have devastating effects. Inflexible gender role adherence results in higher incidence of life problems for males. Research shows that rigid hegemonic masculinity translates into the failure of males to develop their emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1997; Kindlon & Thompson, 2000), which means having less empathy and less comfort with expressing a range of emotions, particularly those that would suggest vulnerability. Males also have higher rates of violence than females, including violence directed toward themselves as evidenced by unnecessary risk taking, higher mortality rates from traffic accidents, higher suicide rates, and more violence toward others. Note the higher prison rates in the United States of males compared with those of women: 1,348 male inmates per 100,000 men versus 123 female inmates per 100,000 women (U.S. Department of Justice, 2004).

An essentialist and fatalistic view of these violent behaviors is the belief that this is just the way males are and will always be. Using a social constructivist lens that accepts the elasticity of gender norms, we will investigate the ways that heteronormative masculinity is learned and reinforced in society and in the classroom. We will explore how the queering of curriculum and school culture expands the possibilities of masculinity. Finally, we will address the origins of this form of masculinity across 6,000–10,000 years of patriarchal social structures.

The Limits of Heteronormative Masculinity

In general, males express a greater sense of disdain for male homosexuality than women, distancing themselves from behaviors, attitudes, or beliefs associated with femininity and thus with gayness. This results in lower achievement in schools where the athlete is more valued than the dancer, intellectual, or "geek." Placing emphasis on sports and action-oriented accomplishments rather than intellectual curiosity and emotional vulnerability results in limiting boys' physical interactions with other males to slaps and punches in place of expressions of tenderness and concern. Adherence to the hegemonic masculine results in curriculum based on

what are seen as boys' "natural" interests—competition, sports, adventure, mechanics, business, math, and science—as if these were the only areas that represent boys' potential. It also situates masculinity as disruptive by nature. It assumes that boys act out, and thus schools must keep boys in check, find outlets for their expression, and even hire security guards. While it is reasonable to consider boys' physical needs, accommodation of those needs is often based on a monolithic perception of masculinity, leading to an assumption that all boys are the same, and that their needs are different from those of girls. Boy behavior then is anticipated, interpreted, and accommodated within a narrow range of meaning. The boy never learns the full potential of his masculinity because the accommodation leaves no room for self-reflection. There is no "other" to reflect upon that is valued or desired above or even alongside that of the hegemonic masculine.

This accommodation to and reinforcement of one particular form of masculinity takes place even though we see boys struggling within the gender system they inhabit. The results of this struggle take many forms. Boys are more likely than girls to drop out of school, act out violently toward others, be disruptive, have lower grades, commit suicide, and be beaten or threatened with violence by other boys. Boys are also more likely than girls to have a fear of homosexuality and are less tolerant about difference overall. We may see these behaviors as natural, but they are a product of both the social world that exists outside the classroom and an internal struggle to exist within the confines of a rigid masculinity.

The non-conforming males—the quiet boy, the poet, the one who loves reading, the sensitive boy, the sissy, the out gay or bisexual boy, the dancer, the giddy boy—are all seen as outliers of the masculine. Such a boy is seen as someone who needs to be rescued, corrected, toughened, or protected from harm by those who are tough. Even though this need to rescue, correct, and protect may be well intended, it is based on a perception that such boys have failed at the one acceptable form of masculinity. This type of boy is the "un" masculine and thus suspected of being "un" heterosexual, as in "he must be gay," or at the very least does not have the expected phallic, "hard" heterosexuality but instead a "soft" masculinity that is suspect. Even when the behavior of these boys, such as being gentle or nurturing, or having an interest in fine arts, is valued, the boys remain "different," needing to be changed somehow, or at least protected.

These boys (the sissies, the fems, the artists, the dancers) queer the meaning of masculinity. This queering could be considered a gift, as it expands the definition of what is and can be "masculine." Yet this queer type of masculinity does not find a place in the center of school culture. Behaviors, interests, and ways of expression of such boys are not integrated into the curriculum. This lack of legitimatization negatively impacts not only the boys who do not fit the hegemonic masculine ideal but also those boys who do. Without broadening the range of possibilities for "boys being boys," we box boys into ways of being that are severely limited in emotional, physical, and intellectual expression. We prohibit boys from experiencing themselves, their bodies, and their relationships within a full range of possibilities. A body that has never done ballet because the boy was only allowed to play football may never feel the graceful, slow, melodic movement of which a body is capable.

Queering education means disrupting the normative patterns of gender and sexual expression. Queering invites possibilities that are not typically imagined. In much the same way that feminism encouraged new approaches to curriculum and a broader range of opportunities for girls and boys, queer theory and its application invite opportunities to re-envision the classroom, the curriculum, and the school environment. Such queering summons new ways of being "boy," including ways of being often associated with the feminine. It allows for affection and tenderness and can reduce the negative effects of homophobia and sexism for all males. Queering invites a greater appreciation for a range of diversities. Such queering dismantles the hierarchical view of difference associated with compulsory heterosexuality (Wittig, 1992). Queering extends the reach of acceptable male gender expression and dismantles the rigidity of expression and fear of others that boys live with everyday.

One critique of the changes brought about by feminism is that it became safe for females to act more like males but not for males to act like females. What does this mean for how we see qualities associated with the feminine such as nurturance, love of beauty and art, and expression of tender emotions? For many, when such qualities are seen in boys, the saying "if it's girly, it must be gay" comes into play. But by disparaging qualities seen as female or gay, we limit the full manifestation of human potential, no matter what one's gender or sexual orientation may be.

From preschool through college, expectations for performance of gender and sexuality based on traditional hetero-masculine norms infuse the curriculum and are displayed behaviorally in school hallways, playgrounds, social and athletic clubs, and residence halls. Every aspect of student life is a gendered experience and, by extension, has sexual implications. The extent of this gendering is reflected in the use of language. Boys learn to talk *boy*—meaning heterosexual boy—and end up lacking the vocabulary to communicate experiences that do not represent straight boy culture. Words such as *pretty* and *fun* learned in preschool years are replaced with *awesome* and *cool*. Boys learn to act *boy* in a way that distinguishes them from *girl*.

Such pervasive gender-based learning starts early and continues throughout childhood. After first or second grade, the hugging stops, gender-neutral play comes to a halt, and public tears are held back. Parents often encourage these behaviors to protect the boy from being labeled a sissy. "You're too old to cry" continues to be a refrain boys hear from parents and older siblings. By middle and high school, boys learn to emote *boy* by withholding any feelings except anger, as in "I'm so pissed off!" and by avoiding situations that might provoke displays of affection, empathy, tenderness, or tears. Boys learn to find safety in objects—footballs, computer games, drums, texting—anything that distances them from the risk of emotion-laden social situations wherein boys might express feelings that seem unmasculine. Television shows, films, and videogames geared toward boys emphasize competition, violence, and control over others. In such systems, a boy can lose touch—literal distancing from physical connection with others. The close hugs and playful wrestling of the preschool and elementary school years end when adults show up with their fears of sexuality between boys, as the following story illustrates.

Scene 1: The Boy Code and Parental Fear of Homosexuality

Two sisters in their thirties attending a family reunion stood talking on the porch of their mother's house watching as their sons, both 11 years old, began to wrestle on the lawn below. These two boys had grown up together, visiting each other's homes, playing, talking, and laughing. They loved each other; it was plain to see. Suddenly one mother yelled at the boys to stop, saying, "I've told you two before. You two are too old to be rolling around on the grass together like that. Stop it!" The other mother joined her, telling the boys to stop immediately.

   The boys got up and walked away, sulking, and trying to act like they were going to get up anyway. While somewhat shamed by having their mothers yell at them in front of the assembled family, the boys probably didn't know that the message they had been given was about sexuality and gender expectations. The boys knew they had done something wrong even if they didn't understand what it was. Something that had been just fun and even encouraged when they were little—when their dads wrestled and laughed with them—was now just one more thing the boys had to give up because they were growing up. Why?

The shifts in expectations for how much touching males may do as they go from boys to men may seem to be natural, a developmental change that boys must go through. Yet when we look across cultures, across families, and across historical periods, this is not always the case. Boys and men holding hands while walking, kissing on the cheek when greeting, displaying tears openly, using an emotional vocabulary, and showing an ability to process feelings are all seen in some boys and men depending on the person, the context, and the culture. Yet these behaviors are not associated with masculinity or heterosexuality in American culture. What Pollack (1999) refers to as the "boy code" comes to dictate boys' lives—the boy code restricts emotional expression as well as limits opportunities and conscious desire for physical and emotional closeness.

   Then boys show up for school. They show up having experienced cultural conditions that have placed limits on their gender and sexual presentation. If boys have not been influenced by the "boy code" because they come from families or subcultures where restrictive pressures are not prominent or the boys have not learned to adapt to the code, they still encounter a culture where the hallways and dorm rooms, classes, and locker room accentuate hegemonic masculinity. Yet educational settings could be a place where alternative masculinities are developed: a place where images of what is possible can be passed along, and new paradigms for being male can be practiced.

   Researchers of school bullying note that the power bullies have in school settings is not only over the direct victims of the attacks but also over those who witness those behaviors. Through witnessing both what bullies do and the characteristics

of victims, other students learn how to prevent becoming victims themselves—by avoiding the bullies, by emulating the bullies' behaviors, including postures, language, and threats, or by not displaying behaviors similar to those displayed by victims. Avoiding victimization also leads boys to distance themselves from behaviors, attitudes, or any form of interaction associated with the feminine, including appearing to be a good student (Kindlon & Thompson, 2000), and thus a "fag." For boys who are likely victims, qualities that contribute to the boys' vulnerability include being smart and small and expressing sensitivity (e.g., crying).

Avoiding victimization also leads boys to engage in a gendered system based on what Connell (2001) calls the hierarchy of masculinity. Boys not only seek to be masculine according to hegemonic dictates, which is most highly regarded, but also to exercise their masculinity in association with a type of heterosexuality that rejects homosexuality and its feminine associations. This heterosexuality is a form of sexuality that has no menu, no options. One is either straight, and acts like it, or is not. Males do not see, envision, or affirm the range of expression, feelings, and associations that are possible regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Schools can provide a setting where a broader menu can be introduced and gender/sexual meanings, expressions, and experiences boys encounter can create new possibilities of what it can mean to be male.

Critiques of what is called "the feminization of the classroom" (Martino & Kehler, 2006) suggest that boys need more physically active experiences in the classroom than girls do—thus less sitting and less process-oriented learning environments. However, there are a number of assumptions in this argument. First, this argument assumes that all boys are shaped from the same mold and thus have the same needs. Second, this argument ignores that the culture itself contributes to boys' lack of development of those qualities needed to accommodate learning and social relationships that require a high level of process, reflection, and empathy (Kindlon & Thompson, 2000). Contemporary culture promotes the "rough and tumble" for boys and devalues reflection and quiet demeanor (Heasley, 2005; Pollack, 1999). Psychologists Dan Kindlon and Michael Thompson (2000) note that Quaker schools place a high value on reflective thinking and have an expectation for the processing of feelings between boys. In place of physical aggression, boys in these schools display emotional intelligence, intellectual achievement, and a greater degree of empathy for others. These same qualities might be justification for boys in other schools to call a boy a "fag." Kindlon and Thompson found that while boys with these non-aggressive qualities do well both academically and emotionally, these boys are seldom viewed as "real boys." These boys are likely to be seen as the exception, not the boys who will grow up to be just like other guys or be seen as "Joe six pack."

Gender theorists have moved away from the idea of "sex roles," which assumes that the individual is a passive recipient of socialization, acting from a script. A more nuanced analysis recognizes that individuals have agency and self-awareness (Davies, 1997, cited in Renold, 2004). Gender is not fixed but instead is socially negotiated through actions and interactions. That dress the young boy wants to wear in third grade creates an opportunity for all boys to witness and experience that boys

can wear dresses. That boy in fifth grade who tells his classmates he thinks he is gay provides an invitation for all boys (and girls) to bear witness to sexual possibilities. Two boys holding hands walking across a high school campus affirm males' need for touch and physical connection from other males.

All these behaviors can be thought of as queering, of opening up space for alternate forms of masculinities. But such queering goes against the tide of what teachers and schools may have the capacity to accept, let alone support. Instead, the response to the boy wearing a dress may be fear and even panic: fear that the boy may be hurt, fear that the teacher may not know how to "deal" with the behavior, or fear that parents of other children will protest and call the news media. It is, of course, just a third-grade boy trying something out. But for the school, a boy wearing a dress can become a major event.

Culture change in the form of changing behaviors of young people often precedes changes in school curriculum, policies, and classroom practices. Historians relate the panic that ensued in American schools in the 1950s when black and white students began to openly hold hands or date. School administrators in the late 1960s and 1970s reacted severely when high school boys started growing their hair long and wearing earrings and girls began wearing pants. These actions, a few students dating across race and challenging gender norms, confronted the racism and sexism that were part of the larger culture, reinforced by educational institutions. Eventually schools caught up. New educators arrived on the scene, and older educators dared to be agents of change. New research and theory on race and gender led to new paradigms in education, contributing to changes in schools from being enforcers of racism and sexism to being institutions that can lead the way in ending both.

Queer theory, queer research, and queer awareness can provide an impetus for schools to again take a leadership role in cultural change.

Disrupting Hetero-masculine Norms

The issue of bullying provides an example of how queering might be used to interrupt problematic interactions in school settings. Queering requires systemic change that addresses, models, and supports ways of being masculine that might otherwise be devalued because of their association with homosexuality. At the elementary through high school levels, bullying by boys grows out of a perceived need to dominate and control through a process of threats and demeaning actions. Gender and sexuality are very much a part of the practice, with threats often taking the form of homophobic name-calling, using terms such as *fag*, *queer*, *sissy*, or *wimp*. Bullies target boys who are least likely to engage in fighting and are thus perceived to be feminine and, by extension, penetrable.

Interventions to stop boys from bullying include telling boys not to do it and trying to sensitize them to how it feels, in order to develop empathy. While such interventions can be effective, they often occur only after male-on-male bullying becomes a problem. This falls short of introducing a radically different way of being

male. What if all boys in schools had qualities and behaviors that were proudly associated with being girly or gay? Might the bully then have no target? Would anyone pay him any mind? Would qualities in males that are associated with the feminine still be viewed as threatening or undesirable or as a justification for attack?

Using the curriculum and the classroom to engage boys in affirming the feminine, broadening the definition of masculinities, and legitimizing intimacy between males—whether sexual or non-sexual—can serve to disarm the tools the male bully draws on for his actions. This engagement in change involves a process of queering, shifting meanings, and disrupting the hetero-masculine normative in a way that diminishes its legitimacy and its accommodation.

One might ask why such a shift is needed. Most boys are heterosexual and do not bully. They get along without being disruptive. Aren't they doing just fine? Why change anything? Why queer the curriculum and school environment when they appear to be working well for the majority of boys? The answer is that queering education can be good for all students, not just those who are or will be gay, because it introduces a range of options, alternative forms, and images of hetero-masculinity that optimize human potential. Indeed, queering can provide support to those males who are doing all right, who are not overtly homophobic or demeaning toward girls and women but who "hide in the shadow of masculinity" (Heasley, 2005, p. 316). Such males actually hate the way that other males act when they are trying to fit in, such as the way they make a lot of noise and take up a lot of space or the way they put others down in order to build themselves up. These males who are doing all right may not consciously see these behaviors as sexist or homophobic, or interrupt them, but these males also do not participate. They maintain their distance, and avoid social situations in which they, too, might be targeted if they don't go along.

Queering affirms the qualities of such males, of the "sweet guy" (Crane & Crane-Seeber, 2003) side of boys and men. These are the boys who are caring, who want to learn, who want to pursue their goals with emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1997), whether in sports, the arts, mechanics, or science. These boys have an awareness of self and others that affirms the feminine and acknowledges the reality of the complex and rich nature of human sexuality. While such boys may do "all right" in school and life without the effects of queering, with such a change they will find the school setting more affirming. They will be more fearless in their expression and empowered to pursue their interests without risk of being labeled or harmed. Queering disrupts restrictive hetero-masculine norms. Queering gives voice and vision to possibilities of masculinities and to ways of expressing and experiencing sexuality that are not constricted by the need to dominate or by the fear of being different.

What does queering the classroom look like in real life? Consider the following example drawn from an action research project that Robert facilitated at an elementary school with teachers who wanted to learn about and address the needs of boys in the school.

Scene 2: Creating Queer Space: Ms. Williams' Classroom

Ms. Williams begins each day of her fifth-grade class by sitting with the students on the floor in a circle. Turning off the overhead lights, she plays meditative music on the small portable stereo sitting on the file cabinet next to her desk. As Ms. Williams joins the circle, she reminds the children to sit calmly, close their eyes, take a few deep breaths, and reflect on their feelings as they come into the class for the day, imagining how they want their day to progress.

On a morning when a student in one of our gender classes observed this classroom, Ms. Williams asked the children to reflect on these questions: "What do you bring with you today that would be helpful to hold onto? What would be best to leave behind? Are there any ways you need help getting through the day?" After a few minutes, the teacher turned off the music and asked if anyone wanted to share a feeling or thought about his or her reflections.

One boy talked about a concern that his parents might be getting a divorce, saying that he had heard them arguing late into the night and again that morning before he left for school. When the teacher asked what feelings he was carrying with him, with a teary voice he said he was both afraid and sad. The students listened with respect, their faces displaying both concern for the boy and appreciation for what he shared. Quite possibly, others in the circle had similar fears or had known similar sadness. A boy sitting next to him lifted his arm and, placing it over the shoulder of the boy who had spoken, looked lovingly into his eyes and said that he was sorry that things were hard and he hoped the boy knew that it was OK to be afraid. As he kept his arm around the boy's shoulder, he added that he wanted the boy to let him know if he needed support getting through the day.

These two boys were in the fifth grade. At age 10, sitting in a circle of their peers, they were guided by a teacher who created an environment where physical and emotional intimacy between boys, as well as girls, was a safe and even normal expression. A boy soothed another boy with words of comfort, an outstretched arm, an expression of empathy. What might it mean if this could happen for every boy every day? If every boy could receive and give such support from other boys throughout his childhood, might he give and receive more support throughout his life? Yet it is unlikely that this scene would have occurred if the teacher had not created an environment free of threat or ridicule for admitting fear and sadness and if the supportive boy had felt emotionally distant or lacked the vocabulary to express empathy.

Traditionally, school environments do not create such safety for boys. In large part, this is a result of dominant cultural expectations for performance of masculinity and resistance to encouraging expressions that would appear weak, sensitive, tender, or vulnerable. Queering education is one aspect of a larger societal shift related to supporting a plurality of expressions and potentialities for masculinity and sexuality.

Imagine the average classroom in comparison to that of Ms. Williams. The boys come to school; some play roughly with each other while many stand back to avoid the roughness. The teacher observes the boys who are pushing and shoving and gives them attention by scolding them or perhaps making a humorous comment about settling down. In either case, the other boys in the classroom are not getting attention. Other boys may fear being near the boys who are playing roughly. Girls may avoid the scene altogether out of disdain for the behavior or to avoid getting hurt by the action. During the course of the day, the teacher reminds these boys to stop punching, making jokes that get other students' attention, and interrupting the lesson. Many boys sit in silence. While girls may criticize the boys for acting out, the silent boys do nothing. They are the bystanders who know better than to criticize the other boys' behavior for fear of losing their status as one of the boys. Instead, the quiet boys appear to tolerate the scene, getting by, not knowing that they are experiencing a performance of hegemonic masculinity. At the end of the day, the teacher sees a colleague in the hallway and shares how challenging the boys are in her class. But she doesn't mean "the boys." She is referring to the few boys who solicit attention by misbehaving, who seek to impress other boys, and girls, through intimidation or simple bravado. The teacher doesn't notice the boys who fade into the shadows of the dominant ones.

No one wins in this scenario. The boys in the shadows hide because they experience a type of masculinity associated with heterosexuality as intimidating. The boys acting out get attention. Their behavior is accommodated, but it takes up space and time and affects the emotions of the teacher. Even if the boys are punished, the punishment itself is a legitimization, and validation, of their heterosexuality, and ultimately masculinity.

It may seem like a small price to pay for the apparent reward. Yet over the long term, they are short-changed. They are learning to take power from others and to assume privilege. But they lose out on learning to be emotionally aware, reflective, and empathetic, the abilities that would serve them well later in life as fathers, workers, lovers, and friends.

Queering the classroom means creating a safe space for reflective expression and support for gentle, empathic ways of being. Thus, it provides an opportunity for authenticity that frees males from limitations imposed by the hegemonic hetero-masculine. This includes both the males in the illustration above who are acting out and the males who are sitting in silence. However, queering the classroom requires someone with authority, in this case the teacher, to see the forest and not just the trees—realizing that a classroom culture that expects and accommodates this behavior actually cultivates it.

In the case of Ms. Williams' class, without her guidance, without the safety she established in the classroom, without the space she created for practicing self-awareness and reflection, without permission to share, without opportunity to

connect, the two boys who shared so tenderly, and those who witnessed them, may not have had the opportunity to express at that level or know that displaying vulnerability and empathy was desirable. So much of boys' tender, loving, and vulnerable expressions occur behind closed doors in the safety of their homes, with their empathetic moms or dads, or in a quiet moment with a sibling or best friend. Providing public space and opportunity for such expression changes the shape of masculinity and, by association, sexuality in boys' lives where tenderness and sensitivity are no longer "girly" or "gay."

What keeps this from happening? The following story illustrates the tenderness of male vulnerability—for a student, a parent, and a teacher.

Scene 3: Fear of Queering in Mr. Thompson's Class

When one of our sons, Nate, was in second grade, his teacher, Mr. Thompson, who was in his late twenties, took Robert aside after a PTA meeting to say he was concerned about Nate, because he walked on the balls of his feet and tended to smile a lot, indeed, act happy all the time. Since these were qualities that Robert appreciated, he asked the teacher to say more about his concern. Mr. Thompson said that, while Nate's behavior was not a problem as a second grader, if he didn't learn to walk without a bounce—to walk on the heels of his feet instead of the balls of his feet—then he would likely be picked on for being a sissy by the time he was in third grade and for being seen as gay by the time he reached fifth grade.

Months later, after having developed a friendship with Robert through work together on the PTA, Mr. Thompson shared that he was gay and had been a target of ridicule when he was young, due to his "feminine" qualities. It was evident then to Robert that this teacher was being protective of Nate. Yet his protection reflected a sense of Mr. Thompson's own powerlessness and hopelessness that the school environment would or could ever be changed.

Mr. Thompson certainly was not "out" at school, and he was unlikely to be an advocate for changing the school culture in a way that would alleviate the gender and sexual oppression that boys face. Rather, he advocated that Nate curb his enthusiasm and appear, like so many other boys, to perform his gender in a way that would be associated with heterosexuality, and thus masculinity. In Mr. Thompson's eyes, Nate needed an intervention to learn how to become a man, which could take place only if he gave up his bounce!

Nate's second-grade teacher had nothing but the best intentions in proposing a teacher/parent intervention to change Nate's way of walking and his smiling demeanor. Yet Mr. Thompson's proposal reified hegemonic hetero-masculinity and its control over the institutions that affect our everyday lives. Would he have ever

suggested to the parents of a girl, as he did to Robert about his son, that their daughter should have a more firm way of walking or show less overt cheerfulness?

This teacher lived in a different community from that of Ms. Williams in Scene 2. His community did not overtly support gay rights. He did not work in a school system, like she did, that advocated policies that embraced feminism and sexual diversity. All these factors contributed to his reaction to Nate. And, on a more personal level, this teacher's attempt at intervention might be a product of his inability to embrace his own queerness. This could have had to do with unresolved shame associated with internalized homophobia, based on his experiences of hegemonic masculinity (Allen & Oleson, 1999). At the same time, his ability to live outside the hegemonic hetero-masculine contributed to his ability to be the sensitive, caring, and loving man that the children in his second-grade class adored.

Teachers, administrators, and counselors are constantly confronted with the contradictions presented by their own lived experience, those of their students, and the often-confining expectations of the institution. Students are not square pegs biologically engineered for square holes. Children are not widgets to be shaped and bent to make them fit, particularly when it comes to gender and sexual conformity, regardless of the pressure to do so.

The dominant discourse on masculinity is so solidly heterosexual that the association goes unquestioned. It is taken as self-explanatory, as monolithic. We want our boys to be *masculine*—meaning that we want them to be competitive, tough, and thus able to dominate through fighting when called upon, militarily, politically, or in business. And, of course, to be heterosexual. Thanks to the women's movement, we are no longer similarly obsessed that our girls be feminine. Indeed, most teachers and parents would question a curriculum that socialized girls to fit into a narrow range of gender expectations based on the traditionally feminine—for example, quiet, submissive to males, indecisive, and with low career expectations.

But we do just that with males, emphasizing a masculinity that locates competition, toughness, and heterosexuality as core qualities. The boy who studies violin or dance is encouraged to take up a sport as well; while the boy who pursues sports is unlikely to be expected to pursue the arts. It is the exception when we witness a breakdown (or opening up) of this masculinity. A children's book depicting a father changing his baby's diaper, for example, or a boy crying or seeking emotional support in times of personal crisis, may be noted by a teacher, but also as exceptional. Not common. Not expected.

The "tough guy" (Crane & Crane-Seeber, 2003, p. 210) is the image that the media, fundamentalist religions, sports, Wall Street, and the military all promote as the goal for what boys should be when they grow up. Yet the military needs men who are creative, who can learn and translate languages, and who can manage people well. The military needs people, men and women, who understand computers, can entertain troops, and counsel fellow soldiers. The form of toughness associated with traditional heterosexual masculinity is not about being strong, competent, or able—these are qualities also possessed by women and by gay men. Rather, the cultural contract for hetero-masculinity's version of toughness calls for competitiveness and ultimately gaining dominance over other men, over women,

and all that is associated with the feminine. Such dominance includes homophobic attacks—verbal, physical, spiritual, or political—by males toward queer (or queer-like) males and females and recruiting of soldiers by older men offering (heterosexual) manhood in exchange for submission to older men's commands (Crane-Seeber, 2007).

Queering questions these processes of power and control. Queering problematizes the hetero-masculine so that boys do not become vulnerable to the promise of power and control over others. Queering offers the grounds for resistance to the type of masculinity that is so central to patriarchy. For teachers to work against the tide in recognizing what queering masculinity can produce, it is critical to have a sense of historical perspective—a narrative of masculinity that legitimizes challenging the status quo. Such a narrative is taking shape as feminist, postmodernist, and queer scholars provide new interpretations of ancient history (Eisler, 1987; Gimbutas, 1982; Stone, 1976).

Unveiling History: Challenging the "Caveman" Narrative of Masculinity

The "caveman" image of masculinity has become a common reference in popular culture. A cartoon-like image of a man with a club dragging a woman by the hair is a commonly shared idea of prehistoric male–female relations, a back-story that supports male domination over women and heterosexual male hatred for anything queer. McCaughey (2008) asserts that a "caveman mystique" has arisen out of evolutionary theory that allows men to experience their sexuality as "acultural, primal" (p. 3). This mystique sustains the dominance of a certain way of being masculine that is hurtful to women, queers, and straight males.

If boorish male aggression is hard-wired in our genes, there is little hope for change. We offer instead a socially constructed narrative for the story of male dominance that dates back to the formation of patriarchy 7,000–10,000 years ago (Eisler, 1987). Patriarchy is defined as "social organization marked by the supremacy of the father in the clan or family, the legal dependence of wives and children, and the reckoning of descent and inheritance in the male line" (Merriam-Webster Online, n.d.).

More important to the narrative, though less often named, is that a particular type of heterosexual male represents the ultimate masculinity. He is one who desires young women, regardless of his own age, and will go to any extreme—including using a club, as if to drag a woman into "his" cave, and fighting other males to possess his desired woman. In this story, women have little if any agency and are destined to submit to male authority. Males who don't follow this construction of masculinity, who do not participate in dominating women or in aggressively warring with other males, are a threat to this narrative. They threaten the idealized image of masculinity and its presumed association with a type of heterosexuality that dominates women.

In patriarchal cultures, this narrative of the hetero-masculine is institutionally supported. Religion, education, and legal systems all repeat the same story as if it were rational and the truth. Thus, women in some parts of the world cannot expose their faces in public, and males who are not heterosexual are derided as fags, and may be beaten, or killed. Yet there is hesitation about changing the nature and function of masculinity and heterosexuality itself. Is it fear that to do so would create chaos, and the loss of males as protectors and defenders? Does the way a mother bear protects her young become forgotten, as if anything associated with the feminine is ultimately helpless? Education as a social institution serves the interests of the larger society and, thus, has historically been used to retell this story of male dominance and female submission and to play out the narrative through its policies and practices by not disrupting the heterosexism and homophobia that are woven into our cultural practices.

This leaves educators who are aware of the disfunctionality of the current gendered system with a lot of work to do. Challenging this paradigm of the hetero-masculine imperative threatens cultural norms, particularly religious teachings, social policy, and institutional practices with a long history of rewarding the hegemonic masculine at the expense of other masculinities. And, while interventions in schools are often geared at harm reduction (protecting the queer student from peer abuse or protecting girls from sexual harassment and assault), such actions don't address the problem. The problem is rooted in the cultural narrative that says, "this is how males are," and we can only hope to reduce the harm males will do to others or themselves, which is yet another form of accommodation. With the best of intentions, we often end up restricting the mobility or rights of potential victims of sexism, heterosexism, and homophobia. Preventing violence by telling queer kids to avoid dangerous areas of campus, or telling girls to use the campus emergency phone or late-night escort services, is like triage. It is about treating the worst manifestations of the problem. It does nothing to change the meaning and implications of hetero-masculinity.

Until we queer the curriculum and school culture, becoming free of the orthodoxy of the hegemonic masculine, there is little hope for real change. Without queering, disrupting the meaning of heterosexuality and its power that becomes intensified when aligned with masculinity, there can be no systemic and cultural change. People on the margins of heteronormativity will not be safe, and those at the center will remain unaware of the value of stripping off the straitjacket of dominance where sexism and homophobia find their breeding ground.

Queering the Classroom: Challenges and Potentials

Schools and their leaders are vulnerable given their position in society. Publically funded institutions have a tenuous relationship with their public. While schools "serve" students, the schools do so at the dictates of a society that is resistant to disrupting the inherited hetero-masculine constructions from our patriarchal history.

Yet queering the classroom and school culture has real benefits for all boys, as well as girls. The idea of disrupting hegemonic masculinity is the key to the changes experienced in girls' lives through the introduction of feminist thinking in the curriculum, classroom interactions, and school culture. Queering hetero-masculinity has similar potential for boys.

While many schools have or are developing policies intended to protect lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students from harassment or discrimination, school administrators may be implementing these policies only to protect the schools from lawsuits. We would not dismiss the good intentions behind such policies, but do suggest that such action falls short of changing the system itself. By not teaching queer history, for instance, schools force both straight and queer students to respond ahistorically to queer-related issues and events. For instance, the topic of gay marriage, so prominent in the media and in politics, deserves to be discussed as well as that of heterosexual marriage, including the history of power relationships between the sexes that made women dependent on men for economic survival and social status.

Students might want to know why Princess Diana had a gynecological exam the night before her wedding to Prince Charles, in order to assure the Queen that his bride was a virgin. This practice, intended to ensure that any child she bore would be "rightfully" the heir to the British crown, reflects the history of heterosexual marriage relative to male domination and the importance of male lineage. Students could critically examine the debates over gay marriage through studying the legalization of interracial marriage and the arguments posed that such relationships were unnatural. This would put the issue of same-sex marriage into context and in the process evoke critical learning and informed discussion. It also queers the discourse that takes place in the class. Consider the benefit to students entering middle school of knowing there are gay, lesbian, bisexual, and straight teachers, who are all clearly supported by administrators who make a point of acknowledging this diversity.

For boys, there is also something else to focus on, the implications for masculinity, its meaning, and its power. Most boys are not aware of gender, as sociologist Michael Kimmel (2008) has observed. When carrying a master identity, a white person in a white-dominant society, for instance, is less likely to be conscious of his or her power and privilege and less likely to critically examine the identity to see its deficiencies. Thus, whites may think that race is an issue for people of color, and males may think gender is a "women's" issue. Heterosexual males are likely to think sex is a woman's issue due to her potential to become pregnant or raped, or a gay issue because they are different, but sex may not appear to be a "problem" for straight males beyond concern about diseases and unintended pregnancies.

Critically examining masculinity can generate a discourse on sex and gender that invites straight males into the discussion. This requires students to have exposure to information that addresses queer topics—knowing that many of the writers the students study are gay, exposure to queer theorists and historical analysis, exposure to queer representation in the arts and athletics; providing students with this material enables them to think, reflect, and engage with this topic. However, providing information through courses isn't enough, any more than "adding" women as a

topic to traditional history lessons or setting aside a month for black history serves to adequately change the culture. Queer infusion of the curriculum means that heterosexuality gets questioned along with homosexuality. It means examining how heterosexuality gives status and privilege and how problems identified with being straight go unnamed. It means problematizing straightness itself, its meaning, and its status.

In the same way, acknowledging the diversity of ways to be masculine by questioning the construct itself provides an opportunity for students to consider the meaning of masculinity and its use. Was Mussolini masculine? Was Mozart? In what way? Can a particular presentation of masculinity get in the way of being true to oneself? Does it contribute to problems for males? Would girls in a high school class want to be "feminine" at all times? How does that compare with boys in terms of the desire to appear masculine? There is no end to the opportunities for discussion!

But queering the curriculum is only a first step in effecting change. Queering classes means creating policies that articulate values of acceptance and equality regardless of gender or sexual orientation. It also requires establishing opportunities to experience difference. For boys who may display resistance due to their master status, providing space and time to engage their masculinity in alternative settings and observing role models of difference in the form of teachers, administrators, and coaches is necessary to bring about change. The coach who uses "sissy," "girl," and "fag" put-downs to run his male athletes through practice has no place in the educational setting. The school that has only female cheerleaders fails to acknowledge the heterosexualization of male sports. The teacher who expects different behavior from boys and girls has not critically questioned assumptions about gender and classroom dynamics.

We have arrived as a culture at a point where teachers feel empowered to interrupt discriminatory remarks regarding race and gender. Teachers in workshops we have conducted say, however, that if they overhear students using the word "fag" or "gay," the teachers may be more hesitant to intervene. A number of factors influence this hesitancy. School policies are not always as clear on issues of discrimination against LGBT students. Teachers themselves may carry discomfort with or feel ambivalence toward addressing these concerns. These interventions may lead the teacher into a discussion about sexual orientation that feels uncomfortable or unfamiliar. Or she or he may be labeled a gay or lesbian—a fag or a dyke—by students.

Disrupting hegemonic masculinity and the effects of compulsory heterosexuality in the classroom, the subtitle of this chapter, has unique challenges and important potential for changing the educational experience for all students. If we accept that much of the school climate and curriculum has centered on a patriarchal construction of both gender and sexuality, we can see how the past 40 years of work focused on creating a safe and positive learning environment for girls has led to great accomplishments. The more recent acceptance by schools of policies protecting the safety of LGBT students, while a limited step, has been of great importance. But if the "boy code" that reflects a heterosexualized masculinity that is homophobic and misogynist is not addressed, then boys will continue to have intra- and interpersonal

relationships informed by fear of the feminine, thus limiting their understanding of sexuality, intimacy, and relationships. As Pinar (2003) states, "What we need today is a nation of mama's boys, men who have declined to repudiate their maternal identification" (p. 58). Such males may be sons of men and students of teachers who have themselves redefined their masculinities to embrace what had been denounced as feminine, other, and queer.

Teachers serve their students when the teachers bring conversations about these topics into the classroom, helping children and adolescents reflect on the ways that some identities and ways of being are valued more than others; for example, who and what are considered "cool" or even just "normal," and who is marginalized. Renold (2004), who carried out ethnographic research in British primary schools on how "other" boys negotiate non-hegemonic masculinity, stresses the importance of transforming the "oppositional and hierarchical gender constructions that permeate children's identity," stating:

> Exploring (especially with children themselves) how they are interconnected (and indeed interact with social class, ethnicity, religion, sexuality and age) may well go some way to disrupting the power relations that constitute the gendered hegemonic matrix that all children (boys and girls) negotiate on a daily basis within and beyond the school gates. (Renold, 2004, p. 262)

Queering schools to disrupt hegemonic masculinity and compulsory heterosexuality is not just about increasing space and safety for "queer" males in schools; it is about improving conditions for all males, and all females, and making space for those, such as some who are intersexual or transgender, who do not wish to identify as either male or female. Such disruption makes possible a view of masculinities and sexualities that have a plurality of potentialities and expressions without hierarchical discrimination based on a presumed superiority of one way of being masculine over another. Disrupting hierarchies related to all forms of oppression, whether sex, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, class, or other forms of identities and abilities, enhances the overall project of democratization and the possibilities for the enhancement of human potential. For many reasons discussed here, the dismantling of the privilege associated with hegemonic masculinity is one of the most difficult to achieve. Queering education may provide an essential and critical space for this effort.

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Part II
Queer Masculinities at the Collegiate Level

Chapter 8
Queering Masculine Peer Culture: Softening Gender Performances on the University Dance Floor

Grant Tyler Peterson and Eric Anderson

Queering the Heterosexual Dance Floor

The music blares throughout the dance hall. Youthful and intoxicated bodies hedonistically pulsate, absorbing its rhythms. The colored lights flash across the walls and reflect off the floor. John and Peter synchronize their gyrating hips to the beat, then down and around to the song's syncopated lyric. Their attractive bodies slowly succumb to the libidinal forces of the music and their desire to join bodies. When the lyric of Taio Cruz's (2008) song "Come on Girl" beckons, "I love how you shake that little booty around the club, I just wanna turn you, me, into a us," Peter and John's crotches join, pulsing and grinding together in synchronized form. John wraps his left arm around Peter's lower back and Peter's right hand grabs John's neck and draws him in closer. As the music and lights climax, Peter goes in for a kiss. John mirrors Peter and their lips touch. The song ends, their eyes open, and they smile.

But this is not a gay club, and Peter and John are not gay guys. This is a university dance club, and Peter and John are self-identifying heterosexuals who attend the university. After dancing, Peter leaves John to walk over to his girlfriend, Sarah, who is standing nearby. He takes her hand and gives her a kiss on the cheek.

Peter and John are not alone in the sexualized nature in which they dance. Virtually all men in this and every other university-aged club we conducted our participant observations in saw men dancing this way. Whereas earlier men used to sit on one side of the room, working up the courage to ask a girl to dance from the other side, today men go to clubs together, in groups or pairs, and for most of the evening dance only with each other. While they may have danced near each other just a few years ago, today they dance with each other. At one "student only" night, we counted 80 percent of the occupants as men; rarely did we see men dancing with women.

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It is not just dancing together that we see. We recently saw two men snake through a crowded dance floor, one holding the hand of the other, so as not to lose him in the dense crowd. At the same club, men sit in a corner, one's arm draped around the other. At a considerably harder Bristol club, we see two working-class youths kiss. At the same club we see middle-class boys wearing cardigan sweaters and higher-end clothes.

Accordingly, in this chapter we suggest that what used to be subversive signs of a polarized gender and sexuality order are increasingly found in the domain of popular and normative heterosexual culture. From fashion to casual kissing, on the dance floor or in the classroom, what does it mean when gay and queer masculinities are performed by otherwise straight-identifying men? What implications does the "homosexualization" of heterosexuals or the queering of straights have on understandings of gender and sexuality?

In this chapter we take a different perspective on queer masculinities. Rather than examining the masculinities of gay men or queer-identifying individuals, we examine the masculinities of heterosexual men. We examine how the masculinities of self-identifying straight men are being queered in masculine peer culture. We do this from both sociological and performance theoretical frameworks, highlighting the multiple influences that shape perceptions of gender and sexuality. Whether the context is a sporting event or a dance hall, social terrains rely on a body of assumed knowledge—from the rules of the game to current choreographic trends—that help construct the social meanings inculcated in and performed by moving bodies. Because we suggest that what used to be subversive signs of a polarized gender and sexuality order are increasingly found in the domain of popular and normative heterosexual culture, we require a change in our theoretical formulations of masculinity, too.

Heteromasculinity

Connell (1987, 1995) advances an understanding of the problematic process of understanding masculinities, particularly highlighting the privilege some versions of masculinity retain over subordinated and marginalized others. Perhaps her insight comes from her own queer sense (Raewyn used to be Robert). Connell suggests the hegemonic form of masculinity shifts in response to cultural influences, permitting it to maintain social dominance. Anderson (2005a) suggests that many of the achieved and ascribed attributes of contemporary hegemonic masculinity are no better epitomized than in the masculine playgrounds of university team sports. Accordingly, we discuss team sports here because they have been shown to set the masculine norms and standards of university cultures. This is particularly true at the university under observation because it is ranked one of the premier athletic institutions in the United Kingdom. Accordingly, if a queer perspective on masculinities is found within this university culture, one might expect it plausible in other universities, too.

The ideal university athlete is strong, masculine, good looking, and hyper-heterosexual. Correspondingly, studies of the multiple and changing forms of

masculinities (Kimmel, 1997) have contributed to a growing body of literature examining the role team sports play in the construction of hegemonic masculinity, particularly in North America (Anderson, 2002, 2005a; Messner, 1992, 2002). These studies highlight sports' influence and socialization of almost all boys into a sex-segregated system of team sports, in which they are regularly taught to devalue women, femininity, and gay men (Anderson, 2008a; Messner, 2002). Conversely, boys and men who occupy feminine terrain or play feminized sports such as gymnastics or cheer are often thought gay, stigmatized by the institutional culture that associates homosexuality with feminine terrains (Adams, 1993; Anderson, 2005b; Grindstaff & West, 2006; Hanson & Pratt, 1995).

Queer Theories on Gender

Like gender, sexual identities are also socially constructed (Seidman, 2002) and continuously contested (Flowers & Buston, 2001) categories of social power. Significantly, as Foucault ([1984] 1990) shows us, these categories are not a natural fact of human nature, but are a "set of effects produced in bodies, behaviors, and social relations by a certain deployment deriving from a complex political technology" (p. 127). According to Foucault, the dissemination of gender and sexual norms are not only from the top-down but are formed by a complex matrix of power relations between individuals and institutions. Homophobia and sexism, then, are forms of official and self-regulatory powers that aim to segregate and relegate gender and sexuality.

As Guy Hocquenghem ([1972] 1993), one of the forefathers of queer theory, suggests, homophobia becomes a tool to regulate the suppressed homosocial and homosexual desires inherent in everyone, not just self-identifying homosexuals. The work of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1990, 1993) would later rearticulate and expand this point, becoming a popular springboard for much of queer theory. Sedgwick uses the term "homosociality" to analyze the blurry lines between encounters of men of the same sex and homosexual identifications. In the process of policing these desires, homophobic social stigma begets a system of compulsory heterosexuality maintaining the hegemonic gender norms observed in Western cultures (Rich, 1980; Rubin, 1984). But the stigma associated with men's homosexuality reflects more than just the fear of sex between men: male homosexuality, as Sedgwick and others have demonstrated, is also disparaged because it is regularly conflated with femininity (Barrett, 2000; Kimmel, 1994; Nardi, 1995; Pharr, 1988; Pronger, 1990; Sedgwick, 1990, 1993), something Pepper Schwartz and Virginia Rutter (1998) describe as the gender of sexuality.

Boys (Epstein, Kehily, Mac an Ghaill, & Redman, 2001; Pollack, 1999) and men (Anderson, 2005a; Messner, 1992) wishing to avoid homosexual stigma generally do not work (Williams, 1995) or play (Adams, 1993; McGuffey & Rich, 1999) in feminized terrain or act in effeminate ways (Kimmel, 1994) if they desire to be perceived as heterosexual and masculine (heteromasculine) among peers.

Accordingly, while occupying feminized terrains, boys and men traditionally position themselves away from femininity to show they are not feminine and therefore not gay (Anderson, 2005a; McGuffey & Rich, 1999). Epstein et al. (2001, p. 135) note, "Even little boys are required to prove that they are 'real boys' in ways that mark them as masculine, even macho, and therefore (by definition) heterosexual." Hence, homophobia does more than just marginalize gay men; it also regulates and limits the behavior of straight boys and men.

The desire to be perceived as heteromasculine is understandable in a culture that distributes privilege unequally according to gender and sexuality (Connell, 1987; Lorber, 1994). Consequently, when heterosexual boys and men fear the stigma of homosexuality, they normally conceal their same-sex sexual forms of homosociality. This is because same-sex sexual behavior is normally conflated with a homosexual identity in North American and Western European cultures (Anderson, 2005a; Jagose, 1996; Lancaster, 1988; Nardi, 1995; Parker, 1999). Tomás Almaguer (1991, p. 77) suggests same-sex sex historically carries ". . .with it a blanket condemnation of all same sex behavior. . .because it is at odds with a rigid, compulsory heterosexual norm." Roger Lancaster's work (1988, p. 116) compliments this rigid model, arguing, "Even homosexual desires stigmatize one as homosexual." Judith Butler (1997) agrees, suggesting gender is acquired by repudiating homosexual sex and by having never lusted after someone of the same sex. Under this framework, the only way to be considered heterosexual is to avoid any same-sex sexual act and to avoid admitting same-sex sexual desire, something Michael Messner (2004, p. 422) describes as being "100 percent straight."

Borrowing from the one-drop theory of race (Davis, 1991; Harris, 1964), in which a dominant white culture once viewed any person with even a portion of black genetic ancestry as black, and thus non-white, Eric Anderson (2008a) calls the stigma attached to the behavioral component of homosocial interaction the one-time rule of homosexuality. One same-sex sexual or pseudo-sexual experience in contemporary hegemonic codes of masculinity is usually equated with, or stigmatized as having, a homosexual identity. This rules out the possibility of men engaging in recreational same-sex sex or pseudo-sex without the stigma of a homosexual label (Anderson, 2005a). Under this rubric of taboo, it only takes one act of same-sex behavior to be associated with homosexual stigma. However, the inverse of this rule does not evenly apply, as Schwartz (1995, p. 12) suggests, "We have to rethink how we have demonized the power of homosexuality so that we assume it to be the greater truth of our sexual self—as if one drop of homosexuality tells the truth of self while one drop of heterosexuality in a homosexual life means nothing."

This one-way application of the one-time rule has also created a double jeopardy for men who reveal they have experience with same-sex sex. It disqualifies them from achieving the requisites of orthodox heterosexuality and diminishes their masculine capital among peers (Anderson, 2005a). While Reis (1961) and Klein (1993) show that some heterosexual men (including those who financially profit from sex with men) are less inclined to fear gay stigma, and same-sex sex is also less threatening to heterosexual men in certain homogenous, masculine institutions, like prisons and the military (Bérubé, 1991; Gear & Ngubeni, 2002), the general

rule seems to be that for most heterosexual men in contemporary North American and Western European culture, their socially perceived heterosexual identities are partially conditioned upon exclusive opposite-sex sexual behaviors (Butler, 1990).

Many have found that when self-identifying heterosexual men do engage in same-sex sex, they normally structure anonymity into these transactions (Boykin, 2005; Corzine & Kirby, 1977; Humphreys, 1975). This is something King and Hunter (2004) and Keith Boykin (2005) describe among African-American men who have sex with men as being "on the down low," and it might explain why recent quantitative research on team sport athletes finds less than 4 percent engaging in same-sex sex (Southall, Anderson, Coleman, & Nagel, 2006). Confidentiality enables men to have sex with men and avoid the stigma associated with same-sex sex identity categories.

None of this is to suggest that sexual orientation, identity, and behaviors are synonymous; indeed the matrix of sexuality is fraught with ambiguity and contradictions (Butler, 1993; Rubin, 1984; Sedgwick, 1990, 1993) that are complicated by sexual fantasies, attractions, behaviors, self-identities, and cultural understandings (Foucault, 1984; Lubensky, Holland, Wiethoff, & Crosby, 2004). Accordingly, this one-time rule does not work equally in all cultures.

Many scholars have problematized the cross-cultural applicability of the way North American and Western European models of homosexuality and gay identities are constructed because these models do not much differentiate the structure or role men play in same-sex sexual practices (Almaguer, 1991; Carrier, 1971, 1995; Lancaster, 1988; Parker & Caceres, 1999; Warner, 1993). Men throughout regions of Latin America, for example, are permitted to anally penetrate other males and retain—or even promote—their heterosexuality. In this type of model, men's heterosexuality is determined by penetration, not the sex of whom one penetrates.

Furthermore, not all cultures conflate homosexual behaviors with a homosexual identity, something Gilbert Herdt (1981) famously shows with the ritual copulation of younger boys by older boys in Sambian culture. Thus, the way North American and Western European heterosexual men identify with same-sex sex seems more prohibitive, and the meanings attached to it are stigmatized differently than the way other cultures understand same-sex sex. This variance highlights the multiplicity of genders and the plurality of sexualities, both intra-culturally and cross-culturally (Redman, 2001).

Of particular relevance to this chapter, we found that university men in this study (who identify as heterosexual) also engage in ambiguous same-sex sexual behavior on the dance floor and that they attach new meanings to their sexual activities and identities. Dancers kiss one another, which has some degree of sexual connotation, even if they say it does not. We argue that these behaviors are a change that perhaps more closely resembles elements of the Latin American system of gender and sexuality. Anderson (2005b) has previously found occurrences in which gay men were invited to have limited forms of sex with their ostensibly heterosexual peers. But these accounts also find heterosexual men explicitly concerned with anonymity in their same-sex sexual behaviors—one major reason why heterosexual males engaging in same-sex sex may be underrepresented in current quantitative

research (Southall et al., 2006). Anderson goes on to suggest that recent trends in shifting sexual attitudes are, at least for this group of men, influencing how other university-aged self-identified heterosexual men structure and manage their same-sex sexual behaviors.

Shifting Attitudes on Sexuality and Gender

There are a number of trends that may influence how university-aged, heterosexual men construct their sexual and gendered identities. First, since the early 1990s, both qualitative (Barrett & Pollack, 2005; Pascoe, 2005) and quantitative (Laumann, Gagnon, Michael, & Michaels, 1994; Loftus, 2001; Widmer, Treas, & Newcomb, 2002; Ohlander, Batalova, & Treas, 2005; Yang, 1997) studies show a significant decrease in cultural and institutional homophobia within Western cultures (Anderson, 2002, 2005a, 2005b; Price & Parker, 2003; Southall et al., 2006). Second, there is increasing evidence of a form of normative masculinity growing more inclusive of feminine gender expression, particularly among university-aged, white, middle-class men (Anderson, 2005b, 2008b; Cashmore & Parker, 2003; Hyman, 2004; Price & Parker, 2003). Third, recent decades have brought a lessening of traditional stigmatizing views and institutional control of sexual behaviors and relationships (Joyner & Laumann, 2001). This is made evident by the growing percentage of those engaging in pre-marital intercourse (Laumann et al., 1994; Johnson et al., 2001) and the lessening of the traditional double standard of girls being "sluts" and guys being "studs" in heterosexual intercourse (Tanenbaum, 1999; Wolf, 1997).

Other relevant trends include the growing willingness of men to be taken (dominated) in sex (Segal, 1994), trends that successfully make men into objects of sexual desire (Heywood & Dworkin, 2003; Miller, 2001) and more fluid gender codes resulting from a merger of gender and sexuality signifiers in consumer culture (Warner, 1993). Finally, some evidence shows institutional sexism may also be decreasing among university-aged men (Anderson, 2008b; Bryant, 2003).

It is reasonable to suspect, then, that these changing cultural trends have implications for a sex-gender system that conflates homosexuality with femininity (Pascoe, 2005). For example, John Ibson (2002) shows how increasing cultural homophobia influences heterosexual men to further police their gendered behaviors while decreasing trends in cultural homophobia has the opposite affect.

Homosexual Stigma and HIV/AIDS

The apex of cultural awareness of homosexual identities came at a particularly relevant time for the study of masculinities. Just as our culture grew aware that anyone could be gay (sending men into homophobic performances in order to prove that they were not gay), the gay community was hit by two substantial socio-political

events. These events impacted not only gay masculinities (Levine & Kimmel, 1998) but men's gendered understandings as a whole. The first came in the form of a cultural backlash to the gains made by gay men and feminists of the 1960s and 1970s.

The development of the counter-culture in the 1960s and 1970s and the subsequent conservative backlash of the 1980s are perhaps best seen in the phenomenon of disco. Disco was invented by largely unacknowledged black, gay DJs who overlapped "soul and Philly (Philadelphia International) records, fazing them in and out, to form uninterrupted soundtracks for nonstop dancing" (Thomas, 1995, p. 439). The use of black soul music, itself derived from black gospel, marks the secularization and appropriation of black church music by gay men and, thus, the reconfiguration of religious narratives into sexual ones. Thelma Houston's "Don't Leave Me This Way" and Cheryl Lynn's "Got to Be Real" are disco examples that reconfigure the ideas of spiritual salvation in gospel and soul into ideas of sexual salvations.

In this respect, disco, for gay men, became a popular church of the orgasm. The fact that the etymology of disco relies on a space—the discothèque—speaks to the central role that "claiming a space" had within the development of disco and gay communities. Disco provided some of the first spaces where gay men could come together and "out" their forbidden desires to one another.

Disco came to a sudden demise, however, with the ushering in of the 1980s. The homophobic-slanted 1979 campaign of "disco sucks" set out to abolish disco and its homosexual (sexual deviancy) and feminine associations (Hughes, 1994; Dyer, 1995). The apex of this phenomenon was most poignantly expressed during a mass demonstration at the halftime show "Disco Demolition" at Chicago's Comiskey Park baseball stadium. DJ Steve Dahl led an over-capacity crowd of 50,000 in a ritualistic explosion of the crowd's self-sacrificed disco records; he piled them together and detonated several pounds of TNT to the crowd's chants of "Disco Sucks! Disco Sucks!" (Cheren, 2003). Accordingly, just as disco emerged from the closet in the 1960s and 1970s, it was forced back in with the beginning of the homophobic 1980s.

Indeed, with a recession in 1979 and continuing into the 1980 election of Ronald Reagan (as well as the 1979 election of Margaret Thatcher in Britain), cultural conservatives were determined to reclaim their respective countries from the apparently out-of-control counter-culture and New Left of the 1960s and 1970s. The excess of disco, with both its material glamour and sexual freedom, could not survive such cultural changes.

This trend continued in the 1990s with the religious right's crusade to reclaim "the soul of America" (as Pat Buchanan declared in 1992), which in most contexts meant to remasculinize America. Heterosexual gender roles were to be recalibrated through organizations like the religious right's "Promise Keepers." Freud's explanation of homosexuality as the product of an absent father figure also found a renewed emphasis during this time (Kimmel, 1997). Mainstream culture was hell bent on addressing and redefining the crisis of masculinity.

Notably, however, the gender inquisition of the mid-1980s and 1990s made its mark in dance music. Disco was phased out and replaced by the often homophobic

and hypermasculine genre of rock and roll. The only surviving remnants of disco were its musical decedents, "garage" (in New York from 1977 to 1984) and "house" (in Chicago from 1984 to 1989), both derived from the original New York gay, black disco music trope. These genres, however, eventually developed into "acid house" (1988–1992), "hardcore" (1988–1992), and "industrial" (1983–1992). The new forms of club music abandoned diva narratives and instead emphasized sensory overload with pure, electronic loudness and speed, employing rigid rhythms, dark tones, and extreme frequencies.

Left in the wake of these inherently hypermasculine forms, disco waned, and its use was primarily transfigured into requiems for the many lost to the HIV/AIDS crisis. As Walter Hughes (1994, p. 156) poignantly writes, "1970s [disco] songs like 'Don't Leave Me This Way' and 'Never Can Say Good-bye' [became], in the 1980s, part of the work of mourning." Songs that once celebrated sexual excess were now being used to cope with unimaginable loss. Bodies that were once virile with heightened sexuality and donned masculinities were now stripped by disease, poxed with Kaposi's sarcoma, and stigmatized as contagion by ignorant and reluctant governments.

Homosexuality and its association with HIV/AIDS was not only pathologized as a lack of masculinity but also perceived as a "lifestyle" that resulted in death. Gay men were stigmatized as being effeminate, diseased, and even a threat to the public. In Britain, this atmosphere expressed itself in the 1987 witch hunt for gay football (soccer) referee Norman Redman, who disclosed his HIV status. Mark Simpson (1994) writes how Redman was forced from public life and moved to a secret address after receiving threats and having excrement pushed through his mailbox. Soon after this the Football Association moved to ban kissing among its players after goals, on the justification that it would prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. The obsession surrounding same-sex behavior and its association with HIV/AIDS—and thus a threat to public health—became, as Simpson suggests, "a spectacle of masculine paranoia" (ibid).

The men's movement of the HIV/AIDS era was, just like during earlier parts of the twentieth century, a way for men to distance themselves from what one was not to be. This time, however, in addition to using the stigma of femininity and employing religious righteousness (especially in the United States), dominant culture was now using medical epidemiology to configure its strictures against homosexuality and gender expression. The anxiety over HIV/AIDS played a dramatic role in men's desire to constitute their masculine subjectivities.

HIV/AIDS had an incalculable and unfortunately rarely acknowledged effect on the gender expression of men, both heterosexual and homosexual. Men's suspicions of other men's serostatus functioned as a form of sexual survival and fostered an environment of systematic corporeal policing among men. Such anxieties became reflexive and shaped how men developed and advertised their bodies for sexual encounters. To disassociate oneself from previous markers of gay virility, namely the hair and moustaches of the 1970s and 1980s now signifying the older and possibly infected generations, the sexual economy of the 1990s depended on the theory that the more young and more muscular a man was, the less likely he was to have

HIV/AIDS. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, body hair became a sign of age; it meant age in particular but experience in general and thus was conflated as a prime indicator of health (Signorile, 1997). This led to the ultra-masculine, hairless, shaved bodies and faces that dominated the 1990s and continue to spread throughout metropolitan gay and straight male communities.

Essentially, this era was more or less a corporeal pissing contest based on who looked youngest and disease-free, explicated through hairless muscularity. The hauntingly Darwinist nature of 1990s gay sexual politics continued to edge the more feminine and less masculine alternative gender signs further toward the margins of gay communities. Medical technologies of the 1980s and 1990s also added to the masculinization of gay and straight cultures. Steroids were first introduced into gay communities as a necessity for HIV/AIDS patients but were soon misused by many gay men as body enhancers (Halkitis, 2000). Similarly, with the proliferation of fitness industries in the 1990s (with gyms and vitamin shops becoming a cornerstone in metropolitan areas) gay men adopted new workout regimens to ensure muscular physiques (Pope, Phillips, & Olivardia, 2000).

If HIV/AIDS did anything good for the gay community, it brought such visibility (albeit the wrong type) that it solidified that homosexuals existed in great numbers, that we were lurking in every social institution. Equally as important, it was another catalyst for gays and lesbians to talk about homosexuality from a "rights" perspective. Then, as the virus later took hold in heterosexual communities, the stigma it brought to those infected slowly began to wane. This is not to say that HIV/AIDS was not and is still not overly conflated with homosexuality or that it is not still stigmatized, but we are at least more nuanced today in our understanding that HIV/AIDS is not *caused* by homosexuality. As this occurred, social attitudes began to swing back in the other direction. By 1993, homophobia, and the orthodox masculinity used to sustain it, was in retreat.

The General Social Survey (GSS) represents one of social scientists' most overly used social surveys in the United States. Although the greater part of this chapter does not rely on quantitative data, the GSS results, despite being severely flawed, offer encouraging evidence to decreasing trends in homophobia. But before we use this data, the deeply problematic nature of GSS questions needs to be addressed. In the case of homosexuality, the survey asks, *Is homosexuality always wrong, sometimes wrong, occasionally wrong,* or *never wrong?* Asked face-to-face by an authority figure, it directs the response toward the negative—measuring the degree of homosexuality's "wrongness." This survey lacks a less value-ridden question or a counter-balanced example such as, *Is homosexuality always right, sometimes right, occasionally right,* or *never right?* Furthermore, the study is not clear as to whether the question is meant for others or the person asked. One might think homosexuality is never right for themselves, but always right for their gay friend.

These types of problems with surveys, especially with regard to sexuality, are frequent and maddening—and they highlight the value of qualitative methods. With qualitative methods you are provided the opportunity to explore a single issue in depth. With quantitative data you are never sure how people are interpreting the questions. Clearly, the GSS is not an ideal survey for understanding

the changing relationship between homophobia and society; however, it is arguably the most reliable because it represents a long-term, nationally representative survey of American's social attitudes, precisely because they have not changed the poor language upon which it is written. It also means that attitudes may be better than described.

We point out two GSS variables to elucidate how homophobia hit its apex with President Reagan. First, throughout the early and mid-1980s, the percentage of people who thought that a homosexual male should not be permitted to teach held steady at 40 percent. However, this number dropped to 33 percent in 1989, and it has continued to drop ever since. By the time Bill Clinton took office it was down to 28 percent. Not even the revised fundamentalism of George W. Bush could change the trend. In 2006, it was down to 20 percent.

Similarly, throughout the 1970s, an average of 70 percent of people said that homosexuality was always wrong, but those numbers increased to 76 percent throughout the Reagan years, then dropped a dramatic 10 points when Clinton took office in 1993. Using this same GSS data, Jenni Loftus (2001) writes that American attitudes toward homosexuality became slightly more liberal in the 1970s, and then became increasingly conservative through the 1990s, before sliding toward the current level of acceptance we have today.

Thus, just as increasing homophobia (through the awareness of homosexuality) begat compulsory "heteromasculinity" and social distance among men in the 1980s and early 1990s, it stands to reason that a reduction in cultural homophobia would have just the opposite effect. As homophobia declines, men should be permitted—even encouraged—to come closer together, physically and emotionally. As homophobia lessens (Barnett & Thomson, 1996; Laumann et al., 1994; Loftus, 2001; Widmer et al., 2002), there might even be a reconstruction of the relationship among sex, men, and the gender order so that decreasing homophobia might also decrease men's dominance over women (Bourdieu, 2001).

The trends we speak of can be slightly confusing. On one hand, we speak of cultural homophobia rising in response to an increased awareness of homosexuality. On the other, we speak of cultural homophobia declining in recent years, despite the fact that more people are aware of the existence of homosexuals. Quite simply, this means that if members of a culture do not believe that homosexuality is possible, there is no need to prove to one's peers that one is not gay. This is explained by Anderson's (2009) notion of homohysteria: A culture of high awareness of homosexuality and high homophobia. Men's gendered behaviors are highly policed in a homohysteric culture. However, in a culture of low awareness of homosexuality (or one with high awareness of homosexuality but low homophobia), men are given a wider range of gendered expression. Thus, there are two steps in creating cultural homohysteria—the first is raising awareness that homosexuality exists, and the second is stigmatizing it. Identity politics then picks up on this, raising awareness of the issue as a human rights concern, and advocating for legal equality, which is then hoped to bring cultural equality and less policing of heterosexual men's gendered behaviors, too (low homohysteria).

Metrosexuality and Inclusive Masculinity

As idealized buffed bodies of the late 1980s and early 1990s served to show that one was not diseased, not effeminate, and not gay, things have radically changed since. For example, in 1997, Leonardo DiCaprio was culturally promoted as a sex symbol. His status as sex icon was not felt at all levels of society, but his "twink-ish" build particularly resonated with young women and gay men. His sexualized boyish physique stood in stark contrast to the sexually esteemed men of the 1980s such as Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger. DiCaprio's emergence as an idol marked the cultural change for men to be sexualized not through muscle, but through the avoidance of fat. This is a trend that gained in strength over the next decade. Filiault (2007) shows that what remains important for men today is not how much muscle they have, but how little fat they have covering that muscle. This rapid change is likely produced by a number of social influences, including corporate marketing. Whatever its antecedents, the emergence of DiCaprio as a sex idol signaled a further shift away from the dominance of orthodox masculinity in the broader culture.

In his book, *The Metrosexual Guide to Style* (2003), Michael Flocker credits cultural critic Mark Simpson with coining the term *metrosexuality* in the early 1990s. Later, the term *metrosexuality* became popular when marketing research firm RSCG published its findings in 2003. Although the RSCG term originally referred to a Manhattan heterosexual male who wore high-end clothing (Simpson, 1994), the idea of "homosexualizing" heterosexuals goes back to Frank Rich's 1987 *Esquire* article in which he called it "the most dramatic cultural assimilation of our time" (qtd. in Buckland, 2002, p. 142). Rich warned that the commodified sensibilities of the gay PINK (Professional Income, No Kids) market were quickly crossing over into the heterosexual mainstream.

More recently, English soccer player David Beckham has become the lightning rod for dialogue surrounding these new conceptions (and consumptions) of metrosexuality. Cashmore and Parker (2003, p. 224) refer to Beckham as metrosexual because of the following:

> Beckham's complex and contradictory identity suggests that there is more room for more than one version of masculine construction. He possesses a kind of ambivalence that makes him beguiling to a wide audience. Beckham acknowledges this ambivalence, publicly confirming, for example, his awareness of the admiration of the gay community in the UK. . .To this end Beckham's inclusive popularity should be seen as a positive step in terms of the masculine norms which he clearly transcends and the subversive trends and behaviors he explicitly displays.

The further broadening definition of metrosexual is also evident in Anderson's various research settings (2005a, 2005b, 2008a, 2008b). Some interviewees use the term "metrosexual" to describe their increased fluidity in gender expression, others use it as a euphemism for bisexuality, and still others use it to describe a heterosexual male who dabbles in same-sex sex. When reporting their differently gendered perspectives on sex, women, clothing, or just about anything else that varies from orthodox prescriptions, many of the men interviewed asked, "So does that make me metrosexual?"

Defining the term "metrosexual" is not our intent. In fact, the indefinable nature of the label is arguably queer. As Sedgwick (1993, pp. 8–9) theorizes, queer "can refer to: the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality aren't made (or *can't* be made) to signify monolithically." Butler (1993, p. 113) goes one step further by suggesting that "it may be only by risking the incoherence of identity that connection is possible." Thus, the queer power behind the evasiveness of the term "metrosexuality" gives it deconstructive as well as productive power. It provides a label for men under which to identify who contest orthodox masculinity, yet it provides enough wiggle room for still-shifting understandings of the term.

Admittedly, Butler would argue that this type of slippery gender subversion, despite appearing to destabilize heterosexual norms, is merely a re-idealization and reconfiguration of its terms. Butler's model of gender performativity, which she redefined after multiple misreadings of *Gender Trouble* (1990), "is not a radical fabrication of a gendered self; it is a compulsory repetition of prior and subjectivating norms..." (1993, p. 22). Performativity for Butler is not a subversive act performed *by* individuals as we are constructing it here, as much as it is a re-signifying phenomenon that "*precedes and conditions* the formation of the subject" (1993, p. 18).

Therefore, although we call upon some of the queer definitions outlined in much of Butler's work, we do not subscribe to her model of gender performativity as it evacuates the individual of socio-political agency. On the contrary, our research indicates that the minoritarian and sublimated gender codes of femininity being performed by males in otherwise hegemonic masculine peer culture can transform the power relations among these men. Their reported experiences of feminine-gendered performances resonate with very real—if only in the sense they are perceived by the respondents—social and political implications.

Significantly, the behaviors attached to the label metrosexual are codes that were once attached to the label *homosexual*. So while metrosexuality means different things to different people, it is the fluidity of the term that makes it influential in queerly challenging the orthodoxy of masculine peer culture. The label has given men a long-awaited popular justification for the ability to associate with femininity and to cross previously stigmatized boundaries of homosociality. The term "metrosexuality" permits men to say, "I am not gay, I am metrosexual." It has therefore served as a mediating factor in the manner in which homophobia has traditionally policed gendered boundaries.

However, we do not deny the limitations of metrosexuality as a popular term and its inability to completely subvert hegemonic positions of orthodox masculinity. Tim Edwards (2006) argues that just like the "new man" literature of the 1990s, metrosexuality is a media invention that is more connected to "patterns of consumption and marketing, or the commodification of masculinities, than to second-wave feminism and sexual politics" (p. 4). But developing an inclusive masculinity model that builds upon the commodified foundations of metrosexuality suggests that inclusive masculinity(ies) operates in opposition to certain aspects of orthodox masculine values. Thus, the emergence of metrosexuality is compelling in that it highlights

alternate masculine narratives, at least for those privileged enough to afford it. A decade after its coining, however, the diffuse application of *metrosexuality* (real or imagined) has permitted men of many classes and backgrounds to associate with increasing discursive forms of femininity.

We argue that the existence of inclusive masculinity in the form of metrosexuality highlights an awareness that heterosexual men can act in ways once associated with homosexuality with less threat to one's public identity as heterosexual, and that this has an increasingly positive influence on men to associate with women and femininity.

We theorize that the Internet has also played a crucial role in breaking down homophobic gender binaries and opening up the boundaries of sexual categories. Today's Xtube.com generation accesses sexual images online, early and often, that arouse or entertain. Whether accidentally or intentionally, they view pictures and video clips of gays, lesbians, and other sexual minorities once stigmatized by the Victorian baggage of heterosexual tradition and censorship. Often, heterosexuals cannot find their preferred images of heterosexual intercourse without filtering through the images of other sexual acts once so socially tabooed. Desire for the exotic other, or perhaps a curiosity to simply see what others enjoy, tempts the heterosexually minded young male into clicking on the link, watching what their fathers in a previous generation were taught to despise.

The Internet, we propose, has therefore been instrumental in exposing the forbidden fruit behind homosexual sex, commercializing and normalizing it in the process. This, combined with a strategic and political bombardment of positive cultural messages through youth media, reality television, and other popular venues, has sent a message that, in an environment with ubiquitous same-sex representations, homophobia is not socially acceptable. This has even sent heterosexual youth into attempting to prove that they are not homophobic. Today's saturation and appropriation of gay sensibilities has turned Oscar Wilde's "love that dare not speak its name" into the love that one dare not speak ill of.

Moreover, networking websites like Facebook and MySpace specifically ask for one's sexual orientation. This *asking* contributes to the breaking down of barriers of what is considered private information for men of this generation. One's sexual orientation is listed alongside the other markers of relationship status, age, and gender. With a click of the computer mouse, today's youth can easily find who the openly gay boys or men are at their school or university. Compared to recent decades, sexuality is no longer in the domain of secrets and silence it once was.

University Dance Floor as a Cultural Site

As this chapter began on the university dance floor with Peter and John, we propose that today's new cultural formations of gender and sexual categories can be best viewed in this often academically neglected landscape. This is a particularly good indicator of the power of the broader culture. Dance club culture is not an institution, nor an organization. Thus, what one sees occurring must be a reflection of the broader cultural trends.

In *Dancing Desires* (2001), Jane Desmond argues that "dance provides a privileged arena for the bodily enactments of sexuality's semiotics and should be positioned at the centre, not the periphery of sexuality studies" (p. 3). Indeed, social dance redolently employs and reflects cultural notions of gender, sexuality, desire, race, class, and social bonding and its academic embrace could prove productive for many academic fields.

The study of gender as performance and as choreography can be a challenging project, however. One struggles to organize ephemeral gestures, glances, and costuming into discernable lexicons and categories to be analyzed—vivisecting the moves of a live body and repositioning them to suit theoretical frameworks. Moreover, the discourses surrounding gender and sexuality are continually plagued by slippery semantics that ultimately reflect the subjective historic specificity of its very construction. Nonetheless, closely examining the nexus of cultural moments and movements can not only illuminate hegemonic regimes (be they upper-class-white-heteronormative modes of gender, for example) but can also deconstruct them, offering new directions for productive action and intervention. To unsettle hegemonic discourses is to make the invisible visible.

Musicologist Susan McClary, author of *Feminine Endings: Music Gender and Sexuality* (1991), emphasizes how the dancing body is a significant sight worthy of academic attention. In her article, "Same as It Ever Was," she argues it is through the body's corporeal interpretations that the musical/historical moment is often revealed—especially when it is subversive in nature. McClary writes that music "especially as it intersects with the body and destabilizes accepted norms of subjectivity, gender and sexuality—is precisely where the politics of music often reside" (p. 32). In this intersection, dance becomes the vehicle of the music and performs the negotiation (and disruption) of contemporaneous gender politics. McClary also proposes that "music is foremost among cultural 'technologies of the body,' that is a site where we learn how to experience socially mediated patterns of kinetic energy, being in time, emotions, desire, pleasure and much more" (p. 33). Here McClary draws on Teresa de Lauretis's notion of "technologies of gender" (which de Lauretis derives from Foucault's "technology of sex") as a system of knowledge production.

In the book, *Technologies of Gender* (1987), de Lauretis focuses on cinematic practices as technologies of gender. According to de Lauretis's theory, gender, like Foucault's theory of sexuality, is not a priori but is rather "the set of effects produced in bodies, behaviors and social relations" relative to a "complex political technology" (p. 3). Combining the projects of de Lauretis and McClary, we would like to focus on both the music and the dance floor of a club as forms of gender technology.

Besides the musical structure encased in pop music—which employs variations of tension and release with choral/verse and density of highs/lows—the lyrics, more than any other factor, point to pop music's explicit project of uniting bodies through sexual desire. Notably, many of the hit pop songs carry traces of the liberating theologies characteristic in earlier forms of disco such as Destiny's Child's "Survivor" (2001) ("I will survive//Keep on surviving//I'm a survivor") or Christina Aguilera's "Fighter" (2002) ("Made my skin a little bit thicker//Makes me that much smarter//So thanks for making me a fighter"). These songs uncannily recall defiant disco antecedents like Gloria Gaynor's "I Will Survive" (1979)

and Diana Ross's "I'm Coming Out" (1980) that often relied on individualism and self-reinvention. Interestingly, many of the clubs we attend now mix these songs with current pop music (along with several other disco/gay/camp songs). It is quite common in the southwest of England to see men dancing and singing to "It's Raining Men," too.

Self-liberating narratives, however, are the exception in pop music, and the majority of songs express the desire to unite bodies with narratives that rely upon another dancer's body. In "I'm a Slave for You" (2001), Britney Spears sings, "Baby don't you wanna dance up on me//To another time and place." And in "Boys" (2001), Spears orders, "Let's turn this dance floor into our own little nasty world." Spears is not only expressing sexuality, but she explicitly cites her sexuality occurring within the context of a dance club. The song's recorded narrative establishes a parallel reality to that of the live dancer on the floor. The dancer thus becomes a mimetic extension of the song's story and is called upon to act it out by dancing with other bodies in the club.

Dancers often lip-sync or sing along to songs they know, hence, further extending the music's narrative performance into a speech act (Austin, 1962; Butler, 1990, 1993). Madonna's "Music" (2000) ("Hey Mr. D.J.//Put a record on//I wanna dance with my baby"), Missy Elliot's "Get Your Freak On" (2001) ("Now people gather round, now people jump around"), and Janet Jackson's "All for You" (2001) ("All my girls at the party//Look at that body//Shakin' that thing like you never did see") function in similar ways. Similarly, Taio Cruz's "Come on Girl" (2008) elicits, "I love how you shake that little booty around the club." These lyrics perform a sexual immediacy that depends on dance floor illusions such as the "DJ," "records," "party," and "club." Further, the lyrics of the songs help script the act of dancing onto the dancer's body, shaping choreographic flirtations and desires and encouraging the sexual possession of other dancers' bodies.

Besides performing the lyrics' narrative script, pop songs also function as choreographic instructions to dancers. When the lyric of possession or seduction occurs, such as Janet Jackson's "Got a nice package all right//Guess I'm gonna have to ride it tonight" ("All For You"), the dancer on the floor has the narrative justification to approach another dancer and engage in mutual choreography, often with movements focusing on the crotch area. Similarly, when Missy Elliott sings, "now people gather round, now people jump around," people on the dance floor (i.e., groups of men) find the justification to execute synergetic movements of gathering and jumping. A dance floor's crowd morphology is thus directly influenced by the explicit sexual and choreographic technologies encased in the lyrics and rhythms of pop music.

In his book *Between Theater and Anthropology* (1985), Richard Schechner calls this type of collaborative nature a "collective special theatrical life" (p. 11) that can create a trance effect. The familiarity with the songs' lyrics and rhythms provides dancers with a greater ability to repeat the choreographic narratives embedded in the music, "as if the security of repetition frees the dancer's imagination" (ibid). We argue that it is within this realm of increased imagination and self-transcendence that codes of gender expression and interaction can be most provocatively exploited and played upon.

Conclusion

Dance floors, and in particular university dance floors, or clubs that cater to university students, function as social training grounds for gender expression where young people rehearse and repeat various modes of gender construction and play upon discursive sexual economies. In contrast to Butler's theory of gender repetition, we contend that it is within the excessive repetition characteristic to dance floors that a dancer can exercise individual agency and a sense of originality. Paradoxically, it is within the redundant and excessive repetitions of dance that liberating gaps may open up for imaginative experimentations with gender and sexuality. These improvised moments can contain movements that rupture many of the traditional gender and sexual norms that the dancer would otherwise not embody under other conditions. Through the various gender technologies located in the terrain of a dance club, dancers etch out new forms and meanings of gender and sexuality.

In her book *Impossible Dance,* Fiona Buckland (2002) calls the process of reformulating a dance club into a utopian gender-variant realm the act of "queer world-making." Her idea points to the imaginative potential and subversive agency dancers can possess in reshaping codes of gender and sexuality. "The impulse to dance," Buckland writes, "reveal[s] a desire to compose a version of the self that moves out of its prescribed column and dances all over the map" (p. 93). In communities that have been historically relegated to the margins, "queer world-making" becomes a critical strategy of resistance and subject formation.

But we argue that despite occupying social spheres of heteronormative privilege, self-identified heterosexuals are performing comparable strategies of utopian subject formation. Finding the rigid requisites of hegemonic masculinity imprisoning, men we interviewed about their dancing experience reported a desire to transgress orthodox customs of normative gender roles. They want to explore homosocial interactions otherwise policed by heteromasculinity and heteronormativity. When on the dance floor, the university students embody this desire through gender transgressions and queer interventions. They reflect a gender zeitgeist in which to participate in male bonding, it is acceptable, enjoyable, and sometimes important to perform same-sex dances together, erotically touch one another and sometimes even to kiss. Effectively, these students are reformulating the university's masculine peer culture, making their own queer world where their same-sex desires and enjoyments can find expression within a new framework.

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Chapter 9
Does Masculinity Have a Race? Queering White Masculinities

Bobby Noble

As a significant focus of feminist, queer, and anti-racist scholarship, masculinity is itself becoming a fairly standard feature in curricula across university campuses. As documented in a number of anthologies over the past 5 years, much scholarship and pedagogy on masculinity still tends to occlude both female and female-to-male transsexual masculinity in content as well as in course directorships (Halberstam, 1998). To discursively echo questions about subjectivity raised by Michel Foucault (1984), does it matter who does the speaking about masculinity at the front of such classrooms, as long as it is spoken about with critical engagement? While it seems entirely reasonable to query how a university educator might take up the issue of queer and/or transsexual masculinities in a women and gender studies classroom, such a question grounded in identity politics might presume that knowledge is transparent, distributed by the professor alone, and already in controlled circulation at the beginning of the class. Instead, this chapter begins by reformulating the question deliberately through an anti-identity political paradox: How might the female-to-male transsexual gender studies professor trouble the way that students are already taking up masculinity in the women and gender studies classroom through the trans-body of their teacher? Would it matter if that body was racialized self-consciously and self-reflexively as white? Or classed as middle class? Moreover, if we are to reconsider modes of delivery in a university context, then we must also deconstruct constructions of identity-based curriculum in the first place: What is at stake in formulating the subject of such a course as so singular and not already formulated through simultaneous axes of identity such as race, class, nation, ethnicity, and sexuality, to name only a few? Drawing upon the deconstructive methodologies of queer and trans theory, this paper documents the transformative potential of teaching through transsexual masculinity in the gender studies classroom to trouble not only heteronormative configurations of masculinity but also what might be its hegemonic racialization as white.

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My work in this chapter emerges from several locations. First, these are questions that were developed through and since a graduate seminar in the Graduate Program in Women's Studies at York University, Toronto, Canada. The graduate seminar—*Discerning Masculinities*—was a half course, interdisciplinary by design, and focused on the growing body of scholarship taking up the subject of feminist, anti-racist, queer, and female-to-male trans-ed (i.e., transgendered and transsexual) masculinities. But second, these are also questions that emerge about the site of the university itself not only as a location of both activist scholarship but also as an overdetermined social geography of racialization. It is in this context—of the graduate classroom—that I intended to use the course design to stage what I hoped were transformative pedagogical and epistemological crises by deploying activist and popular knowledge production as pedagogy to interrupt that racializing hegemony which passes very much as *business as usual* in the university context and in the scholarship. In this chapter, which is part descriptive and part analytical, I want to demarcate, justify, and track those crises as they were manufactured on two subjects in our course readings (white masculinities and female-to-male transgender/transsexual incoherent bodies).

Discerning Masculinities was offered in the fall of 2007 and was the first graduate course on masculinity studies offered through our graduate program in women's studies.[1] It was designed to tease out what I identify as a series of profound and complex intersectional crises among gender, race, and the body. I want to map out how I constructed those crises as pedagogy by taking two detours toward the stated goal of the course (which was to elaborate the spaces of critical feminist masculinities): the first detour traveled through the contested and yet very uneven terrain of female-to-male transgender/transsexual embodiment; the second, through the equally contestable terrain of critical whiteness studies, especially as it is being articulated by what Fiona Probyn identifies as the "white critic of critical whiteness studies" (2004). These are the pedagogical detours around which my course was structured and like any detour, these need to map and *unmap* simultaneously in

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[1] My university is the third-largest post-secondary institution in Canada and one of a handful of unionized campuses. Approaching its 50th birthday, York's self-generated mythology is as an interdisciplinary teaching and research institution, supported by a very diverse cohort of faculty and staff, offering full- and part-time graduate and undergraduate degree programs to more than 50,000 students in 11 faculties. It is a unionized campus, its student demographic is very diverse, international, and 'multi-cultural,' and drawing from diasporic communities including racially diverse gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, and transgender/transsexual cultures. For example, York is one of the first institutions in Canada to offer not only transgender and gender-variant washroom spaces but is, in 2008–2009, about to launch a pilot transgender and gender-variant residence housing complex/program to accommodate the needs of its students. The School of Women's Studies is a conglomeration of the undergraduate program in women's studies, the Nellie Langford Rowell women's studies library, several journals, a publishing imprint (Inanna Press), the sexuality studies minor/certificate (quickly developing itself into a major), a bridging program for mature students, the Centre for Feminist Research, and the graduate women's studies program, one of only two in Canada to offer post-graduate degrees (both a PhD and MA). The school is large, dynamic, and home to a small number of full-time women's studies faculty (myself included) but more than 75 cross-appointed interdisciplinary scholars.

order to render visible the racially overdetermined hegemonic subject of masculinity studies (Razack, 2002). That hegemonic subject, I argue, remains both white and non-transed, hegemonies which have histories deeply embedded in essentialized sex/gender systems and colonial white supremacies. Unmapping those intersecting histories and the bodies they normalize outs that hegemonic subject as anything but universal.

Politicized scholarship is not new to me. As one of only a handful of transgendered/transsexual tenure-stream associate professors working in Canadian universities—and the first female-to-male transsexual man to be hired and tenured in a women's studies program—my public profile has been and remains higher than most. I've published two monographs that help establish a context for that profile and for the work I do—and live—as a scholarly activist. My first book, *Masculinities without Men? Female Masculinity in Twentieth Century Fiction* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), explored constructions of gender variance, transsexual and transgendered masculinity, and female masculinity across a variety of texts including early and late twentieth-century fiction, obscenity trials, popular films, and contemporary queer counter-cultures. In that first monograph, my goal in part was to trouble Judith Halberstam's seamless collapse of transsexual/transgendered masculinity and female masculinity, suggesting that Halberstam's important work seeks through a series of disavowals to privilege female embodiment as the ground of the collapse (1998). I began to think about the discursive co-production of trans and female masculinity, nationalism, and whiteness in three important novels: Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* (1928); Leslie Feinberg's *Stone Butch Blues* (1992); and Rose Tremain's *Sacred Country* (1992). But it wasn't until my most recent monograph, *Sons of the Movement: FtMs Risking Incoherence on a Post-Queer Cultural Landscape* (Toronto: Women's Press, 2006), that the potential to create productive whiteness trouble became much clearer as a political imperative built around the necessity of what I identify as a practice of post-queer incoherence. Motivated to a large degree by trans-activists such as Les Feinberg, *Sons* addresses itself as much to young FtMs as it does to feminist theorists and activists and develops that imperative into a call—admittedly one shaped quite differently around political, racialized, and social location—for FtMs to transform spaces of masculinity as *we* find ourselves called into them. *Sons* was much less interested in arguing for the social and political right to transition—although it certainly assumed the necessity of that right even as it continues to be denied trans-peoples —and is much more interested in articulating a space of, and need for, progressive and counter-normative masculinities *after* transition. In that word, I heed the assertion of Judith Butler when she suggests that subjects are formed by and through relations of power, often the same processes which they seek to trouble; such embeddedness constitutes the subject in the first place (1993, p. 15). All the more so, I would suggest, for subjects of masculinity. That trans-men have the "right" to transition is not in question in my work; but once in our chosen genders safely and with supportive medical care in place, we are now grappling with the same questions many other progressive subjects of masculinity face: What kind of man am I? At what cost and to whom does my gender occur? What are the systemic and colonial historicities playing out on, through, as

my space of embodiment? What am I doing with the hegemonic bargains offered to me as a man attempting to find my place amongst other men (Chen, 1999)?

The "right" to transition is not something I debated in *Sons*; instead, this was and remains my primary starting assumption. I continue to argue about gender what Stuart Hall argues about popular culture—the capacity to constitute "norms" is the nature of political and cultural struggle. Gender is one of the sites where this struggle for and against a culture of the powerful is engaged; it is also the stake to be won or lost in that battle (p. 452). Gender transitioning and, to a certain extent, gender variance, has long been viewed as suspect, especially inside many feminist communities. Where male-to-female transgendered and transsexual subjects have a long history of being outrightly condemned and abjected, female-to-male transgendered and transsexual persons are either pathologized as self-hating women, as the destroyers of lesbian culture, or hailed as uber-masculine butches pretending to be men to access men's spaces (Jeffreys, 2003; Irwin, 2007). It is beyond my scope here to detail these gender-panicked and fundamentalist responses but what's noteworthy is the degree to which trans issues are often rendered—even inside our social justice movements—as less than urgent, as "lifestyle" issues, or as embarrassments to the real violence unfolding as the everyday acts of police, state, and national terrorisms. To be fair, when the public face of transsexual social movements continues to be those with too many resemblances to those agents of "police, state and national terrorisms," such suspicions are hard to refute. That is, bell hooks (1992) is quite right to note that unbeknownst to itself, whiteness has too much history not too stand in as the white face of terrorism to those subject to its unpredictability on a daily basis, year after year, epoch after epoch.

One of the arguments I make in *Sons* is that in this period of fierce commodity capitalism and white supremacy, the trans-labor of materializing bodies is also deeply embedded in its own histories. As an incoherently gendered man—that is, as a man who has a long working-class lesbian history that I neither disavow nor repudiate—I became quite aware as I transitioned that I was moving not only into the spaces of manhood but also into the spaces of white middle-class manhood. My gender transition overlapped with a class transition; raised by a single mother on social assistance, I have not only worked my way through the educational system but also worked as a part-time sessional/contract academic previous to my current tenure-stream appointment. The incoherence around trans-embodiment and the imperatives to read trans-bodies through the unequal distributions of power—at least on the level of the abstract—seemed somewhat thinkable without a great deal of work both inside and outside of my graduate classroom. Outside of the classroom— that is, in my institutional life, my professional life, and in my private life—my own practice of incoherence as a trans-man was to try to maintain my birth sex (since changed) my birth sex (i.e., "female") on all of my official documents for as long as possible while moving through the world as a man. In actuality, such incoherence proved impossible to live. For example, because of the discrepancy among my voice, my gender identity, and my birth sex on documents, bank accounts, ATM cards, credit cards, etc., are regularly frozen until telephone-banking officials can verify my identity in person. I have been denied non-trans-related medical services

at my university's health clinic. But also, the human resources infrastructure of my own university, one of the most progressive in Canada for its trans politics, has had an extremely difficult time accommodating incoherence and has frozen research funds, withheld benefits, reverted in all public and classroom schedules to my birth name, and so on despite recruiting me to the school as a high-profile and well-known trans-scholar. Moreover, producing my driver's license when asked by police is a dangerous activity and crossing the American border on a passport that lists me as female is something I do not attempt.[2] In almost all of these cases, it is a combination of my current class status (as professor) and my whiteness that has kept each of these situations from escalating into temporary incarceration, detainment, and/or body searches—visual or physical—to verify the so-called "truth" of my identity.

All too often, however, despite the rhetoric of intersectionality inside of feminist scholarship and space, discourse about transsexual masculinity in particular almost always seems to bypass intersectional analyses of power and becomes bogged down in what can only be identified as very ironic issues of "privilege" instead. One of the most common criticisms of female-to-male transsexual and transgendered masculinity is an anxiety articulated in one of two ways: either FtMs are accused of selling out to patriarchy in order to move through the world with more power and privilege (what I'm calling the "women become men for privilege" argument); or, by inference and argued through a racist analogy, "women" transitioning to become "men" would be akin to people of color wanting to become white in order to bypass white supremacy and racism (the "women becoming men is like people of color becoming white" analogy) and so must be rendered suspect. Where the latter, which at the very least must be named as a violent and racist failure of feminist intersectional frameworks, renders systems and histories of racism, white supremacy and the discursive production of transsexuality as reducible to each other, the former, equally a failure of intersectional frameworks, is a clear example of rendering all materializations of masculinity as equal to each other despite dramatic differences between men and within the category of masculinity. The "women become men

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[2] The last time I crossed the Canadian-U.S. border on a female passport was to attend a conference, and given I was traveling on a Canadian passport from a country in which same-sex marriage is now legal, I decided to pass as a very masculine lesbian. I shaved off all facial hair, wore an oversized baggy shirt, a baseball cap, hunched my shoulders over my chest, raised the pitch of my voice, and told the customs official I was attending a conference on lesbian studies. Such an explanation was much safer than allowing the official to have a question in his mind about what the actual 'truth' of my sex might be. It is noteworthy that passing as a somewhat legible "sexual minority" can sometimes allow me much greater mobility and safety than traveling across borders as a subject of gender incoherence. Again, I travel with a "Dr" in front of my name and am white. Trans-folks of color who do not have such class privilege or who do not/cannot pass as "lesbian" or "gay," or folks already profiled in 'suspicious' national, racial, religious, or ethnic categories fair much worse at such points of crossing as do trans-folks attempting to claim refugee status in Canada or the U.S. Sex/gender coherence and other such homonormativities, whether chosen post–sex reassignment procedures or those assumed, normalized, and 'unknowingly' practiced are forms of privilege that need to be calibrated into our intersectional analytics of power as long as binarized sex categories (i.e., M or F) remain regulated and mandatory markers of identification on official state-issued documents. I have since changed the sex on my documents to "M."

for privilege" argument eclipses the degree to which dominant and hegemonic constructions of masculinity are dependent upon positions of privilege to do their work. At the risk of being tautological, what allows masculinity to function with privilege is a privileged relationship to power in the first place. If I move through the world with power as a man, it certainly is both my whiteness and my class position articulating my gender. If a "woman of color" undergoes surgery and hormone treatment to materialize *his* sex differently, it would be a serious failure of our anti-racist analytics to ascribe to that man of color the status of categorical privilege. We would be very hard-pressed to maintain the argument that men of color in a North American context experience unconditional privilege. So, while FtM transsexual men may well move through the world experiencing relief or a sense of personal satisfaction, naming such experiences as categorical betrayals of feminist or anti-racist or postcolonial practices reduces all critical interventions to the limits of embodiment instead of critical practice. It also misses the degree to which interlocking markers of identity modify each other; in my case, it isn't quite as much my gender as my race which facilitates mobility.

Other gender scholars are starting to reference these limitations of identity politics as they occur on transsexual and transgender politics and scholarship. With conceptual intersectionality as a starting point, Butler frames a critique of these as "crude analyses" of FtM bodies in particular by locating what is constructed as the 'choice' to gender transition in the realities of clinical and medical regulation of gender through the diagnoses of Gender Identity Disorder (GID) instead (2004, p. 94). In her chapter of *Undoing Gender* called "Undiagnosing Gender," Butler develops a complex and nuanced reading of the way that GID as a clinical practice enforces that which it regulates; that is, GID assumes and then enforces a binarized, heteronormative model of sex and gender practice by creating a grid of intelligibility used to regulate gender-variant bodies and their access to transition services. Suggesting that these very structures themselves "that support normalcy... compel the need for the diagnosis to begin with," Butler details that the reduction of such a complex regulatory apparatus to "choice" and "gender freedom" eviscerates the way that the regulatory discourse surrounding the diagnosis has a complex life of its own (2004, pp. 90–91). "One has to submit to labels and names, to incursion, to invasions; one has to be gauged against measures of normalcy; and one has to pass the test ...The price of using the diagnoses to get what one wants is that one cannot use language to say what one really thinks is true...the only way to secure the means by which to start this transformation is by learning how to present yourself in a discourse that is not yours, a discourse that effaces you in the act of representing you" (2004, p. 91). Addressing this quandary specifically to the question of masculinity and privilege, Butler details the degree to which cultural positioning and the desire for power work best and, most potently, simultaneously: "some men are at no advantage at all, *if they cannot talk the talk; being a man is not a sufficient condition for being able to talk that talk*...the cultural advantage it might afford will be the advantage it affords to someone who has certain kinds of desires and who wants to be in a position to take advantage of certain cultural opportunities" (2004, pp. 94–95, emphasis added). Certainly it would be a mistake to read Butler

suggesting that it is individual desire that calibrates power. But what she is indexing is the space I am mapping of incoherence—both around masculinity and whiteness: the degree to which self-conscious, self-reflexive, critical, and political practices all depend upon an unequivocal and unwavering reading of how one is positioned structurally, historically, and systemically, and then making the appropriate and necessary interventions to, in Butler's terms, *talk a different kind of talk*, one not so commensurate with the strategies of power. Butler is clear in this important essay to frame all questions of choice—but especially those around gender transition—in the context of what she dubs "the social world": "Not only does one need the social world to be a certain way in order to lay claim to what is one's own, but it turns out that what is one's own is always from the start dependent upon what is not one's own, the social conditions by which autonomy is, strangely, dispossessed and undone" (2004, p. 100). If how one imagines oneself as masculine—and indeed, as white—is dependent upon the social conditions, as Butler indicates and as I will elaborate below, then working those conditions to a point of incoherence must be one strategy of making that familiar strange, dispossessing oneself of a whiteness one hasn't always known that one has had, and indeed, undoing and beginning to unmap sequences of colonial history (Razack, 2002). To return to the dismissals of transsexual men, these simplistic renderings of masculinity work against complex feminist analyses of power as a product of intersectional social positioning, one where, in my own case, my whiteness articulates my gender to allow it to *talk the talk*. The *talk*, in other words, works because it is conditioned by the grammars of white supremacy.

In the second analogy where "women become men" is seen as analogous to people of color becoming white, a much more complex erasure of both discursive history and intersectionality is at work. If in the first example racialized scripts of whiteness authorize particular renderings of masculinity over others, in the second example where "women becoming men" is constructed as analogous to "people of color becoming white," the colonial histories producing present conditions of white supremacy are folded into the clinical production and regulation of gender variance where all gender variance is already constructed as white. This is a particularly pernicious and racist dismissal of transsexual masculinity, one curiously enough unique to the readings of FtMs transitioning with greater frequency in the last two decades but also one that is quick to disavow readings of white supremacy and colonization as systemic and historically ongoing. This form of critique not only erases the often violent experiences of trans-folks of color, it also quite ironically perpetuates a conceptual framework that both stabilizes whiteness as the subject of transsexual discourse and maneuvers trans-folks of color into silent invisibility inside both trans-communities and racialized communities. Their bodies are quite literally forged as bridges of betrayal no matter where that bridge begins. Again, Butler's analytics of the clinical diagnosis—GID—is an important reminder that regulatory apparatuses themselves produce and discipline coherently sexed bodies as binarized; trans-bodies can be a form of capitulation or resistance, sometimes both, sometimes neither, depending upon how those bodies do the work of articulating other forms of power working through those same bodies.

These two debates, triangulated around and through a profound incoherence around whiteness, structured the noisy silences about masculinity produced in my graduate classroom. This women's studies course outline proceeded by way of the assumption that teaching from an intersectional framework was much more complex than theorizing that same framework. Even though we proceeded from two questions seemingly simple on the surface—"what does a feminist practice of masculinity look like?" and more generally, "what does masculinity want?"— my actual question was "to what degree must intersectionality generate productive crises in the classroom about whiteness in order to accomplish its work?" As a way to stage any number of these questions, the course was structured into three sections: "Interventions," which flagged the problematizations of masculinity both in a feminist context and, through the mytho-poetic men's movement, in anti-feminist contexts; second, "Critical Intersections," which detoured through critical race theory including Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, James Baldwin, and Toni Morrison, in order to begin mapping complexity onto what the first set of writers could not fully map. Finally, the third section of the course was a rendering of resistances to what emerges à la Morrison as the "architecture of the new white man" and the way that this new citizen is constituted as much through discourses of whiteness, colonial historicities, heteronormativities, and the hegemonic imperatives of nation; that is, that such a new white man be fit and fully subject to the imperatives of militarized nation-ness. In this final section, we also read three novels (Gautam Malkani's *Londonstani,* Timothy Findley's *The Wars*, and Tomson Highway's *Kiss of the Fur Queen*). The latter two novels are Canadian, and Highway's novel in particular takes up resistance to European colonization and rape by Catholic priests in residential schools, resistance embodied by two queer First Nations' brothers who leave a remote northern hunting culture to study music and dance at a prairie university. Both *Londonstani* and *Kiss of the Fur Queen* are paired with readings designed to tease out the interlocking mechanisms of race (the operations of whiteness), gender (normative imperatives of militarized manhood), and sexuality (the use of rape as part of the infrastructure of whiteness and colonialism). This was a fairly large class (20 students; the average in my graduate program per graduate class is 7) and there was no shortage of discussion of and engagement with these materials. The entire course was designed then to almost literally fold back over itself as, I hoped, the material on whiteness would, as Said advised via the work of Antonio Gramsci, assist my white students to, in part, develop a "critical consciousness of who they 'really' are as products of the historical process to date which has deposited in them an infinity of traces without leaving an inventory" (Gramsci, quoted in Said, p. 25). The structure of my course would accomplish this by occasioning a critical self-reflexivity as the students, in essence, "read their own readings" of the earlier critical race theorists as performative of whiteness. Again, my hypothesis was that they would, for the most part, consume the work of Morrison, Said, Baldwin, and Fanon, with critical ease as they intellectually grasped the concepts without implicating their own subject positions in the colonial and racialized structures that each writer details. Grasping their own embeddedness as white subjects would, then, generate what I hoped would be productive race trouble that would unmake who they understood themselves to be when they arrived in the course in the first place.

And of course, this is exactly the way the trajectory of racialized 'knowledge' production and deconstruction proceeded over the duration of the course. Such "race trouble" emerged predictably the week we began discussing the readings on whiteness. The lively discussions that we had been enjoying up to that point in the course quite abruptly came to an end. On the first day that we read work in critical whiteness studies, all students were present in class. I made my preliminary comments about the writers and contextualized (albeit quite briefly) the emerging field of critical whiteness studies. When I then asked the students for their initial thoughts on the readings, something I would do with consistency throughout the course, I was met with a very resonate silence. I asked if everyone had done the readings: they responded that they had. I reframed my initial questions and again, the students remained quite avowedly silent. I stopped talking and let the silence simmer. After a substantial period of time, one young white woman in the class began laughing and said "I can't stand this silence," to which almost the entire group responded with shared laughter, something that I would characterize as symptomatic of intense anxiety and high levels of distress in the room. (Again, it's worth noting here that this was more than halfway through our course.) After more silence, I prodded the group with what I hoped would be a productive query: *How might we read our own silence?* At this point, another student initiated conversation by acknowledging that she "had no vocabulary with which to talk about whiteness," an utterance which was met with overwhelming nods of approval from her white colleagues in the room. Yes, they told me and each other for a short time, they had no language to talk about what they had just read. But very quickly, a language began to emerge: A couple of students attempted to speak but their words were truncated by tears. Another student indicated that he found it quite unfair that people of color were now doing to white people what they claimed white people did to them: lump everyone together by the color of their skin. Another indicated that he'd been thinking hard for "a couple of weeks" about what whiteness meant and just couldn't figure out how he, the son of a second-generation Italian family, was white. As we began to approach the end of class for that day, I took us back to the question of what we imagined we were doing when reading Fanon, Said, Morrison, and Baldwin. I asked why it was that this particular material generated what we imagined to be an impoverishment of discourse. I took us back to what was clearly our elision of Baldwin, in particular, when he identified in "White Man's Guilt" the historical scripts and languages of incoherence that we had just enacted.

While I positioned myself at the beginning of the course as a trans-man fully and unambivalently occupying a space of masculinity, this project also required that I embody the figure of institutional authority in the classroom context, despite my own ambivalence about how institutions themselves can aggressively mishandle my incoherence. If such race trouble as a pedagogical goal is going to be effective, it has to emerge as a teacher-driven program and not student driven. That is, its effectiveness emerges when I, as an institutional authority figure (i.e., with grades to distribute where graduate grades have a great deal at stake), can work the means and mechanisms of the institution against its ends (in this case, the successful duplication of knowledge as a non-politicized enterprise, what I'm calling the "business

as usual" model of education). This to me, as a trans-man with a critical practice, is not at all unlike working the means of socially sanctioned and systemically authorized "manhood" against "patriarchal" ends (i.e., where privilege means, among other things, occupying space with other men but without critical consciousness and practice, what we might identify as the "business as usual" model of masculinity).[3]

Precisely because the stakes are so high, I want now—and did in the graduate seminar—to push these arguments a step further. While the elaboration of the respective failures of intersectionality is noteworthy, both critiques detailed above are symptomatic of what Michael Yellow Bird identifies as the unconscious imperatives of white supremacy (2004). In his essay, "Cowboys and Indians: Toys of Genocide, Icons of American Colonialism," Yellow Bird makes a complex and nuanced argument about the degree to which colonial white supremacy has colonized the definitions of *normal* and about the role pedagogy plays in both securing that construction of *normal* through institutions like post-secondary education and, potentially, troubling them in the same location as well. Yellow Bird's essay is autoethnographic and details a visit that he makes regularly to a friend's home. As part of his visit, he describes stopping at a small convenience store to pick up gifts for his hosts and their children. On one occasion, Yellow Bird is shocked to find plastic cowboy and Indian action figures still available as children's toys and for purchase in such a store. Yellow Bird makes two astonishing decolonizing interventions with his discovery.

Like any other scholarly activists inside post-secondary educational-knowledge producing complexes, Yellow Bird's first intervention is with his students. He purchases the cowboy and Indian figures, musing over the semiotics of American presidents on the money that he turns over for these toys, and takes the toys into his classroom for a show-and-tell session with his students to illustrate the master narratives of colonial white supremacy (p. 37). Yellow Bird describes his encounter in the classroom as follows:

> I said, 'Imagine if children could also buy bags of little toy African-American slaves and their white slave masters, or Jewish holocaust prisoners and their SS Nazi guards, or undocumented Mexicans and their INS border patrol guards.' I paused a moment for greater effect. 'Imagine if the African-American set included little whips and ropes so the white slave masters could flog the slaves that were lazy and lynch those who defied them. Imagine if the border guards in the Mexican toy set came with little nightsticks to beat the illegal aliens, infrared scopes on their rifles to shoot them at night, and trucks to load up those they caught.' I continued, 'Imagine if the Jewish and Nazi toys included little barbed-wire prison camps and toy trains to load up and take the prisoners to the toy gas chambers or incinerators, batteries not included.' When I finished I asked for feedback on what I thought was a most brilliant exemplar and repartee to American colonialism. To my dismay no one answered or showed any emotion. Students seemed paralyzed. I waited as they remained fixed and dilated giving me 'the thousand-yard stare.' (pp. 35–36)

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[3] For an extremely important critique of the institutionalization of whiteness studies see Ahmed (2004). For a more in-depth discussion of this critical practice of trans-masculinity see Noble (2006); Sennett (2006); and Anderson-Minshall (2008).

Such moments marked by the "thousand-yard stare" are evocative of those described by James Baldwin in his essay called "White Man's Guilt":

> History…is not something merely to be read …on the contrary, the great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it within us, are unconsciously controlled by it in many ways, and history is literally present in all that we do… it is with great pain and terror that one begins to realize this. In great pain and terror one begins to assess the history which has placed one where one is and formed one's point of view. In great pain and terror because, therefore, one enters into battle with that historical creation, Oneself, and attempts to recreate oneself according to a principle more humane and more liberating…. but obviously, I am speaking as an historical creation which has had bitterly to contest its history, to wrestle with it, and finally accept it in order to bring myself out of it….on the other hand, people who imagine that history flatters them (as it does, indeed, since they wrote it) are impaled on their history like a butterfly on a pin and become incapable of seeing or changing themselves. This is the place it seems to me most white Americans find themselves. Impaled. They are dimly, or vividly aware that the history they have fed themselves is mainly a lie, but they do not know how to release themselves from it, and they suffer enormously from the resulting personal incoherence. (pp. 410–411)

Baldwin goes on to map how this incoherence, which is, as he acknowledges, extremely uncomfortable, might be remedied. "This incoherence," he writes, "is heard nowhere more plainly than in those stammering, terrified dialogues with which white Americans sometimes engage the black man in America. The nature of this…can be reduced to a plea. Do not blame me. I was not there. I did not do it" (p. 411). I quote both Baldwin and Yellow Bird at length to detail what happens when whiteness is forced to know the unthinkable about itself. Such unthinkabilities function as a moment of destabilizing unknowingness that whiteness cannot endure knowing. This became the major crises staged in my classroom and is measurable in its stammering and noisy silences, as both Baldwin and Yellow Bird indicate. Two trajectories occur on the occasion of such disavowed incommensurability; either the unconscious imperatives of white supremacy quickly render this unfathomable moment remedied through violence and the stammering denials are pervasive, or the crisis begins to penetrate through what Baldwin describes as the "curtain of guilt and lies behind which white" folks hide (p. 412). Following leads provided by Yellow Bird, Toni Morrison, James Baldwin, bell hooks, and Sara Ahmed—following, in other words, the century-long work by critics of color that have been articulating the shape of whiteness long before, during, and since the work done by the white critic of anti-racist whiteness studies[4]—such moments of white racial incoherence have

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[4] Probyn is, of course, making interventions in the growing field of anti-racist whiteness studies. As I am about to argue about masculinity studies, narratives of origins are telling. This field of anti-racist whiteness studies imagines itself emerging in the last decade of the twentieth century, often citing Richard Dyer's extremely important essay, "White" (1988), and Ruth Frankenberg's book, *White Women Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness* (1993) as seminal texts. It has become commonplace by now to suggest that one of the defining premises of anti-racist whiteness studies is that whiteness is an invisible construct. An even more important, and quite recent, recasting of this narrative and its premises occurs in the work of Sara Ahmed's "Declarations of Whiteness: The Non-Performativity of Anti-Racism" (2004). Ahmed answers such genealogies— at once discursive, canonical, and academically as a field in the making—with an extremely crucial

the potential to be to white supremacy what trans is to gender: political interruptions of business as usual. Such servicing of day-to-day business is the by-product of chains of historical choices which normalize coherence, which depend upon the discrete and so called "purity" of binary systems and their categories, and upon the desires of subjects in those imaginary but potent constructions to talk the talk in order to remedy what Baldwin, Yellow Bird, and others identify as profound, and I would argue potentially productive, incoherence.

Such penetrating ruptures emerged as the second moment of incoherence in my graduate course, one that occurred as I quite deliberately set out to stage this crisis in and through whiteness. For me, the question developed as follows: If, as Fiona Probyn suggests, the white critic of anti-racist whiteness studies is simultaneously the subject, object, and obstacle to the success of its own work, then how might it be possible to stage that moment of incoherence productively in a predominantly white graduate classroom without the unconscious imperatives of white supremacy rendering that crisis violently mute? This particular challenge depended upon securing the structure of the course—a course in feminist masculinities studies—in an intersectional nexus of "origin" quite outside of the stories the field of masculinity studies might tell about itself. As always, narratives of origins have high stakes. Two recent academic anthologies, for example, both agree on a feminist "parentage" of masculinity studies. *The Masculinity Studies Reader*, edited by Rachel Adams and David Savran (Blackwell, USA, 2002) and *The Masculinities Reader*, edited by Stephen M. Whitehead and Frank J. Barrett (Polity, UK, 2001), both tell similar stories about masculinity studies emerging as part of the uprising of 1960s social movements even though, as an academic field, it took the analyses of feminism to bring women, first, then men, into view as subjects of critical scrutiny. Insofar as academic anthologies are a barometer of institutional appetites, both of these anthologies, however, make the same mistake with masculinity studies that canon-building projects make with "women" studies. In their gestures to feminist parentage, each constructs that parentage within the parameters of what M. Jacqui Alexander calls "add and stir feminism" (p. 187). That is, what remains unmarked in these intellectual genealogies are their decidedly un- and virtually anti-intersectional white and colonial practices despite the inclusion of essays about race in each anthology. Two opposing examples illustrate the limits of such approaches. *Race and the Subject of Masculinities*, edited by Harry Stecopoulos and Michael Uebel (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), makes significant interventions in the

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counterpoint, one that grounds the work accomplished in this paper, my own scholarship, and in my graduate class itself: "whiteness is only invisible for those who inhabit it. For those who don't, it is hard not to see whiteness...scholarship within the field is full of admissions of anxiety about what whiteness studies could be...we should I think, pay attention to such critical anxieties...the repetition of the anxious gesture, that is, gestures toward a field. Fields can be understood, after all, as the forgetting of gestures that are repeated over time. Is there a relationship between the emergence of a field through the enunciation of anxiety and the emergence of new forms of whiteness, an anxious whiteness? Is a whiteness that is anxious about itself—its narcissism, its egoism, its privilege, its self-centredness—better?" (p. 3).

field as it has developed both in and through social science approaches (i.e., it takes up cultural constructions of masculinity in film and popular culture) but also intersectionally through other categories of identity, particularly those of race, class, and ethnicity. As an anthology, though, it does not necessarily trouble scholarly myths of origins as they have been established to date.

However, in her essay called "Un-Making: Men and Masculinity in Feminist Theory," Robyn Wiegman contributes one of the most accomplished intersectional narratives of origin by locating the stakes of masculinity studies within the project articulated in the 1977 Combahee River Collective statement, published in the groundbreaking anthology, *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1981). Wiegman outs the whiteness of the feminist project and the white subject of masculinity studies by suggesting that, for both, the force of a foundational and oppositional notion of sexual difference was, in fact, doing the work of whiteness instead. "By drawing out the implications of an analysis of women's differences from one another," Wiegman argues, "the collective identified the ways in which the category of men could not be monolithically rendered" either (p. 35). As such, she suggests, "the study of men and masculinity was disarticulated from its status as patriarchal business as usual" (p. 36). To tease this out further in my course, I began mapping the possibility that if power is racialized, it falls into place then that hegemonic masculinity has a race as well and that by implication, its race is white. This became a major hurdle in the course, and moreover I went on to tease out the assertion that given the colonial histories of whiteness, and given the possibilities that masculinity was articulated through scripts of whiteness, its violence was less that of gender and far more that of colonial whiteness. By implication then, and this remained the most intense moment of incoherence in the course, whiteness itself not only connotes the history of violence but *is* that violence itself. In its contemporary nationalist configuration, whiteness is the artifact of colonial violence. The work of our course from this point forward—and I would suggest that this also must be the work of progressive masculinities regardless of what kind of body it finds itself animating—has to be the work of rendering its historical and white colonialities as incoherent, as disoriented—and following the lead of Homi Bhabha, as seditious—as possible.[5]

I want to end by returning to a discussion of the second of Yellow Bird's two interventions that I mentioned earlier. Along with his pedagogical decolonizing strategies, Yellow Bird details more troubling effects of the unconscious

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[5] In his essay, "Are You a Man or a Mouse?," Homi Bhabha suggests that there is an affective and psychoanalytic link to be made between what he calls "phallic respect," the unconditional love of fathers by sons, and the "principle of national self-identification and the *service* of the nation" (p. 59, emphasis in the original). He writes, "The instinct for respect—central to the civic responsibility for the *service* of nation-building—comes from the Father's sternness," leading him to ask an ironic and rhetorical question to which he answers in the affirmative: "can democracy turn demonic in the service of the nation through observing the imperatives of phallic respect?" (p. 60, emphasis in the original). That nationalist turn, he suggests, is evidenced by a hunger for "a strong leader on a white horse" and must be answered, at least in part, by a "feminist 'disrespect' for the hagiography of political father figures" (pp. 59–63).

demands of white American supremacy (p. 35). Theorizing the pernicious effects of white master narratives—something he dubs *cowboy discourse*—Yellow Bird also suggests that such naturalized colonialisms have long-term cultural consequences by perpetuating and valuing the iconography of "cowboy" culture over "Indian" culture, to First Nation men and boys themselves, as the measure of manhood. "Perhaps what gave the master narrative the greatest credibility," he writes, "was that most of the men in my small reservation made an everyday affair of wearing some vestige of cowboy apparel: hats, boots, shirts with mother-of-pearl buttons, silver belt buckles…wanting so much to emulate the dress of our male role models…we young boys took to nagging our parents about getting us cowboy boots and clothes…many of the men called each other cowboy…often when male children cooperated and did some good deed they would be praised by being called cowboys" (pp. 39–40). Although Yellow Bird does not state this directly, it seems clear that his many examples of the degree to which the cowboy discourse as master narrative saturates consciousness is also evidence of the hegemonic racialization of dominant scripts of masculinity as white. Describing the historical chain of signifiers this way, "The cowboy discourse followed me into young adulthood [through] a particular uncle [who] often communicated to me in no uncertain terms that, when I worked for him, I had to act like a cowboy." Yellow Bird also notes the impossibility of such colonial narratives of masculinity: "Despite this uncle's loyalty to this image and lifestyle, he experienced a lot of racism and taunting from some of the white cowboys he interacted with because to them, he was just an Indian posing as a cowboy. And because only whites can be 'true' cowboys, he settled for being an 'Indian cowboy'" (pp. 40–41).

Of course, as I read Yellow Bird, my own practice as a trans-man experienced a moment of rupture itself. I was struck by the inevitable culpability of the modifying process itself. Is being a *trans-man* the gender equivalent of being an *Indian cowboy*? Such modifiers are evidence of what Yellow Bird details as the nationalist and imperial stakes of "cowboy and Indian" culture itself: "Cowboy and Indian" talk, he suggests, is "this nation's most passionate, embedded form of hate talk" (p. 41). What seems inevitable then is that without sedition as intent and consequence, such service-work to the national knowledge-building projects, the documents of the citizen, the desire for home, the longing for gender coherence, and the need for categorical certainty seem quite compatible with the operations of power. That power produces not just the vocabulary but the means by which such performative talk—colonial grammars and alibis of essence—makes sense; such sense making suggests that *talking the (white) talk* is inevitably the space of corruptibility, the space of intelligibility, and the space of (im)possibility all at the same time. What we can know for certain is that such inevitabilities continue to be commensurate with power unless and until they do the work of disservice to the apparatus of whiteness, including interrupting institutionalized, epistemological, and pedagogical business as usual.

Certainly, such epistemological and meta-inevitabilities are precisely the ones around which my course ended: if hegemonic masculinity has a race, and that race is whiteness, to what degree might those who are reticent to conceptualize masculinity

as already racialized be intransigent in the belief that the desire to *become men* is different from the desire to *become cowboy*? If Yellow Bird is right about needing to conceptualize cowboy and Indian culture as hate talk, and the fact that one might need to decolonize that binary while living in it, why would we not make the same argument about gender binaries? Isn't an active project of undermining, indeed, of modifying whiteness one of the only ways of articulating masculinity differently? I'm not suggesting at all that trans-peoples be categorically conceptualized as gender traitors—quite the contrary. But as we've already seen, the technologies of engendering are deeply embedded with, and articulate through, other hegemonic binaries that do the work of what Alexander, Butler, and Yellow Bird identify as *talking the talk*. My questions here are as much directed both to non-trans peoples who would dismiss the desire to transition as suspect as they are to trans-peoples themselves who transition within gender binaries all the while leaving those binaries intact and quite *serviceable*. Such a project of incoherence continues to be indebted to writers like Yellow Bird who remind us that there may well be as many ways to modify *man* as many as there are to modify *cowboy*. But until the logic of whiteness is penetrated, a cowboy remains a cowboy.

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Chapter 10
Queer Listening as a Framework for Teaching Men and Masculinities

John C. Landreau

Introduction

> . . . how might we encounter the difference that calls our grids of intelligibility into question without trying to foreclose the challenge that the difference delivers? What might it mean to learn to live in the anxiety of that challenge, to feel the surety of one's epistemological and ontological anchor go, but to be willing, in the name of the human, to allow the human to become something other than what it is traditionally assumed to be? (Butler, 2004, p. 35)

This chapter uses the theoretical resources of queer theory and rhetoric to make a comparative analysis of various versions of a literature course on men and masculinities from three different professors, including me, at The College of New Jersey.[1] I argue in favor of the pedagogy of "queer listening" as the best way to advance a transformative feminist agenda within the context of teaching a critical masculinity studies course. As I explain below, the idea of queer listening combines Krista Ratcliffe's notion of rhetorical listening with Sara Ahmed's notion of queer orientation.

Queer Listening

In the excellent monograph *Rhetorical Listening*, Krista Ratcliffe (2005) elaborates a theory of meaning based on the trope of listening, or "interpretive invention." For Ratcliffe, listening names a "strategic third ground" of intersubjective receptivity that depends neither on the other's intention nor on our own and neither on the author's meaning nor on the interpreter's framework for finding meaning, but rather on an active, constant negotiation of positions and meanings. Thus, in place of

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[1] In my analysis, I scrutinize my own syllabus and those of two colleagues at TCNJ, Michael Robertson and Nelson Rodriguez, both of whom generously let me put their work under a microscope and publish the results without hiding their identities.

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binary choices such as agreement/disagreement, same/different, Ratcliffe proposes a kind of "strategic idealism" in which one listens not *for* the intention of the other but *with* the intention to hear claims and meanings—both one's own and another's—and to listen to those claims and meanings in their noisy social and discursive contexts. Listening here figures a desire for receptivity rather than mastery that does not necessarily lead to agreement or harmony but that is conducive to an ethics and politics of understanding based on the idea that it is only in the crossings between the self and other that meanings and understandings occur (Ratcliffe, 2005). From my perspective, Ratcliffe's theoretical and practical emphasis on the functional significance of listening is quite provocative, especially for thinking about pedagogical practice, because she attempts to provide strategies of communication and conduct across identities, identifications, and cultural logics and languages.

In the specific context of thinking about the pedagogy of a gender studies course, and especially of teaching a course on men and masculinities, the notion of rhetorical listening can be meaningfully enhanced with an appeal to the notion of queer orientation that Sara Ahmed (2006) outlines in her *Queer Phenomenology*. Ahmed uses the notion of orientation to think about social processes and individual instantiations of attitude and behavior in relational terms. In many ways, her orientational framework is similar to, and certainly compatible with, Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social practice. As Ahmed describes it, we orient ourselves toward, and are oriented by, an already-familiar (already-oriented) world, and thus, orientation isn't just about how we negotiate the given world but also about how we come to feel at home in the given world. Familiar orientation, then, consists of following a *straight* line that is already there, an inherited familiarity that functions as a kind of obligation but whose force is created by the work of orientation itself. When things are straight, they are oriented in the "right" way and allow the body to be extended. "Familiarity," Ahmed (2006) comments, "is an effect of inhabitance" (p. 7). In contrast, queer orientation is unfamiliar and uncomfortable (and sometime dangerous, of course) because it involves being turned by, and/or turning toward, what disorients us in a way that doesn't insist on setting things straight, that doesn't insist on realigning the misalignments, but rather allows things to remain askew, strange, unhoused, and unfamiliar. According to Ahmed (2006), there is an epistemological and political opportunity inherent in queer orientation, in renouncing the familiar by turning (or being turned) slantwise against the straight directionality of culture, because queer orientation entails an angle of vision from which the active making of heteronormative familiarity can be made visible and eventually challenged.[2]

As an approach to pedagogical practice in courses on men and masculinities, the idea of queer listening begins with the intention to dislocate the familiar and the hegemonic through critical reading practices that characterize "superordinate studies" (Brod, 2002). However, it deepens and expands that intention through a

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[2] The notion of the epistemological and political opportunity inherent in a subordinate (or resistant) position should sound familiar to readers familiar with either Marxist tradition or feminist standpoint theory.

course orientation that places queer texts at the center of knowledge-making about masculinities, thus further encouraging the practice of rhetorical listening. In the analysis of syllabi that follows, I will show what I mean by this, how rhetorical listening might be structured in a course syllabus, and why it is significant.

Michael's Syllabus: The Critical Pedagogy of Superordinate Studies

> . . . the concept of the implied reader designates a network of response-inviting structures . . . (Iser, 1978, p. 34)

In the Fall semester of 2008, Michael taught a course titled "American Masculinities" as part of our new "First Seminar Program," a program for incoming first-year students intended to expose them to a challenging and interesting seminar-style class during their first semester at the college. The course looks at American masculinities from the eighteenth century to the contemporary moment through the lens of literature. I begin with an analysis of Michael's syllabus because, of the three syllabi discussed in this chapter (Michael's, Nelson's, and mine), his best exemplifies a rigorous attention to critical reading skills and learning process.

On his syllabus, Michael gives his students a list of questions around which the course is to revolve. They are as follows:

- Why are men and women seemingly so different?
- How have ideas about masculinity changed over time?
- How does childrearing affect boys' development?
- Why is most violence committed by men?
- Why is rape more common in some American subcultures than in others?
- How is masculinity affected by class, race, and sexuality?
- Why do so many straight men seem so homophobic?
- How can men and women promote a more democratic model of manhood?

The culturally familiar gender vocabulary contained in the questions (men, women, masculinity, violence, straight men, etc.) suggests an implied student reader whose orientation is straight—not in the sense of sexual preference of course but rather in the sense of what Pierre Bourdieu (1990) calls "dispositions," that is, in terms of "schemes of perception, thought and action within individuals that both constitute, and are constituted by, the character and regularity of the social system" (pp. 52–65). In other words, the questions address an implied reader whose knowledge of gender proceeds from his or her embodied familiarity with heteronormative culture. Interestingly, Michael mobilizes this familiar gender vocabulary in order to ask defamiliarizing, challenging questions about masculinity: Why do men commit so much violence? Why do straight men often seem so homophobic? Why do men and women *seem* so different? And so on. The last question about how men and women can promote a more democratic manhood lets the student reader know

that the intellectual and political investment of the course is in fact to study the familiar for the purpose of not only defamiliarizing it but also transforming it. The pedagogical investment in a transformative, critical learning process is confirmed and reinforced in Michael's organization of his course calendar, which begins by introducing core concepts, moves from there to an engagement with texts from the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American literary canon, and returns at the end of the semester to look at some contemporary literary and filmic texts with, one expects, new eyes and new ears.

However, how can a course like Michael's deliver on the promises made in its core questions? How, exactly, over the course of 14 weeks, can a course on men and masculinities like Michael's provide students with a useable critical vocabulary with which to listen to the familiar with new ears and to think contextually so that discourses (of all kinds) begin to make sense as flowing from and participating in the cultural logics that inform them? The written assignments, of course, provide a good map of how a course actually does or does not do this because they explicitly artic-ulate intellectual tasks designed to produce knowledge about an object of inquiry. In general, Michael's written assignments provide careful practical and conceptual guidance that make goals and expectations explicit and clear. For example, at the beginning of the semester, he asks students to write a gender biography of a man. The assignment asks students to identify a man they are interested in interview-ing (presumably someone they know), to interview him, and then to interpret the answers according to a critical conceptual framework whose every detail is designed to defamiliarize the familiar. The overarching issues that students must think about as they interpret their interviewee's statements and write a gender biography are the following:

- How powerful is the ideology of orthodox/hegemonic masculinity? How do individuals construct their own varieties of masculinity?
- How do social institutions—such as the family, peer group, sports teams, school, church, marriage, and the workplace—shape masculine identity formation?
- How do social conditions such as race, social class, and sexuality shape masculine identity formation?

In addition to these overarching questions, Michael supplies students with specific instructions about giving an interview and writing the biography. Most sig-nificantly, he gives students a series of model questions that would be appropriate to use. The character of the questions reveals detailed attention to empowering stu-dents to think about masculinity in relational terms as social and historical and as a multidimensional field of contending ideas, perspectives, experiences, and cul-tural logics. Thus, whether or not familiar cultural assumptions about masculinity are reiterated in the interviewee's responses, it is clear that a well-constructed paper (i.e., one that will receive a good grade) will have to engage with the interviewee's answers in terms of concepts such as ideology, social position, and institutional contexts. In other words, Michael's assignment encourages students to listen to the interviewee's story with a sense of the rhetorical character of discourses and of

the cultural logics in which the discourses are embedded. In this sense, the assignment is finely attuned to the resistances that can arise when the common sense of gender and sexuality is challenged and is *specifically designed* to ask students to listen to and think about those very resistances in the students themselves as interviewers and writers and in their interviewees as they respond to disorienting questions.

This is but a sample of the rigorous pedagogical thought that characterizes Michael's syllabus and assignment design. The main point I want to make here is that his close attention to the learning process, and particularly to how to develop vocabulary and concepts with which to perceive the social and discursive construction of masculinities and to overcome the tremendous resistances to denaturalizing the familiar, is a vital element in any successful pedagogy whose aim is to decenter hegemonic masculinity. Indeed, I expect that critical reading skills, in parallel ways across various disciplines, form the core of superordinate studies in general.[3] In large part, this critical approach corresponds to one of the ambitions of Ratcliffe's notion of rhetorical listening: the ability to listen with new ears to familiar voices and the ability to hear those voices not so much as autonomous declarations of individual truth but rather as emerging from, and in relation to, larger discursive formations or cultural logics. However, what Ratcliffe also means by rhetorical listening is an ethics of receptivity to voices that are unfamiliar and unlike one's own, voices perhaps one cannot understand, and with which one cannot identify or agree. This is something Michael's syllabus does not emphasize since it is largely organized around the traditional American literary canon of white, straight texts (with a few marginal texts peppered in). As I elaborate in the following sections, my argument in this chapter is that to foster rhetorical listening in a literature course on men and masculinities, one would do well to augment the critical approach of superordinate studies, exemplified so well by Michael's syllabus, with a fundamental queering of the material basis (i.e., the texts) on which knowledge about masculinity is produced in the course. When we place a high wager on the powers of criticism in our pedagogy, we can sometimes ignore a vital and necessary investment in what we could call, using Ahmed's terminology, the epistemological orientation of our courses. Importantly, what I am calling a queer epistemological orientation requires more than the *inclusion* of subordinate masculinities in the syllabus in order to emphasize the heterogeneity of the superordinate category. This orientation requires using queer articulations of masculinity in our courses as a core material basis for knowledge about masculinity.

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[3] In an excellent article on the subject of teaching men and masculinities as superordinate studies, Brod (2002) details many of the critical reading strategies he uses in the context not of a literature course but rather of a sociology course on men and masculinities in order to make male privilege visible and to reveal the social work involved in creating that invisibility.

John's Syllabus: Straight Orientation

Ahmed's notion of orientation encourages us to ask questions such as, what is visible and invisible from this or that vantage point or social place, what is reachable and unreachable, what is thinkable and unthinkable, what is doable and undoable, what are the possible forms of cooperation and resistance, what kinds of subject positions are enabled or prohibited, and what can we know and how do we know it? A course syllabus is perhaps a good focal point at which to examine the usefulness of these questions for those of us who teach courses on masculinity. Any course begins with the syllabus, and beginnings, as Edward Said (1975) pointed out a long time ago, work to create a "characteristic inclusiveness" within which whatever comes next can develop (p. 12). In epistemological terms, the characteristic inclusiveness of a syllabus is organized most importantly by its presuppositions about what there is to know, why it's important to know it, and where and who is authorized to know and to teach. These are the kinds of questions I want to ask in the following two sections that compare my 1998 syllabus with Nelson's 2007 syllabus: How do we orient our syllabi, and by extension ourselves and our students, to our object(s) of study? What is the object of our study? Does it matter? How? Why?

What follows is a critical analysis of my 1998 syllabus for "Men and Masculinities: Literary Perspectives." This was the first version of the course, which is now taught in multiple sections every semester by several professors. Here is the course description as it appeared on the syllabus:

> Over the past several decades, feminist scholarship has emphasized the significance of gender in our lives. We can no longer ignore (as we once did) the fact that gender difference is one of the organizing structures of society. By gender difference, we mean the beliefs, behaviors, and norms that distinguish men (and "masculinity") from women (and "femininity"). The relatively recent interest in men and masculinity that emerges from feminism responds to the need for a critical analysis of men *as men*, i.e., an analysis that no longer presupposes masculinity as the norm for human experience. In this class, the focus of our study will be on representations of men and masculinity in literary texts, although we may also look at film, advertising, and popular song. Some of the issues we will be looking at include the construction of modern male identities, the diversity of men's lives, the complex dynamics of men's relationships, and questions of power and social justice within the gender order. In addition to these gender issues, we will also do some thinking about literature. What is it? Why should we read it? How do we read it? Why use it to study an issue like gender?

As Michael does in his course, in this course description I indicate an indebtedness to feminism and a core focus on the critical analysis of normative, hegemonic masculinity. In the solid tradition of superordinate studies, I set the course at odds with much of the past thinking about masculinity that "presupposes masculinity as the norm for human experience." The masculinity that is studied in the course—that is, the masculinity that counts as a valid object of knowledge that forms the material basis of course work—is the dominant masculinity that struts around as if it were a universal principle without regard for women. This is particularly obvious if one

is familiar with the four novels chosen as course texts.[4] All four were written by men and feature mostly male casts, while the women who do appear have relatively minor or subordinate roles. In addition, in all of the texts it is the male hero's physical force around which the plot turns and upon which the other characters depend. Finally, in all four novels, the narrative embodies a male, heteronormative gaze.[5]

In addition to the conscious, critical focus on hegemonic masculinity, the syllabus also presupposes, as does Michael's, that the location of masculinity is in men's bodies. To observe "it," one looks toward men's lives. The notion of an organic connection between men and masculinity is announced in the course title, reiterated in the course description, and reconfirmed in the titled sections of the course units that appear in the course calendar. For example, under the section on relationships, one finds the following headings, mostly borrowed from Kimmel and Messner's influential anthology *Men's Lives*: men and families, sons and fathers, daughters and fathers, growing up black and male in America, and men and intimacy. The qualifying use of the plural *masculinities* in the course title adds some important texture to the course structure and content, implying, as was indeed the case, that the course would not view men as a single, patriarchal block but rather take a more detailed approach to understanding different kinds of men and the different kinds of masculinity they embody.

All of the above is to say that the *orientation* of the course was, in Ahmed's terms, decidedly straight. That is, despite my critical intentions, what in fact becomes visible and knowable as masculinity is white and straight, and located within men's bodies. In an unspoken, but powerful, way, I now assume this epistemological orientation was both confirmed and emphasized by white skin, and by the thousand ways I perform straight masculinity every day in class, for example, my wedding ring, the stories about my two kids, and my physical style in class. Saying this does not mean that the course was poorly conceived, or that it acquiesced to the dominant gender mythology of the time. Quite the contrary. I remember the class as valuable because, just as Michael did in his class, I explored difficult and challenging avenues of thought, questioned assumptions, and tried to develop a critical vocabulary in course conversations and assignments. Indeed, the purpose of the course was to decenter hegemonic masculinity through a direct critique of it and through a look at some alternatives. Nevertheless, the material basis of the syllabus embodies assumptions about men and masculinity that I mean to question. Another way of saying this is that the burden of decentering masculinity is left entirely to criticism, while its familiar foundations are left largely untouched. Given the textual sources of information and knowledge about masculinity, the course was oriented in

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[4] I used a thick course packet of selected readings, and four novels: D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Jack London's *The Sea Wolf*, Russell Banks's *Affliction*, and J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*.

[5] The classic text on the notion of the male gaze is Mulvey (1997). I know that a number of critics have offered queer readings of *Peter Pan*. Despite these readings, I would argue that the narrative is, most concretely and therefore most importantly, heteronormative, and that its plot revolves entirely around male agency and violence. Obviously, this is an interesting debate for another time.

a manner tailor-made for white, straight bodies to extend themselves, to feel comfortable and at home. Now, in retrospect, I wonder how the familiar epistemological background music of whiteness and straightness might have sounded to the gay and lesbian students in the class or to the students of color. I think of *musak*: ubiquitous, familiar, insistent, and, when you stop to notice it, oppressive.

I also wonder what the literature of American masculinity would look like if the core literary sources Michael used were Richard Wright, James Baldwin, Audre Lorde, and Toni Morrison instead of Benjamin Franklin, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Mark Twain, and Ernest Hemingway. What would a course like his or mine look like if our core sources were by and about gay, or transgendered, or female masculinities? What would a literature course on men and masculinities look like if the textual sources of information did not come from the literary canon but rather from the lyrics of spirituals and pop music, from magazines and other texts produced for mass audiences such as advertisements and catalogs, from legal and political texts, from newspaper articles and photographs, and from visual representations? What kinds of knowledge would those texts make possible if they were centrally integrated into the ethos of courses like ours?[6] And what kinds of listening skills would our largely white, straight students be encouraged to develop if they were asked to learn and to know about masculinity from these sources and these voices?

By asking these questions, I am not making an argument for disregarding the literary canon or for minimizing the importance of critiquing culturally dominant forms of masculinity. Instead, I am proposing that this is where our work begins, not where it ends. I believe that as long as the core sources of knowledge about masculinity come largely from familiar straight locations, no critical strategies or conceptual tools will be sufficient to dislodge it from its solid moorings. Concretely, in the case of self-identified straight professors such as Michael and me, it would be powerful, I think, to embody a more uncomfortable orientation to invest not only in critiquing heteronormative masculinity but also, at the same time, in centrally locating knowledge about masculinity in queer places. This would entail using our subject positions, and the precedent trustworthiness of our syllabi,[7] not to include diverse voices organized as *other* masculinities around the hegemonic center but rather to use the course ethos to embody a material commitment to the critical epistemological value of nonhegemonic voices for the construction of knowledge about masculinity. The value of queering the curriculum in this way is twofold. First, it

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[6] Aristotle argued in *Rhetoric* that to convince someone of something one needed to show that one possessed the characteristic expertise and authority needed to know about the subject under discussion. He called this *ethos* (in Greek, ethos means "customary place"). Since one assumes that a university course on a given topic will be a legitimate presentation of the knowledge on that topic, and that the teacher knows what he or she is talking about, to queer masculinity studies in this way makes an interesting, and potentially subversive, use of the presumed ethos of the course (the expertise and authority of the teacher and the texts used as the basis for knowledge).

[7] The idea of precedent trustworthiness comes from Susan Miller (2008) and refers to the idea that effective rhetorical forms are effective precisely to the extent that they are able to win audience confidence before their specific content in any given situation.

orients the course away from the solid-appearing setup of a centered heteronormative masculinity surrounded by peripheral queer masculinities toward a more situational, context-bound approach in which relations of domination and subordination are actively and variably engaged in the construction of masculinities across the spectrum. Second, I've come to believe that a pedagogical investment of this kind encourages *a practice of listening* that doubles back and can serve to awaken one's ears to the suddenly noisy cultural logic of straight masculinity much more effectively and profoundly than the more exclusively critical approach Michael and I have used. I will say more about this in the conclusion, but first I want to look at Nelson's syllabus because it is an example of a syllabus that, in contrast to Michael's and mine, approaches the study of masculinities through a consciously queer orientation.

Nelson's Syllabus: Queer Orientation

What might a queer syllabus for "Men and Masculinities" look like? Nelson's syllabus from a section of "Men and Masculinities: Literary Perspectives" that he taught in Fall 2007 quite self-consciously attempts to queer the course of masculinity studies; this makes for an interesting and informative comparison between it and the syllabi Michael and I have used. Conveniently, Nelson (Rodriguez, 2007) has published an article about his version of the course, "Queering the Course of Masculinity Studies," in which he describes its central aspiration as finding productive and hopeful ways to *disorient* (Nelson uses the word "disrupt") hegemonic masculinity through its contact with queer theory and queer masculinities. There are, Nelson explains in his article, two good reasons for centering the course on queer theory and queer texts. The first concerns what he calls the heterocentric orientation of masculinity studies in which gay is attached to notions of sexuality but is seen as having nothing to do with masculinity, while masculinity is unreflectively equated with male heteronormativity. The second concerns negotiating the gap between his own gay male identity and the mostly straight male and female identities of his students within the context of a course on masculinities. The question he asks in this regard is, "In what ways can the curriculum help negotiate the gender and sexual 'difference' between teacher and student identities in such a way that both are queered by, as well as queer, the curriculum?" (Rodriguez, 2007, p. 107).

The required texts for Nelson's course are notably different in character from the kinds of texts Michael and I use (except for the Kimmel and Messner anthology *Men's Lives* (2007)). The main course texts aside from *Men's Lives* are *Brokeback Mountain* (film and story), *Becoming a Visible Man* by J. Green, and *Sperm Counts: Overcoming Man's Most Precious Fluid* by J. Moore. The Green book tells the story of the author's female-to-male transgender experience, while the Moore book is a kind of postmodern analysis of the uses and meanings of sperm in the cultural construction of masculinity. From this vantage point, it is easy to see that the course will seek to understand masculinity through representations of both straight and gay

experience, and through a critical examination of the body that does not assume a natural equation between straight men and masculinity. Indeed, in Nelson's course, straight men do not equal masculinity. Clearly, then, there is on Nelson's part a serious commitment to queering the "Men and Masculinities" course in terms of his presentation of the course and his text selections. In his article, he argues that the overarching ambition for queering the course of masculinity studies is to destabilize fixed identities and positions in order to recreate masculinity as a kind of border zone: "As a metaphor for critical masculinity studies, it's possible to imagine our curricula and pedagogies dwelling at the border zones. From this perspective, the queered masculinity course is a 'transgendered curriculum'" (p. 111). Given what I argued earlier, I think it is clear that the versions of the course that Michael and I teach could benefit from the kind of queer orientation Nelson advocates as a way of encouraging rhetorical listening and of reorienting critical masculinity studies away from a material basis in straight, white men.

Interestingly, at the same time, Nelson's syllabus would benefit hugely from increased emphasis on the learning process we find in Michael's syllabus. I mention this only to emphasize the theoretical and practical point I am trying to make about queer listening as a pedagogical strategy for "Men and Masculinities." Queer listening requires more than queering the content of the course readings. Queer listening requires, simultaneously, an attention to how we negotiate meanings, identities, and ideas over time in a particular class context. Specifically, to be effective, queer listening requires rigorous attention to developing conceptual frameworks for speaking and writing about resistance-prone issues. In fact, one might argue that queer texts such as the ones Nelson uses, taught by an out gay professor such as he, harbor a distinct potential for being easily reoriented through a normalizing identification of the course content with the teacher's perceived and performed identity. That is, queer texts can be easily straightened. This means that off-center text selection by itself does not make for queer orientation any more than critical strategies by themselves make for a decentering of heteronormative masculinity.

Conclusion: The Pedagogy of Queer Listening

I conclude with an anecdote from the last "Men and Masculinities: Literary Perspectives" seminar I taught during the Spring 2008 semester because I believe this anecdote exemplifies the value of teaching the course with a queer orientation and a pedagogical commitment to developing rhetorical listening skills. This was a course for which, in contrast to my original syllabus from 10 years earlier, the core texts explored nonhegemonic masculinities of various kinds. I did not locate these texts in marginal categories on the syllabus such as "gay masculinities." Instead, for example, I did things like use Anthony Giardina's novel *Recent History*, which is about the complex psychological damage internalized homophobia plays in the life of the main character who experiences sexual attraction to both men and women (he doesn't ever self-define as "bisexual"), as the course's core text on masculinity and sexuality.

In addition to queering the content of the course, I also spent a lot of time working with students on developing a critical vocabulary about gender. In particular, I carefully organized a research project that they worked on intensely during the second half of the semester, either individually or in small research groups.[8] The research was done in multiple stages, including a thesis statement, annotated bibliography, first draft, and final draft, with extensive feedback at each stage from peers in the class and me. This constant dialogue during the course of the semester provided rich opportunities to ask questions, introduce new ideas and concepts, and suggest revisions. Each research individual or group had to work out a theoretical framework to guide their project. This was sometimes based on in-class readings but often required outside reading in feminist or queer theory (usually suggested by me). Without going into more details, my point is that during the course I devoted an enormous amount of attention and energy to promoting consciously theoretical approaches to questions of gender and at the same time to listening to nonhegemonic perspectives on, and experiences of, masculinity.

As a result, a wonderful thing happened at the end of the semester. Two of the research projects, one an individual project and the other a group project, were studies of gay masculinity undertaken by straight male students. From my perspective, this was a sign of pedagogical success because these projects showed that over the course of the semester these guys had developed a practice of attending to perspectives different from their own to the extent that they felt comfortable with publicly exhibiting an interest in gay masculinity. Part of their comfort had to do with the fact that interest in—and a sense of the epistemological importance of—listening to voices different from their own had been, over the course of the semester, made legitimate in the group. So, despite the cultural knowledge and internalized dispositions that make straight guys stay as far away as possible from homoeroticism in order not to be contaminated by it,[9] these guys felt comfortable and legitimate in exploring gay masculinity. In addition, they worked not so much to "understand" what life is like for gay men (although they did that, too) but also used texts about gay masculinities as important and valid sources of knowledge about their own masculinity and in general to think theoretically about the social construction of gender. In other words, these students felt personally invested in the research and in the construction of insights about gender.

Let me briefly describe the group project to exemplify what I'm talking about. This presentation was by four fraternity brothers who had signed up for the course

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[8] I encouraged group projects but allowed students to work on their own if that was their preference.

[9] I remember a television ad that aired years ago for Pepsi that featured two guys watching a football game who mistakenly touch each other and then, with intended comic effect, abruptly move very far away from each other as if struck by lightning, with looks of horror and disgust on their faces.

together.[10] They did a project on Esera Tuaolo, a defensive lineman in the NFL (linemen are usually thought of as highest on the macho meter: they're the biggest, strongest, and toughest players) who, upon retiring, came out as gay. What struck me more than anything else about their presentation and their completed research project was that they were able to make strategic use of their own identification with the sports world, and with heteronormative male locker room culture, to imagine Tuaolo's fears and expectations about being outed while he was an active player. At the same time, the students were able to see and reflect upon many aspects of heteronormative male culture that had never before been objects of reflection for these students because they had listened carefully to Tuaolo's story about his devastating personal experience of male heteronormativity as psychological and social violence. (Tuaolo wrote an autobiography that they read and analyzed.) I don't have any magical answers about how to teach a gender studies course or about how to negotiate all the complexities of identity and language in that context. I know that I blunder as much as any teacher, and that my blindnesses are many. But I do believe that something transformative can happen in a gender studies course when the teacher and students are invested in the practice of rhetorical listening, when they are invested in negotiating their comforts and discomforts, their securities and insecurities, and their selves and not-selves, in the imaginative process that knowing is. I know that I felt proud of these guys when they made their presentation because their hearts had been touched by Tuaolo's story not just as an exercise in empathy, or in understanding the other, but also in terms of an interactive process between points of view, between their lives and his. They had practiced what Ratcliffe calls rhetorical listening: a negotiation of meaning in which self and other are in play and at risk.

This notion of knowledge-making as a negotiation of meaning between self and other is, in my view, the *sine qua non* of a queer pedagogy in masculinity studies. This idea depends upon the intention and the effort to stand within what Jessica Benjamin in her theory of intersubjectivity describes as the "tolerable paradox" of a "third position": an always unstable, temporary place from which one can represent both one's own and the other's position, and thus be capable—however tenuously— of a double-sided perspective (Benjamin, 1998). Or, to borrow the poetic phrasing of Gloria Anzaldúa, queer pedagogy depends upon being to be able to stand "on both shores at once and, at once, see through serpent and eagle eyes" (Anzaldúa, 1987, pp. 100–101). In a similar vein, Ratcliffe argues that attention to the process of listening matters because it orients us toward an ethical engagement with the world. To listen means to question the other's position as well as our own, to pay attention rather than immediately agree, disagree, or master (as in dialectic), and to negotiate rather than divide through the binary logics of identification and

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[10] We have a general education gender requirement at TCNJ, and so I typically get groups of guys who take the course together because they think it'll be the least painful way to get the requirement out of the way.

disidentification, self and other, good and bad.[11] Therefore, promoting rhetorical listening in masculinity studies entails queering the material basis of knowledge in order to open up new pathways of investment and curiosity. Rhetorical listening entails taking advantage of the precedent trustworthiness of the syllabus, with its promise of knowledge and teacher authority, to queer masculinity from the beginning, and thereby to disrupt masculinity's inherited familiarity. Rhetorical listening entails thinking about and negotiating our performances of gender as they interact with course texts and assignments and classroom conversation. At the same time, rhetorical listening entails rigorous attention to developing conceptual tools and modes of thinking that encourage and enable one to overcome resistances in order to listen to the familiar with unfamiliarity and to listen to the unfamiliar without insisting on identification as the only context for communication and meaning.

I propose a pedagogy of queer listening that combines the defamiliarizing force of Nelson's course content with the sustained attention to the ethics of listening that Michael's course exemplifies because I believe that a pedagogy of queer listening can contribute to calling "our grid of intelligibility into question," as suggested by the Judith Butler epigraph to this chapter, and to enabling us "to live in the anxiety of that challenge" (Butler, 2004, p. 35). Clearly, this is a challenge and an opportunity for both professors and students.

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[11] Though Ratcliff doesn't use him in her work, her idea coincides with Bakhtin's critique of dialectic and his arguments in favor of "answerability," the ethical responsibility to respond to the "eventness" of things, not to respond categorically or theoretically. See Bakhtin (1993).

Chapter 11
Becoming the Loon: Queer Pedagogies and Female Masculinity

Stacey Waite

> *The metaphor for the text is still the metaphor of text as body.*
> *Paul de Man from* Allegories of Reading
>
> *The wild foxes, uncertain, walk across the frozen river, listening beneath for the sound of water. If they hear nothing, they may cross to the other side.*
> *David Rothenburg from* The Blue Cliff Records

Introduction

Elementary school—when it was time to get in line to walk from the primary classroom to gym class or to music class. There were, without question, the girls' line and the boys' line, the two linear formations in which we were to walk from one room to another. And there was me, always lingering at the end of those lines, floating between them like a small balloon. The narrative begins this way because it continues in this way as I stand now still in this androgynous, passing body, a body that cannot align itself even disciplinarily. This exploration of where queer pedagogies might be or begin, like my body, refuses linear formations, refuses the category of discipline. The investigations are narrative, theoretical, fluid, a series of constant movements between gender studies, queer theory, pedagogy, and composition theory. I both argue for an approach to teaching *and* try to invite my reader to embody that approach—fluid, queer, self-conscious, web-like and fragmentary. I do not believe the story of my scholarship is separate from the story of my life or the body in which my life lives. This leaves me, I know, endlessly vulnerable to a certain kind of criticism, one that says narrative cannot be scholarly or theoretical, but this criticism arises out of ways of knowing that this chapter intends to call into question. In this work, the narrative cannot be separated out from the theoretical. It is both a theoretical narrative and narrative theory.

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I am aware, as I begin, of the way in which my body, my identity, the events of the story of my life and education inform the way I construct this writing, my thinking, and the stories of my classrooms. I cannot read without my body. I cannot read without the presence of a fleeting masculinity, androgyny, contradiction and movement. And because I have come to see this position as a kind of blessing, I try to find ways to offer contradiction and movement to my students—especially those students who have come to understand themselves as solid, as fixed and named forms who can make fixed and named assumptions about reading and writing. I seek to (as tenderly as I can and with acute awareness of the responsibilities) disrupt this kind of learning as I feel it limits our capabilities and places us (without our consent) into a state of unconsciousness. It leads us, unfairly and without self-implication, to walk the boys' line or the girls' line, endlessly, through each door of our lives.

Before I knew the names of identities, before I had traveled the long years of "mistaken for a boy," before I knew the word "butch," before I stumbled upon the XY chromosome in my "female" body, I am no older than 6 or 7. And each month the Highlights Magazine *arrives at the house. And I am giddy with excitement to complete my favorite task. It's a game called "What does not belong?" in which the child (in this case me) is meant to identify in a picture the object or subject that does not belong and then use scissors to rid the picture of its not-belonging piece. I can remember cutting out what appeared to be a bird from inside what appeared to be a body of water of some kind. The bird appeared to be swimming, so my mother happily hands me the red-handled kid scissors. She watches me and is proud of how smart I have always been. "Careful," she says, "don't accidentally cut out a fish." And here I am, thirty-one, remembering back. Here I am a poet who knows, of course, there is such a bird called a loon—in the air a bird, flying, but in the water a winged fish swimming.*

My mother went to great lengths to convince me, as a child, to wear shirts, to wear the tops to my bathing suits in the swimming pool. I tore the Communion dress and rubbed my hair violently against the velvet couch to dismantle the "body wave" the hairdresser offered up for the special day. The body of Christ. And I learned how to hold my hands to receive it, how to stand in line with the others. Mostly, in the late afternoons, when I'd ride my bike into the woods, I'd pull off my shirt and ride the dirt pathways with the sun lighting up my small back. No one was there to see me. The loon is the only bird with solid bones as opposed to the hollow bones of other birds. This is what makes the loon a brilliant diver.

Legitimate Bodies

As children, we get our first lessons in difference and domination quite early. Find what is different in the picture. Dominate that difference. Remove it. Toss it into your plastic Peter Pan garbage pail. It does not belong. I have dedicated many of

my adult years to teaching and to building a pedagogy that blurs difference and tries to call all types of domination into question—heterosexism, racism, classism, sexism, and all the systems that interweave with and/or support these types of domination. I have selected numerous texts in my courses that aim to disrupt hierarchies and expose systems of privilege of all kinds, particularly with regard to gender and sexuality. I have resisted, for a long time, many male teachers whom I saw as constructing and using masculine domination to lead a classroom. After all, the definition of pedagogy comes from classical Latin and points to "a training establishment for boys" (from the *Oxford English Dictionary*). Pedagogy's interesting intersections with gender and masculinity are striking. For example, Mariolina Rizzi Salvatori's (1996) edited collection, *Pedagogy: Disturbing History, 1819–1929,* provides a lens through which we can begin to think about masculinity and pedagogy, and, importantly, about the complex relationship between pedagogy and identity. What strikes me about so many of the documents in Salvatori's collection are the many ways definitions of pedagogy struggle with essential philosophical and political questions of what it means to be in a body, what it means to *be* in the lived world, what it means to learn. Gabriel Compayré, in one of the documents (from 1910) aiming to define pedagogy in Salvatori's collection, writes the following:

> The science which claims to establish the laws of education, which would instruct and raise the child and form the man, cannot with certainty construct its inductions and deductions unless other sciences have taught it what man is, what child is—in body, in soul, in his individual nature and also in what he must be in terms of his destiny, his social role. (Salvatori, 1996, p. 32)

There are several things that seem to me worth noticing about this passage. Rather than putting pressure on the word "science" as an understanding of pedagogy or putting pressure on the masculine understanding of who is worthy of being taught, I want to focus first on the ways this passage links pedagogy ("the science which claims to establish the laws of education") with ontology, with concerns of *being* ("what man is"). Compayré is quite aware that in order to begin to understand what it means to teach, we must also begin to understand bodies, souls, nature—in essence, being—meaning that pedagogy is not alone a question of education, but also a question of ontology, a question of identity, physicality, theology, and ecology. This, of course, is one of the reasons pedagogy is endlessly contested. What can we know about what we are? About what "the child" or the student (or even the teacher) is? And if our vision is always blocked or otherwise blurred by these limits, how can we see what we are in order to educate ourselves not only *about* what we are but also *about* what it means to teach another being? I ask these questions to remind myself that when I am talking about teaching, I am, without question, talking about and making assumptions about *being,* about who I imagine myself to be and who I imagine my students to be. I sat some time with this passage. I grappled with what this question of *being* implies about both the endless possibilities and frustrating limitations of what pedagogy means or can do. Of course, nearing the end of this document, Compayré does undo, to an extent, the complexity of this passage when

he writes, "We must hope that the day will soon come when a scientific schematization will finally be accomplished" (Salvatori, 1996, p. 34). Here, he indicates that we will someday be able to *know* what pedagogy is after science has finally determined what man is. For Compayré, once we know what man is, we can know what it means to teach him. Perhaps these questions of "what man is" are part of the reason pedagogy has taken its modern home at times in composition—because writing has something to do with *being*, because composing thoughts, composing writing, and composing a self permeate every aspect of being. And how do we bring questions of being to questions of pedagogy more explicitly? What will be said of our doing so? And what is man? Who is the man who teaches him? What kind of man am I?

The university classroom, in its long history, is a masculine place. As Pierre Bourdieu points out in *Masculine Domination*:

> The particular strength of the masculine sociodicy [a term he uses to mean the justification of a masculine society as it is constructed] comes from the fact that it combines and condenses two operations: *it legitimates a relationship of domination by embedding it in a biological nature that is itself a naturalized social construction.* (1998, p. 23)

Etymology is one way we can mistake the constructed for the natural—language making and deceiving us at once. Bourdieu points out how domination is linked to the masculine but that the masculine is linked to "biological nature." And anything linked (despite its social construction) to "biological nature" is going to be seen as natural. As Connell (2005) suggests, "True masculinity is almost always thought to proceed from men's bodies—to be inherent in a male body or to express something about the male body" (p. 45). Therefore, domination is natural, the masculine is natural, masculine domination is natural. Of course, many gender theorists know this not to be *true*. However, I am interested in what happens when masculinity's "truth," its fragility or fluidity, is exposed via the body, in my case via the female masculine body. I am interested in the way my masculinity (read often as illegitimate because it is not linked to "biological nature") constructs a complicated performative pedagogy in which the now destabilized masculinity becomes a site of contention, disruption, or even horror and melancholy, for students; I would further argue that this disruption site is not only productive in terms of a radical and effective pedagogy in both gender studies and literary studies but is also, in fact, quite necessary to the project of challenging systems of domination outside the classroom itself.

The neighbor boys look for frogs in the yard. I do not want them to find one. I want them to invent the game in which they are not looking for something to harm. I want them to invent the game in which they are not building villages they will bomb from their plastic planes. They make the bomb noises in unison. They fall down giggling in the grass until their mother names what has been cooking inside.

I was sixteen the first time I saw a drag show—the first time I understood what it meant to "pass," to "appear," and how that "appearing" was a kind of being. It was, as it turned out, my first time in a tie if we don't count the endless number of times I tried on my father's ties in the master bedroom, pulling each one close to

my neck trying to learn how to loop the fabric, how to become a man. Here, in this gay bar off the coast of suburban Long Island, drag queens called me "Handsome," giggled when I pulled out their chairs and lit their cigarettes. We performed a kind of dance, the kind of dance we are all always performing, though this time through subversion. And when I arrive home late, when I try to sneak in through the back sliding glass door, my mother sees me in the suit and tie. She, for a moment, covers her eyes as though I had been naked and not her child. "What are you doing?" she wants to know. "Where could you have gone dressed like that?"

The word "loon" is said to derive from the Scandinavian word lom—*which means clumsy and awkward person. The loon gets this name because of how graceless it seems on land, its legs too far back for walking. It moves in strange jerks and diagonal patterns on the ground. One can always recognize a loon's sporadic walking.*

What I am calling the "illegitimate masculine" (the masculine not lived in a "male" body) is most visible when it comes into contact with or is put under the gaze of "legitimate masculinity." For example, I am often confronted with male masculine students who fold their arms in refusal when I walk into the room in my suit and tie, who challenge my authority in various complicated and sometimes comical ways, or who see my gender performance, perhaps rightly so, as an embodiment of a pedagogy that is asking them to change the way they think about identity. I am fully aware that there are a variety of reasons students might act in these ways; however, over the past 5 years of teaching courses at the university, I have become acutely aware of a brand of resistance that is gendered, that is an embodied response. I can feel this (for different reasons and in different ways) both when I run into a female student in the public bathroom and we both shift our eyes toward the walls, shift our weight from one foot to foot with the sense that I do not belong there (despite her "knowing" I am a "woman"), and when a male student looks over my clothing the way my cousin, who is a serious skateboarder, might look at a boy in "skateboarder" wardrobe who cannot "actually" (whatever that means) skate or cannot skate well—or look "natural" doing so. I believe the word my cousin uses to describe this is "poser." I am a "poser," illegitimate and non-authentic. My performance can never be "the real deal," the real masculine deal. I have not learned my masculinity or been given the "masculine habitus" (a name Bourdieu gives to the set of sometimes invisible codes for masculinity and domination that are taught, reinforced, and handed down in any given society) in an authentic (meaning natural) and institutionally approved way. I am, in that sense, the self-made masculine or, in Bourdieu's terms, an autodidact:

> Because he has not acquired his culture in the legitimate order established by the educational system, the autodidact constantly betrays, by his very anxiety about the right classification, the arbitrariness of his classifications and therefore of his knowledge—a collection of unstrung pearls, accumulated in the course of an uncharted exploration, unchecked by the institutionalized, standardized stages and obstacles, the curricula and progressions which make scholastic culture a ranked and ranking set of interdependent levels and forms of knowledge. (1984, p. 328)

Bourdieu's notion of the autodidact is certainly useful in talking about masculinity and about how masculinity is read by the larger culture and often by students in a classroom. The autodidact, then, "has not acquired his culture in the legitimate order established." *He* betrays; *he* is "a collection of unstrung pearls." The butch performance clearly echoes the description Bourdieu offers of the autodidact. In this case, it is me who has not had my masculinity sanctioned and approved by the legitimate order. It is my own body and performance that "betrays" me, that reveals "the arbitrariness" of classifications—my body standing at the chalkboard, fleshy proof that masculinity might be worn, might be acted out by one who does not have "birthright." And, consequently, my body *betrays* and in doing so becomes a kind of *betrayal*. I betray my students, so that in addition to reading, say, a text as radical as *Gender Outlaw* by Kate Bornstein, my students are also faced with a teaching body and performance that betrays them—they cannot use the knowledge mainstream culture has offered them to read or interpret the texts I give them *or* the text I am to them. Here, Bourdieu would seem to agree with Judith Halberstam's (1998) assertion, in her seminal text, *Female Masculinity,* in which she argues that masculinity "becomes legible as masculinity where and when it leaves the white male middle-class body" (p. 2) and that "female masculinity is generally received by hetero- and homo-normative cultures as a pathological sign of misidentification and maladjustment, as longing to be and to have a power that is always just out of reach" (p. 3).

There was always something about the public bathroom doors, always the dry chalk of androgyny sticking in my throat as I'd walk towards the women's room with my mother. Somehow I knew she wasn't bothered by the stick figure triangle skirt that indicated the path we were to take, the ways we were to interpret our bodies. But my mother and I do not have the same body. We do not read the signs on the bathroom doors similarly. In fact, my mother does not read the doors at all; she is automatic in her automatic body. She tugs me in by my small arms and leads me to the stall. Often, I have trouble urinating. I ask my mother to sing so no one will hear my body and she does. "I'm leavin' on a jetplane, don't know when I'll be back again . . . leavin' on a jetplane, don't know when I'll be back again."

It is only recently that pedagogues have been willing to talk about the body of the teacher. In 2003, an anthology was published called *The Teacher's Body: Embodiment, Authority, and Identity in the Academy*. For so long we have been talking about negotiating identities in the classroom and in texts, but rarely are those identities talked about in relation to the body itself in the classroom or to the body's performance. Kimberly Wallace-Sanders, in her essay, "A Vessel of Possibilities," writes: "The academy largely insists on the body's erasure because the body is the undeniable reminder of our private selves. Our bodies betray truths about our private selves that confound professional interaction" (p. 188). The academy is so often a disembodied place—a place where we are asked to distance ourselves from our bodies, to leave them behind in favor of some "critical thinking" practice that we

mistakenly imagine happens outside or independent of the body. Not so. Our bodies are with us always. We cannot, as it were, teach without them.

There were several long days of snow that year. The students seem tired having stayed up late figuring the snow would cancel their buses and leave them asleep and warm. I have been teaching at this small high school in central Pennsylvania only a few months. And after the 11th graders have turned in their papers on "the white- ness of the whale" in Moby Dick, one student stays behind. She leans awkwardly against my desk. She looks down at the patches she has sewn to her backpack. One reads, "If you can read this, you're too fuckin' close." I almost giggle—knowing the school's policies about such language displayed. "What's up?" I ask her. "I'm preg- nant," she answers. And we both stand quiet under the horrible fluorescent lights. She begins to cry. I cannot come close to her. I cannot comfort her. I have listened hard to my teacher training meetings: Do not touch your students under any cir- cumstances. Do not touch them. They cannot be touched. You cannot trust what they will say. You cannot touch them for any reason.

Practices of Body

It certainly troubles both teachers and students when they come face-to-face with the materiality of the body. It helps me to understand both myself and my students to think of my masculinity as a kind of embodied betrayal—not because I believe that to be so, but because it helps to explain what, for my students, is a challeng- ing and unusual interaction—the androgynous body, the men's ties I wear to class, the deep voice, the "female" pronoun. The body that betrays "professional bound- aries" by *not* being invisible is a body that must be reckoned with as one of the classroom's primary texts. One cannot avoid or ignore it any more than one could avoid or ignore the work of a course that must be done in order to complete it. This body also highlights some of the differences between the body and embodiment— "embodiment [which is distinct from but also inextricably linked to notions of the body] moves in conjunction with inscription, technology, and ideology" (Hayles, 1999, p. 195). Embodiment is "the specific instantiation generated from the noise of difference" (Hayles, 1999, p. 196). The "noise of difference" rings loudly in classrooms—between students, between our performances to and for one another, between their gendered embodiment and my own. Such a curious, cacophonous, seductive, beautiful, and tragic noise.

   To provide a concrete example, I will turn to an assignment I gave to my college composition class in the fall of 2005. I asked my students to do a short writing response to Kate Bornstein's concept of the gender terrorist. The assignment was as follows:

   Re-read the following passage from *Gender Outlaw:*
      For a while, I thought that it would be fun to call what I do in life gender terrorism. Seemed right at first—I and so many folks like me were terrorizing the structure of gender itself. But I've come to see it a bit differently now—gender terrorists are not the drag queens,

the butch dykes, the men on roller skates dressed as nuns. Gender terrorists are not the female to male transsexual who's learning to look people in the eye as he walks down the street. Gender terrorists are not the leather daddies or back seat Betties. Gender terrorists are not the married men, shivering in the dark as they slip on their wives' panties. Gender terrorists are those who bang their heads against a gender system which is real and natural, and who then use gender to terrorize the rest of us. These are the real terrorists: the Gender Defenders. (p. 72)

    Compose a response to Bornstein's definition of a gender terrorist. Can you think of examples of gender terrorism as she defines it? Are we all implicated in her definition? Are you implicated in any way? Why or why not?

Many of my students responded quite thoughtfully to the passage, citing examples of having seen people asked to leave bathrooms, talking about their gay or trans cousins, friends, etc. But there was one particular response that is of interest here from a male student who often let out sighs of disbelief in class or sat with his arms folded but rarely said anything. The student[1] writes:

Bornstein should change this book now that it's 2005. You can't run around calling people who think women look ridiculous and funny in ties gender terrorists. Terrorists are people who fly planes into important buildings. It's horrifying to think her problems are serious at all enough to equate them with terrorists. Even all her examples are funny. When people "slip on their wives' panties," they make themselves open to ridicule. I'm not going to feel bad for them. (Student Paper, Fall 2005)

We can first notice that Bornstein says nothing about "women in ties," but the student does say something about this. And, of course, I have been standing in the front of the classroom in a shirt and tie for 2 months by this point, so it is hard to imagine the student is not talking to me (even though he, technically, is not). But the translation here seems to be: this student will not take seriously a performance of "illegitimate" masculinity such as mine. He is quite aware of me as a "poser," as the autodidact masculine who makes him/herself "open to ridicule." It is both Bornstein's text and my body that disrupt the students' understanding of identity and body. A serious identity is one that matches a body, a "normal" portrayal of gender and sexuality. It is here in this student's claim that Bornstein's concerns are "horrifying" in that the student is horrified that she would consider her "problems" to be problems of a kind of terrorism. This horror is not only about the word *terrorism*'s connection to September 11. Terrorism, the student worries, is not funny. And I think we (all of us—students, teachers, writers) would agree it is not at all funny. Bornstein certainly does not say that gender terrorism is funny. This student's horror *is* about terrorism; it is about the idea that someone you couldn't see, someone undetectable, someone you might have even trusted, would betray you—your traditions, your culture, your life, your country. This horror is, more specifically, the horror of "passing." It is also the horror of moveable boundaries, of blurring, and of coming to see that what we think we know will not stay still, will not, in the end, *become* knowledge. But the truth is, as I read my student's writing, I understood

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[1] All students are quoted in this piece with their permission using the form available at the end of this chapter.

the various ways the student might be terrorized by me (by my course, by this book I had chosen for him to read); I also understood the ways I, too, felt terrorized by him—he's *not going to feel bad for them*. It's the "them" that's terrifying. It's seeing myself as my student's "them."

Then there is my crying in dresses. "Since I was born," my mother says. She walks the line of my crying. The church dress I will not. The pigtails I will not. The long nights praying: Please God, if you let me wake up and be a boy, I will never say another swear word again.

It is here that Julia Kristeva can offer an interesting way of thinking about the experience of students who are "traditionally gendered" when they come into contact with the female masculine body, with my body. She writes, "It is thus not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite" (Kristeva, 1982, p. 4). Abjection seems a viable way to describe what happens when students encounter an unreadable body in a pedagogical context. Here, the pedagogy *and* the teacher's body are sites of abjection—both do not "respect borders, positions, rules;" both are the "in-between, the ambiguous, the composite." After all, as Karen Kopelson (2002) suggests, "A queer performative pedagogy, in fact, often *strives* to confuse, as it strives to push thought beyond circumscribed divisions—strives to push thought beyond what can be *thought*" (p. 20). Kopelson argues for a pedagogy and a teaching body that disrupt and destabilize identity. She argues, for example, that "coming out" as any stable identity is a mistake in the classroom. We should, according to Kopelson, only "come out" as destabilizing. This should be, if we are dedicated to queer theory and what it offers us, a productive way of thinking about identity and the body. I am not interested in arguing here whether certain identities may feel themselves to be fixed or stable; I work with the understanding that there might be momentary fixities, or particular strategic (and even activist) reasons why one might, at some given moment, name identity as fixed or unilateral. For the purposes of my work, however, I am interested in the idea that fixed and stable identities are not always useful for writing pedagogies. I think that what it means to introduce students to academic writing in the humanities is to teach students that writing an essay is not a binary act—it is not a moment where we decide one thing over another or take one side of a two-sided debate—rather, it is an act of wavering and careful consideration in which writers move fluidly through the complicated terrain or their own thinking and the thinking of others. In this sense, while my masculine body is at times troubling or resisted, it can also be an opportunity for confusion of the productive kind, the kind that produces complicated ways of knowing that push the borders of what can be written or thought.

Bird watchers have said it is virtually impossible to tell the difference between a female loon and a male loon. There is sometimes a difference in size, but nothing distinct to mention. Nothing that allows us to see the loon and know it.

I am in college and taking a course titled "fictional history." I have a professor who practices, in each opportunity for confusion of the productive kind, a "destabilizing" pedagogy. We are talking about why a particular student in the class does not find pleasure in reading a series of Toni Morrison's books. The student says to the professor, "I just think women enjoy books like these more than men, that's all." He says it with no ill will, sort of sweetly. The professor, Professor Hill, says to him, "And do you think I am a woman?" The student, sort of, grins. He sees her clearly in her long dress, her full lips and perfectly feminine cheekbones. We (all of us in the class) "know" she is a woman. She goes on: "What makes you think I am a woman, Charles?" The student doesn't answer again. We spend the better part of that hour, as a class, making a list of reasons we think Professor Hill is a woman. It starts with silence before someone says, "Your first name is Mary." Another student says, "You said you were a mother." She writes them on the board as we list them. We must reckon with our perception of her body. No one ever says she has breasts, but we are all thinking it. We are all thinking of the material conditions we could not (because of boundaries) name that would settle the question once and for all. Professor Hill shows us the holes, the room for possibility in each of our womanhood proofs. We never did get to Toni Morrison that day, or perhaps we did some other way I couldn't name.

It is illegal to hunt or kill loons. Many have been found dead at lakesides with high amounts of mercury in their blood. Many of their natural habitats are being polluted by the pastime of driving one's motorboat or by the spilling of chemicals.

Abject Pedagogy

At times my masculinity is read in a way that is advantageous to me. In an article by Gibson, Marinara, and Meem (2000), Deborah Meem writes of her own positioning as a teacher: "Students and faculty see my butchness as powerful, especially as contrasted with femme experience, which is mostly invisible" (p. 82). Like Meem, I also never experience the space of invisibility that she describes here, the space reserved for "women," a space that is sexually visible while intellectually or politically *in*visible. I have no idea what it is like, for example, to be treated as a female sexual object by male students. My masculinity protects me from this particular gaze, however illegitimate my masculinity may be. And the issues I may have with authority in my classroom are rarely public—most male students do not, for example, challenge me publicly (as they might do silently or in their papers) for fear that my illegitimate masculinity may somehow supernaturally trump their "real" masculinity. Feminine women are not necessarily feared in this way, though they are, of course, feared in others. Masculinity worn on the "female" body can change an environment in specific ways, can change the bodies in that environment, can call the entire notion of the body and the environment into question, because it troubles

their meanings. After all, as Kristeva (1982) also points out, what is abject has much to illuminate with regard to meaning:

> If the object, however, through its opposition, settles me within the fragile texture of a desire for meaning, which, as a matter of fact, makes me ceaselessly and infinitely homologous to it; what is abject, on the contrary, the jettisoned object, is radically excluded and draws me toward the place where meaning collapses. (pp. 1–2)

The "desire for meaning" is not merely a desire for any meaning at all or for multiple meanings. The meaning of legitimate masculinity is a singular, fixed meaning according to those who establish and perpetuate its singularity and static-ness. So when, as Kristeva asserts, "the abject" brings us to the place "where meaning collapses"—*the place the bird hits water*—we are, in turn, horrified (and perhaps intrigued as well). We are faced with a moment of crisis about ourselves and about our notions of how the world is named and ordered. Written texts can have this effect as well; but I want to emphasize that the body is most rooted in desire, and in shame, and that the body's appearance creates the intense and visceral site of abjection that Kristeva describes. Here I have appropriated aspects of Kristeva's theory of abjection as a lens through which to look at female masculinity within the context of my classrooms and their discourses, a lens that allows us to theorize the in-between, the ambiguous and the unnamed in the classroom.

Naming. Kindergarten. I do not like saltwater, the class gerbil or writing on the blackboard. I do not like the girls' line and the boys' line. I do not like swallowing my gum. I will not tell anyone my middle name. The teacher, she tells the whole class my middle name. "It's Ann," they scream. "We know it's Ann."

The abject can often be seen as criminal. And there is a sense in which I have "stolen" masculinity, a sense in which I have taken an inheritance that does not belong to me or to my line of people—namely "women." Masculinity, is, in a sense, a type of inherited capital (the male body) that prepares a man for his acquisition of cultural or social capital (what Bourdieu would deem the masculine habitus). In this way, we can understand Bourdieu's thoughts about education alongside the model of female masculinity I have described above. Bourdieu explains:

> Likewise, in every relationship between educational capital and a given practice, one sees the effect of the dispositions associated with gender which help to determine the logic of the reconversion of inherited capital into educational capital, that is, the "choice" of the type of educational capital which will be obtained from the same initial capital. (1984, p. 105)

Here Bourdieu is talking about educational capital as a series of titles or stages achieved through masculinity, the inherited capital masquerading as achieved educational capital. However, this system of reconversion also applies to the inheritance of masculinity and finally to how masculinity is passed down—educationally, culturally, socially. As for the female masculine, we must resort to stealing pieces of the masculine educational capital regardless of our living in a society that tells us we have little or no right to that capital. We have no inherited capital. I am quite

interested, in some sense, in my students viewing me as this kind of thief, some-one who has attained masculinity without any right to it. As a poet, I can remember quite clearly the first time I heard T. S. Eliot being quoted: "Good poets borrow; great poets, true great poets, steal." As in poetry, it is the image that is stolen, the phrase, the syntax—all performances of language.

There is always the sense that students find their teachers strange outside the envi-ronment of the classroom. For me, however, there is the sense, in certain moments, that this strangeness is amplified. When my composition course breaks halfway through, I stand nervously with the women in my class as we wait for stalls in the women's room. They are nervous, too. We do not speak. We look at the white floor. Or I do. There is the sense there is a man in this room. There is the sense of invasion, of the criminal.

   It is language and image, after all, that are at the center of teaching rhetoric and composition. What we name conjures up an image. This is one of the primary ways meaning is made. And it is not merely enough to expose this constructedness to students, for what good does it do us to know that names are constructions, that the images these names conjure up are twice constructions, that we all lie floating dead still in our pool of names and identities? Language is performance; we are performances—unstable, improvisations of ourselves. In this sense, the world is not a stage; the world is, more precisely, a drag show in which, as Butler would have it, we are all imitating the "copy with no original"; we are "acting out" an authenticity that can never be an original. But so what? What good (beyond awareness itself) does knowing this do for my students' lives, for their writing and thinking?

Loons need up to one half-mile of build-up running in order to lift themselves up into the air. Once they do, they can fly up to sixty miles per hour.

Pedagogy of Melancholy

In Judith Butler's (1995) essay "Melancholy Gender/Refused Identification," she describes a kind of grieving (which accompanies this sense of abjection I am inter-ested in) gender creates; she calls it "a mourning of unlived possibilities" (p. 32) in which gender is always already about loss. In this case, Butler is talking about a compulsory heterosexual model in which one becomes a girl, for example, by not desiring another girl but then mourns the girl she is and therefore the girl she cannot have. This model means that succeeding at one's gender means to succeed at not lusting after one's own gender; one becomes a woman by refusing to want another woman. Desires not being met can certainly qualify as a kind of abjection in that, when our desires cannot be met, there is a clashing between the world as it is and the world as we wished or thought it to be. Then, following, we must grieve that loss—the loss of the world as we wished or thought it to be in order to try to move the world as it is—whatever that means—into its place. This is not to suggest that

there is a "world as it is" but rather there are moments of seeing, flickers of clarity in which we are either affirmed or challenged in our seeing—or some combination of both. If we are challenged and find that what we see destroys some other version or vision we had, we experience the melancholy Butler describes—the melancholy, the mourning of the person we are and the person we cannot be/have. There is, or can also be, a kind of exhilaration in this loss.

Many students, like all of us, have visions of the world, have visions of themselves inside it. And when they come into contact with texts/bodies/ideas that do not fit that vision, there can be great risk for them; they can lose vision, can lose some version of themselves they hold dear, can experience great loss. For example, last fall in teaching Peggy McIntosh's "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" (in which she lists more than 50 privileges belonging to white people only and by virtue of only their skin color), I received the following response from a student: "I was brought up to believe all people are equal. I find it hard to believe that in this day and age that these privileges hold to be true. If they were true, I would have to feel pretty bummed out that my success was so fake." There is so much in my pedagogy, in my body, in the content of my courses that may have students "pretty bummed out" or that may get them feeling that their realities are at risk as "fake." The student's feeling of being "bummed out" is a real sense of loss. If he reads the essay in a way that allows his version of equality to be challenged, he loses something: his own sense of "success," which is important to him as it is to all of us. By assigning this essay, by bringing to class a contradictory identity, a moveable body, I put my students at risk. I ask them to purposely put their realities in danger and, in a sense, to embrace that danger. This is no small task, despite the fact that our identities and realities are always in danger. We don't often want to look there, to find this danger, and walk in its direction. And what is to say the risk will be worth it? What might we all (students and teachers alike) gain in spite of these abjections, risks, and losses? This melancholy pedagogy in which we lose, again and again, what we believed to be permanent and stable visions. My gender performance, in this sense, undoes a version of reality even as it undoes me.

Understanding how female masculinity seems to function inside the bounded container of a classroom does appear to offer a way of approaching teaching, a way of modeling identities for students (this can be done through gender and many other identity locations). "Performative pedagogy is thus a 'doing' that disclaims 'being'—or at least a doing that disclaims the idea of 'being' as singular, unified, and static" (Kopelson, 2002, p. 25). It can, I argue, help students to develop critical and political positions from which to read and write if they are reading and writing in a classroom in which the instructor's body will not lie still on the specimen table of identity. The instructor will not "be" their identities. They will only perform their identities. It is important that teachers move (even in the sense that Professor Hill moves), that we create moments of abjection from which our students can emerge, from which we can emerge. I mean not at all to compose a heroic narrative of how my butchness makes for good teaching. It, in fact, like most categories of identity, makes for complicated teaching, for teaching that confuses. After all, as Kopelson (2002) reminds us, "*Queer* is a term that offers to us and our students an

epistemological position—a way of knowing rather than something to be known" (p. 25). And what is valuable about this way of knowing?

Practices of Performance

In the essay, "Performance and the Limits of Writing," Kathryn Flannery (1998) writes, "Performance does not displace writing and reading in my classes, but it has come to function as another and important way of knowing, another way of making sense, another mode through which students develop critical literacy" (p. 44). While it can be argued, of course, that all teaching is performative, that all classrooms are stages of sorts, we do need to ask more systematically what it means to "perform." What is the value of performance as a "way of knowing"? Here Flannery discusses having students act out readings, valuing performance as a "way of knowing," and, I would argue, a particularly queer way of knowing. Flannery argues further that performance is a way of "getting interpretation out of the closet" (p. 56). To think of interpretation as needing to be "out-ed" in the way we talk about queers "coming out of the closet" is a productive starting point. Coming out of the closet has come to mean giving oneself a name: gay, bisexual, queer, trans, etc. And since I am pushing on the very notion of naming, why might I find value in "interpretation [coming] out of the closet"? What if "in the closet" was never a stable and nameable existence to begin with? What if, hiding deep in the corners behind the ties, stacked boxes (perhaps one containing some unstrung pearls), clothing and memory, what if what is there inside the closet is complexity itself, is disruption, is the very confusion of interpretation and vision I am trying to name? What does "interpretation coming out of the closet" in this way even look like?

The loon song is one that has inspired cultures for centuries. On northern lakes where they nest in the summer, loons utter long drawn-out, wailing cries and screams at night. Early Inuit cultures buried loon skulls in graves. Because of their mournful song, the loon was thought to act as a guide into the netherworld.

Michelle Doyle, a student in my composition course in the fall of 2005, may perhaps have an answer to the question of interpretation's being brought "out." She writes, in a paper about Susan Griffin's *A Chorus of Stones*:

> It's like I can see myself reading. I can see myself trying to make meaning from the bunch of strands Griffin writes. When we talk about the essay in class and I see the way everyone has read the symbols she uses, I try to imagine what has made each of us say what we say about what it means. It's like reading is more about who you are than what you are reading.

When I am the female masculine text my students read, the reading may be, as Michelle says, "more about who [they] are than what [they] are reading." Something is at stake in seeing me, in reading the texts they read. And haven't we all claimed, time and time again, how students need to "be invested in their own work"? What better way to ensure investment than to put something of value at risk? Butler (2004) writes in *Undoing Gender*, "That my agency is riven with paradox does not mean it

is impossible. It means only that paradox is the condition of its possibility" (p. 3). Risking loss becomes the "condition of its possibility." To have agency, then, might mean to put the archive of the self at risk. The paradox might exist partially then as the paradox of loss and gain, freedom and constraint, stillness and movement—both at onceness.

"Don't count on it"—was what my father used to say to mean no. The trees never mean it. They spit up fire. They sometimes think they can make stars. No one is there to deny them.

On my first day of every course, I walk in terrified, the shake of voice, the sweating, the stomach turning over and over at the thought of interpretation. My students need a pronoun with which to refer to me; their language demands it. Years ago, I would avoid the pronouns altogether until once, a kind, hardworking, and well-meaning student (as most of my students are) does something on the first day he never quite forgives himself for. He's late for starters and then says loudly to a classmate, "Did *he* give out the syllabus yet?" The classroom rings with discomfort. The other students have "figured out" by now that I am not a man—at least not in a way they are used to. The student sinks down in his chair. He does not look at me for weeks. He believes he has done something hurtful, I think. I suspect he thinks he has offended me, which (of course) he has not. These days, I begin with pronouns; I talk about my gender in those first few moments of introducing myself to my students. I try it comically and gently: *If you think you're not quite sure about my gender now, wait 'til you read these books on the syllabus.* They laugh, sometimes nervously. *My parents refer to me as "she." You may do the same. But it doesn't mean you know anything about how I throw a ball.* Again, they laugh, less nervously this time. We try to work it out together, the stories of one another's bodies. We spend the semester "undoing" the texts we read, undoing the texts of our bodies. And there is risk, and sadness, and horror, and seduction, and the sense that nothing is as it first appears. I assume things, too, about them; they teach me again and again that I cannot do so.

Loons are very shy and wary birds that put on fantastic displays if a human or another animal gets close to the nest. The display signals extreme distress and is called penguin dancing. In this display, the loon rushes forward across the water toward the intruder and rises with head drawn back and bill almost touching breast while its feet beat the water and create a wild spray. Humans triggering this behavior often don't understand that they have come too close to a nest and continue to come back and watch the display until the birds finally leave the area.

The Work of Assumptions

Often, in beginning to talk with students about gender, I begin by asking them to notice their assumptions about what feminism is and what a feminist does or looks like. I ask them, "What are some stereotypes about feminists?" And this is a question

they readily answer with (and these are just some of their responses from last spring) doesn't shave, is a lesbian, overassertive, loud, manly, finds fault with everything, militant, overcritical, and doesn't know when to shut up. And as they construct this vision of a feminist in their minds, I can't help but straighten my tie and wonder if I might just follow up the list on the board by saying, "Well, now that you've met me." There is the sense that when my students arrive in my composition courses focused on sexuality and gender, they are reading my position from the moment they step in the door. It figures, after all, that a short-haired, manly, overcritical "woman" would teach a course that begins with feminism. My position is being read one of two ways by my students: (1) I am trying to "convince" them to be feminist radicals because I want them to think I am OK; in other words, my intellectual interests are reduced to personal investment only (and perhaps there is always some truth in this assumption for all teachers); or, (2) Because my body inhabits the space that it does, I must be certainly the bearer of knowledge of all that is feminist and butch lesbian (perhaps there is some truth in this assumption as well). All semester, my students and I dance around one another's identity. They suspect me, and I, in turn, suspect them. In the essay "Identity Politics in the College Classroom, or Whose Issue Is This Anyway?," Katherine Mayberry suggests that "the politicization of identity, knowledge, and authority have changed much about the way students and their instructors interact, introducing an identity-based definition of *credibility* as an entirely new precondition of professional authority" (1996, p. 3). And, in fact, I find myself wondering how I might begin to discuss my authority or my credibility with my students, to engage in a dialogue about the way we are reading one another as bodies in terms of gender and the assumptions we make about what we are trying to get one another to do. For example, at times, I suspect my students of being polite and refusing to assert their "real" beliefs for fear of literally "hurting my feelings." I am aware of the danger or the perceived danger rather of even uttering the word "feelings" in this specific context of a theoretical discussion of pedagogy. But often, identity begins there, with feelings. Or I suspect my students of being over-resistant to texts because they feel threatened not so much by the text itself, but by me, by the female masculine body. Last year, at the close of my composition course, I gave my students the following prompt:

Return to your papers this semester and read through my comments. Write a letter addressed to me in which you consider the following: What kind of writer am I asking you to be, and why might I ask you to be this particular writer? What kinds of questions do I seem to be wanting you to ask? How do you feel about my challenges to your ideas, and where in the course did you see my reading of the text and yours as drastically different? Why might they be different? What about you or about me might cause us to read a text so differently? Use specific examples from my comments to make your points.

Let me say I was terrified to get these papers. But I felt, and still feel, that there is so much I have to learn about the relationship between my students and myself in terms of identity in order to teach them about reading and writing. One of my

students, whose permission I have to use her writing but not her name, discusses what she calls our "totally opposite ways" of reading the following claim by Kate Bornstein. Bornstein (1994) writes, "In living along the borders of the gender frontier, I've come to see the gender system created by this culture as a particularly malevolent and divisive construct, made all the more dangerous by the seeming inability to question gender, its own creation" (p. 12). The student writes:

> I think the whole reason that Bornstein doesn't really affect me as much with this line is because I want to keep my gender. Although you don't seem to go as overboard as Bornstein, it seems like you want things that go against what is expected for women, so it would make sense that you'd see gender as malevolent. What I want is to stay a woman, to play that role and maybe I said what I said about Bornstein because she wants gender to be 'performance?' and I think there is something more internal, spiritual even, about it. I want to be a woman. I know that you probably know more about gender than me but I cannot believe that gender is 'a creation of culture.' I just can't.

This student, quite astutely I think, articulates something about reading that she may not have articulated before, that our reading of a text is somehow located in what she calls "want." She *wants* to be a woman and suspects I have been more "affected" by Kate Bornstein's book because I want something different from the world than she does. Of course, I did not have to tell my students explicitly that this particular text illustrates many of my own ideas about gender, but they have positioned me with the text—*partially* because I am the instructor and I have chosen the text but also, and more so, because my performance of gender, as the student says, "goes against what is expected." The student positions Bornstein as "going overboard" and positions me as perhaps a less militant version of Bornstein. She ends her response with the words, "I just can't," which I think reveals another way that desire and the body become visible in the teaching of composition. Basically, in this short paragraph, the student comes to the conclusion that there is something about "want" and about willingness that positions a reader who is considering these ideas about gender. William Cooper, also a student in this particular composition class, writes:

> Next to where I wrote 'Feminism itself might be a reason for inequality,' you wrote to me 'In what sense?' And I don't know why but I felt like you were annoyed with me in a way, not that 'in what sense' is a mean comment, but there is a possibility that you didn't know what I meant. OK, let me get this out right. If Kate Bornstein (and you I think) believes that gender is a myth and that it being a two-choice system is what creates all the problems, then wouldn't feminism also be setting up a two-choice system. OK, because if feminism is about women being equal to men then it's about women and men, which means gender has to exist. I think you want me to agree with Bornstein and agree with feminism, but you haven't proved to me why I guess because the two things are saying reverse ideas. I know you're gonna say it's wrong, but I think it's true.

William Cooper articulates a contradiction in what he sees as two of the ideologies represented in my course and represented by me—perhaps by the very existence of my body itself. He had no idea how happy I would be to read his response. He assumes that I am trying to "prove" to him that feminism and this text, *Gender Outlaw,* are supporting arguments I want him to "agree" with. The student positions my emotional reading of his text, that I was annoyed with him when I wrote "in what sense?" He then ends by saying, "I know you're gonna say it's wrong." Of course,

I think my question "in what sense" is a generous one, but I have to be honest in saying I did assume that he was suggesting that feminism creates inequality because women then want to surpass or be better than men. Perhaps I assumed he meant this because I read him as a man, as a white male college freshmen who is "probably threatened by feminism," never mind the queer theory in Bornstein's book. In actuality, William and I are concerned about the limits of feminism in some of the same ways. In fact, we are perhaps both "post-feminist" in that sense, both concerned with a kind of gender multiplicity.

This assignment really changed my relationship with many of my students. As we discussed some of their responses in class, it became clear that with each excerpt we looked at, we became more human to one another; we became physical, intellectual, and emotional beings—all of whom seemed to have sets of assumptions shaping our interpretations, shaping our interactions. Of course, I don't discuss this assignment as a "magic trick" to composition but rather one of the ways I was able to make the assumptions about desire, body, and intention more visible, a way to address the question of my gender, and of theirs, and how these genders and bodies shape the texts we read and the texts the students write.

Notes on Teaching (the Teacher)

In the country in which I teach, our histories are quite similar in terms of how we come into being, how we arrive or are said to arrive in the world. The body is the first text. There might, as it were, be a sonogram in which the doctor will use an approach, a camera of sorts to locate the presence or lack in the child's body as it is submerged in the fluid that holds in warmth and nourishment. The doctor will announce the presence or lack. What the child is, how the child is to be interpreted gets named into being. The first interpretative act is one acted upon us, one we cannot control or enter into a conversation about. We will then be born into a body, and we ourselves will begin to interpret our world in this gendered body, this first trap of unconsciousness, unwavering, perceived as certain. A careful set of cultural rules will instruct us that our genders are natural, that they go always without question. We learn first what not to question. We learn first the antithesis of knowing, to accept without wondering, without asking or probing.

This is often where names come from; they come from a desire to contain wonderment. And it is here that my students and I must commit to teaching one another to wonder how we know what we know, what ways of knowing have led us to know what we know, and (finally) how we will enact ways of knowing that have the potential to make new knowledge about our names, about our bodies, about reading and writing, about the lives we imagine. This chapter has been about how we have made what we think was never made—the construction of masculinity, of the body, of a reader, of students, of the body of their teacher. For many of us, many of the ways of knowing we have learned are ways that cover the tracks of acquired knowledge, invisible ways of knowing that then appear naturalized; they appear as found knowledge rather than made.

To teach, inevitably, means to engage with and be responsible for constructions of identity. And one of our first tasks is to expose that constructedness; however, that will not, in the end, be enough. As one of my students reminded me in an anonymous midterm course evaluation when I asked them what questions they were hoping the rest of the course would address, "I guess, what do we do if everything we know is just a bunch of spoon-fed ideas about who we're supposed to be or who everyone is? It seems like we don't know anything then." This student reminds me of something very important; that is, it is not enough to expose identity as unstable or fragile, or to expose its constructedness. Something more needs to happen. The student feels stuck. I start to feel stuck. Yes, what do we make now of identity knowing full well what it has tried to make of us?

Perhaps the lyrical or the narrative of gender can tell us something about where or how to move from here. Just as this project seeks to sound off in a number of registers, as does identity. And each register is its own way of knowing. To know lyrically is thought to be something quite aside from knowing theoretically; to know narratively is something quite distinct from knowing politically; and so on. And when the lines begin to blur, we can begin to *make* new ways of knowing, ways of knowing (actual knowledge and teaching practices) that are in themselves unstable and fluid.

It is summer. I have been swimming most of the day in a small lake in northern Maine. I am watching two dogs chase a loon out into the water. A man calls after his dog, Here, Shelby. Shelby, come. And as the dogs move toward the loon, it sinks down into the lake. And the dogs turn back as if it had never been. Identity does sink down into the water, does disappear as we come closer to it. Still, we think we know what we've seen. We think if we return to the place where identity was, we'd hear it echo; we'd follow that sound to its origin, which, of course, is (as echoes are) only a memory of a sound having been made.

Student Permission Form

Instructor: Stacey Waite
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Course:

The following is a request for your permission to use or quote from your Reading Response Journals, Essays, E-mails or Presentations as part of the scholarly work I write about teaching writing and theories of teaching. You should know that my work is written with public intention and that should you choose to be identified, your name could enter the public in print. Your writing is, of course, integral to the study of teaching writing and to my own scholarly pursuits in pedagogy. However, it has no effect on your grade in this course or on your relationship with me whether or not you choose to make your writing available to me in this way. Thank you for taking the time to read this. If you do not want your work used or quoted from, there is nothing more for you to do. If you agree to have your work used or quoted from, fill out this form and return it to me before the end of semester. If you have questions, let me know.

Check one:

_____ You may use my writing anonymously, without my name.

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Print Name: _____

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Chapter 12
Trading Gender: University Spaces as a Facilitator for Transgressive Embodiment of Women in Male-Dominated Trades

Louisa Smith

Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss how the university can facilitate the embodiment of queer masculinity at work. I will do this by comparing two case studies of women who worked in the male-dominated trade of carpentry before and after they attended university. According to Connell (1995/2005), masculinity nearly always refers back to the body, and in trades, this body and its skills, strengths, and violence are on display and are exalted not only as hypermasculine but also as a form of hegemonic masculinity. Therefore, women who engage in these work processes are not only engaging in work usually dominated by men but also challenging the sanctity of masculinity itself. In entering an area that is defined by men and defining of them, women confront masculinized work cultures that are often sexist and homophobic. The first case study I will discuss, that of Zadie, shows how a politicization that happened at university encouraged Zadie to enter a trade and gave her the resources to critique the workplace and its sexism and homophobia. Lisa, on the other hand, attended university after having completed her trade apprenticeship, and therefore provides this critique in retrospect. During her apprenticeship, Lisa was sexually harassed and discriminated against and had no resources to respond, instead internalizing this treatment and becoming depressed, disempowered, and insecure.

Queer theory offers us a dynamic framework for engaging with how masculinities can be done and undone. Through an epistemological undoing of gender, queer theory, while restlessly reconciled to gender's performative, constitutive, and repetitive nature, also opens up spaces for agency within, through, and around practicing gender and gender practices. Gender practices, however, are so well practiced that they are invisible until resisted (Yancey Martin, 2003). And while subversion can powerfully challenge a gender regime, subversion can also be incorporated into a

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gender regime, making boundaries more stubborn. In my research, I have found that those with a critical political framework around gender practices and practicing gender are more likely to embody queer masculinities that resist, educate, and are sustainable in workplaces. Universities and university campuses have been places that have facilitated critical thought, activism, and political networks and have therefore been crucial to reducing the personal risks of the queer embodiment of my participants in the workplace.

This chapter draws on Connell and Yancey Martin's theorization of gender as a social practice. While acknowledging that "the physical sense of maleness and femaleness is central to the cultural interpretation of gender" (1995/2005, p. 52) in our culture, Connell argues that "[g]ender is a social practice that constantly refers to bodies and what bodies do, it is not social practice reduced to the body" (1995/2005, p. 71). By starting with social practice, gender becomes mobilized through individuals' bodies and the ways bodies are experienced physically and socially. Freud's complex consideration of personality, desire, and social relations is enacted in Connell's description of bodies that are both "objects and agents of practice" (1995/2005, p. 61). According to Connell, individuals experience their bodies through a dynamic cycle of "body-reflexive practices" (1995/2005, p. 60), in which the individuals attribute social meaning to their bodily experiences of physical and social processes. Thus, the body is in a continual process of doing gender and therefore changes from moment to moment as the body reconciles its contradictions. Probably the best illustration of this is provided by Connell when she describes a man who enjoys anal sex with a woman (a bodily process) and therefore decides he must be gay (anal sex is socially understood as belonging to the homosexual body). Making sense of what this man perceives as a contradiction between his bodily pleasure and his social and sexual identity propels him into new social practices. The social structures through which one interprets personal experiences causes an individual to engage in continual change.

Yancey Martin (2003) draws on Connell's argument to theorize how gender practices and practicing gender are done at work. She sees the workplace as a gendered institution because individuals and groups behave in accordance with prescripted gender relations. When one resists the gender practices that are expected, one is still practicing gender (you can never be recognized as ungendered), but one is recognized as practicing gender differently. This is highly relevant for the tradeswomen who are constantly reminded of their gender by their own responses and by others, even though these women are performing tasks that could be seen as resistant or as engaging in a transgressive embodiment.

Early work on female masculinity, one form of the female body embodying queer masculinity, found it in the transgender body and the body in drag (Butler, 1990/2006; Halberstam, 1998). While illuminating illustrations of transgressive embodiment, female masculinity within queer theory has often been analyzed with "little thought of the individuals designated as the objects of study" (Namaste, 2000, p. 16). Viviane Namaste's work as an activist and academic argues that queer theory is often blind to the real lives and experiences of the people it uses as examples and fuel for theoretical analysis. In particular, Namaste argues that queer theory

ignores the realities of transgender, transsexual, and gender questioning people's lives at work, decontextualizing their bodies from what their bodies do and their social, economic, and racial realities, thereby rendering queer theory as little use to transsexuals and transvestites (Namaste, 2009). To acknowledge the contradictions and patterns people experience about their gender, education, and work over time, I have used in-depth life history interviews in which, through storytelling, "people turn themselves into *socially organized biographical objects*" (Plummer, 2001, p. 43). At the same time, I found life history a perfect method for examining gender and the interaction between the body and the social as this method "forces one to recognize that the social is present in the person—it does not end at the skin" (Connell, 1994, p. 34).

Interestingly, in the two case studies that follow, the site of the skin, the carpenters' female bodies, was used to interpellate them as women and as female even when their bodies were engaged in doing work yoked to hegemonic masculinity. In the first case study, Zadie, we see how experiences of being politicized at university created a particularly interesting political moment in Connell's body-reflexive practice. A moment when, due to a cognizance of bodies as socially located Zadie's own body became an object of the intellect, she critically reflected on how her body was being positioned and how she was being made to feel through how others were treating her body. Thus, we see that through her work in a male-dominated trade Zadie was able to mediate how she was being recognized by others due to her gender with a powerful sense of how she recognized herself. This moment of political body-reflexive practices, of consciousness around gender and power, is to me a queer embodiment that undoes the boundaries between masculinity and femininity and thereby queers them both. On the other hand, in the second case study, Lisa, shows that not being able to intellectually interrupt the way the body is being interpellated by others can have devastating consequences on a person's ability to confront discrimination and thereby maintain employment that to some degree demands transgressive embodiment.

The Case Studies

Both case studies were based on life history interviews that lasted for approximately 2 hours and were conducted in the participants' homes. These interviews are part of a larger study that investigates the embodiment of women who work in the male-dominated fields of manual trades and information technology (IT).

Zadie's Story

Zadie worked as a carpenter and construction worker for more than 10 years until she had to leave her trade due to an injury to her foot. At the time of the interview, Zadie worked as the producer for a theater attached to a major post-secondary institution in Australia.

Zadie was born in the Caribbean in 1958. Both of Zadie's parents migrated to the Caribbean after experiencing the traumas of WWII. Zadie's father had been in a Nazi work camp and escaped from Germany on the brink of war, accidentally migrating to Trinidad in his desperation to leave. And while it is unclear from the interview why Zadie's mother migrated, Zadie does tell of her mother joining the air force and driving an ambulance through bombed-out London collecting bodies:

> She was this tiny, very delicate woman, nothing like me, not as chunky as me by any means. And she was . . . driving trucks.

Zadie describes her parents as "discarded people" because they were "so outside what's socially normal." While they brought "class stuff" and "white privilege" with them when they migrated, "they also came from really hard places," which meant they "couldn't possibly engage in society in a normal . . . a really normal way." I tell these stories of Zadie's parents as they set a primal scene for her life.

Zadie describes her childhood as happy and free:

> My identity in being female or male, that kind of, I did feel pretty free. I was a kid who ran around in shorts all the time and never worried that much about being a tomboy or playing the boys games or . . . um . . . all that just seemed normal. No one ever said, "Aw, you can't do that." I might get called a tomboy, but it didn't have the inference that that meant weird.

She also emphasizes the significance of growing up in the Caribbean, which meant that she grew up different "ultimately about being white in a very black, mainly black community."

Moving from the Caribbean to Australia at the age of 14 caused huge changes in the family's lives. In the Caribbean, Zadie's family was middle class. Zadie's father was a sound engineer and her mother a receptionist. And as was the case with most middle-class people in the country where Zadie lived, they had a servant, and Zadie went to a private university school. Migration to Australia caused a huge shift in Zadie and her family's social position and organization. Both of Zadie's parents changed to working-class occupations. With no servant, the domestic arrangements also changed. However, there was not a conventional division of domestic labor. Since her father was "organized and house-proud," things were "fairly shared."

When Zadie arrived in Sydney, she was in the middle of high school and attended a "pretty rough" public girls' school close to the center of Sydney. Zadie found this an extremely difficult transition, feeling as though she needed to conform and yet not understanding the rules she was to conform to. Any sense of freedom around her sexuality and sexual identity changed when she was about 12, "when all that kinda normative stuff starts to happen." Zadie's experience of high school in Australia clearly illuminates arguments about schools directly and indirectly producing sexualities, which are often experienced as contradictory (Epstein & Johnson, 1998). One of the first things Zadie remembers about arriving at her new school was someone saying, "Aren't you wearing a bra?" This question made Zadie feel that her body had let her down, that it had done something wrong. This contributed to Zadie feeling "very at risk here [in Australia] like everything I knew had vanished."

Despite the difficulties Zadie experienced when she came to Australia and the pressures to conform, she still had a "little seed inside of me that always resisted."

Even as a teenager, Zadie "[saw] that things didn't necessarily make sense, that there were alternatives." This vision of alternatives was in keeping with a political impulse at that time in Australian history. The period that Zadie attended high school (1972–1975) was the term of the reforming Whitlam government. Many teachers at Zadie's school were overtly political: "one [teacher] was a member of the Labour Party and used to talk very openly about politics." Others were less overt feminists, which clearly translated into the students' education. For example, when Zadie wanted to do woodwork instead of cooking, the school principal organized for Zadie to do woodwork at the local boys' school. But when Zadie realized that she would be the only girl, she "chickened out."

Zadie was grateful, then, when she left school and went to university in 1976 where she "learnt how to be a lesbian" and "a radical feminist with socialist leanings." University gave Zadie the "political framework" that underpinned her future careers.

After university, Zadie engaged in an unconventional series of jobs: from 2 years spent fruit picking to house painting to 2 years on Social Security to counseling at a women's health service. At the age of 28, Zadie decided to do a carpentry apprenticeship, largely due to a government initiative to support women in trades.

During her apprenticeship, one relationship with one employee caused Zadie particular stress and ultimately tainted her whole experience of the workplace. The most significant incidents of harassment by this man happened out of the workshop when Zadie and a team were on-site as there was less managerial supervision and generally less surveillance. Zadie was not out as a lesbian at the shop fitters: "So, you know, everything was kind of hidden and secret." This man constantly questioned Zadie's sexuality and hinted that she might get raped. But he was never clear enough for her to make a formal complaint. One day, he brought a carved wooden penis to work and pulled it out of his bag to show her. Zadie yelled for everyone to come and look at what the "dickhead" had brought, but he quickly shoved it back in his bag. "But it was really that incredible intense intimidation, you know, that direct. This is about my penis. You are threatening my penis, and I'm going to have to confront you."

That relationship ruined Zadie's feelings of safety at the shop fitters.

> I just never felt safe. I didn't feel safe about who I was or anything. It just felt like this constant having to be on edge waiting for comments, waiting for things to happen. Even though most of the time it was fine. You learnt lots, and people were really fair to me and really great.

An example of this difficult contradiction between feeling unsafe and yet being fairly treated occurred when Zadie complained about the girly calendars everywhere. Although the management told her to ignore them, one man brought in a calendar of landscapes to show his support. It just wasn't enough.

Despite this experience of discrimination, Zadie had the feminist critique and network that she had formed while at university for support. Indeed, she benefited from a number of government feminist initiatives during the 1980s that supported women in trades: a TAFE place for women in carpentry, a council apprenticeship

reserved for a woman carpenter, and funding for a women's building co-operative. This connection with other women carpenters and awareness of the political reasoning behind encouraging women to go into trades buoyed Zadie through any difficulties.

At the end of Zadie's apprenticeship, she went into partnership with an experienced construction worker, and they had a successful construction business for 8 years. They employed women and became "famous" for it; "people would want the company with the women in it because it was so normal and nice to have that kind of building site." Zadie and Frank ran their business for 8 years:

> And we did really well. Never made a lot of money, but we always, you know, broke even with enough money to go on a holiday at the end of the year.

Frank never treated Zadie differently from any of the men on-site. Working in a trade gave Zadie's body a shape, strong and lean, that she recognized as herself. Like many tradespeople, Zadie ended up leaving the job due to a physical injury. Losing her trade also meant losing her powerful body and a certain familiar identity.

At the time of the interview, Zadie was 49 and worked as a producer and building manager at a theater at a post-secondary institution in Sydney.

Lisa's Story

At the time of the interview, Lisa was 40 and on maternity leave looking after her 4-month-old baby. At the age of 17, Lisa was employed by the Sinkin Council in a 4-year indentured apprenticeship as a carpenter. Lisa did not pursue a career in carpentry after this apprenticeship. She now works for a university as a lab manager.

Lisa was born in 1968 in a regional centre in northwest New South Wales, Australia. She grew up on a chicken farm and was the middle child of five. The farm on which Lisa grew up was run by her father's family, and the extended family all lived on the property. Coming from a property-owning family of some success, Lisa saw her father as middle-class Catholic. Her mother, on the other hand, was working-class Protestant.

Working on the farm, both of Lisa's parents were available to their children after school. Lisa did not enjoy school, finding elementary school particularly isolating because she was considered "weird" for reading too much and playing too rough. She enjoyed home life much more: Their mother gave the five siblings the freedom to run around the property burning blackberry bushes and riding motorbikes.

In approximately 1976, when she was 8, Lisa's father had a nervous breakdown and went to Sydney for electroshock therapy. When he returned, he became engaged in art therapy and was not as involved in farm work for some years. Lisa describes her father as being "airy fairy" and artistic; he read Sartre and knew about art and was very thoughtful. Lisa stressed that he was not the "traditional authoritarian father figure." Lisa's father was sick for a long time before committing suicide when she was 21. Lisa describes her mother as the antithesis of her father. While her father was artistic and thoughtful, her mother was "sensible, logical, and practical." Lisa's

mother was always engaged in physically hard work on the farm and still is. Lisa's mother provided a role model for Lisa as an "unrelenting physical worker." When Lisa started to look for apprenticeships, she never had a sense that she wouldn't be able to do the physical work. Both the family home and the family farm were led by strong women.

Lisa wasn't ambitious at school and didn't know what she wanted to do when she finished; the school's career counselor provided only three career options (nurse, teacher, or bank teller). In Lisa's family, an apprenticeship was considered to be "gold," so when Lisa moved from the country to the capital city, she looked into apprenticeships. Lisa adds that, particularly during the difficult economic situation in the 1980s, solid employment, rather than university, was many people's main aim when completing education. She succeeded in getting an apprenticeship in carpentry at a local council and spent 4 years there.

During her apprenticeship, Lisa was discriminated against in many ways. Despite equal opportunity policies, which were actually the reason that Lisa got the job in the first place, the way work was allocated and managed at the council made inequality and favoritism embedded. Leading carpenters simply chose who they wanted to work with (their friends) and took their teams out into the local community to complete interesting jobs. The few carpenters who weren't chosen stayed in the workshop and made tractor boxes. Lisa left the workshop only twice during her 4 years, greatly impeding her skills. Her male colleagues also wouldn't teach her or help her do, lift, or hold anything. In fact, they ignored her completely, not speaking to her or acknowledging her except to put pornography in her locker.

The sexism and harassment were so condoned that it was Lisa's manager who provided the most startling example. On one of the two occasions Lisa did work out of the workshop, it was to renovate her boss's kitchen. While she was working in the kitchen, her boss was sitting in the next room watching pornography on television. Every now and then, he would call out, "Come in and watch this, love." In another instance, he came up in front of a group of her colleagues and reported that he'd had a wet dream about Lisa the previous night. Lisa didn't know what to do, and in the passage that follows, you can still hear how confusing and difficult it would have been for a young woman:

> how far do you ignore this kind of shit because there's no redress there's no one to talk to you can't dob him in so he's sitting in the next room watching porn films saying come in and watch this love and you just have to take yourself away. That was the only tool I had. In hindsight, I would have taken a bat to the television, but it takes 10 years to develop that kind of agro, and I would have to, that would have fixed him. It was horrible; it was nasty.

Despite the constant harassment and isolation, the worst time in Lisa's life was when a feminist joined the council as an apprentice. While Lisa's strategy was to be as "unobtrusive as possible," this woman "would not be ignored." As an adult, Lisa recognizes that this woman's active response to the injustices and sexism were appropriate and called for. As a 17-year-old, wanting to make her difficult work life as easy as possible, Lisa didn't want to help or be seen to collaborate with this woman in case it made things more difficult for her. The men Lisa worked with

made life very difficult for this other apprentice, eventually causing her to leave. However, "the feminist" made an official complaint to both her TAFE and to a local supervisory body, prompting an investigation that eventually led to a public scandal about the council's institutionalized corruption and restructuring. At the time of the interview, Lisa was still "deeply ashamed that I never stuck up for her properly"; "I use it as a situation decider now, 'Remember when you regretted it last time'. . . . I felt like a Nazi collaborator. It's a very important life lesson."

There is a strong sense throughout Lisa's interview that she is looking back at a completely different and distant person. Talking about herself when she was a young carpenter, Lisa sounds like a compassionate parent, able to understand the system, organization, and gender relations with a clarity her young self had no awareness of. Many times during the interview, Lisa uses the expressions "in hindsight" and "in retrospect." This disjunction between present and past selves is obviously caused in part by age and maturity, but the frameworks Lisa uses to understand the discrimination she experienced as an apprentice are the political and theoretical frameworks of feminism and the gay and lesbian rights movements. In the interview, she uses a language she was to learn years after she was an apprentice, when she attended university and would finally understand what was going on at the council.

Lisa never found the work difficult, but because she was given so little direction over the 4 years, she finished her apprenticeship feeling completely unskilled and unqualified. After completing her apprenticeship, Lisa lasted only a few days as a carpenter for the council before resigning and returning to her family home in the country. There she hid for the next year, feeling depressed, disheartened, and demoralized. She knew that she couldn't be a carpenter. Not only did she not have the skills, but she also felt that she would be under constant scrutiny as a woman:

> I didn't want a life with people looking over my shoulder the whole time. I got used to it on the council, having people watching me all the time, but I thought, "No."

It is interesting to contrast this situation with Zadie's experience. Because Zadie had been involved with a women's building co-operative during her apprenticeship and been in a number of "female friendly" workplaces, she had a network of people who supported her skills, encouraged her career, and recognized her value. This allowed her to not only feel confident enough but also have the connections with construction workers and other tradespeople to start her own business partnership.

In 1992, Lisa began a social science program at a local university. Lisa loved the learning experience and quickly recognized how different it was to be in an environment where you are acknowledged and supported. Through her studies and a trip overseas, Lisa developed her confidence. She eventually moved back to the city to complete her studies and "to become a lesbian." Through studying at a university in the city, she became involved in a number of political groups and slowly came out as a lesbian. It is interesting that for both Zadie and Lisa university was the place they went to "come out." The support groups, political awareness, and academic subjects combined to make being homosexual OK.

Through her studies at the university, Lisa got a job in the biomedical engineering lab and gradually became its manager, the position she held at the time of the

interview. At the time of the interview, she was married to her partner of 5 years, Mary, and on maternity leave.

The Body

When I ask Zadie to discuss her body at work, she doesn't refer to the activity of her body but to the activity of her mind. She explains that the work doesn't need to be physically difficult: "it's just about attitude."

> An attitude of being able to do things. You know, so nothing is too overwhelming and if you're five foot two and you're building a house, that you always know how to work out how to get that beam up or when you have to ask for help and it's never about being unconfident in anyway. It's always about being competent and confident in your strengths and your abilities. If not to have the actual strength, then to be clever enough to work out a system that would make something happen which would probably be more sensible anyway and easier on everyone's backs and all that kind of stuff.

So the body is not powerful by itself; it is powerful because of what you think it can do and how cleverly you approach using it. When Zadie is engaged in building, she feels very powerful. She feels powerful and confident not because of what she knows she can do physically but because of what she knows about physicality:

> You do walk differently, and you do have a way of being in the world which I think is different. It's almost like being in a bit of a secret club about the physicality of the world and how it's constructed like this kind of world, fridges, and houses . . . .

Zadie agrees that this "secret club" was previously a men's one and notes the difference in her relationships with men when they realize that "you actually understand their world and that it's your world too." While some men are hostile to this, most are intrigued and relieved that they can let go of the "bullshit" and responsibility of being the "paternal relationship between the tradie and household person."

When I asked Zadie whether she gets the same sense of her body when she is doing anything else, she talked about the control she has in her current workplace. But interestingly, when going on to describe her control, she describes two incidents when her knowledge, power, and control were *not* recognized by others. The first incident she described was about control in building. When people came on the building site and asked a woman where the construction worker was, the visitors would respond with a disbelieving, "Naaah," when the women said that they were the construction workers. Similarly, when she produced and worked backstage in the theater, people often didn't know her position. The day of the interview, someone at the theater had not done what Zadie had asked, and she was really angry because the person's lack of compliance was because he didn't recognize who she was. In both cases, Zadie responded by asserting her position and her control. She had t-shirts made that said, "I'm the builder [construction worker], who are you?" and told the stage manager of the performance group that they could never use the space again.

There is an interesting contradiction here around the enjoyment Zadie takes from being recognized for the power that she holds. Central to Zadie's enjoyment is the

sense that she knows that she has power and control. Secondary to it, and laced with frustration, is that she also knows that others will not recognize her as being the one in control, meaning that she will have to assert it in more direct and forceful ways. In both incidents Zadie describes, it is clear that she is unrecognizable in a role of power because of her gender. Clearly, the male body is a symbol of power; therefore, a woman holding a position of power and forcing others to recognize not only that she holds power but also their own assumptions around its gendered nature involve queer embodiment. Because Zadie is politically conscious and aware, she takes pleasure from asserting her position, from making herself recognized, and from empowering herself.

Lisa's experience as a carpenter was strikingly different. Interestingly, she, too, focuses on the importance of socio-cultural political knowledge when you are going to *do* something resistant: "Not knowing anything and being 17 years old, I had no idea what I was doing." Lisa didn't think about her body. As a child growing up on the farm, she had always been strong and capable and hadn't considered that she wouldn't be able to do the physical work. She tells a story of being shocked that she could jump over a fence so easily when she returned to the family farm after a year of carpentry. She tells this story stressing that she had no awareness of her strength or physical change, even though upon reflection she recognizes that she must have looked amazing and been incredibly strong.

The young Lisa seemed to avoid thinking about her body. The council gave all of the apprentices long overalls, and she wore them all year round. She tried to neutralize her gender and sexuality as much as possible because she was aware that it was under surveillance. Men would try to look up her shorts and occasionally pinch her on the bottom. Because Lisa had little awareness of sexual discrimination, unlike the feminist she describes who took industrial action, Lisa tried to deal with this by being as "unobtrusive as possible": "I was like Teflon. Very hard to get stuff to stick to me."

Clearly, while Lisa's body was engaged in work that was nonnormative, she was not able to resist in ways that allowed transgressive embodiment. The kind of empowering strategies that Zadie used require a confidence in your position and an awareness of how that position fits into a normative gender order, whereas the only thinking that Lisa was encouraged to do about her body at work was that she was a sexual object incapable of difficult physical work.

It was only after Lisa attended university that she started to see her carpentry skills as useful. University friends and colleagues are always shocked that she was a carpenter: it's a "great party piece." Like Zadie, Lisa recognizes that being a carpenter changes the way she looks at things and enables her to solve different kinds of problems in her workplace. At the time of the interview, Lisa was using her carpentry to help make a home for herself. Lisa found doing carpentry work around the house a useful complement to full-time mothering:

> I like to do it, and I've found that . . . because babies are so repetitive and there are no actual visible signs of action other than that she's alive and cleanish I find that doing things around the house is fantastic because you can look at it at the end of the day and think I did that.

It is interesting that it is as a mother and a homemaker that Lisa has found enjoyment in carpentry as the body of the good mother is usually seen as delicate and fragile, rather than strong enough and skilled enough to build kitchen cabinets. Clearly, Lisa is now able to use her body and her knowledge in ways that she finds empowering and useful.

After reading Halberstam (1998), I thought that my case studies would reflect the type of queer masculinity she talks about as female masculinity. However, while Zadie and Lisa constantly refer to gender, they never talk about the experience of their bodies doing physical work as masculine. Their bodies are able to do things men's bodies can because the women have learnt how to and they believe they can, but they don't interpret this as a form of masculinity. So, unlike Halberstam, for whom queer masculinity is visibly blurring gender identities, for Zadie and Lisa, female masculinity is not so much about how they recognize themselves but how others recognize them and their engagement with labor processes. Zadie and Lisa's involvement in labor processes usually done by men means that their female bodies are seen to displace gender norms, engaging in a queer masculinity. But for both Zadie and Lisa, the most immediate experience of gender is that imposed by others who insist the two are very much women, even if masculine ones.

It is this idea of recognition that has important implications for education. If we assume that we can't avoid categories of gender, that they don't ever fit but that they are inevitable in the way we structure our lives, then the way that we recognize people as gendered is crucial. But it is not simply a matter of being recognized as a gender identity or category that "matches" your sense of self, even if it is as elusive a term as *queer masculinities*. For Zadie and Lisa, it seems that what is more important is that one is enabled with the skills, knowledge, and resources to recognize what gender is doing so that you can do something with it. Without these skills, you can, as Lisa did, find yourself abused, oppressed, and depressed and not knowing enough to do anything about it.

Zadie saw this knowledge beginning when she was a child when her parents fostered "seeds of resistance" in her by exposing her to differences that allowed her to see possibilities beyond what was expected. There is extensive work in education on teaching students about difference, be it racial, gender, or cultural. But what seems to be significant here is that Zadie's direct childhood experience of racial difference with her family gave her a resilience that she could draw on in later experiences of difference in her life.

It is important to recognize that both Zadie and Lisa's experience of gender changes through time according to their relationships with significant others and institutions. The moment when Zadie and Lisa could be most accurately described as engaging in queer masculinity was when they were children relatively free from gendered restrictions: tomboys but not "weird." Interestingly, this freedom, which I think many would think of as a positive induction into queer masculinity, was not experienced as such by Zadie. Instead, Zadie felt that her personal experiences were not mediated, reflected, or recognized by significant others in a way that authenticated her experience in a world that had very different expectations of gender. This could also be said of Lisa, who disliked school and then her apprenticeship partly

because she didn't have the language to reflect on the disjuncture between the gender relations in her "rough and tumble" farm life and that of the institution.

For Zadie, becoming politicized at university was the crucial resource in being able to publicly engage in sexualities and genders that weren't expected of her by the gender system. Until then, while Zadie had the seeds of resistance, she didn't have the skills or the frameworks to resist. She tried to do carpentry at school but "chickened out," and may have again if she hadn't had the exposure to political discourses that helped her theoretically understand gender frameworks. It was this background in politics that allowed Zadie to recognize discrimination and speak up and act out against it. Lisa, not having this framework until years later, felt as if her only method of survival was to be passive. She didn't understand the political implications of her entering a male-dominated trade because in the country women farm just as hard as men.

These two stories have several implications in an educational context. First, encouraging an understanding of sexualities that goes beyond simple "masculine" and "feminine" gender roles cannot be done in an ideological vacuum. Zadie and Lisa's reflections on their childhood experience show a clear awareness of themselves and their bodies and what the women saw in the world beyond that. Both needed adult help in negotiating the contradictions between the two. This leads directly to the second point. Despite, and perhaps because of, constant illustrations that gender does not fit into categories, most people who display significant difference are discriminated against. A queer project, particularly in an educational setting, needs to take this discrimination into account and the reality of it. Even equipped with her skills and knowledge, discrimination makes Zadie feel unsafe. Without such skills, Lisa is left in a much worse position of self-doubt and self-loathing, needing to spend a year unemployed being cared for by her family.

It is clear that universities provided useful spaces for Zadie and Lisa to develop political frameworks and networks to help them partake in untraditional work. Universities, like places that allow politicization, can provide skills and resources in being able to intellectually interrupt dominant practices of gender. These skills and resources are not mere abstract and academic frameworks; instead, they can be used as tools to interrupt an embodied experience of discrimination or harassment. These skills can allow individuals to reflect on the ways their bodies are experiencing the social and thereby facilitate transgressive queer embodiment that is empowering. The challenge is to extend these spaces to ensure that everyone leaving school has the resources to understand his or her own power and how power can be used by others to empower and disempower them.

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Part III
Queer Masculinities and Cultural Pedagogies

Chapter 13
Fighting Fairies, Gazing at Men: How to Become a Queer Reader

Jeffery P. Dennis

During the last thirty years, LGBT people have made themselves heard in every arena of adult life, but children and adolescents still grow up in a world of utter silence. Only 10% of high schools and virtually no elementary or middle schools in the United States offer a Gay-Straight Alliance or other LGBT organization; not one in a hundred children's books features a gay character; not one children's television program produced in the United States has ever used the word "gay." Parents still invariably ask their daughters if they have begun to "notice boys yet," coaches upbraid daydreaming boys for "thinking about girls," and English teachers assign English compositions on "what you look for in the opposite sex," as if heterosexual desire were universal and inevitable, and same-sex desire an epistemological impossibility. As a result, in spite of the few "new gay teenagers" who grow up fully cognizant of the possibility of same-sex desire and practice (Savin-Williams, 2006), most gay boys grow up believing that only laughably feminine "fairies" ever experience same-sex desire and that "real boys" must tremble with desire for "the opposite sex" or die.

Yet children's media is awash with hints and signals. Even in the most oppressively heterosexist movie, with a boy meeting, losing, and winning a girl while a soundtrack trills its approval, some characters, scenes, situations, and dialogues will always recognize same-sex desire, or even validate it, or even celebrate it. However much "they" try to erase same-sex desire with elaborate stage sets, memorized scripts, and endless prevarications, nevertheless it is commonplace. There are "queers everywhere" (Seidman, 1997, p. 99). But in order to find them, we must be trained or train ourselves in the strategies of queer reading, in seeing what is meant to be invisible, in hearing what is meant to be silenced. It may take years of false starts and dead ends; we might have to sift through many hours of Saturday morning cartoons and prime-time sitcoms, many shelves of books in the children's room of the library, but eventually, we can learn that "real boys" often desire each other and often fall in love.

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In this chapter, I will analyze the pedagogic function of the children's media that I consumed in 1969 and 1970, when I was in eighth grade and dedicated to fighting "fairies." I will not attempt to analyze everything I read or saw or listened to, but only television programs, and only those that I recall with the ecstatic joy and the ache of despair that C. S. Lewis (1955) characterized as "good beyond hope." I will demonstrate that the "good beyond hope" quality in otherwise banal and forgettable programs derives to a great extent from my success in using them as proof that same-sex desire and romantic relationships can exist, in spite of the stultifying silence or outright denial elsewhere in my childhood world. I will contend that those men and boys deprived of an LGBT subculture (as are virtually all children and adolescents) must always construct our masculinity in this way, by becoming "queer readers," forcefully dragging from media texts the possibility of love.

Washington Junior High

In the fall of 1969, I was twelve years old, living in Rock Island, Illinois, a dark, working-class factory town on the Mississippi, and just entering eighth grade at Washington Junior High School. I remember a red-brick labyrinth, dark with endless narrow passages and stairways and tall dark-oak doors marked "Girls Only," "Ninth Graders Only," and "Faculty Only," hinting at horrible consequences for trespassers. I remember rigid gender polarization: all eighth-graders took algebra, English, and general science, but otherwise boys were steered into woodshop, basketball, and Spanish, and girls into home economics, volleyball, and French (cf. Leske, 2002). No boy was permitted to enroll in home economics or volleyball, and though a few managed to sneak into French class, their peers reviled them as *fairies*.

In our junior high parlance, fairies were boys who pretended to be girls. They were shy, quiet, and pensive, good at schoolwork, and bad at sports; they didn't like to yell or run. They feigned an interest in art, music, and theater; they might have enrolled in home economics class, if it were permitted. No one ever suggested that they might be romantically interested in boys; we were all told repeatedly that every boy on Earth was attracted to girls, regardless of whether he liked poetry or music or fashion design. Yet fairies disrupted the basis of that attraction, the presumption of an absolute difference between male and female that polarized our every class, hobby, cultural object, conversation, gesture, and action (Britton, 1990; Kimmel, 1997; Walters & Hayes, 1998; Plummer, 1999; Nielsen, Walden, & Kunkel, 2000; Wiegman, 2006).

Most girls happily allowed fairies into their tight gossiping cliques, and most "real boys" tolerated or even befriended them. But my friends and I had a single mission in life: to encourage fairies to *stop it* and become real boys again. We were constantly devising clever ways to point out to the fairies the error of their feigned femininity. We leapt out from behind bushes to squirt them with *Midnight Passion* perfume, switched their sneakers for high heels while they were in gym class, sneaked lipstick into their pencil boxes, and rained bagsful of pantyhose onto

them from second-story windows. Meaner boys tripped the fairies, knocked their books out of their hands, spat on them, or simply pummeled them in the school yard, often in front of teachers who pretended not to notice since, after all, it was for their own good (cf. Epstein, 1996; Friend, 1996; Kielwasser & Wolf, 1993).

At the end of a long day of punishing fairies—and occasionally being punished myself when other real boys grew suspicious of an overly competent history report I wrote or an overly enthusiastic rendition of a Shakespeare soliloquy—it was a relief to return to my family's small green house on 41st Street, where the kitchen smelled always of chicken or pork chops frying, and watch television. In the absence of Netflix, MySpace, and Pokemon, there was little else to do, so my brother and sister and I usually watched for two hours after school and two more before bedtime, plus about four hours on Saturday morning. We didn't stare in slack-jawed passivity, as critics claim; we watched while playing, or reading books, or doing our homework, the flickering lights and murmuring voices forming a constant, soothing backdrop to our lives. But there were a few programs that I anticipated eagerly, that I couldn't bear to miss, that were "good beyond hope." Returning to those few again after nearly forty years, I realize that I was using them to give lie to our daytime struggle to rid the world of fairies. Gradually, almost unconsciously, the interaction between my life and the texts allowed me to parse out the real reason for our disapproval of the fairies' girlishness: fear of a queer masculinity, fear of a world where gender polarization was irrelevant to romantic desire, where real boys could fall in love.

Barnabas and Willie

The moment the closing bell rang, I sprinted ten blocks home in the hope of catching the last ten or fifteen minutes of *Dark Shadows* (1966–71), a Gothic soap opera about the brooding, guilt-wracked vampire Barnabas Collins (Jonathan Frid) and his immensely wealthy, occult-obsessed family. Plotlines drew from *Dracula* and every other horror classic imaginable: *Frankenstein*, *The Turn of the Screw*, *Jane Eyre*, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, and even the pulp fiction of H. P. Lovecraft. The characters traveled to the past and to the future, to parallel worlds and to the *past* of parallel worlds, until not even the writers were quite sure what was going on, but still there remained one absolute: heterosexual love was the driving force of life, so powerful that it could transcend time and space, jolting the lover to heaven, hell, and the crypts of the undead to unite with his heterosexual beloved.

Nevertheless, many of the cast members were gay or gay friendly, including Joel Crothers, Louis Edmunds, Grayson Hall, and the vampire himself, Jonathan Frid. When Don Briscoe took time off from his role as a tortured, often shirtless werewolf to appear in the gay-themed *Boys in the Band* off Broadway, he brought cast members Chris Bernau and Keith Prentice back with him. Perhaps their subtle influence made many of the male characters immune to the charms of eyelash-fluttering governesses and heiresses: the fey Noah Gifford (Craig Slocum), who has an unspecified "sinister" relationship with the gold-digging Lieutenant Forbes (Joel

Crothers); Aristede (Michael Stroka), a brooding, androgynous "manservant"; and the darkly sensuous Gerald Stiles (Jim Storm) who, although involved with women, did not shy away from expressing his devotion to Quentin Collins (David Selby). Even the most famous of the *Dark Shadows* characters, tortured vampire Barnabas, trips easily across the boundary between homosocial friendship and homoromance.

He enters the story when the slim, stuttering ne'er-do-well Willie Loomis (John Karlen), prowling around the Collins estate on the stormy coast of Maine, discovers a secret room in the old mausoleum and inside it, a chained coffin. At this point, anyone with more sense than a bullfrog would flag down the next bus to Boston, but the somewhat dimwitted Willie decides to pry off the chains and peek inside. A bejeweled hand shoots up and grabs him by the neck. The next day Barnabas Collins introduces himself to the family as a long-lost "cousin from England," and talks his way into possession of the ancient, decrepit Old House. Willie moves in with Barnabas, telling his friends that he has taken a job as his servant; yet he is obviously more than a servant. The two spend an inordinate amount of time together and are on a chummy first-name basis—a liberty taken by no other servant on the estate. The truth, of course, is that Barnabas bit him, and now they are co-conspirators, if not secret lovers. What is a vampire's bite, after all, but a form of sexual congress (Haggerty, 1998)? Costar Kathryn Lee Scott (2001) recalls that the producers, skittish about the potential for homoromance in the initial storyline, ordered a heterosexual crush for Willie and decreed that all same-sex neck-biting must occur off camera.

Eventually the strain of living with a vampire gives Willie a nervous breakdown, and he is confined to Windcliff Sanitarium. Later, Barnabas misses Willie and "wants him back." Willie retains only pleasant memories of their time together, gushing that "Barnabas and me, we were good friends—he did a lot for me," so he eagerly agrees to return. Later that evening, ally Julia Hoffman (Grayson Hall) sits alone in the drawing room of the Old House, when someone comes to the door. "Barnabas isn't here—he's with Willie," she says, with a diffident glance upstairs—to the bedrooms. Exactly what is Barnabas doing up there to welcome Willie home?

When Barnabas announces a plan to cure his vampirism by transferring his soul into a different body, Willie worries that the new Barnabas will not be interested in him (or, perhaps, that he will not find the new Barnabas attractive):

Willie: Suppose he don't like me?
Barnabas: He will be exactly toward you as I am.
Willie: You don't know that! You might come out of this all different. [Sullenly.] It won't be the same.

As Barnabas zipped back and forth between time periods and parallel worlds, he encountered different characters played by the same cast members, and John Karlen managed to infuse all of his characters with a sometimes frivolous, sometimes dark and passionate attraction to the vampire hero. For instance, in the year 1897, Barnabas meets Karlen as Gabriel Collins, a fop who could easily blend into

Oscar Wilde's green-carnation crowd (only two years after Wilde's infamous trial). Gabriel grabs his shoulder, touches his hand, takes his arm, and whispers softly in his ear, "You look so nice! We're going to be close friends, aren't we? We're going to be buddies!" And thereafter, whenever he has a problem (usually involving ghosts or werewolves), he throws himself into Barnabas's arms, overtly presenting himself as a lover.

Barnabas is so busy courting every faint-hearted governess, heiress, and girl-with-a-terrible-secret in sight that he usually responds to Willie's devotion with just a word or two, and he barely acknowledges Gabriel's flirting. But, nevertheless, I ran home breathless from school every day to watch scene after scene that permitted homoerotic desire and homoromance to exist. When John Karlen left the series to work on other projects, and male characters were no longer throwing themselves into Barnabas' arms, I felt that something immeasurably precious had been lost to the world.

Peter Brady

Few prime-time television programs were "good beyond hope." I remember being thrilled by the theme song of *Daniel Boone* ("Daniel Boone was a man...he was a big man"), but bored by the program itself. I watched *Laugh-In* on Monday, *I Dream of Jeannie* on Tuesday, and *The Flying Nun* on Wednesday because I had no choice; they were the shows the family voted for. But Friday night was a paradise: *Get Smart* (Don Adams as handsome, albeit incompetent, secret agent), *Hogan's Heroes* (World War II beefcake), *The Brady Bunch*, and, just before bedtime, *Here Come the Brides*.

The Brady Bunch seems surprising as a "good beyond hope" contender, given that during the years since it first aired, it has become emblematic of staid heteronormativity. In the famous opening sequence, four women were quite happy by themselves, but four men were "all alone," desperate for heterosexual union. Therefore "[the] group must somehow form a family." But it was not the messy, unvariegated "bunch" that the title suggests; it was a mathematically precise four-fold union of age- and size-matched and gender-polarized dyads: adults Mike and Carol, teens Greg and Marcia, older children Peter and Jan, and younger children Bobby and Cindy. It was as if the writers set out to ensure that no one could even think of resisting the presumption that all desire is heterosexual desire, that boys are incapable of desiring boys.

However much the opening tries to make the project of heteronormativity seem as stable, coherent, and solvable as a mathematical equation, viewers soon learn that it is fragile, incoherent, and doomed to failure. The patriarch and matriarch of the clan, Mike (Robert Reed) and Carol (Florence Henderson), are not opposing elemental forces, nor dark disturbing figures who unite into some mythic wholeness, but cordial best friends. Florence Henderson accounts for this lack of passion by noting that her costar was gay; but surely actors can portray passions that they don't

necessarily feel. A flick of the channel would have revealed *Bewitched,* with Darrin (gay actor Dick Sargent) intensely engaged with his wife, Samantha, and on the big screen Rock Hudson, Sal Mineo, and many others had no trouble sizzling in their heterosexual love scenes.

The strict heteronormative regimentation of the family is further disrupted by middle boy Peter (Christopher Knight), who painfully grows into adolescence as the show progresses, and frequently exhibits behavior that at Washington Junior High would have gotten lipstick shoved into his locker. He dons a Campfire Bluebird skirt to sell cookies door-to-door. When he joins the glee club, taunts of "sissy" nearly make him quit until a visiting football star assures him that "real men" can sing. When he auditions for the school play with other drama club fairies and is cast as Benedict Arnold, it is the taunts of "traitor" that nearly make him quit. But surely, if Peter were cast as Dracula, his peers would realize that the role did not reflect his true desire to bite people on the neck. Why is the role of Benedict Arnold different? Is he committing treason against the American Revolutionary army or against the gender polarization that forbids real boys from seeking solace in the theater?

Most interestingly, Peter fails to exhibit the intense desire for girls required of "real boys" by the time they reach eighth or ninth grade. He expresses heterosexual desire only twice during the course of the series, both times in a triangulation with his older brother. Every other Brady child, even Bobby (Mike Lookinland), who was still prepubescent at the series close, displays heterosexual desire more often. Perhaps it is fitting that, although Barry Williams briefly fancied himself a teen idol, only Christopher Knight successfully fashioned himself into an object of adolescent desire: he appeared seminude in teen magazines well after *The Brady Bunch* ended and developed an impressive, toned physique that he still maintains today.

Other characters and scenes through the five-year run, from a visit from Alice's hard-talking career-soldier sister to Jan's jealousy over Marcia's jiggly popularity, imbued *The Brady Bunch* with a pleasantly subdued critique of heteronormativity. In 1969 and 1970 I found on Friday nights a surcease from the "What girl do you like?" interrogations that obsessed my friends and parents and coaches and random strangers on the street.

Bobby Sherman

Here Come the Brides (1968–70) was a fairy-friendly quasi-Western that delivered lots of bare-chested bravado and created two teen idols. In the back story, idyllic, 19th-century frontier Seattle is inhabited by hundreds of tall, broad-shouldered men in tight jeans, but no women except the matronly Lottie (Joan Blondell), who runs the local saloon. So far it sounds like a homoerotic paradise, but then camp foreman Jason Bolt (Scottish actor Robert Brown) gets the silly idea that some of the men might want to date women, so he arranges for some to be transported from Boston.

These aren't mail order brides, however; they live in a dormitory with chaperones, waiting to be courted nice and proper.

Few courtships and fewer marriages actually occurred during the show's two-year run. Instead, plots mostly involved Jason's brothers, both cute and somewhat too soft to be believable lumberjacks, negotiating a colorful Old West populated by shady lumber dealers, crotchety prospectors, decadent Shakespearean actors, wannabe Mormons, snake-oil hucksters, and miscellaneous scalawags. Blond pretty boy David Soul, who played middle brother Joshua, later became a *Tiger Beat* fave-rave for his foray into pop music, and for *Starsky and Hutch* (1975–79), where he played a soulful cop in love with his partner; but for now the break-out star was Bobby Sherman, who played youngest brother Jeremy.

Jeremy was a shy outsider and a stutterer, as cuddly as a teddy bear, yet muscular enough to wander around Seattle with his shirt half unbuttoned, or sometimes off altogether. Although he was vaguely heterosexual in intent and even sweet on one of the brides, his plotlines were never heterosexist. He either rescued boys from marauders and evildoers or else got carried off by the marauders and evildoers himself, tied in a back room and awaiting a terrible fate while his older brothers mounted daring rescues. And sometimes he sang.

Bobby Sherman had been singing professionally for several years, but his career didn't take off until he became Jeremy Bolt. Suddenly he had four charting singles, and his anthem, "Julie, Do Ya Love Me?," hit 2 on the charts in September 1970. I bought his eponymous first album (1969) because the cover was a tight shot of Bobby facing the camera, nude or at least shirtless, with broad shoulders, brilliant blue eyes, and a soulful pout. The tracks were not of much interest: most had "girl" as every other word or titular protestations of Bobby's heterosexuality, such as "Little Woman" or "She's a Lady." But a vague glimmer of same-sex possibility occurs in "Hey, Mr. Sun," which charted in the spring of 1970: the lonely Bobby complains that "I've been running all my life/In search of something I can't find." Then he looks up and realizes that "Mr. Sun" will always be beside him. I found it easy to move from the anthropomorphized sun to a human boy who might "tap me on the shoulder and whisper to me from behind/Remind me of the yesterdays I tried alone."

With Love, Bobby (1970) and *Portrait of Bobby* (1970) were even more interesting, in spite of the tight head shots of the covers and the overt egotism of the titles. Bobby falls away from the incessant heterosexism of his previous efforts to offer the gender-neutral "Spend Some Time Loving Me" and "Message to My Brother," as well as an oddly oral "Sweet Gingerbread Man," which originally appeared in the early gay-themed *Magic Garden of Stanley Sweetheart* (1970). Cafarelli (2001) notes that pop music aimed at preteens often associates food with incipient sexual desire, even featuring barely veiled images of oral sex, as in the Archies' *Sugar Sugar* ("You are my candy girl") and the 1910 Fruit Gum Company's *Yummy* ("I've got love in my tummy"). And in this case I found the object of a man's oral fantasy to be "all tasty and tan, sweet gingerbread man."

Jimmy and the Dragon

In eighth grade, I was twelve and then thirteen years old, far too mature for Saturday morning cartoons; to be actively involved, or to volunteer preference for any particular show, would cause a scandal. I had to pretend to watch *Bugs Bunny* casually, just sharing space in the living room with my younger brother and sister, who were still watching avidly over their bowls of Captain Crunch. But live action programs were not cartoons, and so I felt no guilt as I petitioned to watch *H. R. Pufnstuf* (1969–1970)*,* the first of many Sid and Marty Kroft series with live actors interacting with life-sized puppets; the serial *Danger Island,* which featured Jan-Michael Vincent taking his shirt off in nearly every episode; and at 11:00, as the morning was winding down, *The Monkees,* about a pre-fab boy band.

In the opening segment of *H. R. Pufnstuf*, a cute, androgynous sixteen-year-old named Jimmy (Jack Wild of *Oliver!*), with a Beatles-style moptop and a cowboy hat, prances through a bucolic mountain countryside, playing his golden flute (it is not really gold in color but dark bronze, thicker and blockier than real flutes, and it looks extremely phallic later, as it pokes out from Jimmy's pocket). A witch named Witchiepoo (Billie Hayes), passing by on her supersonic Vroom-Broom, spies Jimmy and decides that her drafty old castle could use his youthful vitality—and his ten inches of flute. She lures Jimmy aboard a boat with the promise of a pleasant journey to Living Island. But the moment they set sail, the boat develops arms and claws to hold Jimmy securely in place as the witch laughs maniacally.

In a scene that is still frightening today, Jimmy manages to free himself from the grasping claws and dives into the dark, choppy ocean. He crawls onto a desolate beach and collapses, half-drowned and exhausted. Then help arrives. A bipedal green-and-yellow dragon named H. R. Pufnstuf resuscitates Jimmy, moves him into his cave, and dresses him in a garish Sergeant Pepper–style outfit. (One wonders where the dragon got human clothes. Had there been other Jimmys?) Later Pufnstuf introduces Jimmy to the citizens of Living Island, various animals, plants, and inanimate objects, all sentient and, witty, almost all male.

Since Jimmy is well protected, Witchiepoo turns her attention to the flute, now alive and named Freddy. Most episodes involve her grandiose, impractical schemes to steal Freddy, or, when she succeeds, Pufnstuf and company's equally grandiose, impractical schemes to retrieve him. Jimmy also mounts a few half-hearted escape attempts, but it is obvious that he has no real desire to leave Living Island. Witchiepoo is more mischievous than evil, promising excitement more than threat, and Jimmy is having the time of his life—dancing, singing, putting on plays, and otherwise engaging in *fairy* activities—with a group of friends apparently undisturbed by his gender transgressions.

The feature film *Pufnstuf* (1970) offers a more detailed backstory: Jimmy has recently moved from England to a resort town in California, where he plays the flute in the school band. During a practice session on the front lawn of a gaudy, baroque-style junior high school, a group of "real boys" insults and trips him, and he knocks over some music stands. True to junior high form, the teacher punishes Jimmy. He runs away, through a town of small brown cabins and autumn-orange trees that, for

all its beauty, promises fairies nothing but brutality and viciousness. Eventually he stops by the lake to rest. Suddenly his flute grows longer and thicker, changes color, and starts to move of its own accord—an awkward moment for Jimmy to enter puberty!

Witchiepoo happens to be flying overhead, and the plot proceeds as in the series. But now she has a homosocial motive for her designs. She believes that Freddy the Flute will be a perfect trinket to impress the other witches, especially Witch Hazel (Mama Cass Eliot), with whom she has a sort of Auntie Mame/Vera Charles rivalry.

All of the many witches we meet in the film are female, and all are aggressively heterosexual. Witchiepoo, disguised as an attractive dance instructor, tries to sneak into Pufnstuf's cave by flirting with him. Whenever she telephones Witch Hazel, their conversation consists mostly of gossip about which female witch is dating which male wizard. Living Island, however, is a veritable Fire Island, inhabited by ten male creatures and only two females, Pufnstuf's sister and a parody of Judy Garland named Judy the Frog. None of them is married or involved with the other sex, nor do any of the male residents "boing" with lust over Witchiepoo in her bodacious disguise. It was not unusual for children's films a generation ago to omit heterosexual content, but quite unusual to place it squarely in the laps of evil witches while infusing the hero and his friends with a blatantly gay sensibility.

Certainly Jimmy's cherubic cuteness and sexy Cockney accent sufficed to make the show a must-see for me in eighth grade, but I never rated a program as "good beyond hope" simply due to the presence of cute boys or muscular men. Something far more significant was going on: I found the crux of the story to be a competition between the female Witchiepoo and the male Pufnstuf over control of Jimmy's flute (his sexual potency), and it ended unequivocally in the male camp. Witchiepoo lives in a dark, sinister castle dug-through with dungeons, and Pufnstuf in a gaudy psychedelic paradise with living trees and flowers. Witchiepoo barks out orders, Pufnstuf sings and dances. Who would not choose the dragon over the witch?

Morgan and Chongo

An obsession with beefcake was obvious from the start of *Danger Island,* a serial that aired during *The Banana Splits* variety program (1968–1970). Archaeologist Professor Hayden (Frank Aletter), his daughter Leslie (Ronne Troup), and their young, tanned, and remarkably toned assistant, Link (Jan-Michael Vincent), are searching for a lost city in the uncharted South Seas. Suddenly, pirates attack. Link is knocked overboard, and sees the ship explode, so he assumes that his friends are dead and swims for the nearest island. Crawling onto the shore like Jimmy of *H. R. Pufnstuf,* but more buffed and nearly nude, he encounters a pair of long-time castaways, the tall, muscular Morgan (former footballer Rockne Tarkington) and the short, slim Chongo (professional stuntman Kahana), who is mute and somewhat addled. My brother, ten years old in 1969, spent all Saturday afternoon screaming his annoying summons, "Uh-oh, Chongo!"

The couple invite Link back to their cave-home, where Chongo fusses over him like a drag queen auntie, making him try on one inappropriately risqué costume after another and in the process "accidentally" fondling his hard chest and shoulders. Link settles on skin-tight white pants and a blue sailor shirt (but not to worry, it's always being torn open or ripped off). Meanwhile, Morgan advises him of the severity of their situation: Danger Island is overrun by wild animals, savages, and pirates, all with different specialties of murder and mayhem (thus its name). The cave and fields are secured by booby traps, but every move into the bush is perilous.

Eventually Professor Hayden and Leslie, not dead after all, join the party, and they spend many cliffhangers looking for the lost city and fighting the promised wild animals, savages, and pirates (who drool enthusiastically over hard-bodied Link). In the last episode, they have thwarted every villain and acquired a boat, and they prepare to head back to civilization. But Morgan and Chongo decline rescue: "We've been living this way too long," Morgan explains, his arm cozily around his partner's waist. "We wouldn't know how to live civilized." They say goodbye and walk off arm in arm. I cannot imagine what the actors thought they were portraying in this scene. What I saw, on a Saturday morning in the spring of 1970, was two men in love. Surely Morgan and Chongo could live "this way" quite happily in Greenwich Village or the Castro, with the first heady days of gay liberation imminent.

Davy Jones

Although former child star Micky Dolenz, with the scrunched face and anarchic wit of a young Groucho Marx, was ostensibly the leader of the teen-dream band *The Monkees*, Davy Jones, with his dark eyes and sensual pout, quickly became the standout star. He was prominently displayed on every album cover, and almost every episode required him to wear a swimsuit or prizefighter trunks or get his clothes ripped off by fans or otherwise display his slight but firm physique. The first album I ever owned was the eponymous *Monkees* (1966), purchased with my allowance money because the cover displayed Davy Jones, dirty from working out-doors, with another man's arm wrapped around his waist. Some of the tracks were gender explicit, with lots of "girls" and "babes" to prove that the boys are hetero-sexual, but many were not, including the high-charting "Last Train to Clarksville": talking on the telephone, Micky invites a loved one of unspecified gender to a final rendezvous in a train station before he goes away forever. *More of the Monkees* (1967) again had an evocative cover, with the boys in blue shirts and tight jeans gazing down suggestively at the camera. However, every track was about desperate longing for some girl, with one exception: "Laugh," which didn't chart as a single, perhaps because it was so sinister and strange:

Laugh, when you're keepin' a secret.
   And it seems to be known by the rest of the world.
Laugh, when you go to a party.
   And you can't tell the boys from the girls.

Davy Jones seems to be suggesting that fairies have a deeper secret than mere gender-transgression and that everyone knows it; they're hiding in plain sight.

The television series, which moved to Saturday mornings in 1969, after a few years in prime time, was a mélange of old Vaudeville routines, self-referential jokes, and spoofs of every movie cliché imaginable, with surprisingly little emphasis on the strictures of heteronormativity. Only 9 of 58 episodes, about 15%, involve one of the boys going ape over a girl. Indeed, Micky Dolenz refrained from practically all demonstrations of heterosexual interest. The voice-over introduction to "Monkees on the Wheel" notes that in Las Vegas, "each man seeks the things he loves most…[Shot of Peter following a girl]…the things he loves most…[Shot of Mike following a girl]…the things he loves most…[Shot of Davy following a girl]." And then the story begins. Why is Micky omitted? Because the evocation of hetero-mania has run its course, or because girls are *not* the things he loves most?

In "Monkees Mind their Manors," the group travels to England. At the airport, the boys realize that the customs agent is portrayed by Jack Williams, the show's prop master, but Williams protests: "Look, Sweetie, I may be the prop master to you, but to twenty million teenagers, I'm the Customs Man." *Sweetie?* Then he sings the Dean Martin standby "Everybody Loves Somebody Sometime" (which, incidentally, is not gender specific), and Micky, overcome with amorous hysteria, leaps into his arms.

A studied, gay-stereotyped posture has been a mainstay of comedy for nearly a century: Jack Benny maintained a prissy, limp-wristed stage persona for forty years and even pretended that his real-life wife, Mary Livingstone, was just a good friend, lest the illusion of gayness be shattered (McFadden, 1993). Thus, we need not evoke gay allies to explain the countless characters on *The Monkees* who evidence gay stereotypes, such as Sir Twiggly Toppin Middle Bottom (Bernard Fox), or who display no heterosexual interest, such as beach-movie star Frankie Catalina (Bobby Sherman), who is "allergic to girls." Nor need we conclude that any of the Monkees were "really" gay, or even gay friendly, to explain their constant touching of shoulders and chests, the cuddling together, the buddy-banter, the panicked hugging in moments of danger. Regardless of what the actors *thought* they were conveying, I found in *The Monkees* a powerful evocation of same-sex desire, among both "real boys" and fairies, as if the two categories were not so different after all.

A Real Boy

In the spring of 1970, I met my own Davy Jones. Dave was blond and slim, almost fragile, with dark blue eyes and glasses and warm hands. We had been in three classes together all year, but his interest in drama and poetry pushed him uncomfortably toward the fairy camp, so I avoided him until our English teacher, sensing that we would "like" each other, or just that we would "work well together," assigned us to be partners on a report on Greek mythology. Sometime in March, I began walking Dave home: a strategically useful tactic, since he lived only two blocks from

Washington Junior High, close enough to catch most of *Dark Shadows*. But I stayed on all afternoon and sometimes through the night. We played chess and ping-pong, and listened to records, and watched TV. We argued about who was cuter, Bobby Sherman or Desi Arnaz Jr., Link of *Danger Island* or Michael Cole of *The Mod Squad*. On Saturday afternoons, we rode our bikes downtown to see if the new *Tiger Beats* had arrived at Readmore Book World or to sort through the old Monkees singles at the Record Barn.

During the summer of 1970, we spent every day together. We took swimming lessons at the public park, and I wrapped my arms around his thin waist and bobbed him lovingly toward the deep end, his skin water-sleek, his hands grabbing frantically at mine. One night we heard Donny Osmond sing "The Twelfth of Never" on the radio, and we were both trembling. One night we wrestled on the floor in his room; we were struggling and laughing, our legs intertwined, our bodies pressed together, and then suddenly we weren't struggling anymore, and we weren't laughing.

The summer of 1970 was as vast and bright and earnest as a dream, as joyful as heaven, even though every evening's newscast told us of mounting casualties in Vietnam, where many of our older brothers fought, and silence and despair at home. I had no idea that June 28th marked the first anniversary of the Stonewall Riots or that the Gay Liberation Front was, at that moment, zapping the media with the message "We exist!" I had never even heard the word "gay." I still "knew" that desire could flow only between male and female bodies and that every boy grinned and nudged his buddies when a girl passed. Yet as I watched Barnabas and Willie every afternoon, and Jeremy and Peter on Friday night, and Jimmy, Link, and Davy Jones on Saturday morning, I also "knew" that boys could grin and nudge their buddies when a boy passed, that desire could flow between male and male or female and female. And I was no longer fighting fairies.

Expectation and Text

Since the fall of the New School of Chicago-based criticism that found meaning inherent in every text (Cain, 1984; Mao, 1996; Harris, 1996), critics have been averse to identifying what a text might "mean." As the semioticians remind us, every image is polysemous, capable of practically limitless meanings; the artist's job is to embed the image in enough contexts to delimit its meanings, to "fix the floating chain of signifieds in such way as to counter the terror of uncertain signs" (Barthes, 1993; cf. Eco, 1986; Berger, 1998). But of course, no one can totally fix an image: in cartoons and comic books, for instance, a few loops and squiggles, a few lines of dialogue, must suffice to establish that characters are male (not female), adult (not child), clothed (not naked), and sentient (not animal). Even more complex films and television programs, with sound and music and lighting, must depend upon a series of vague, unstable, and often contradictory signs (Condit, 1997; Nerlich & Clarke, 2001).

There is never a single correct way of transforming these texts into meanings, or what Stuart Hall calls "decoding" (1997, p. 15); we can never say for sure that an intent gaze or a hand on the shoulder signifies altruism, compassion, lust, tenderness, or anger. But we can acquire the tools for creating "preferred" readings through years of socialization, through decoding many texts under the strict supervision of parents and peers, through watching movies and then replaying scenes in the school yard, through following the careers of favorite actors or singers or through comparing texts with others by the same performer or with others in the same genre or with our own lives. Thus, we learn the rules of the genre, the standard plots, characters, and situations. We learn that the villain's bullets can never touch the hero; that the monster is never really dead; and, especially, that every story concludes with a boy and a girl in love.

We generally learn decoding tools within the bounds of an interpretive community, a term invented by Stanley Fish to describe groups of "true believers" who render judgments about what a text should—and can—mean (Fish, 1980, p. 173). In other words, someone you know or some book you read must impart the decoding tools to you. Studies of how gay and lesbian people interpret texts assumes that they belong to such an interpretive community, that they are immersed in a gay and lesbian subculture where they can learn the tools of creating "alternate" or "transgressive" readings of heterosexist cultural texts (Bursten, 1995; Harrison, 1997; Woods, 1998; Doty, 2000; De Angelis, 2001).

But gay and lesbian children live in a world where same-sex desire is never, ever mentioned, where no one can help them decode a text, unless it is to decode a heterosexist lie. They must interpret a text that was not produced for them, that in fact may have been produced explicitly to demonstrate that they do not exist; they must therefore develop strategies, not to find the truth so much as to create truth out of the fissures in the text, the incongruities, the anomalies, the contradictions (Briggs, 2006). They must listen selectively and remember selectively, zero in on a single gesture or tone of voice, misread, misinterpret, subvert, and appropriate, create pastiches and bricolages and slash fictions, uncover palimpsests and fossilized speech. They become, in effect, like the writers of a "minor literature" that Deleuze and Guattari discuss in their analysis of Kafka, who, by writing in an unfamiliar, alien language, can resist its oppressive qualities and find "points of nonculture or underdevelopment, linguistic Third World zones by which a language can escape" (1986, p. 27). The points of nonculture, like Julia Hoffman's glance up the stairs to the bedrooms, Bobby Sherman's "sweet gingerbread man," and Morgan's arm around Chongo's waist, cannot easily fit into heteronormative decoding schemes. So, regardless of what the performers intended, they allow us to "break free" and recognize the existence of same-sex desire, behavior, or romance.

Slippages and breakdowns in the text are not, in themselves, sufficient for a queer reading. I was indifferent to most of Dave's "good beyond hope" programs, and most of our friends at Washington Junior High were perplexed by the programs on both of our lists. Many years later, I acquired DVDs of programs on my list and showed them to friends or colleagues who were quite aware of queer potential, but they still often said things like: "Sorry, I don't see anything romantic going on between

Barnabas and Willie," "Aren't you reading too much into Morgan and Chongo?," and "Sometimes a flute is just a flute!" Queer readings require not only text but expectation or rather, the interaction of text and expectation, just as Sarah Ahmed (2006) argues that nonnormative sexual orientations arise through both desire and object: we can be drawn away from the strictures of compulsory heterosexuality through contact with a desirable object. Willie must ask "Suppose he don't like me?" in a certain tone, and I must already be looking, consciously or not, for evidence that same-sex relationships—other than tepid friendships—exist. Chongo caresses Link's arms and shoulders, and I must already be looking for evidence that some people desire intimate same-sex contact.

Different readers find different texts amenable because they use different constellations of reading "strategies" to orient and validate their expectation of desire. There are many such strategies, but in the eighth grade, I seem to have only used three: beefcake (the least important), absence of heterosexual desire (essential), and same-sex plotlines. For Dave, however, beefcake was the most important strategy, and he didn't use absence of heterosexual desire at all; instead, he preferred characters with gender-transgressive traits, such as the androgynous Keith (David Cassidy) of *The Partridge Family*.

Beefcake

Many directors and actors seem to believe that no one, male or female, gay or straight, could possibly be interested in seeing men shirtless, swimsuit clad, in tight pants, or otherwise demonstrating their physicality. Therefore, the camera lingers lovingly over the female form, backlit and in slow motion; the movie code "nudity" means *female* nudity; and men doff a few articles of clothing only when it would be absurd for them not to. Every beach scene on *Hawaii Five-O* contained effusive close-ups of every curve of every female body and then displayed the men in distant, blurry shots. *Petticoat Junction* displayed Kate Bradley's three teenage daughters in swimsuits in practically every episode, but a man doffed his shirt exactly once in 170 episodes.

Sometimes, however, the camera *does* linger on the male form. Three of the five programs on my "good beyond hope" list and all of those on Dave's list were awash with muscle; Jeremy Bolt frequently doffed his shirt on *Here Come the Brides; Dark Shadows* often depicted tortured werewolves *sans* shirts; *Danger Island* was little more than an excuse to display Jan-Michael Vincent's physique. Perhaps we should conclude therefore that sexism had decreased in 1969 and 1970 and that directors still believed that everyone on Earth was heterosexual but were willing to accede that some were female heterosexuals.

But a mere decrease in sexism cannot explain the presence of frequent beefcake images in the programs that I watched, on the record albums I listened to, and in the tie-in paperbacks I read in eighth grade, before the wide-scale erasure of the male body in the 1970s media. And even if the directors did believe that these images

would delight every woman on earth (Goddard, 2000), while every man and boy would shrink away in disgust, waiting with downcast eyes for the next shot of a babe, their heterosexist presumptions are irrelevant. The gaze has no gender, no sexual identity: it allows anyone that elemental shock of joy and pain, the longing to touch and be touched that signifies desire (Gibson, 2004). For me, beefcake alone was not sufficient to make a program "good beyond hope," but it opened the door. When it was combined with lack of heterosexual interest or same-sex plotlines, it allowed me to conclude that, maybe, regardless of what the encoders believed, a desire for men was possible after all (Mulvey, 1992; Steinman, 1992; Evans & Lorraine, 1995; Nixon, 1997).

Lack of Heterosexual Interest

Most of the programs that my family voted to watch, from *The Dating Game* to *Love, American Style*, were obsessed with demonstrating that every boy, without exception, likes girls. In 1969 and 1970, there was a fad of programs about "impossible" heterosexual couples—widow and ghost, casino owner and nun, man and genie, man and witch—to demonstrate that universal heterosexual desire can transcend all barriers. But three of the programs on my "good beyond hope" list featured characters with little or no heterosexual interest, and two omitted hetero-romantic interactions altogether. With the need to demonstrate heterosexuality so strong, with the screams of "You must like girls!" so incessant and intense, both in the media and in everyday life, the absence of a specific avowal becomes a welcome relief, like silence after a deafening roar. And in the silence, we can think clearly. When Willie of *Dark Shadows* expressed no interest in girls (except during his initial plotline), I could finally "notice" that his devotion to Barnabas Collins had a romantic undertow. When Peter Brady expressed no interest in girls, I could finally "notice" what the fairies were hiding in plain sight.

Dave was not particularly swayed by characters lacking heterosexual interest. His list even included *That Girl,* about a heterosexual courtship between an aspiring actress and a cute journalist. He found displays of male physicality so powerful that he could use them to "see" even when the men in question enthusiastically wooed women.

Same-Sex Plotlines

Most texts, especially those encoded within the last half-century, are built around heterosexual desire. That is, the plots are driven by a male protagonist's desire to meet, fall in love with, have sex with, marry, or rescue a woman. Princesses must be won, slain wives avenged, girls next door selected over spoiled debutantes, prostitutes reformed, enemy spies wooed, librarians wooed, cowgirls wooed, friends' sisters wooed. In these scenarios, a man's choice of vacation site, military

service, college enrollment, class enrollment while in college, sports participation, and religious observation all are based on the proximity of pretty girls.

But occasionally one finds plots built around same-sex desire; that is, plots are driven by a male protagonist's desire to meet, maintain a relationship with, or rescue a man. All of the programs on my "good beyond hope" list contained extensive, frequent same-sex plotlines. Morgan and Chongo rescued each other from certain doom a dozen times a week. Jeremy Bolt subverted gender-polarized plotlines and became a "damsel in distress," requiring rescue by his male companions. Davy Jones of *The Monkees* used his charm, wit, and erotic appeal to symbolically rescue many a shy, inhibited teenage boy.

Both Dave and I found same-sex plotlines the most potent of all. They were romantic in all but the name. Especially when they were combined with beefcake or lack of heterosexual interest, they required only the slightest, most casual of intent to allow for a queer reading and to recognize the possibility of love.

Conclusion

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* published the year I stopped fighting fairies (1970, 2000), Paulo Freire disputes the then-common pedagogic model of student as "empty vessel," waiting to be filled with the teacher's knowledge. He suggested a more positive model of both student and teacher as "incomplete," helping each other toward wholeness. Everyone growing up in a heteronormative society is certainly "incomplete," struggling toward true selves that they cannot even recognize—especially boys, who must overcome the additional strictures of gender polarization and hegemonic masculinity. To a great extent all boys—gay, bisexual, straight, or questioning—must learn to become queer readers.

But few formal pedagogic techniques other than the standard—avoiding heteronormativity, acknowledging difference, and addressing texts from multiple subject-positions—can assist youth in such a private process, particularly when we include differences in cultural backgrounds and life experiences. Dave and I grew up at the same time and in the same place, attended the same school, and watched the same programs, yet we had quite different strategies. Attempts to teach "queering" as a general decoding skill usually fail. Students can certainly learn techniques of locating same-sex plotlines, characters lacking in heterosexual interest, or male physicality, but becoming a queer reader requires both text and expectation. Without expectation, queering the text becomes nothing more than an interesting intellectual exercise.

In the end, as long as children's media remains oppressively silent, it is up to the children themselves to break the silence. As long as no boy on *Hannah Montana* ever tells another boy "I think you are cute!" except as a put-down or a joke, and no boy on *The Suite Life of Zack and Cody* ever asks another boy for a date, except in a "hilarious" misunderstanding, it remains up to the children to find their own meanings. In the words of Alice Walker (1992, p. 138), "You yourself are your last hope."

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Chapter 14
"Please Sir! Can I Come Out of the Closet and into the Classroom?": British Low Culture and Representations of Queer Masculinities in Education

Peter Hughes Jachimiak

This proposed chapter considers representations of queer masculinities in popular culture as cultural pedagogy. As such, it aims to make explicit the pedagogical role of both the *presence* and, perhaps more importantly, the *absence* of queer masculinities in the cultural representations of schools, schooling, and schoolchildren. Offering quintessentially British case studies that possess global resonances, I intend to draw from what Leon Hunt (1998) refers to as "'[b]ehind the school desk' fiction" (p. 75)—such as weekly comics and mass-market "pulp" novels—all illicitly read by schoolchildren during school hours. Additionally, this chapter will examine television sitcoms, dramas, films, and so on that are aimed at not only children and young adults but also adults and present (misrepresent even) the schoolchildren, schools, its environments, and ideologies. For example, *Please Sir!*, a highly popular ITV television series of the 1970s, now available via nostalgia-oriented Network DVD, or the more "honest" and "gritty" *Grange Hill*, recently decommissioned by the BBC after its 30-year run. Produced during an era when the low end of popular culture tended to be openly racist, sexist, and homophobic, this chapter insists that such texts, as per hegemonic cultural pedagogy, implicitly reproduce the heterosexual status quo, while simultaneously suppressing homosexuality.

By examining the intersections between the categories/concepts of *queer masculinities* and *education*, the aim of this chapter (in line with the broader aims of this reader) is to propose an understanding of the range and layers of meanings and practices of those intersections as well as offering the possibility for imaginatively reconstructing the categories/concepts themselves. Indeed, this chapter encourages—instead of the unquestioned absence of queer masculinities from the classroom—the introduction of non-differential attitudes (while, at the same time, being appreciative of "difference"), not only within schools and schooling but, perhaps more importantly, cultural representations of education more generally. In turn, it is hoped that this will help to advance the meanings and/or practices of queer

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masculinity in education, especially as this plays out within the context of popular culture as a contested site of cultural pedagogy.

Coming Out of the Closet: Queerness and the Opening Up of Identity Politics

According to Chris Haywood and Máirtín Mac an Ghaill, in *Men and Masculinities: Theory, Research, and Social Practice* (2003), the West, in the 1990s, was swept by a wave of queer politics—fundamentally a set of deconstructive ideologies that, collectively, was concerned with the positive destabilization of socially and culturally given forms of identities, classifications, and stereotypes. At the heart of this destabilization, Haywood and Mac an Ghaill stress, was the already recognized gay and lesbian movement. Yet, queer politics encouraged the members of this movement to re-evaluate their social identities further in line with a more extensive "range of political identifications/alliances that are in the process of being assembled" (p. 139). In effect, this can be better understood as a more communal, concerted *coming out* of the gay and lesbian movements within the intellectual arena. The notion of coming out itself emerged from the activism of the Gay Liberation Front: Formed in the United States in July 1969, and launched in Britain in 1970, the front materialized out of the joint legacy of Black Power and second-wave feminism, which, combined, helped to crystallize the ongoing agenda for identity politics into the new millennium. Dunphy (2000) makes explicit that the process of coming out is a highly politicized act that is founded upon three intersections:

> [C]oming out to oneself by accepting one's homosexuality as an identity to be proud of; entering into a community by forming not just relationships but social and political alliances with others of a similar sexual orientation in safe places, and creating such safe places if they didn't exist; and coming out to the wider heterosexual society of family, friends and workplace. (p. 57)

As a result of such individualistic/societal intersections, and the associated queering of identity politics, academics have been encouraged to also "come out" and produce a rich body of work concerned with gay and lesbian studies that has resonated out into the area of gender studies more broadly, providing "a philosophically rich range of concepts…including deconstructing the hetero/homo boundary, the heterosexual matrix and gender performativity" (Haywood & Mac an Ghaill, 2003, p. 139). Haywood and Mac an Ghaill go on to insist that, as a typically utopian postmodern political stance, queer theory "celebrates the transgressive potential, both discursive and social, of the implosion of existing gender and sexuality categories, enabling us to reimagine inhabiting a range of masculinities and femininities" (p. 140), whereby "queer activists emphasize the openness, fragmentation and diversity that infuses contemporary ways of being" (p. 140). Quite crucially, though, queer politics is not restricted to conceptualizing the gay or lesbian community, or being used by those researching/writing purely in the areas of gay/lesbian and gender studies, as it is, in a truly "the-personal-is-political" manner, open to a range of oppressed and exploited minorities.

Queerness, Campness, Masculine Strangeness, and Humor

Masculine queerness, especially on British film and television screens, is, more often than not, represented by a "camp" character—"a character who is sexually 'out of place'" (Boyd-Bowman, 1982, p. 56). According to Brett Mills in *Television Sitcom* (2005), any attempt to portray homosexuals in a sympathetic light is fundamentally flawed by a heritage of "camp" characters that, if not overtly gay, have drawn upon the acceptable ways in which homosexuality has historically been represented within British culture more generally. British Low Culture, especially television sitcoms, "consistently coded homosexuality through campness, to the point where the two are indistinguishable and the former only exists in relation to the latter; indeed, the majority of gay characters are shown to be homosexual not through any kind of sexual activity, but instead by their being camp" (Mills, 2005, p. 123). Quite simply, "[i]n British comedy campness is funny, not homosexuality; [as] the latter hardly exists" (ibid., p. 125).

Mark Simpson, in *Male Impersonators: Men Performing Masculinity* (1994), discusses Laurel and Hardy's classic *Their First Mistake* (1932), where, looking after an infant, and sharing a bed to do so, Ollie bottle-feeds Stan to sleep in an exemplary moment of their cinematic "sissy-buddy" relationship. Quite crucially, Simpson insists that "[t]he scene's humour depends precisely upon reading this as both 'innocent' and queer, with the second reading held under the first" (p. 274). While Laurel and Hardy are, obviously, not depicted as homosexual, they are, especially in this instance, not entirely heterosexual either, for their "dalliance with perverse signifiers—their queerness—is actually a measure of their gender nonconformity as much as, if not more than, a sign of sexual deviation" (p. 274). Bearing in mind that *Their First Mistake* was screened in 1932, Simpson suggests that in the years following the on-screen performances of their male/male partnership, homosexuality has, instead of something that can be characterized by its greater-than-before visibility, become something that is increasingly renounced in male/male relationships. If "male-to-male ties were once taken to be 'the symbol of innocence itself' then perhaps this was only through a suspension of disbelief that is no longer tenable in an era when homosexuality is so much more visible" (p. 279). Rather more radically speaking, Simpson turns to Michel Foucault with regard to this trend: "In an interview towards the end of his life, Foucault suggested that the rise of homosexuality as an identity has coincided with the disappearance of male friendships" (p. 279). So, any queer re-watching/re-reading of Laurel and Hardy—indeed, any of the cultural case studies that follow in this chapter—will be tinged with a queer innocence that follows the loss of male friendships.

This chapter will, at many points, draw from case studies that are unmistakable examples of British Low Culture (children's comics, film, sitcom, pulp fiction—but all with a schools and schooling focus). In doing so, it will question what should be acknowledged as queer masculinities. The very multiplicity of the use of the term "queer masculinities" will suggest that queer masculinities are to be better understood as "multiple performances" of masculinity, be it heterosexual, homosexual, camp, rebellious, ambiguous, institutional, and so on.

Buggery, Beatings, and *Ripping Yarns*—Public Schooling and Queerness

The American sociologist Erving Goffman, in his classic study *Asylums: Essays On the Social Situation of Mental Patients* (1961), conceived of not just prisons and the army, but, more significantly, schools, as what he termed "total institutions." All-encompassing, in which every human action is regimented and aligned to a timetable, perhaps the epitome of the school as "total institution"—indeed, as absolutely central to the maintenance of the Establishment, and the Empire beyond—is the "all-boys-together" British public school. Acknowledging public schools as the "nurseries of empire," Jonathan Rutherford, in *Forever England: Reflections on Masculinity and Empire* (1997), notes that they "constituted a form of life" to boys of both the upper and upper-middle classes, with the adoption of in-house jargon becoming "[t]the language of a national culture and its empire" (p. 15), with the wearing of a blazer, cap, and colors denoting your position amid a hierarchy within a hierarchy. At a Shrewsbury public school following World War I, one pupil recalled his lowly position within such a hierarchy as bordering on slavery: "There was also fagging…The monitors simply shouted DOUL: at the call, all boys who had not been in the House for two years had to stop whatever they were doing and come running. My housemaster explained with some pride that doulos was the Greek for slave" (cited in, Gunn & Bell, 2003, p. 156). Yet, despite the reality of a slave-like existence, the 1863 report of the Public School Commission proudly announced the paramount position that public schools now occupied in the national consciousness, so much so that "[b]y the turn of the century their ideologues had won over the middle classes, and sizable parts of the more respectable working class" (Rutherford, 1997, p. 15).

George Orwell (an ex–public school pupil and once a teacher himself), in his seminal essay for the magazine *Horizon* (March 1940) entitled "Boys Weeklies," made explicit that, regarding the representation of the all-male public school (specifically the "sleep-over" boarding school variety) in such boys' turn-of-the-century periodicals as the *Gem* and the *Magnet,* this kind of school environment very much appealed to boys from the lower classes: "It is quite clear that there are tens and scores of thousands of people to whom every detail of life at a 'posh' public school is wildly thrilling and romantic. They happen to be outside that mystic world of quadrangles and house colours, but they can yearn after it, daydream about it, live mentally in it for hours at a stretch" (Orwell, 1940, p. 467). In addition to life at a public school being something that boys of all classes aspired to, it was the version of Empire-building masculinity that proved especially aspirational. For, from the late 1800s until the end of the World War I, "[t]heir ideals of manliness were the national ideal" (Rutherford, 1997, p. 15).

Orwell, intrigued as to how these "two-penny weeklies" still proved popular in the Depression-tarnished 1930s, notes that any mention of sex in the *Gem* and the *Magnet* is, of course, "completely taboo, especially in the form in which it actually arises at public schools" (p. 465). The absence of sex—in particular, any forms of

queerness such as homosexuality—in such public school tales found in the *Gem* and the *Magnet* was, significantly, a result of it previously being overbearingly present in similar texts: "[T]he *Boy's Own Paper*, for instance, used to have its correspondence columns full of terrifying warnings against masturbation, and books like *St. Winifred's* and *Tom Brown's Schooldays* were heavy with homosexual feeling" so "[w]hen the *Gem* and *Magnet* were started, it is probable that there was a deliberate intention to get away from the guilty sex-ridden atmosphere that pervaded so much of the earlier literature for boys" (Orwell, 1940, p. 465). Yet, despite such attempts to rid the public school—and the popular literatures that represented their lifestyles—of any traces of queerness, they, due to their continued emphasis upon camaraderie and hierarchical subservience, remained arenas of queer homosexual practices, quite often, of course, as a result of overzealous efforts to purge queerness from within their walls: For, "the homophobia of the schools precipitated sexual ambivalence, frustration and a predisposition to sexual brutality" (Rutherford, 1997, p. 15).

With this institutional brutality in mind, Gravett and Stanbury, in *Great British Comics: Celebrating a Century of Ripping Yarns and Wizard Wheezes* (2006), note that the liberal reformer Thomas Arnold, as the headmaster of Rugby School, the setting for *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, managed to expose such educational injustices as early as 1857. Yet, Gravett and Stanbury also assert that, despite Arnold's revelations and the *Gem* and the *Magnet*'s attempt to refute such allegations, the boys' public boarding school was to remain firmly ingrained within the public's mind throughout the twentieth century as a place of eccentric sadism. For, more than 100 years after *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, Lindsay Anderson was to direct his scathing condemnation of the boys' public boarding school—*If. . .* (1968). As Gravett and Stanbury remind us, *If. . .*is "a radical indictment of the education system, and of British society in microcosm, that ended in violent revolution by the pupils" (p. 80). According to Andrew Calcutt in *Brit Cult: An A–Z of British Pop Culture* (2000), the film also "demonstrates the real energy of youth while the public school functions as an allegory for all regimented, hierarchical institutions" (p. 28). Furthermore, Andrew Spicer, in *Typical Men: The Representation of Masculinity in Popular British Cinema* (2001), claims that "Anderson used the public school as a metaphor for a moribund, brutal and corrupt English culture run by masters who are perverts, eccentrics or nonentities" (p. 159). In other words, *If. . .* underlined the fact that not just the public school system, but the British Establishment itself, was riddled to the core with a queerness.

If. . ., though, manages to critique both the public school and sadistic behavior within its walls through—not the inclusion of the standard model of the wholesome filmic male "hero" (see Beynon, 2002, p. 65)—but the memorable performances of a trio of rebellious "anti-heroes": Mick Travis (Malcolm McDowell), Wallace (Richard Warwick), and Knightly (David Wood). Their queer take on revolt "escalates from growing a moustache, drinking gin and smoking, to stealing a motorbike, firing at the cadet corps and finally machine-gunning the assembly of staff, dignitaries and parents at Founder's Day" (Spicer, 2001, p. 159). Significantly, their queer

rebellion is performed not only through acts of subversion of rules, crime, and violence but through the romanticism of the public school's perverse sexual stigma: "They were sexual rebels too, as shown in the ... delicate lyricism of Knightly's affair with the younger pupil Bobby Philips" (Spicer, 2001, p. 159). Although a choice of queer "anti-heroes" should come as no surprise, as Ali Catterall and Simon Wells, in *Your Face Here: British Cult Movies Since the Sixties* (2001), explain, the film was originally scripted by "two disaffected schoolboys" (p. 44). While attending Tonbridge public school during the 1950s, David Sherwin and John Howlett were subjected to what Sherwin described in his diaries as "nightly beatings and buggery" (cited in Catterall & Wells, 2001, p. 40). Sherwin adds that such a queer system, of course, was exacerbated by there being "[n]o mother" and "[n]o father" present (cited in Catterall & Wells, 2001, p. 40), so, as a result, "[p]arental love was superseded by intense romantic bonds between boys, which often endured for a lifetime" (Rutherford, 1997, p. 15).

Yet, even during the mid-1970s, there was still a desire, within aspects of British Low Culture, to revisit and ridicule the public school system. Michael Palin's television series *Ripping Yarns* (the very title of which harks back to those days of Empire, and the telling of the adventures to be found at its peripheries in boys' periodicals such as the *Gem* and the *Magnet*), with the episode entitled "Tomkinson's Schooldays" (broadcast January 7, 1976), manages not only to parody the romanticized camaraderie but to invert—with a truly queer sensibility—the sexual perversion meted out by teachers upon the pupils in the name of discipline. Depicting the experiences of such "new bugs" as Tomkinson at the fictional public school Graybridge, in one highly memorable scene, set outside the headmaster's study, the audience—hearing the "thwack" of buttocks being hit and the gasps of resulting pain—expect to see a line of tearful pupils leaving the confines of the study. Instead, upon the opening of the paneled door, the pupils leave in a sprightly manner, while the sweating and shortness of breath show signs of sexual satisfaction having been on the receiving end of physical punishment. As such, this is an "inversion of the cliché" (Pixley, 2004), a further queering of what was already, in the public's collective consciousness, a historically queer aspect of the Establishment's many institutions.

Softies Boys and Mustachioed Wives—"The Bash Street Kids"

By the late 1950s and early 1960s, such increasingly outdated representations of institutionalized schooling held less and less appeal to your average post-1945 "baby boomer." Following the decline of the Empire, and the Labour Party-era questioning of the relevance of the upper classes and the Establishment, education now took place amid the "white heat of technology" that was personified by the bright, new inner-city Secondary Moderns. So, from the late 1950s onward, children's literature—in pursuit of more realistic, "kitchen sink" representations of schools and schoolchildren—tended to move out of the "paneled halls" of the

boarding schools, onto the "asphalt playgrounds" of the Secondary Moderns. For example, the *Jim Starling* series of books by Edmund Hildick, the first of which was published in 1958, were set where the author was born, raised, and worked as a teacher: the bleak, industrial working-class north of England. Thus, Jim Starling goes to Cement Street Secondary Modern School, Smogbury, and is—according to John Rowe Townsend in *Written for Children: An Outline of English-language Children's Literature* (1987)—"taught not by formidable gowned pedagogues but by ordinary teachers doing their best in grim surroundings" (p. 261). Of course, the Secondary Moderns were not only to form the settings for such a dreary, black-and-white version of Britain of the late 1950s but to also eventually provide the day-glo children of the 1960s with an outlet for chaotic humor: enter the comic-strip "The Bash Street Kids."

Leo Baxendale's "The Bash Street Kids" first stormed into *The Beano* on February 13, 1954, with *The Beano* itself, one of Britain's longest-running children's comics, first published in 1938, by D. C. Thomson, Dundee. Yet, even then, in the early 1950s, his new series was feverishly ushering in the new era of kids' comics. As previously mentioned, prior to "The Bash Street Kids," the predominant representation of education and schooling was that of pompous public schools, so Baxendale (in comic strip form, rather than literature), intent on both portraying, and appealing to, working-class children, states: "I intended something very different: to present 'ordinary' secondary-school children. . .so that "Bash Street" would appear near to the everyday life of the greater number of children in the country" (cited in Gravett & Stanbury, 2006, p. 85). The strips' weekly procession of the "Kids" (Wilfred, Sidney, Herbert, Smiffy, Toots, Danny, Plug, Fatty, Jimmy, Ella, and Teddy), drawn in every conceivable shape and size, suggested that here was a school—on "Bash Street" of course—that was "populated by misfits with spots and jug-ears. . .and was [as such] vastly amusing for eight-year-olds at the time" (Sabin, 1996, p. 29). This was, then, a strip that included queer-looking kids that equally queer-looking readers could readily associate with. Crucially, Baxendale, while cleverly maintaining the outdated symbolism of the gown and mortarboard for his nameless "Teacher," made "The Bash Street Kids" highly conspicuous as the epitome of a new breed of Secondary Moderns' unteachable pupils by, each week, making explicit their hatred for homework and their scruffily rebellious refusal to adhere to their uniform.

Before we examine, in detail, "The Bash Street Kids," we should consider how children's comics and the comic strips within "worked" during this period, and how they tended to depict queer masculinities. Marshall (1977), giving reasons as to how and why comics "connect," insists that their mass appeal was a result of "familiarity" and "regularity," stressing that "[s]uch familiarity breeds in the child not contempt but comfort," while "[t]he regularity. . .provides something to look forward to" (p. 54). Comics such as *The Beano*, within which "The Bash Street Kids" regularly appeared, comforted their young readers each week with a plethora of familiar characters. *The Beano* openly encouraged disdain for both the weak and those in authority, as it was "powerful in gag humour and slapstick, with a stubborn toughness and scorn for the higher virtues" (Perry & Aldridge, 1967, p. 51).

Anthony Easthope, in *What a Man's Gotta Do: The Masculine Myth in Popular Culture* (1986), takes a look inside *The Beano*, and contemplates the range of queer masculinities on offer, finding "weak" forms of masculinity such as homosexuality, albeit covertly.

Easthope, analyzing David Law's "Dennis the Menace," another of *The Beano*'s highly popular characters, makes explicit that the strips' representation of masculinity is founded upon a simplistic binary of "menaces" (Dennis) and "softies" (Walter) that are, primarily, visually defined in opposition to one another. So, whereas Walter, who regularly appears with neatly parted hair, spectacles, and a blue V-necked sweater with a shirt and bow tie underneath, is the epitome of orderly obedience, Dennis—each week, without fail—sports a hedgehog-like spiked haircut and red-and-black crew-neck jersey with matching football socks. Within the context of a comic that openly scorned higher virtues, Walter's adherence to respectable clothing approved of by adults is an "otherness"—queerness even—to Dennis's ragged ensemble (the latter, of course, envied by his young, mostly male, readers).

Moreover, "[t]he pairing of Walter and Dennis gives the dominant codes of what is masculine and what effeminate for a wide range of male behaviour. . .Dennis is physically strong, Walter is weak, and in one episode Dennis mixes concrete while Walter mixes a cake" (Easthope, 1986, p. 29). Walter's male queerness, though, is predominantly signified through what he *does* do (i.e. what Dennis *does not* do)—for while Dennis endlessly fights and swaggers, Walter, in stark contrast, can be seen to both faint and swoon. Yet, Walter, so obviously "different" (and, certainly, more "feminized") from Dennis, is, quite crucially, firmly heterosexual, as Walter is shown to frequently mix with girls his own age and, on occasion, "gives gifts of flowers and perfume to women" (Easthope, 1986, p. 29).

Comics like *The Beano* and strips like "The Bash Street Kids" have been recently revisited and reappraised with the BBC4 series *Comics Britannia*, noting that "Teacher" was a "complex character," both "authority figure and underdog." Living in a house where the railings were canes, gateposts had mortarboards upon them, and piles of unmarked homework spilled out of rubbish bins, Baxendale, commentating over shots from the strip, draws our attention to his rendering of Teacher's wife: "Crucially, there's Teacher's wife in the window, holding a big lunch— 'bangers 'n' mash,' of course! Now, she looks exactly like Teacher. She's got Teacher's moustache. That raises the question, was Teacher married to his sister?" With the series' narrator then admitting that "[f]ew children would've picked up on that kind of ambiguity," we are left with the feeling that Baxendale, with "The Bash Street Kids"—and Teacher and his wife especially—was keen to subvert our understanding of what is normal by sneakily introducing elements of queerness into his work.

Hansen (2004) declares Leo Baxendale as "a national treasure, and the last surviving link to those halcyon days of British comics glory now sadly gone" (p. 33). So, with this in mind, we can, perhaps, read "The Bash Street Kids" in a similar way to Simpson's sympathetic interpretation of Laurel and Hardy. Baxendale, "The Bash Street Kids," and that strip's representation of "Teacher" in his queer relationship with his wife, represent a golden age of British comic-strip queerness,

when "soft lads" and "mustachioed wives" graced the pages of such "funnies"—whereby, the passing off of the odd as reassuringly comforting brings about, once again, Simpson's "impossible contradiction" of "innocence and queerness."

Reel Teachers: *Carry On Teacher* and *Please Sir!*

Susan Ellsmore, in *Carry On Teachers! Representations of the Teaching Profession in Screen Culture* (2005), sets out, by way of examining the portrayal of schools and schooling on television and in film, to differentiate between, yet draw comparisons with, the "real" experiences of actual teachers and their portrayal by their on-screen versions—what she terms "the *reel* world of teaching" (p. vi). Released in 1959, *Carry On Teacher* is essentially a typically quaint, black-and-white British film of the early postwar period. Indeed, Ellsmore explains that what characterizes the early *Carry On* films is their attempt to poke fun at the institutions that typified the British Welfare State's tackling of five great societal ills that faced the country during the late 1940s and entire 1950s: squalor, disease, ignorance, idleness, and want. As such, "the introduction of a National Health Service to fight disease was portrayed in *Carry On Nurse*, the second in the series, and the development of the education system to combat ignorance in the third, *Carry On Teacher*" (Ellsmore, 2005, p. 5).

As with the series' films before it, *Carry On Teacher* was a non-threatening look at institutional Britain. Essentially "a rose-tinted social document of the British way of life in the 1950s" (Ross, 1998, p. 21), lightheartedly addressing the era's "youth problem" at the time of—both real and on-screen—youth rebellion, it was all mortarboards and chalk dust rather than in-class insolence and violence. So, "[w]hile Glenn Ford was dealing with sluggish teen angst and Bill Haley–obsessed rocking rebels in *The Black Board Jungle*, the experienced farceurs at Pinewood struggled to survive itching powder and a defaced piano: more Billy Bunter and Greyfriars than James Dean and the juvenile court" (Ross, 1998, p. 21). *Carry On Teacher*, then, is "a delightfully naïve vision of the education system" (Ross, 1998, p. 22).

Carry On Teacher is set in Maudlin Street, a chaotic inner-city Secondary Modern School where, as "the teachers are always yelling and the pupils are always rebelling" (Anon., 2004, p. 3), discipline is clearly a problem for Mr. Wakefield the headmaster (played by Ted Ray), to such an extent that he is determined to apply for a job as head of the far more tranquil and idyllic "School of Offord, New Town, Sussex." Meanwhile, an inspector from the Ministry of Education visits, accompanied by an up-and-coming child psychologist, Alistair Grigg (Leslie Phillips), who aims to conduct research at Maudlin Street for his forthcoming book, *Contemporary Juvenile Behaviour Patterns*. Furthermore, the underlying ideological debate that runs through the film is that of liberal educational attitudes versus the (then) necessity for corporal punishment.

Drawing from D. H. Hargreaves' *The Challenge for the Comprehensive School: Culture, Curriculum, and Community* (1982), Ellsmore insists that such a "reel

world" of teachers reflects the spectrum of beliefs and values held by their equivalent in the "real world" of teaching: Indeed, "[w]ith these diverse characterizations, *Carry On Teacher* particularly plays to audience memories of their own real world of teachers as 'a motley collection of individuals'" (Ellsmore, 2005, p. 6). This call for an awareness of the nuances among teachers (especially male as, during the 1950s, it was mainly a male profession) is echoed in Edward Blishen's near-contemporaneous novel *Roaring Boys: A Schoolmaster's Agony* (1955). Based upon his own experiences of being a teacher in an inner-city Secondary Modern, the main protagonist is known as "Mr. Sums" by the boys in his English and arithmetic class as a result of his "reliance on arithmetic as a form of punishment" (p. 23).

One day, toward the end of term, "Mr. Sums" is summoned to the headmaster's room:

> I had little to do with Mr. Penny. He had been teaching for forty years and was very close to retirement. Much of his sense of individuality of boys and situations had gone, and he had given up reacting to new people altogether. In his eyes most men under the age of fifty were one man, and he called this one man "young fellow." (p. 25)

In stark contrast to his head's ignorance of his, and everybody else's, "individuality," one of his pupils—David Tring—possessed a heightened sense of perception regarding teachers and the "difference" among them:

> He was reading a simple book about animals. Animals fascinated him; he had the passion of a true zoologist. The odd behaviour of lions or elephants amused and interested him as though they had been his classmates. "Do you know," he was always saying; and then he would cite some eccentricity of animal conduct. (p. 32)

As a result of Tring's near-obsession with zoology, Blishen goes on to explain that such a "skill" led Tring to be able to playfully differentiate, with ease, among teachers' behavior:

> "You're not a bad teacher," he went on. "But you don't keep order very well, do you? I don't blame you. We're terrible boys." He put his elbow on the desk and gave me a parody of a piercing look. "You don't keep order like Mr. Bonner, do you?" he said. "Fetch me the cane, boy! Hold out your hand, boy!'" Tring chuckled. "Very queer," he said. (p. 32)

Blishen/"Mr. Sums" then reflects upon this boy's view in which teachers, and the difference among them, were amusingly "very queer":

> He was poignantly different from the others…He regarded us all as though we were zoological specimens. We were a vast storehouse of odd behaviour, and the teacher was no less intriguing. (p. 33)

In turn, then, *Carry On Teacher* should be reconsidered regarding queer masculinities' striving to acknowledge and accentuate (not necessarily as "zoological specimens" as such, but akin to that, in a less Darwinian, more identity politics, sense) the characteristic differences among men—especially those of a queer nature. As well as acknowledging the acting head, Mr. Wakefield, we must acknowledge that there is Mr. Adams, the "frustrated" scientist (played by Kenneth Connor); the French and music teacher Mr. Bean (Charles Hawtrey), an amateur musician who performs his own work during school productions; and the English teacher,

Mr. Milton. Milton (played by Kenneth Williams, who, increasingly through his life, played upon his accentuated campness on talk shows and the like) "walks about the film in his flamboyant, energetic personification of the dedicated and understanding teacher" (Ross, 1998, p. 22). Despite that all of his fellow male teachers adhere to dressing in traditional robes, Milton—in an effort to break down barriers between him and his pupils—dons far more contemporary, casual clothes, such as slacks and a checkered tie. Most significantly, his contentious views regarding the harmful effect of corporal punishment meted out by his colleagues are aired in one of the film's most caustic (yet amusing) lines: "Extraordinary theory, you bend a child double in order to give it an upright character!" As Ross (1998) exudes, this is "vintage Williams without the eye-popping innuendo of later productions" (p. 22).

Regarding any "reading" of *Carry On Teacher*—in relation to furthering the meanings and/or practices of queer masculinity (especially as this plays out within the context of popular film as a contested site of cultural pedagogy)—we must, like the David Trings of this world, begin to appreciate nuanced difference between "reel" teachers and their portrayal of teacherly eccentricities through audience expectations of actor's perverse characterizations: So, while Charles Hawtrey's Mr. Bean and Kenneth Williams' Mr. Milton are both unconventional characters, Hawtrey and Williams's gross exaggerations of camp, seen in the later *Carry On* films, are not evident here—but that does not make them (especially when compared to the dull, "straight" on-screen companions) any less queer. Indeed, their queerness here, rather than their later inflated parodies of gayness, should be very much viewed as representations of many ways of being male and should be celebrated as such.

Leaving the quaint 1950s behind, we now move on to the more downbeat late 1960s and early 1970s, an era when the much-maligned comprehensive school system was in place, and the 1971 film *Please Sir!* Despite the fact that the public school system was impervious to change, the Labour Party government, from the early 1960s, put in place a policy committed to comprehensive education for all, "as part of the aim of achieving a truly egalitarian society" (Ellsmore, 2005, p. 8). Yet, as Ellsmore points out, statistics for the academic year 1970/71 (when *Please Sir!* was being screened) show that there were already 1,313 comprehensive schools. The number of Secondary Modern Schools was only slightly less at 1,164, while the supposedly outdated grammar schools still numbered a sizable 673: "Thus the secondary modern school still provided the education with which most of the film audiences were familiar, so its portrayal did not disappear that quickly from the *reel* world of teaching" (Ellsmore, 2005, p. 9). While well meaning, it quickly became obvious that the Labour Party's idyllic educational plans—especially within the comprehensive system, but amid the secondary moderns as well—were not achieving its egalitarian aims, as "[t]he physical proximity of students of different backgrounds, interests and abilities did not ensure a better social mix" (Ellsmore, 2005, p. 12). Worse, the comprehensive schools were accused of helping to usher in "the alleged decline in social discipline, general standards and basic skills" (Ellsmore, 2005, p. 12). Significantly, the daily harbinger of bad educational news was the media, and "[t]he controversy over comprehensive schooling reached a peak

in the late 1970s, when some journalists in London that had children in inner-city comprehensive schools reacted in print to the size of some schools and the lack of discipline" (Ellsmore, 2005, p. 11). Ironically, central to the media's crusade to defile and debase comprehensive schooling was the lambasting of the pursuit of diversity and difference now taking place within the classroom—for example, teachers' freedom of what to teach, and an emphasis upon pastoral care, over an overly rigid curriculum and top–down teacher–pupil relationships. In other words, to the media, the embrace by more liberally minded teachers of a "softly softly" approach, which "pandered" to student multiplicity, was "part of the problem" and not "part of the solution."

Please Sir!, the film, was a "spin-off" of the highly successful television sitcom of the same name. Opening with oversized credits and a rowdy theme song that incorporated the jarring ringing of a playground handbell, "*Please Sir!* mined the staff-as-bad-as-the-pupils seam shamelessly" (Kibble-White, 2005, p. 150). As with our reading of *Carry On Teacher*, we should be aware of the spectrum of on-screen teachers within *Please Sir!*—especially their differences and queerness. Regarding the 1971 movie specifically, it was concerned with the exploits of the inexperienced, yet idealistic, Bernard "Privet" Hedges (John Alderton), a recently qualified teacher in his first teaching job at the inner-city Fenn Street Secondary Modern, "surrounded by a team of teachers who carry on in the *Carry On* style" (Ellsmore, 2005, p. 10). As Graham Kibble-White (2005) lists, the teaching staff (many of who are, quite clearly, nearing—or past—retirement age) included the incompetent "dopey headteacher" Mr. Cromwell (Noel Howlett), the formidable deputy head and "bring-back-the-birch" enthusiast Miss Ewell (Joan Sanderson), and "sweary Welsh nutter" Mr. Price (Richard Davies) as the science and maths teacher, while the pupils, "twentysomething-looking teen oiks," included the "'backward' Dennis (Peter Denyer), wide boy Eric (Peter Cleall) and Hedges-smitten Maureen (Liz Gebhardt)" (pp. 149–150). All in all, then, Fenn Street was "a right queer lot" regarding its teacher/pupil mix.

Mr. Hedges is appointed the intimidating role of acting as the tutor for these—and other—pupils that make up the class "5C" who, quite clearly (due to their shared disengagement with studies, and hostility to them by the majority of the teaching staff), are collectively at the bottom of the school's streamed hierarchy. As Ellsmore points out, such "streaming [. . .] puts them [students] in the same teaching group for all their subjects" (2005, p. 10) and was widespread practice at the time. Indeed, despite the Labour Party's utopian claims that comprehensive education would help bring about a classless society, "[i]n reality, comprehensive schools used streaming as an internal selection device" (Ellsmore, 2005, p. 12). Instead of openly displaying and embracing this streamed diversity (which could have been used to its advantage), "difference" was heightened, with underachieving pupils—such as the fictional 5C of Fenn Street—being ostracized, while the more highly streamed students had an even greater advantage through added attention that streaming encouraged.

Yet, throughout the film (and the majority of the series) Mr. Hedges clearly displays undying devotion to 5C. While the rest of the staff, in their shared cynicism, constantly refers to the form as "anarchic," Mr. Hedges prefers to describe them,

instead, as "a little difficult." As such, then, "[c]haracterisation of the idealistic teacher in Bernard Hedges is at its peak in this film" (Ellsmore, 2005, p. 11), demonstrating that by the time of comprehensive education—and certainly mirrored in the film version of *Please Sir!*—"[t]eacher status and innovation was at its height with respect to both curriculum and pastoral development" (Ellsmore, 2005, p. 2).

While Mr. Hedges' conviction to his pupils is universally apparent, the version of masculinity he offers is not so obvious. Stephen Whitehead, in his *The Many Faces of Men: The Definitive Guide to the Male Species* (2004), suggests that, on a day-to-day level, "we see merely a forest of men—'trees' that all look alike" (p. 3). Whitehead's texts, though, allow us (albeit in a semi-comic manner) to differentiate among the "trees" and acknowledge that "this forest is full of different types" (p. 3). Amid all of the other "trees," Hedges can be recognized as exemplifying what Whitehead terms the "Teddy Bear" type.

According to Whitehead, Teddy Bears have a highly developed feminine side, facilitating their tendency to be 'just friends' with a number of women, as they tend to be "soft, comfortable, sensitive, always reliable and, in a very non-sexual way, quite attractive" (Whitehead, 2004, p. 190). Indeed, Whitehead expands, Teddy Bears "will listen with wide eyes, but without moral judgment" (Whitehead, 2004, p. 190). With all of these attributes taken into account, it is no surprise, then, that the Teddy Bear "makes a good vicar, nurse, teacher, social worker, counselor, secretary" (Whitehead, 2004, p. 194). Furthermore, such traits—and even professions—underline Teddy Bears' possession of "an ambiguous sexuality" that explains "why he's often mistaken for being gay" (Whitehead, 2004, p. 195). Of course, as Whitehead stresses, all of this "doesn't make him gay, though there's no reason why he shouldn't be" (Whitehead, 2004, p. 189).

Meanwhile, Kibble-White (2005), pontificating further on the actor's portrayal of "Privet" Hedges, describes him as an "open-faced John Alderton in an oversized blazer" (p. 150). Significantly, in the serialized cartoon-strip version of the sitcom/film that appeared in the "youth TV"–oriented weekly glossy magazine *Look-in*, Alderton's character as the "wide-eyed," twitchingly awkward teacher in an oversized checked tweed blazer, is taken to ludicrous proportions.[1] Indeed, appropriating Whitehead's notion of masculine "types" further, Hedges is also part "Trainspotter," as he "[o]wns lots of brown cardigans and tweed jackets. . .[and] loves twitching" (Whitehead, 2004, p. 197). This, of course, demonstrates that even pseudo-academic attempts at quasi-humorously pigeonholing men quite often results in the blurring of the supposed boundaries between masculinities: Hedges, then, is a queer type indeed—a bug-eyed, oversized-jacket-wearing Teddy Bear/Trainspotter hybrid form of masculinity.

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[1] With artwork by Graham Allen and a storyline by Angus P. Allan, the *Please Sir!* strip that appeared in the 1972 *Look-in* annual—with John Alderton's bug-eyed portrayal of the teacher "Privet" Hedges—was recently re-printed in Kibble-White's *"Look-in": The Best of the Seventies* (2007), pp. 18–19.

Grange Hill and "Coming Out" in an "Aggro Britain"

As the state system underwent change, from Secondary Moderns to comprehensives, children's media (comics and television in particular) was to eventually adopt a nastier, more explicit edge in their representation of, what was for many, the "no future" of education and schooling. Thus, on TV came *Grange Hill*. As previously mentioned, the comprehensive school system was a controversial institution. Yet, by the mid-1970s, the majority of the local authorities in England, and all of them in Scotland and Wales, had "gone comprehensive." That stated, a select number of authorities in England tenaciously hung on to a system of educational selection. Indeed, "[f]or them, and their defenders in the media, the comprehensive school was an institution which threatened academic standards and destroyed the established 'high culture' of state secondary education, embodied in the grammar school" (Jones & Davies, 2002, p. 145).

For some, then, the spread of comprehensive schools and schooling represented a radical educational policy that was hell-bent on eroding established and proven modes of discipline and learning. Non-attendance, lack of discipline, politicized teachers, and their regular tampering with the curriculum, were all acknowledged as "different faces of an assault on traditional educational order through which the tried-and-tested curriculum of the grammar school was being ousted by one which depended on negotiation with interests and experiences of students" (Jones & Davies, 2002, p. 146). The general public and right-wing politicians interpreted this debasing of education that they perceived was taking place within each and every comprehensive school as part-and-parcel of what was happening on a wider scale: deprived inner cities increasingly populated by a lawless youth. The rise of punk, "race" riots, the National Front (and its equally troublesome antithesis, the Anti-Nazi League), and pupils' involvement in teacher-led dissent, were all interpreted as evidence that education itself was inciting social unrest. Appearance of *Grange Hill* on television screens in 1978 was seen to be tantamount to an incitement to riot: "To make a programme based in a largely working-class London comprehensive school was thus from the beginning to court controversy" (Jones & Davies, 2002, p. 146).

Furthermore, *Grange Hill* was seen as a children's program that bullied public service television (for it was made by, and shown on, the BBC) into the worrying realm of "realism," whereby the representation of the everyday would, it was feared, detrimentally affect the minds and attitudes of its young viewers. To the more conservatively inclined viewers, then, *Grange Hill* "presented evidence not just of overall cultural decline, but of a betrayal by public service professionals of their original mandate and responsibilities" (Jones & Davies, 2002, p. 146). That stated, the initial series of 16 episodes included little subversive material. By the second and third series, the upholders of moral decency were up in arms about the program's content: Every episode seemed to be "all about student militancy and behind the bike shed and horrendous things like periods and first bras" (Jones & Davies, 2002, p. 147). *Grange Hill*'s initial "issue" addressed was racism only to be followed by bullying, teenage pregnancy, drug-taking, date rape, asylum seekers, the commercialization of schooling, and so on. Significantly, with each "issue"

being tackled—and in line with the central tenet of queer theory—"the agency of the student protagonists is presented as a central feature" (Jones & Davies, 2002, p. 155). Since the 1980s, each 25-minute episode has attempted to increasingly elucidate what it is exactly that British schoolchildren—indeed, the British population generally—are primarily preoccupied with. So, while class-based social inequality was tackled less and less as each series was aired, "other kinds of social issue, especially ones concerned with race and sexuality, have become more prominent" (Jones & Davies, 2002, p. 155).

When one admirably brave plot in the 1990s made explicit the harassment of Mr. Brisley, a gay teacher, howls of outrage appeared, in the early years of the new millennium, amid the letters' page of the *Radio Times* (the BBC-sponsored TV listings' weekly) over *Grange Hill's* depiction of a lesbian pupil, whereby "[c]ontinuing the insistence on agency, an 'out' lesbian insists to her friend that 'your sexuality isn't something that happens to you'; it, too, is a matter of choice" (Jones & Davies, 2002, p. 155). Of course, such an open attitude about pupils' sexuality was not always overtly displayed, although that is not to say that queerness was ignored altogether; the 14 TV "tie-in" novels that were published quite often tackled sensitive issues of a queer nature. For example, *Tucker and Co.: Stories of Life In and Out of Grange Hill* (Redmond, 1982) examines the predicament of a female pupil that has been condemned for acting like a tomboy. Never referred to as "gay," of course, her gender-derived (or, rather, gender-contradicting) behavior is, nonetheless, self-questioned:

> Annette Firman was a tomboy. At least that's what everyone said. Ever since she could remember, people had used the phrase about her. Especially her Auntie Luke. She was the first one Annette could remember using it and so Annette blamed her for it. She just couldn't understand why everyone made such a fuss about it. She liked to play with boys. But that was because she liked to climb trees, throw stones, mess about with her dad's car and a hundred other things that only boys are supposed to do. But she also liked pretty dresses, cosmetics, dolls—girls' things. Annette liked doing anything, so long as she had a good laugh. Why should that make her a tomboy? She hated the description. Just as she hated her Auntie Luke.
>
> Well, perhaps hate was too strong a term for it, but she definitely thought that she was loopy. Even her name was ridiculous. How could an Auntie be called Luke? Annette knew it was because her name was really Lucinda, but why didn't she call herself Lucy? And if anyone was a tomboy, it was Auntie Luke. Annette always thought she was a bit odd. . .."
> (p. 53)

Despite *Grange Hill's* claim to present an "honest" and "gritty" portrayal of life in an inner-city comprehensive school, we have to remember that, as with the majority of television shows, its version of "reality" was, often for purely dramatic purposes, an exaggerated one. Of course, regarding *Grange Hill's* representations of homosexuality (like many cultural texts before it), rather than exaggeration, understatement is the defining characteristic. With this is mind, though, as a children's television drama, *Grange Hill* has "been the most watched and the most consistently controversial within the genre bar none" (McGown & Docherty, 2003, p. 113). Indeed, "[u]nlikely as it would have seemed in 1978. . .[it became] an institution in both senses of the word" (McGown & Docherty, 2003, p. 115). Furthermore, the series

has managed to entertain and "teach" six successive generations of schoolchildren (with each generation watching across a five-year span, which, in turn, reflected their own progression through school) how to deal with both educational matters and notions of identity politics.

"Behind the School Desk" Fiction and a Culture of Anti-queerness

The notion that, by the late 1970s and early 1980s, Britain's schools were teeming with a mass of increasingly wayward youths was a fear that was symptomatic of a wider perception of the onset of a "crisis" Britain: Increasingly ungovernable, this was, according to Leon Hunt, in *British Low Culture* (1998), an "Aggro Britain" distilled via a range of mediated texts that were, primarily, being exchanged in classrooms and playgrounds. Such "'behind the school desk' fiction" (Hunt, 1998, p. 75) was exemplified by Richard Allen's substantial output of "youth-sploitation" novels for New English Library. His first being *Skinhead* (1970), they were mass-market pulps, primarily aimed at youths who saw no benefit whatsoever in the reading of school set texts. Commonly consumed—as Hunt's term makes explicit—behind the school desk, they were an illicit read that conjured up "images of counter-education, of subcultural capital smuggled into the classroom" (Hunt, 1998, p. 75). As one reader put it: "For any kid attending a comprehensive school between 1971 and 1977, Richard Allen's books were required reading. . .[as] it was New English Library's *Skinhead* wot [sic] provided your sex'n'violence education" (cited in Hunt, 1998, p. 75). Regarding Allen's output—and their eager consumption by Britain's schoolchildren—let us, for a moment, turn to *Skinhead*'s equally popular sequel, *Suedehead* (1971).

The racist/homophobic protagonist, ex-Skinhead Joe Hawkins, is apparently "reformed" and now sporting the look of Britain's newest youth cult—that of the Suedeheads (a more sophisticated version of Skinhead fashions)—as we find him working for a stockbroker in London. Commuting home by the London Underground, he is about to embark on a vicious act of "queer-bashing." Allen, at this point, is at pains to capture Hawkins' masculine attractiveness:

> He was eighteen, tall, not bad looking. In his City suit, the Crombie coat with velvet collar, his furled umbrella and the new bowler perched cockily on his head he was enough to make silly little birds take a second glance and get their hormones working overtime. Every night as he traveled home from Bank on the Central Line he could feel those hot, passionate eyes seek to catch his attention. (p. 39)

At this point Hawkins realizes he has caught the gaze of a middle-aged man. Initially repulsed by the man's advances, Hawkins realizes an imminent opportunity for an outlet for both his psychopathic violent streak and homophobia. Indeed, upon being told that the man lives "with Auntie," and noting that "[t]he queer giggled girlishly," Hawkins/Allen then goes on to equate the gay man's sexuality as being the result of mental instability: "Joe thought. . .*Anyone could tell he's round the twist*" (p. 40).

Finally, back at the man's flat, Hawkins begins his ferocious attack: "All the fury, all the hatred went into those viscous fists. Slowly, steadily, Joe beat the man to a pulp until whimpering ceased and he collapsed to the floor" (p. 42). Again, it is vital for us to note that this graphic example of "queer-bashing" would have been read illicitly by many thousands of British schoolchildren.

. . .Into the Classroom—Conclusion

My dining table was "salvaged" from the university that I work at during a campus relocation. Formerly an in-class shared desk, it is a discarded relic from the time when the institution was a technical college, Glamorgan Polytechnic. Located in Treforest, Pontypridd, South Wales, Glamorgan Polytechnic was a nigh-on all-male bastion of education that provided school dropouts—again, young men mostly—with an opportunity to gain workplace-oriented qualifications in engineering, electronics, and so on. Indeed, Pontypridd itself is a town that has been very much shaped by masculinity and masculine practices—coal mining, rugby, and beer. Heterosexuality is the norm, and homosexuality is frowned upon and, quite often, openly ridiculed, or worse (as "queer bashing" is, of course, a consequence of violent, working-class male society).

Upon close inspection, then, the dining table betrays the attitudes of male students to all aspects of their lives, including their views on queer masculinities. With some of the vandalism helpfully dated "1981," this is clearly the work of *Learning to Labour*-era "Lads," as carved into the desk, among the aggressive, blasphemous, and misspelled graffiti ("Fuck off you nosy bustard"; "Scum"; "Moron"), are references to their sporting heroes ("Arsenal F. C.," a London soccer club; "Roy of the Rovers," a comic-strip soccer "star"; and a soccer player kicking his opponent in the testicles—the latter accompanied by an onomatopoeic "crunch") and representative interpretations of their sexual fantasies (exaggerated male genitalia; a naked woman with oversized breasts and accentuated vulva). Quite insightfully, certainly as far as this chapter is concerned, there are also three interrelated drawings that illustrate these boys' collective worldview on homosexuality. Again, smattered with spelling mistakes, their portrayal of a queer male (i.e., in this case, a "poof") who genteelly smokes a cigarette from a holder and stands ramrod straight with a walking cane is ridiculed thus: "Come and visit poove boutique ducky," as, next to this stereotype, are to be found "frilly" shirts and the like, all neatly displayed in protective covers; this is, supposedly, their imagining of a "gay" fashion outlet. Indeed, the third drawing depicts, and I quote, "a typical poove shopper," immaculately dressed in a waist jacket, with bouffant hair and carrying a furled umbrella.

Such unreconstructed rendering of male homosexuality as graffiti is, historically, commonplace. Moreover, these are typically British versions with their use of such colloquial terms as "ducky," and references to "gays" as "poofs" (or, again, in this case "pooves"). Yet what is most striking about these particular examples is that they were probably drawn by young working-class men who, for the era (the very

early 1980s), would have been—enrolled to study at a polytechnic college—in one of the highest levels of educational establishments available to them. In other words, these vandalistic representations of queer masculinities were not the by-product of some uninterested secondary school pupil who was whiling away the hours until the day he would leave school forever. This was, instead, the work of an (supposedly) educated young man whose views on gender, sexuality, human relationships, and so on were already all-too-ingrained and reactionary. Indeed, as a child, he probably would have read "The Bash Street Kids" each week. Perhaps, just a few years beforehand, he may have flicked through a borrowed, well-thumbed copy of *Suedehead* in some "boring" lesson. He probably still eagerly watched the endlessly repeated *Carry On* films on TV and laughed out loud as both Charles Hawtrey and Kenneth Williams "camped it up" and "minced about" in front of his eyes— behaving, of course, as such versions of queer masculinities were suspected to behave (in both "reel" life, and "real" life, that is). It is, perhaps, convenient for us to remember Andy Medhurst and Lucy Tuck's contemporaneous thoughts on heterosexuals' consumption of on-screen "camp" homosexuality:

> Even the most positive reading…would be necessarily undermined by the fact that the character is conceived by and for heterosexuals. Gays have the right to present themselves as camp, since campness is a part of gay culture—but for heterosexuals to reduce gayness to a handful of ridiculed gesticulations is another matter entirely. (Medhurst & Tuck, 1982, p. 51)

This chapter, then, has set out to provide us with a critical queer theory reading of British Low Culture texts that, while portraying queer masculinities, were probably "conceived by and for heterosexuals." Yet, as they are examples of British Low Culture, they do require examination to uncover hidden forms of queer masculinities. For, one criticism of queer theory/politics is "that its concern with abstract theorizing and accompanying disinterest in the "ordinary" is elitist" and that "[q]ueer theory remains highly abstract, disconnected from the way people are living their lives within the institutional constraints of economics, the state and cultural traditions" (Haywood & Mac an Ghaill, 2003, p. 141). Therefore, there is an urgent need to reexamine these British Low Culture texts if there is any hope of encouraging a radical overhaul of public perceptions of gender and sexuality. For, what is central to all of these texts—and their audiences' collective consumption of them—is that queer masculinities are inherently unstable due to their continual performance: "The 'laws' of gender are formed simply by continual performances of gender. At the very least, the awareness of gender as 'performative' suggests its instability—why else would it require constant reworking?" (MacKinnon, 2003, p. 5).

This chapter, to put it another way, has attempted "to defamiliarize texts, attitudes and identities commonsensically assumed to have fixed meanings and which endorse heterosexuality as the norm" (Beynon, 2002, p. 166). Indeed, I suggest that queer masculinities is not something that—in "The Bash Street Kids" and *Please Sir!*—is not there; on the contrary, it is, instead, something that is always,

and has always been, there. Peter Billingham, examining the landmark television series *Queer as Folk* (Channel 4's controversial drama that was concerned with Manchester's gay/lesbian/queer community), concluded "that the drama has inscribed within its performative aesthetic" the "post-modern queer discourse of 'We're queer, we're here and we're not going away'" (2003, p. 185). With this mantra in mind, I would insist that, with its proliferation of queer "all-boys-together, " "softies," "teddy bears," "pooves," and so on, British Low Culture should be reconceptualized along the following discursive lines: "We're queer, we were here all along, and we're here to stay."

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Chapter 15
Coming Undone: James Baldwin's *Another Country* and Queer Pedagogy

Dennis Carlson

Wait, I'm coming undone
Unlaced, I'm coming undone
Too late, I'm coming undone...
(Korn, "Coming Undone," 2005)

What does it mean to come undone? In common usage, to say that someone has "come undone" implies an undoing, a coming apart at the seams, that leaves the person unable to cope and without direction. The person can no longer "hold it together," we say. Judith Butler (2004) observed that "sometimes a normative conception of gender can undo one's personhood, undermining the capacity to persevere in a livable life" (p. 1). One might say the same of being queer in a heteronormative culture, or being black in a white racist culture: that it can undo your personhood and make life seem unlivable. How else do we account for the fact that so many queer youth still, in this "tolerant" and enlightened age, attempt suicide—the ultimate erasure and undoing of the self? And how do we account for the fact that so many young black men, queer and straight, still end their lives on the mean streets of the inner city or in prison? However, coming undone can also imply something less destructive, nihilistic, and suicidal. For Butler, the flip side of coming undone is the "undoing," disassembling, and deconstructing of heteronormative, patriarchal, and racial norms. This deconstructive "undoing" is a necessary step in the reconstructive project of redoing gender, race, and sexual identity with "greater livability" as the aim. We have to come undone by calling into question normative constructions and performances of identity before we can redo identity along more equitable, free, and livable lines.

In what follows, I want to explore some of the terrain opened up by a queer pedagogy that undoes the hegemonic norms of white and black masculinity. Any popular culture text in which masculinity is performed or represented can be read from the perspective of a queer pedagogy, to deconstruct the reigning narratives of

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masculinity production in American culture. In this case, I am interested in a literary text from an earlier era, James Baldwin's *Another Country* (1962a), a novel that graphically depicts how hegemonic norms of white and black masculinity in the United States in the late 1950s were implicated in a destructive undoing of the self, and how the undoing of such norms can lead to a liberatory redoing of race, gender, class, and sexual identity. Baldwin's novel, I want to argue, also reveals a perspective on identity that is consistent with many of the central tenets of queer theory and queer masculinity studies. Interestingly, *Another Country* often has been read and taught as a liberal-humanist novel that addresses the great human questions and struggles, with a focus on individual rather than political solutions to problems. The novel also has been read through the interpretive lens of a rather essentialistic, one-dimensional standpoint theory. In these interpretations, Baldwin has been appropriated as either a black author or a gay author, and the novel is understood to be about the importance of establishing a stable, authentic sense of blackness or gayness. I do not mean to imply that liberal-humanist and standpoint interpretations of the novel are "wrong" as such. In important ways, both contribute to an understanding of how the novel has been received in the public and among critics, and these interpretations contribute something to an understanding of queer masculinity. But in significant ways I believe they also misread Baldwin, or at least miss a more compelling queer narrative of undoing and redoing the self that is woven throughout the novel. When read and taught through the critical lens of queer theory (as I wish to), *Another Country* is a novel that explores the self as intersectional, that is, forged out of an ensemble of race, class, gender, and sexual identities that are dynamic and open rather than closed and fixed. I think Baldwin also develops a quite complex analysis of the performance of gendered sexuality in the novel, and his queer characters engage (although with limited success) in re-performing and redoing masculinity.

Another Country is Baldwin's third novel, and one he labored on for 14 years before finally finishing it shortly after his return to the United States from a self-imposed exile in France (Weatherby, 1989, pp. 169–179). As most critics have recognized, the novel is about the complexity of human relationships and self-construction when the wounds and resentment of race, class, gender, and sexual identity are factored in. In a country in which these identities have been constructed in terms of domination and subordination, master and slave, victimizer and victim, Baldwin suggests just how difficult it is for people to have equitable, trusting, and open relationships with the Other; and as the number of axes of self and Otherness increases, so, too, do the conflicts that work to undermine relationships. Thus, it becomes almost impossible and unthinkable for the central queer men in the novel—Rufus, a poor black man from Harlem, and Vivaldo, a working-class Italian from Brooklyn—to have a queer relationship that works. In the late 1950s world in which the novel is set, the racial wounds and anger of the queer characters are too raw, and their sense of masculinity too fragile, to allow them to get what they want and need from each other.

The novel is set for the most part in the queer spaces of Harlem and the Village in New York City—queer in the sense of being liminal spaces on the margins of a

very normalizing culture. Rufus is a young jazz musician who works in the clubs in both Harlem and the Village, taking the A train, like so many other New Yorkers, back and forth, forming a hybrid culture of border-crossers, hanging out in jazz joints late at night, doing drugs, and then drifting off to parties. While his life seems somewhat aimless, when he has his job in the jazz band, he has friends and enough money to have a good time. His best friend, Vivaldo, is a working-class white man from Brooklyn who has come to Harlem looking for black women and for the jazz scene. Together, Rufus and Vivaldo have a homosocial, if also homoerotic, friendship, organized around a series of short-term relationships with women, whom the men objectify as sexual conquests, brag about to each other, and degrade and humiliate. When Rufus loses his job and many of his white friends turn their backs on him, he ends up hustling on the streets of Harlem before he comes undone by jumping off the George Washington Bridge. Rufus's death haunts the rest of the novel as a living memory, as a puzzle that must be decoded, and as a death that must be redeemed. After Rufus's death, Vivaldo enters into a tempestuous relationship with Rufus's sister, Ida, who sings in a jazz group. It is clear that Vivaldo consciously or unconsciously looks to her as a stand-in for Rufus, and she shares his racial anger— with the added dimension of gender. Their relationship succeeds to the extent it does because they stay open to one another and, through struggle and dialogue, learn to love one another—although it is at best a tempestuous love. Near the end of the novel, one more queer character reemerges. Eric, a white, middle-class man, had a sexual relationship with Rufus at one time, and although Eric got out when it turned abusive, he continued to love Rufus. Eric moved to France after they broke up, and there he fell in love with a young man named Yvette. Eric returns to New York to secure a job and rent an apartment so that Yvette can join him. Before Yvette arrives, Eric has a brief sexual relationship with Vivaldo, who is made to stand in once more for Rufus. If there is hope in the novel (and it is a provisional hope), it is that some of the queer characters have begun to deconstruct the norms of masculinity and racism that have undone their relationships in the past and struggle to redo their masculinity in ways that free the characters to be creative and open to others.

Dominant Readings of *Another Country*

For teachers to use *Another Country* as a text on queer masculinity, read through the interpretive lens of queer theory, they must begin by calling into question the more commonsense interpretive lenses students use to read texts and construct meaning. For while the author may have one thing in mind in writing a book, the reader may read it "against the grain" and even in opposition to what the author had in mind. This troubles the very idea that one can decode or deconstruct a text without also decoding and deconstructing the interpretive perspective of the reader. Indeed, it becomes impossible for students to read *Another Country* as a queer masculinities text until they have learned to "name" and deconstruct dominant interpretive frames for reading the novel. Two interpretive frames are particularly important in

this regard, what I will call *liberal humanism* and *standpoint theory*, and I want to briefly comment on how each of these interpretive frames has been used to interpret Baldwin's novel.

Liberal humanism was the most influential literary interpretive frame throughout much of the twentieth century, up through the 1960s. While this interpretive frame has since been subject to increasing criticism, liberal humanism remains a largely taken-for-granted interpretive frame among many readers today. Catherine Belsey (1985) defines liberal humanism as "the ruling assumptions, values, and meanings of the modern epoch" (p. 7). This includes a belief that good literature speaks to timeless or universal human truths that transcend culture and history. Literature is about individuals and their struggles to live their lives as free, autonomous subjects of their own making, and this implies that literature is not essentially political in nature. To politicize literature, or write literature from a political standpoint, is to become a propagandist rather than an artist. In nominating *Another Country* for inclusion in the literary canon of great American novels, the influential literary critic Norman Podhoretz wrote that it was Baldwin's intention "to deny any moral significance whatever to the categories of white and Negro, heterosexual and homosexual," and to touch on the great human concerns of love, salvation, and redemption (1964, p. 244). From Podhoretz's perspective, the novel is about the need to rise above the differences that divide us and recognize the universal truths and values that unite us as a people. He argued that Baldwin:

> is saying that the terms white and Negro refer to two different conditions under which individuals live, but they are still individuals and their lives are still governed by the same fundamental laws of being. And he is saying, similarly, that the terms homosexuality and heterosexuality refer to two different conditions under which individuals pursue love, but they are still individuals and their pursuit of love is still governed by the same fundamental laws of being.... The only significant realities are individuals and love. (quoted in Ross, 1999, p. 30)

Another aspect of the liberal-humanist interpretive frame is that it looks for "private" rather than "public" and "political" solutions to problems. For example, Donald Gibson writes that Baldwin's novel advances the very American, liberal belief that "the responsibility for social problems lies with the individual, be he [*sic*] oppressed or oppressor, victimizer or victim" (1981, p. 10). Similarly, William Cohen writes that the novel situates sexuality within a private world, that "for Baldwin, sexuality occupied the realm of the indisputably private, allowing a voice for individual desires to transcend social barriers" (1991, p. 16).

Baldwin was a liberal humanist in the sense of wishing his novels to be read within a tradition of Western literature and as expressive of the great themes and narratives of Western and more particularly American literature. He also was committed to the Enlightenment project of human freedom and social justice, and thus the category "human" was one he sought to reclaim for democratic and liberatory purposes. But liberal-humanist readings of the novel miss much, and end up—I believe—misinterpreting Baldwin's intent. Indeed, Baldwin is quite explicit in critiquing liberal humanism as part of the problem, not the solution, as a contemporary

form of white racism that erases race and makes queerness invisible. He also deconstructs the public–private binary opposition, revealing how individual characters have been formed or produced within a cultural history, in which the private is itself deeply colonized and never separable from "public" performances of racism, sexism, homophobia, and classism. Rufus, for example, is told again and again by his white friends and lovers that they don't want all that "outside" stuff, such as racism, to affect their personal, private relationships, as if it were possible to have a merely private relationship in a racist society, with race left at the doorstep. When Rufus hears from his white girlfriend Leona that he's always bringing race into the conversation, that it shouldn't matter to them, he responds with a cold stare, as if "from a great distance," and he silently wonders what on earth white people mean by this. He accuses them of "ignorance and indifference" (p. 49).

Examples of white liberal paternalism also abound in the novel, from Vivaldo's interest in "protecting" Rufus to Leona's treatment of him as a poor, abused "boy." At times, Rufus internalizes his view of himself as a poor, unfortunate boy—not really a man—who needs to be taken care of and protected. "I'm your boy," he tells Leona, and adds, "[Y]ou've got to be good to me" (pp. 33–34). But at other times, Rufus gets tired of being called a boy and strikes out at Leona in anger, warning her never to call him that again. She gets the message and is more cautious after that, but occasionally slips up, as when she says, "You're a funny boy" and then quickly corrects herself to say, "a funny person." As Rebecca Aanerud (1999) argues, Baldwin viewed white paternalism as condescending and inconsistent with a more authentic solidarity (on the part of whites) and racial pride (on the part of blacks), and believed that "paternalistic attitudes defined white liberalism, thereby rendering it an unsuitable ally in the struggle for civil rights" (p. 63).

Although *Another Country* has, as I indicated, been read through a liberal-humanist interpretive frame, this is indeed a difficult read, one that must cut against the grain of so much that Baldwin meant to say in the novel. Perhaps this is why some liberal-humanist critics, even though they focused on the timeless truths the novel reveals about the human condition, were frustrated with the book and more pleased with Baldwin's previous novel, *Giovanni's Room* (1962b), in which all the characters were white. Of that earlier novel, Leslie Fiedler (1956/1988) has written it was a step in the right direction for Baldwin to become "simply a writer" rather than a Negro writer. That is to say, Fielder argued, the novel is "a step beyond the Negro writer's usual obsession with his situation as a Negro in a white culture." To focus on race relations, writers had to engage in "sociological banalities, especially if one approaches them already committed to righteousness and self-pity" (p. 147). Fiedler also transformed the homosexual relationship in *Giovanni's Room* into a metaphor for the relationship between America and Europe, the old world and the new. What Fielding and other early liberal critics of Baldwin failed to recognize—similar to the white liberal characters in *Another County*—is just how much the critics themselves spoke from a position of whiteness, and straightness.

Indeed, the very category "human" has been used historically in ways that deprive some individuals of the possibility of being treated as human. Butler has observed of the postcolonial black writer Franz Fanon that, when he claimed that

a black is not a man, "he conducted a critique of humanism that showed that the human in its contemporary articulation is so fully racialized that no black man could quality as human." Furthermore, to say that a black is not a man is to suggest that "both masculinity and racial privilege shore up the notion of the human" (1967, p. 13). This is not to say that great novels are not about the human condition and humanistic values or that progressives need to stop using the word "human." What it does suggest, as Butler writes, is that democratic literature, like democratic education, must be about "opening the term to a history not fully constrained by the existing differentials of power" (p. 14). This is precisely, I believe, what Baldwin sought to do in *Another Country*, not by transcending what Fiedler called "sociological banalities" (presumably race, class, gender, and sexual identities and power relations), but by recognizing that the individual is always produced within these identity categories and power relations and that these categories and relations have historically been dynamic rather than static or fixed.

Liberal humanism dominated literary criticism in the United States at least until the late 1960s, when another interpretive frame began to become more influential, which I have called standpoint theory. Feminist theory is most closely associated with the notion of "standpoint," but standpoint theories of race and sexual orientation also have been influential over the past several decades. Standpoint theorists argue that all knowledge is situated knowledge, shaped and conditioned (although not determined) by one's position within a culture (Stoetzler & Yuval-Davis, 2002). Although much of what I have to say is critical of some versions of standpoint theory and identity politics in the United States, it is important to recognize that standpoint theory represented a radical perspective when it took on liberal humanism, and that it is not really possible to move beyond standpoint theory, only modify and develop it in a more democratic direction. Standpoint theorists represented voices that had not been previously heard, and they began to read and write literature as a cultural text, not merely as a text that speaks to "timeless" human questions and concerns. This has been absolutely essential to democratic educational politics. A standpoint interpretive frame and discourse must develop within marginalized communities of identity in order for them to engage in a struggle for freedom and against inequity. The discourses of queer theory and queer masculinities can themselves be understood as standpoint interpretive frames, at least to the extent that "queer" is understood to be a marker for sexual identity.

One trouble with standpoint perspectives and theories is that they tend to construct the subject along one primary identity axis and ignore the complexity of self-production. So, there are queer and gay readings of Baldwin's novels, and there are black readings. Another problem is that they typically take for granted an essentialistic conception of identity in which gayness, blackness, and masculinity are presumed to be self-evident, natural categories of selfhood. Gay identity politics, for example, has been organized around a discursive project of representing sexuality in terms of a given, or natural "sexual orientation," as either homosexual or heterosexual. "Coming out" is understood as a public act of no longer hiding in the "closet"—a hidden, non-public, and, at best, private space. Thus, Charles Toombs (2000) writes that *Another Country* reveals "the deeply complex nature of being gay

in America at [the] mid-twentieth century. . . . Rufus and Vivaldo are, at best, gay men passing as disturbed bisexuals." As for Rufus, his story "unfolds the chaos of the black-gay-man" who is forced to confront "his failed struggle to live an authentic life" (p. 106). In this case, authenticity means being who you really are—a gay man. Similarly, Matt Bell (2007) argues that *Another Country* "helped to shape the gay liberation movement" (p. 577). He interprets Rufus's dilemma as the homosexual dilemma of his time, as consisting of an inability to "push" himself out of the closet, resulting in his "pushing" himself off a bridge. Through coming out, Bell feels, Rufus could have been saved.

But it is a misreading of the novel to interpret Rufus and Vivaldo as merely "closeted" gay men who, in later times, would have been able to "come out" and be "out and proud." Baldwin's characters are queer rather than gay in that they do not have a stable sexual identity associated with a cultural lifestyle and group affiliation. Rufus and Vivaldo are fundamentally more bisexual than they are defined by a given "sexual orientation," either homosexual or heterosexual. In a scene in the novel that has been interpreted by some gay critics as revealing just how "closeted" Rufus and Vivaldo are as gay men, Rufus asks Vivaldo: "Have you ever wished you were queer?" to which Vivaldo replies, staring into his glass, "I used to think maybe I was. Hell, I think I even wished I was. . .But I'm not, so I'm stuck" (p. 44). Is this to be taken as an example of how Rufus and Vivaldo refuse to be honest with themselves and each other about who they "really are" as gay men, or is it to be taken as a statement of their bisexuality? My own reading suggests that Baldwin is playing here with their denial of their desire for each other, symbolized by the refusal of Vivaldo to look Rufus in the eyes, and the recognition that their sexuality is too fluid to be normalized as either queer or straight, even if it might be easier for them if it could be. Baldwin does not view their liberation as dependent upon their "coming out" but rather their acceptance of this fluidity, this unfixity.

If Baldwin never was quite gay enough for some of his gay critics, he was not black enough, and too gay, for some black critics. Among the most homophobic early reviews of *Another Country* was one by black nationalist and political activist Eldridge Cleaver, in his book *Soul on Ice* (1968), in which he takes Baldwin on for his queerness and his interest in interracial queerness. Cleaver described homosexuality as a white man's perversion, and he described black homosexuals who submitted sexually to white men as "self-loathing," as reenacting the ultimate sign of the black man's submission to white masculinity. Of the novel, Cleaver has nothing to say about the brutal way in which Rufus treats his white, Southern girlfriend, Leona, but much to say about how Rufus allows himself to be penetrated by Eric, of whom Rufus declares he would have "done anything." According to Cleaver:

> Negro homosexuals. . .are outraged and frustrated because in their sickness they are unable to have a baby by a white man. . . . Already bending over and touching their toes for the white man, the fruit of their miscegenation is not the little half-white offspring of their dreams. (1968, p. 102)

This is a rather direct reworking of Baldwin's account of Rufus and Leona, but with the characters of both men, and with Rufus "bending over" for a white man,

to take the white man's seed in a way that is non-generative. Even if it could be generative, it would be generative of "little half-white offspring," not "authentic" black children. Baldwin and Cleaver might have agreed on the effects of this history of emasculation among black men; but they differed sharply in what they felt should be the response. For black nationalists like Cleaver, homosexuality was itself a sign of the emasculation of the black race, the wasting of black sperm, and ultimately the death wish. For Baldwin, the problem is with a black masculinity that seeks to reestablish itself upon the firm ground of male domination, and the "othering" of queer men. Cleaver's homophobic tirade, unfortunately, reflects continuing vestiges of anti-gay sentiment in the black community. Thus, Ian Barnard (1996), in the essay "Fuck Community: Or, Why I Support Gay-bashing," writes that any U.S. politics that identifies itself in terms of sexual orientation (or gender for that matter) "will be a white-centered and dominated politics, since only white people in this society can afford to see their race as unmarked, as an irrelevant or subordinate category of analysis" (p. 77). There certainly is truth to Barnard's assertion that gay and queer politics has been white-centric, and that this is a serious limitation. At the same time, one of the contributing factors in this has been black homophobia.

Both liberal-humanist and standpoint critics, for their own reasons, have missed much in their readings of *Another Country*. I now want to turn to a reading of the novel from the interpretive frames of queer theory and queer masculinity studies, a reading I think is more consistent with what Baldwin had in mind. I begin with a discussion of the novel's representation of the destructive un-doing of queer masculinity through internalized oppression. In particular, I am interested in heteronormativity as a form of internalized oppression, and how it is manifested in the central characters Rufus and Vivaldo. Then I turn to a discussion of the novel's hope for an undoing of heteronormativity and a creative redoing of the self in ways that are consistent with new forms of recognition and self-consciousness.

Queer Masculinity, Heteronormativity, and Coming Undone

Queer theory and queer masculinity studies provide an interpretive framework for reading a literary text such as Baldwin's *Another Country* as a cultural text that represents particular social constructions of class, race, gender, sexual, and other identities, as performed by characters in the novel within the narrative structure of the text. While queer theorists have questioned and been troubled by Hegel's "master-slave" narrative of identity development and sought ways around its logic, they, like others who are dealing with issues of identity and difference, have recognized its basic truths. In one way or another, all liberatory narratives—at least in modern, Western culture—have been retellings of Hegel's story of the slow development of the self-consciousness of the oppressed as they struggle for their freedom (Carlson, 2002, pp. 85–86). Certainly, for queer folk, as for women, people of color, and working people, the struggles go on. The first basic truth of the master-slave theory of identity formation is that, within contemporary culture, the dominant way

people construct an identity is in the "looking glass" of the "Other," the one who is the mirror opposite, the alterity, of the self. We come to know ourselves only through our double on the other side of the mirror, which is also an exteriorization and projection of our own disavowed subjectivity and desire. Consequently, at least within the modern era, it has not really been possible to speak of masculinity without referring to the historic social construction of masculinity in the mirror of femininity, as day to night (Irigaray, 1991). Nor has it been possible to speak of gay masculinity without invoking its alterity, straight masculinity, for both are produced simultaneously as part of one identity binary. Butler (2004) notes that "the self 'is' this relation to alterity…It will not do to say that there is first a self and then it engages in splitting" (p. 150). Instead of the ontological primacy of the authentic and unified self that is then split, social constructionists emphasize the "ontological primacy of relationality itself and its consequences for thinking the self" (Butler, 2004, p. 150). Because the self is relational, it is not static but dynamic and historical. Masculinity, as opposed to maleness, is a constantly changing collection of meanings that are constructed through relationships (Kimmel, 2005, 2001; Knights, 2008).

Of course, queer theory has been part of a movement to undo the logic of binary identity and to try to work outside the tightly scripted logic of such a relational production of identity. In this, queer theory shares much with all movements of the oppressed. Queer theory moves in the direction of an undoing of this relational binary and a redoing of self and difference outside the looking glass, as did Hegel. The only difference is that queer theorists believe we can, in our own lives, here and now, begin to redo who we are, and who we think we are. For Hegel, as for Marx, the undoing of oppression must wait until the end of history. In the meantime, we must live and do battle within existing categories of identity even as we work for a day when we might finally get beyond these binaries and the power relations of inequality that are constructed through and around identity. Queer theorists, and other poststructural theorists of a "politics of difference" are not so willing to wait for the end of history. Both perspectives have their merits and limitations, I believe. Even if a movement to "queer" or destabilize identity binaries is beginning to develop in a postmodern cultural terrain of self-production, it must remain partial and contradictory so long as binary logic continues to be hegemonic.

This means that those marginalized by class, race, gender, sexuality, and other markers of difference will be "othered," and will bear the marks of their othering within their consciousness. One might say that Baldwin's novel is, above everything else, about the internalization of racial, class, gender, and sexual oppression, and about the destructive effects of *internalized oppression* on the capacity of people to construct a "livable" life. This is related to what W. E. B. DuBois (1973) called *double consciousness*. One part of the consciousness of dominated people (and DuBois was speaking particularly of black folks in a white racist society) is organized by the discourse and worldview of the master, so they see themselves in their masters' eyes—as bad, deviant, dirty, criminal, and in other ways deficient. The master within keeps people oppressed by convincing them that they have no agency and telling them that they are worthless. Audre Lorde has written that "the

true focus of revolutionary change is to see the piece of the oppressor inside us" (1984, p. 123). In these terms, Baldwin's novel is about the oppressor inside queer white and black men in late 1950s American culture that wounded their psyches and pushed them toward self-destruction. At Rufus's funeral, the minister speaks of him as the embodiment of hopes dashed, of countless lives lost—literally and figuratively—because of the internalization of oppression:

> He [Rufus] got into a lot of trouble, all of you know that. A lot of our boys get into a lot of trouble and some of you know why. . .He was young, he was bright, we expected great things from him—but he's gone. . .I know a lot of people done took their own lives and they're walking up and down the streets today. . . (p. 473)

Baldwin makes it quite clear here that Rufus is to be taken for only a drop in a great ocean of beaten-down souls who walk the streets of New York City each day, jumping off bridges when things get too much for them. In an interview, Baldwin referred to the character of Rufus as "a corpse floating in the national psyche—and what he represents must be squarely faced if we are to find peace in our society" (quoted in Leeming, 1994, p. 201). Near the end of his life, Rufus sees himself as "part of an unprecedented multitude." The good citizens of New York, Baldwin writes, "could scarcely bear their knowledge, nor could they have borne the sight of Rufus," yet he was all around them (p. 2). To "see" Rufus would, after all, force them to acknowledge oppression and their complicity in it, and to care about his fate. In Baldwin's America of the late 1950s and early 1960s, too many black men and queer men of great promise and hope were still being pushed, and suicidally pushing themselves, off bridges.

One element of the oppressor inside Baldwin's characters Rufus and Vivaldo is what queer theorists have called *heteronormativity* (Sedgwick, 2008), the assumption that heterosexuality is "natural," "moral," "clean," and "mature," while homosexuality is "unnatural," "immoral," "unclean," and "childlike" or "narcissistic." To the extent that Rufus and Vivaldo are invested in proving to each other and themselves that they are "real men," they do so not only by degrading women but also by denying and repressing their desire for an emotional and intimate relationship with each other, a relationship that Baldwin suggests might have saved them both. One of the key scenes in the book, which Vivaldo describes later to Eric, involves an evening in which Rufus and Leona have been fighting, and she has left him for abusing her. Vivaldo arrives at Rufus's apartment to try to comfort him. As Rufus lies on the bed, finally beginning to relax enough to find sleep, Vivaldo reaches out his hand to touch Rufus, and comes within a "quarter inch" of doing so. But Vivaldo's hand freezes, the moment passes, and he withdraws his hand. Much hinges on the unanswerable question that Baldwin plants in the novel and that haunts Vivaldo. What would have happened if, instead of withdrawing his hand, Vivaldo had touched and embraced Rufus and held him through that long night?

Baldwin also represents Vivaldo's working-class background as complicit in teaching him heteronormativity and a particular construction of "real men" in which there was no room for "queers." Vivaldo grew up in Brooklyn and worked as a

longshoreman on the docks for a few years, and the complexity of his affirmation of heteronormativity, even as it victimized him, is part of what he must work through:

> He [Vivaldo] had been proud of his skill and his muscles and happy to be accepted as a man among men. Only—it was they who saw something in him which they could not accept, which made them uneasy. . .and they made it clear that they expected him to go, to which place did not matter—he did not belong to them. (p. 52)

Vivaldo's construction of white, working-class masculinity also is represented as involving a desire for the forbidden, sexually unrepressed Other, the black women and men whom he travels uptown to Harlem to meet, and with whom he feels he can do things he cannot do with "good" white women and men. Vivaldo expects the black masculinity and femininity of Harlem to be hypersexual, the exoticized opposite of the white, Catholic, working-class masculinity and femininity he associates with Brooklyn. He is unable to have lasting relationships with "real" black men and women, in all their complexity and hurt, because he projects upon them his own disavowed desires. So he ends up viewing them as "dirty" and despising them at the same time he desires them. Vivaldo's limited saving grace is his capacity to listen and learn from the black men and women with whom he enters into relationships, and his capacity to love, which requires opening oneself up to the Other.

Rufus comes from a black, working-class family, and the messages he received about black masculinity and queerness were very similar to those Vivaldo received. Although, as I noted earlier, the black community is often represented as more homophobic than the white community, Baldwin suggests that, because black folks live outside the norms of white culture, blacks are likely to be more open and less repressed than middle-class or working-class whites. Rufus at least stays open to the possibility of a homosexual relationship with Vivaldo, and has such a relationship for a brief time with Eric. Rufus's more open attitude toward homosexuality is associated with a generally less puritanical, repressive, and moralizing attitude toward sexuality in general—which Baldwin suggests is a strength. But in an ironic way, Rufus also internalizes a heteronormative discourse of black masculinity that makes it impossible to be "out" as a queer black man within the black community, and some critics have pointed to his alienation from the black community as contributing to his undoing (Toombs, 2000).

Finally, Rufus is undone by the internalization of *emasculation*, which links racial domination of black men to their supposed danger as rapists of white women. Rufus's relationships with Southern white women and men are laden with the desire for revenge for his own symbolic emasculation as a black man. The historic infantilization and emasculation of black masculinity by hegemonic white masculinity have led black men to associate pride in self with a reassertion of a masculinity that has been "stolen" from them by the white man (Shin & Judson, 1998). DuBois observed that "the history of the American Negro is the history of this strife—this longing to attain self-conscious manhood" (1973, p. 4). As I have already indicated, there are dangers in this affirmation of black manhood if it is at the expense of women and queer men. Rufus feels emasculated and lives this emasculation in the form of a sense of shame at not being a "real" man and in his feeling that he does not

have any agency or power as a black man in a white man's world. He expresses his rage at this emasculation by getting revenge, by sexually dominating and degrading white Southern women, and by treating queer men as women and thus symbolically emasculating them. Of Rufus's brief relationship with Eric, Baldwin writes:

> He had despised Eric's manhood by treating him as a woman, by telling him how inferior he was to a woman, by treating him as nothing more than a hideous sexual deformity. (p. 45)

The fact that Rufus, as a black man, can sexually possess the white man's woman is, as Charles Toombs (2000) observes, "especially important since so many black men have lost their lives or their sexual organs because white men assumed they desired their women, whether they did or not" (p. 112). Thus, in humiliating and sexually dominating Leona, Rufus is not only performing as the black male "stud" he thinks she wants, but he is also, and simultaneously, taking out his rage at white men by possessing "their" women. According to Susan Feldman, "Baldwin illustrates how misogynistic violence ultimately stems from male castration anxiety" (2000, p. 93). Rufus's economic marginality also represents an ongoing threat to his masculinity, as does his belief that only whites who are "hard up" could be interested in having a relationship with a black man. In a scene in which Rufus almost rapes Leona, he imagines himself as a performer, giving her what she wants, what she has come for, and getting his revenge on white men in the process:

> Nothing could have stopped him, not the white God himself nor a lynch mob arriving on wings... [He] felt the venom shoot out of him, enough for a hundred black-white babies. (p. 22)

This language of sperm as venom speaks of his rage and his self-loathing at the same time. Interestingly, when Cleaver wrote, in *Soul on Ice* (1968), that Baldwin was a "self-loathing" Negro, Cleaver might have been referring more accurately to Baldwin's character, Rufus. The irony of course is that Rufus exhibits many of the patriarchal and heterosexist qualities that Cleaver valorized, and that Baldwin critiques.

In the end, Rufus and Vivaldo's relationship is undone and made impossible by a hegemonic culture of heteronormativity, patriarchy, and racism in the United States in the late 1950s. When the men are together, they establish a homosocial bond by bragging about their sexual conquests with objectified women, and they compete with one another over who is the best "stud." Yet, behind this talk, Baldwin indicates, lurks a desire, a flirting, a sexual playfulness, that both are quite aware of. Eve Sedgwick, in *Between Men* (1985), argues that much of Western literature can be interpreted in terms of "erotic rivalry" between competing male characters. "The bind that links the two rivals is as intense and potent as the bond that links either of the rivals to the beloved: the bonds of 'rivalry' and 'love,' differently as they are experienced, are equally powerful and in many senses equivalent" (p. 21). According to Sedgwick, in any male-dominated society, there is a special relationship between male homosocial bonding, repressed homosexual desire, and the structures of maintaining and transmitting patriarchal power (p. 25). Similarly, Butler argues that in ostensibly heterosexual relations, the "true partner" is often

another displaced man. "What first appears to be a relation of a man who desires a woman turns out to be implicitly a homosocial bond between two men" (p. 112). Rufus and Vivaldo have such a homosocial bond, bordered by the norms of sexism and heterosexism. So long as their bond stays at this level, Baldwin suggests, they are unable to replace bonds of rivalry with love and intimacy.

Heteronormativity among Baldwin's queer characters also takes the form of gay-bashing and bigotry, which represents an attempt to distance themselves from a disavowed sexual desire. In one scene, Eric and Ida pass some "fairies" in the Village:

> Coming toward them, on the path, were two glittering, loud-talking fairies. [Eric] pulled in his belly, looking straight ahead. . . . The birds of paradise passed; their raucous cries faded. Ida said, "I always feel *sorry* for people like that." (pp. 222–223)

It is important to be clear here. We should not assume that Eric and Ida speak for Baldwin. In fact, he means to be critical of their patronizing attitude, of feeling both disgusted by, and sorry for, these poor unfortunates, these "fairies." In fact, the patronizing of "fairies" is only a small step away from the bullying and bashing of "fairies." Vivaldo recounts how once he and six friends from Brooklyn "drove over to the Village and. . .picked up this queer" (p. 97), whom they then raped, beat, and abandoned to die. With Stonewall, of course, this would begin to change, as fairies and drag queens fought back. But in Baldwin's America, gay men were still playing the role of the victim and were being victimized by queer men like Vivaldo and by "straight" men. Baldwin suggests that homosexual desire can only be acknowledged by "straight" men or heteronormative queer men within ritualistic performances in which the men dominate gay men or are serviced by gay men, themselves remaining passive. In the novel, Eric describes two bars on the street where he lives in the Village:

> One of them's gay. . .The other one's for longshoreman. . .The longshoremen never go to the gay bar and the gay boys never go to the longshoremen's bar—but they know where to find each other when the bars close, all up and down this street. It all seems very sad to me, but maybe I've been away too long. I don't go for back-alley cock-sucking. (p. 281)

The power dynamics being enacted in this sexual ritual, in which gay men presumably get down on their knees to service "straight" men, speaks to the internalization of heteronormative oppression among gay men at the time, as well as the internalization of oppression of those queer men who defined themselves as straight. Of course, this is only one reading of the passage. It could be, for example, that Baldwin is playing with the idea that when "straight" and "gay" men get together in a safe space outside the norms of heteronormativity, the men can express a homosexual bonding that queers categories of dominant and submissive, masculinity and femininity. Eric's opposition has to do with the fact that this undoing of rigid roles and expression of homosexual desire across identity borders is still being carried out in a way that allows both parties—but certainly the "straight" men in particular—to disavow what they are doing and to continue to engage in gay-bashing. For Baldwin, homosexual liberation will come about only when homosexual desire is

no longer disavowed, which would involve a "queering" of the straight-gay binary and a questioning of heteronormativity.

I have argued that *Another Country* can be read as a narrative of the undoing effects of internalized oppression, which in turn represent the human consequences of systems of oppression organized around binary oppositional identity. Baldwin's characters have a double consciousness that is tripled and even quadrupled, and this complicates things considerably, making internalized oppression even more damaging if one is a poor, black, queer man like Rufus. But this complication also opens up possibilities for identification with those who are differently oppressed, for recognizing the intersection of oppressions rather than only one dimension of oppression, and for redoing the self around discourses and practices of freedom.

Undoing Heteronormativity

Baldwin's queer characters are overdetermined and undone by racism, sexism, classism, and heteronormativity, and Rufus's suicide is interpreted by Baldwin as a form of killing—both a killing of the body and a killing of the soul. This is the kind of killing that DuBois wrote about in *The Souls of Black Folks* (1973) and that Jonathan Kozol (1967/1985) referred to when he wrote about the "death at an early age" of poor, black youth in Boston public schools in the 1960s. However, Baldwin's novel is also about the undoing of hegemonic racial and gender norms. If people are undone by heteronormativity, for example, their very survival depends, as Butler says, on "escaping the clutch" of those norms (p. 3). Of course, this raises the question of what it might mean to undo restrictive performances of gender and sexual identity, and Butler does not argue that we can do away entirely with norms that have been constructed out of a long history of conflict and reiterated performances. When Butler does speak of a capacity for transformation of the "I" that finds itself constituted in relation of alterity to its Other, she pins her hope on a capacity to "mediate between worlds," to "engage in cultural translation," and to "undergo, through the experience of language and community, the diverse set of cultural connections that make us who we are" (p. 228). Baldwin offers the reader a world in which characters survive and grow, and make themselves a "livable" life, only when they can develop a capacity to struggle with the messiness of translation across multiple subject positions and worlds of experience, when they make themselves vulnerable and give up the need to control others, and when they can see others as different but no longer so threatening, as unique people who cannot be reduced to or known merely as the Other.

At least within the context of late 1950s, Baldwin was committed to the idea that the "I" that seeks to work outside heteronormativity, racism, and classism must find a "safe space" in which to undo oppression and "liberate" itself. Baldwin's novel locates his characters within two such spaces—the Village and Harlem—and more particularly within the jazz joints and scenes in both communities. The need for a safe space in which to engage in the undoing and redoing of identity and self is

an important theme in contemporary research in the cultural studies of education (see Weis & Fine, 2003) and in poststructural feminism. Nancy Fraser (1993), for example, calls for marginalized groups to create "counter-publics," spaces in which the groups may engage in the production of discourses and practices that challenge hegemonic representations of them in the dominant culture. Of course, no space is entirely "free" or "safe" from hegemonic domination, and since identity is constructed relationally, one can never define oneself without reference to the dominant culture (Carlson & Dimitriadis, 2003). Nevertheless, it has been a basic contention in poststructural feminism and queer theory that there is some space that can be carved out for an oppositional and even transformative identity to emerge. This is clearly an important theme in *Another Country*. For Baldwin, the relative safety and freedom that the Village and Harlem represent make possible (but do not automatically produce) an improvisational self that is able to undo oppression, if only for a brief time. As Butler (2004) has observed, gender is a "practice of improvisation" within a scene of constraint, and to undo hegemonic gender norms, people need to create spaces of improvisation. Sedgwick, along similar lines, speaks of queer spaces of "performative acts of experimental self-perception and affiliation" (1993, p. 9), spaces that not only transgress the boundaries of normalizing identities but also make possible new ways of imagining them.

In *Another Country*, the Village is introduced to the reader as a "place of liberation" (p. 29), a space in particular of jazz joints in which improvisation is on display each night, as it is in a very different setting in Harlem. Rufus, Vivaldo, and other characters in the novel travel back and forth between these two spaces on the A train each night, and they hang out in jazz joints late into the night. Near the end of his life, Rufus remembers the good times, and he returns to a particular moment when everything seemed possible. The memory is of a jazz joint in Harlem, in the wee hours of the morning, with Rufus playing bass in a jazz band. The members of the band are playing off each other, in a delirious improvisation. He remembers the saxophonist taking off on a solo:

> He was a kid of about the same age as Rufus, from some insane place like Jersey City or Syracuse, but somewhere along the line he had discovered that he could say it with a saxophone. . . . They [the audience] were being assaulted by the saxophonist who perhaps no longer wanted their love and merely hurled his outrage at them with the same contemptuous, pagan pride with which he humped the air. . . . Each man knew that the boy was blowing for every one of them. (p. 6)

The Village and Harlem represent for Baldwin spaces of hybridity and improvisation, and the jazz player represents "the restless experimenter who takes apart dominant. . .forms and recasts them" (Shin & Judson, 1998, p. 8).

The improvisational performance of the jazz player also involves a radical desublimation of sexual desire and un-disciplining of the body. At the heart of Baldwin's democratic cultural politics is a sexual politics derived from a radical Freudian theory of sexual repression, the "authoritarian personality" (Reich, 1970; Fromm, 1941/1964), and the desublimation of desire as a revolutionary action (Marcuse, 1966). Baldwin's belief that sexual repression was tied to social oppression and domination, and that the desublimation of desire thus carried with it a radical

democratic politics, was, of course, hugely influential in the 1960s, and one could certainly argue that much of the power that was mobilized on the political left in the 1960s was mobilized around the desublimation of long-repressed desires, including homosexual desire (Guattari, 1984). The repression of homosexual desire is not merely a "private" concern from this perspective. It is a surplus repression implicated in the establishment of systems and structures of domination throughout society. The jazz player represents a disturbing element in the culture of surplus repression. He humps the audience—black and white, male and female—with his saxophone/body and brings them along with him toward an orgasmic release. Is this a radical and transformative act? Baldwin suggests it at least potentially is, and that if Rufus could have been more like the young saxophonist, perhaps he could have improvised a life for himself.

This brings us to the third major queer character in the novel—Eric, a white, middle-class man who grew up in a Jim Crow South. As an expatriate American living in France, Eric has taken on a French male lover, Yvette, and the two plan a trip to America to live together. As a boy, Eric is represented as someone considered by his peers to be a bit effeminate, and he never exhibits the hyper-masculinity that Rufus and Vivaldo do. Eric performs an androgenous masculinity, a body that incorporates the qualities of both sides of identity binaries simultaneously, so that he is able to switch back and forth, to perform both active and passive roles, male and female, homosexual and heterosexual, and black and white. This is the result of incorporating or introjecting those he has loved as part of him, and learning to feel the world as they must have. This learning begins early in his life in Alabama, with an adolescent relationship with a black friend, LeRoy. Like Vivaldo, Eric's sexual desire was—at least initially—focused on black masculinity because he viewed black men as less repressed and "cold" than white men. But through his relationship with LeRoy, and later Rufus, Eric begins to see, as William Pinar (2001) has written, that his desire for black masculinity has been "merged with racism, with the history and culture of white male fantasy regarding the black male body" (p. 1100), and he can begin to deconstruct his own racial mythology. Eric also learns from LeRoy something about white privilege that the white man does not forget. One day, LeRoy asks Eric if he is aware of "what they saying about us in this town," and Eric responds that "if we've got the name, we might as well have the game." He says he does not care what people think, and that the two of them should "let them all go to hell." LeRoy gently tells Eric, "You a nice boy, Eric, but you don't know the score" (p. 215). As an upper-middle-class white boy in the South, Eric was protected by racial and class privilege; but LeRoy could not afford to adopt Eric's attitude.

By the end of the novel, Eric has developed a capacity to deconstruct or undo the heteronormativity that has oppressed him, and through this gained the capacity to cross borders, identify with marginalized peoples whoever they might be, and assume responsibility for his own reeducation and freedom:

> His life, passions, trials, loves, were, at worst, filth, and, at best, disease in the eyes of the world, and crimes in the eyes of his countrymen. There were no standards for him except those he could make for himself. There were no standards for him because he could not

accept the definitions, the hideously mechanical jargon of the age... and this meant that he had to create his standards and make up his definitions as he went along. (pp. 212–213)

As one who crosses borders between the inside and outside of American culture, symbolized by his movement back and forth between France and the United States, Eric is able to finally demystify the taken-for-granted character of heteronormativity and racism in America—as Baldwin was able to do as a returning expatriate from France.

Eric is also represented as a teacher of sorts, who teaches others the healing power of no longer defining themselves by the borders and binaries of the hegemonic culture. His sexual encounter with Vivaldo, near the end of the novel, is presented as a metaphor for a kind of "liberatory" healing that comes through a radical queering of the queer body. Vivaldo seeks in Eric something of what it must have felt like to be Rufus, making love to Eric. Then Vivaldo fantasizes that he is Ida, and feels what it is like to be entered. This intersectionality of identities and bodies in the imagination, involving elements of introjection and projection, makes Vivaldo simultaneously homosexual and heterosexual, black and white, and male and female, unsettling in the process the taken-for-granted character of his knowledge about what it means to be a man, or be white, or be homosexual. William Cohen (1991) notes: "It matters that Vivaldo is penetrated not only as a radical affront to the normative sexual practice of the putatively straight man, but, in Baldwin's terms, because a heightened consciousness on all levels enters him through the sexual act" (p. 11). This "heightened consciousness" is not automatically "liberatory" for Vivaldo; and he and Ida continue to struggle at times. But this time he does not walk away and is clearly on a journey for which there can be no return to an earlier self.

For Baldwin, Eric represents a form of queer masculinity that opens up liberatory possibilities along a number of identity fault lines. Yet, by making Eric white and upper middle class, Baldwin seems to be looking to white, middle-class queer men as the most capable of overcoming the negative effects of internalized oppression and living open, accepting lives. Indeed, given the times in which he wrote, Baldwin does see white homosexuals as potentially most "liberated." Rufus seems doomed to his fate by race and class. Not only is his oppression tripled (race, class, and sexual orientation), but he is also alienated from a black community that was still deeply homophobic.

Conclusion

According to Ben Knights (2008), literary texts can be read as commentaries upon the formation of masculinities, in which case they are a "politics at once of interpretation and pedagogy" (p. 2). Masculinity studies and queer pedagogy focus on the representation, performance, and reproduction of normative masculinities within texts, and on both the policing and subverting of hegemonic masculinities. Ultimately, queer masculinity studies must be about intervening in the construction

of masculinity among young males by making them more aware how they actually produce and perform masculinity through interaction with popular culture texts. It thus becomes imperative for young people and adults to become more critical readers of popular culture texts, and to be exposed to texts that help them imagine new ways of thinking and performing gender. I have argued that one way to encourage a shift in consciousness along these lines is by approaching the reading of a text from differing interpretive frameworks, moving from liberal humanism to standpoint theory to queer theory and queer masculinity. Each interpretive frame allows the reader to generate a particular interpretation of the text and thus to produce certain "truths" and narratives through the reading process. Since authors bring their own conscious and unconscious interpretive frames to the writing process, the pedagogical challenge is to help students become more aware of their own interpretive frames in interaction with the interpretive frames of the author.

In identifying the interpretive frame(s) of an author such as Baldwin, we also need to situate the author and the writing of the text within an historical and cultural context, as I have attempted to do with regard to *Another Country*. The country that Baldwin wrote about is in many ways another country from the one young people are growing up in today, although the novel invites the reader to question what has changed and what has not, and to see continuities as well as discontinuities with contemporary America. If the tropes of suicidal queer masculinity, and of self-destructive black masculinity, still are being performed in America today, there are reasons to be hopeful. In 1963, Baldwin's *The Fire Next Time* was published, just a year after the release of *Another Country*. In this series of essays on race in America, Baldwin affirmed a politics of hope in the face of the contemporary "nightmare." He wrote that "relatively conscious" whites and blacks, those relatively few who had been able to work through their racism and internalized oppression, "must, like lovers, insist on, or create, the consciousness of the others." This is, essentially, an educational and a pedagogical project. If we do not take on this responsibility, Baldwin warned, we will fail to "achieve our country, and change the history of the world" (p. 1).

In spite of the real gains that have been made in the social construction and deconstruction of race, gender, class, and sexual identity in the past half century, Baldwin's pedagogical project is still needed, and his warning is still relevant. Even the movement toward a queer masculinity, while transformative in some ways, continues to participate in racial, gender, and class "Othering." As Kevin Kumashiro (2001) observes, "Queer identity, then, is not always successful in queering its very center...Queer political movements that focus on only queer sexuality fail to contest ways that other identities are already privileged in society and even among queers" (p. 4). At the same time, progressive black men need to interrogate homophobia and heterosexism in the black community, associated with the taken-for-granted assumption that there are no queer black folk, or shouldn't be, or that being queer is only a "white thing" (West, 1999; Dyson, 2007). Finally, it will not be enough to recognize multiple, intersecting axes of identity formation, and develop alliances across identity boundaries, or to effectively construct a self outside the mirror of the Other, without simultaneously taking on the very real material and ideological apparatuses that are implicated in the production of inequality and oppression.

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Chapter 16
Queer Imaginative Bodies and the Politics and Pedagogy of Trans Generosity: The Case of *Gender Rebel*

Nelson M. Rodriguez

> The history of the category [of the human] is not over, and the "human" is not captured once and for all. That the category is crafted in time, and that it works through excluding a wide range of minorities means that its rearticulation will begin precisely at the point where the excluded speak to and from such a category. (Butler, 2004, p. 13)

Introduction

In *Undoing Gender*, Judith Butler (2004) focuses on the question "of what it might mean to undo restrictively normative conceptions of sexual and gendered life" (p. 1). Within this broad project, she discusses, in various ways, the concept and process of *becoming undone* "in both good and bad ways" (p. 1). For example, normative conceptions of gender and sexuality can be so constraining and restrictive for some people that their personhood, their identity, their sense of self, becomes undone, that is, "unravels," because of the lack (or withholding) of recognition of their nonnormative gender embodiment, a lack of recognition that can also lead paradoxically to being recognized as less than human. As Butler poignantly asks:

> If I am a certain gender, will I still be regarded as part of the human? Will the "human" expand to include me in its reach? If I desire in certain ways, will I be able to live? Will there be a place for my life, and will it be recognizable to the others upon whom I depend for social existence? (Butler, 2004, pp. 2–3)

In addition to lack of recognition, one might become undone because of forced compliance with a gender regime that, for that person, does not sustain a livable life. In this way, "[one] may feel that without some recognizability [one] cannot live. But [one] may also feel that the terms by which [one is] recognized make life unlivable" (Butler, 2004, p. 4). To come undone in this way could take any number of specific forms.

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The 1997 film *Ma Vie en Rose* (English translation: *My Life in Pink*), for instance, tells the story of a transgendered child, Ludovic Fabre, whose biological sex is male but whose gender identity is female. The story can be read as Ludovic's struggle to survive, in the sense of not coming undone within social environments—for example, the family, the community, the school—of forced compliance with the norms of gender and heteronormativity. The film suggests that, because of a lack of validation and recognition of trans identity within a societal context of gender bifurcation and enforced straightness, coupled with the expectation and mandate of submitting to gender norms, Ludovic is on the direct path of committing suicide—the ultimate form of coming undone. Clearly, committing suicide would be one of the "bad ways" of becoming undone. Butler, however, also speaks of becoming undone in more positive terms. She notes: "Other times, the experience of a normative restriction becoming undone can undo a prior conception of who one is only to inaugurate a relatively newer one that has greater livability as its aim" (2004, p. 1). Utilizing, once again, the example of *Ma Vie en Rose*, let's take a closer look at this more positive conception.

From the beginning of the film to its final climactic scene, it is possible to examine how Ludovic's parents and siblings and grandmother are also coming undone as a result of struggling to have a livable relationship with a trans child within a societal context of fierce unexamined heteronormativity and gender norm expectations that threaten to destroy the family members individually and as a family. However, because of Ludovic's will to maintain his queer embodiment (coupled with his direct and indirect, conscious and unconscious, willful and unwillful forms of resistance to being negatively undone), he facilitates a process of loosening the normative restrictions that have captured the minds of his family members in relation to hegemonic "ideals" of gender and sexual identity and desire; in the process, he has created the critical transformative conditions for his family, as Butler notes above, to become undone in order to "undo a prior conception of who [they see themselves as] to inaugurate a relatively newer [sense of self] that has greater livability as its aim." Of course, Ludovic's resistance enables him, too, to inaugurate, indeed to carve out for himself, a newer sense of self that no longer depends on a heteronormative understanding of the relationship between biological sex, gender, and sexuality; indeed, for Ludovic, greater livability, as a biological male child, is not dependent on embodying, nor being recognized as embodying, heteromasculinity. By the film's end, one might say that Ludovic and his family have developed a critical consciousness—that is, an experientially informed and cultivated level of "criticality"—in relation to gender and sexual norms that has enabled them, at least to a certain extent, to live "queerly" alongside such norms: from this perspective, "the 'I' that [each of them is becoming aware of] finds itself at once constituted by norms and dependent on them but also endeavors to live in ways that maintain a critical transformative relation to them" (Butler, 2004, p. 3).

This process of becoming undone that instigates the capacity to develop a critical reflection about and relationship to gender norms that "maximizes the possibilities

for a livable life . . . [and] minimizes the possibility for unbearable life" points to the significance of and necessity for queer forms of embodiment for literal or symbolic survival for many individuals (Butler, 2004, p. 8). Queer embodiments can, no doubt, produce a sense of estrangement, "a sense of social belonging impaired by the [critical] distance [from gender and sexual norms that such embodiments necessitate], but surely that estrangement is preferable to gaining a sense of intelligibility by virtue of norms that will only do [oneself] in from another direction" (Butler, 2004, p. 3). As with Ludovic, many genderqueer youth negotiate heteronormative heterosexuality and gender norms by cultivating queer forms of embodiment that provide sustainability. In addition, however, such queer forms of embodiment have the potential to critically disrupt "spaces of hegemonic straightness," for bodies are in ongoing constitutive intercorporeal relation to each other: indeed, "to describe embodiment as intercorporeality is to emphasize the experience of being embodied is never a private affair, but is always already mediated by our continual interactions with other human and nonhuman bodies" (Weiss, 1998, p. 5). Karen Saunders (2009), in *Queer Intercorporeality: Bodily Disruption of Straight Space*, notes, for instance, the intercorporeal significance of queer youth bodies in relation to straight bodies within the context of family spaces constituted by hegemonic "straight family values." As she notes:

> The "blacksheep" or deviant/different child that does not "fit" or fails to conform to the family structure is not an uncommon phenomenon. While there is a range of terms circulating within Western culture to identify children that do not blend in, I suggest such a rupture is "queer." The *queer sheep* seems "out of line" or "strange" as s/he disturbs the sense of unity through which the family reproduces sameness and conformity. This child often fails to follow the family lines, namely the preconceived milestones that mark progression through life which are based on the presumption that bodies maintain fixed, straight identities. (p. 55)

One might well imagine there are many types of "queer sheep" who exhibit many forms of queer embodiment that disturb the sense of unity and coherence of other "straight," seemingly fixed bodies in spaces that are in ongoing relation to their own. In this sense, queer forms of embodiment illustrate how the very notion of "bodily humanness," *especially in terms of what counts as legitimate gendered and sexual bodies*, represents a continuing, contested site of struggle over meaning making carried out within relations of power. Butler (2004) highlights this enduring struggle by pointing to the historicity of the term "human": "the history of the category [of the human]," she notes, "is not over, and the 'human' is not captured once and for all. That the category is crafted in time, and that it works through excluding a wide range of minorities means that its rearticulation will begin precisely at the point where the excluded speak to and from such a category" (p. 13).

In this chapter, I analyze the documentary *Gender Rebel* (2006) as an example of a text that can be read as participating in a cultural politics that expands the terms of "gendered humanness" by challenging normative understandings of what constitutes the "proper" gendered body for biological females. In my analysis, I focus on

the lives of two "women" whose genderqueer embodiments can be read as a complex personhood under the sign of the masculine (Halberstam, 2001) that enables the "women" to work on undoing restrictive gender norms, as these have played out on the site of the body, in order to inaugurate more livable lives. From this perspective, the narratives about genderqueer embodiments represented in *Gender Rebel* become one way to "relate the problematic of gender and sexuality to the tasks of persistence and survival" (Butler, 2004, p. 4). My own specific analysis is situated within the broader context of what Judith Butler refers to as the "New Gender Politics that has emerged in recent years, a combination of movements concerned with transgender, transsexuality, intersex, and their complex relations to feminist and queer theory" (2004, p. 4). Along these lines, by drawing from the theoretical insights of queer and trans (gender) theories, this chapter explores the notion of the "queer imaginative body" where queer imagination is understood as a form of "embodied criticality" functioning as a politics that undermines the hegemonic terms of gender arising from a system of bigenderism. Situated within a discussion of the politics and pedagogy of trans generosity, the chapter concludes with a critical reflection on the pedagogical significance of taking up queer masculine embodiment (e.g., the body of the "genderqueer female-to-male [FTM] trans man") as a site of generosity within the women's studies classroom. In this way, I advocate what I refer to as a pedagogy of trans generosity. I argue that, because the queer masculine embodiments of biological females run the risk of being positioned across any number of cultural and social locations as a threatening "Other," especially in relation to delimited understandings of the category woman, a pedagogy of trans generosity becomes a necessary critical intervention to challenge this viewpoint. Such a pedagogy, I attempt to initially work out here, provides an opportunity to situate queer masculine embodiments within a language of possibility that draws attention to the innovative quality of these embodiments as sites of generosity. That is, by way of their ongoing processes of becoming, they generously expand the meanings, as well as the possible range of lived experiences, of the (female) body and of gender/sexual identity in ways that queer these concepts so that they provide greater sustainability to a broader array of bodies and identities. From this perspective, a pedagogy of trans generosity opens up the possibility of framing queer embodiments more generally as forms of "bodily generosity" that can potentially become a resource for students in terms of imagining their own bodies and identities as sites of "endless becoming." Before turning to an analysis of *Gender Rebel* and to a discussion of a pedagogy of trans generosity, in the following section I consider some of the meanings of queer masculinity in terms of the analytical and political work that it does as a queer and trans concept. These meanings will inform my discussion of *Gender Rebel*.

Queer Masculinity: As a Queer and Queer-Inflected Transgender Concept, What Does It Mean/Do?[1]

Since initially coined by Teresa de Lauretis in 1990 at a conference at the University of California, Santa Cruz, queer theory has been preoccupied with the politics of identity, and initially with the politics of gay and lesbian identities.[2] In its contemporary manifestations, queer theory tends to emphasize—that is, place a constructive stress on—"identity fluidity." As queer studies scholar Noreen Giffney (2009) explains:

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[1] Depending on how the concept has been deployed throughout recent history, a range of meanings have been associated with the concept queer. For instance, Reynolds (2004) notes that "queer became a part of a common pathological vocabulary for the deviant, abnormal and immoral 'other' with the emergence of a modern homosexual identity from the late nineteenth century" (p. 177). In its more critical utilization, the concept has mobilized a broad spectrum of nonheterosexuals by providing a language of critique "against the moral, medical and legal compulsions towards heterosexuality" (Reynolds, 2004, p. 177). Within contexts that take up or emphasize the notion of identity fluidity (a central focus of this chapter), queer has been a "means of extending sexual politics from lesbian and gay rights to questioning or 'querying' the whole notion of fixed sexual [and gender] identities, uniting those who have this questioning in common, whether lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, heterosexual or of any other self-definition" (Reynolds, 2004, p. 177).

[2] Since the late 1980s and early 1990s, queer theory has emerged from, has been impacted by, and has contributed to several intellectual locations within the academy. By this, I mean three things. First, queer theory arises out of a broader set of intellectual movements in academia, particularly critical feminist theory and critical literary studies, as well as French poststructuralist philosophy (specifically the work of Michel Foucault) and postmodernism. Regarding the latter, queer theory can be situated within the postmodern turn in sexuality studies as a more radical version of social constructionism that "offers a postmodern critique of metanarratives of identity" (Beasley, 2005, p. 125). Second, queer theory draws from and develops certain ideas and concepts within the overall field of gender and sexuality studies, most particularly having to do with the politics of identity. And, third, queer theoretical work can be found across a number of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, including in the field of education, and, hence, has impacted disciplinary knowledge production. Taking into account these three points, then, it can be said that queer theory is marked by an ongoing intellectual history. Therefore, while queer theory continues to evolve theoretically and politically, thereby defying any singular or set definition, certain meanings and practices can be connected to it, however temporary, as a critical methodology and as a form of gender and sexual politics. In this way, queer theory "does function in specific—albeit complex and somewhat ambiguous—ways in particular contexts, and in relation to particular issues" (Sullivan, 2003, pp. v–vi). Queer theory, in other words, is not an empty or floating signifier. Rather, "'in the face of a resolved and insistent unknowability, it remains clear that queer [theory] *means*'" (Sullivan, 2003, p. 47). One specific and recurring meaning, for instance, is Annamarie Jagose's widely quoted characterization where "queer [theory] marks a suspension of identity as something that is fixed, coherent and natural" (1996, p. 98), making possible a rejection of identity categorization *per se* by emphasizing multiplicity, fluidity, and instability. In addition, queer theory rejects binary identity models—such as straight/gay or man/woman—"leading to 'a more *generic critique* of identity-based theories and politics'" (Beasley, 2005, p. 164). By engaging in a critique of identity binaries, queer theory focuses on what has been excluded or devalued from these binaries by the heteronormative order. In so doing, queer theory illustrates how identity binaries themselves are socially constructed, and hierarchically arranged, within relations of power.

> Queer is … embraced to point to fluidity in identity, recognizing identity as a
> historically-contingent and socially-constructed fiction that prescribes and proscribes
> against certain feelings and actions. It signifies the messiness of identity, that fact that desire
> and thus desiring subjects cannot be placed into discrete identity categories, which remain
> static for the duration of people's lives. Queer thus denotes a resistance to identity categories
> or easy categorization, marking a disidentification from the rigidity with which identity cat-
> egories continue to be enforced and from beliefs that such categories are immovable. Queer
> is championed by people both to reveal and revel in their differences in, what Cherry Smyth
> terms, its "potential for radical pluralism." (pp. 2–3)

Even though queer theory is framed as an anti-identitarian politics of difference,
to this day it continues, in various ways, to be linked to lesbian and gay identity
categories. Drawing on Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Giffney explains why this link
remains politically significant:

> This linking of queer theory with lesbian and gay was (and continues to be) considered by
> many to be self-evident and unquestionable because, as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick pointed
> out: "given the historical and contemporary force of the prohibitions against *every* same-
> sex sexual expression, for anyone to disavow those meanings, or to displace them from the
> term's definitional center, would be to dematerialize any possibility of queerness itself." In
> this, queer theory has become somewhat of an epistemological extension of an ontological
> position, with queer theory a theory for, about and by "queers." Queers' theory in other
> words. (2009, p. 5)

Insofar as gay and lesbian discursive categories are concerned, however, queer the-
ory remains connected to these categories as a "critical sympathizer." That is, queer
theory has functioned as a critique of the exclusions—in terms of identities, desires,
politics, and so on—that gay and lesbian groupings arguably create and sustain
as categories constituted within/as an identity politics.[3] Drawing from these initial
reflections about queer theory, one way to frame what queer masculinities do is to
consider how they work to illuminate the policing and exclusionary tactics of iden-
tity categories. For instance, a queer masculinity can become a vehicle by which to
consider how (and why) certain masculine-inflected gender formations are excluded
from the category of the human, relegated, that is, to the status of "less-than-human."
Similarly, and as another example, a queer masculinity in the form of a trans man
can draw attention to how the category "woman," as an identity politics, has become
naturalized, in part at least, by excluding certain kinds of male-inflected "ambigu-
ous" bodies from the category. In this way, as a queer concept, a queer masculinity
highlights the exclusions through which categories of identity come into being and
are continually policed by focusing on the plethora of possible configurations of

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[3] By the phrase "identity politics," I am referring to particular social movements organized around
specific marginalized identity categories (e.g., gay or woman) that work to serve as the basis of
inclusion/membership into the category/movement. I use other phrases, such as "categories of
identity" or "binary models of identity," in order to differentiate these from the more specific
meaning associated with identity politics. However, in this section of my chapter, I am emphasizing
that all identity-based categories are political in the sense of creating boundaries and borders,
"insiders" and "outsiders."

masculinity and masculine identity formations that are purged from any number of identity categories.

One significant consequence of excluding, say, certain bodies or embodiments from specific identity categories is that such exclusions feed into the construction of hierarchical binaries, where one term in the binary is valued and the other term is devalued, "made other." These kinds of "ranked" binaries are formed not only around dominant/subordinate groups—for example, heterosexual/homosexual—but also within *subordinate* categories themselves—as when, for example, in 1991, as a matter of policy, Nancy Jean Burkholder was ejected from the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival for being trans. One effect of rejecting transwomen in this way has been the construction of a binary around authentic/inauthentic women. As Gayle Salamon (2010) explains in her critical commentary about the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival's enforced policy: "This policy has been protested by transpeople and their allies, who oppose the ban not because they reject the idea of separatist space, but rather on the grounds that transwomen *are* women and thus must be included in women's space" (p. 106). The formulation of a binary around "real/not-real" female bodies or womanhood reveals the relationality of hierarchically organized bodily and identity constructions. After all, the notion of non-transwomen/bodies makes sense only in relation to transwomen/bodies.

Thus, a central feature of queer theory (as well as queer-inflected forms of transgender theorizing within trans studies) is its rejection of binary sex, gender, and sexuality models—that is, male/female, masculinity/femininity, straight/gay—by highlighting the instability and fluidity within each of these binaries as well as between them.[4] Within the context of a queer critique of binary models of identity, a queer masculinity potentially undermines the strict lines of demarcation that constitute sex, gender, and sexuality binaries; to be more precise, queer masculinities, in *blurring* those lines of demarcation vertically and/or horizontally—that is, within and/or across the categories of sex, gender, and sexuality—radically challenge the *certainty* about what those categories mean, who can inhabit them, and what they should look like. Thus, a queer masculinity, as a form of queer-inflected transgender embodiment, becomes useful, as Judith Halberstam (2005) notes, "not to people who want to reside outside of categories altogether but to people who want to place themselves in the way of particular forms of recognition" (p. 49). For example, female masculinity, as a type of queer masculinity, undercuts horizontally

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[4] I specifically use the phrase "trans studies" in reference to discourse production about subjects who engage in forms of, or seek recognition for, "cross-identification, identity 'migrations,' or ambiguous identification" (Beasley, 2005, p. 152). In this sense, trans studies represents a broad arena of theorizing about any number of trans categories, including transvestism, transsexualism, and transgenderism, among many others. While some scholars use the word transgender, rather than the phrase trans studies, to denote this broad arena, I generally agree with Chris Beasley's formulation that transgender seems to increasingly signify a "focus on a particular category of persons/issues within or under the coverall label 'Trans,' who 'do gender' in non-normative ways....Transgender theorizing in this setting means a Postmodern or Queer version of Trans Studies" (2005, pp. 161–162).

the notion that masculine gender identity originates in bodily sex.[5] Female-born bodies can "do" masculinity, thus severing any necessary link between male-born bodies and masculinity. Male and masculinity, in other words, are disarticulated by relocating "the question of masculinity away from the male body 'to the realm of identification'" (Beasley, 2005, p. 233). In the capacity to challenge the stability and coherence of (hierarchical) binaries, by way of a process of blurring and/or mixing up the relationship within and across binary categories, a queer masculinity is a form of critical queerness that "is all about excess, pushing the boundaries of the possible, showing up language and discursive categories more specifically for their inadequacies" (Giffney, 2009, p. 8).

It is this particular focus on the numerous ways that the links between categories of bodily sex (male/female), gender (masculine/feminine), and sexuality (heterosexual/homosexual) are mixed up or queered within the broader context of a critique of the heteronormative social order that postmodern feminist Judith Butler, in her landmark (1990) text *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, suggests can provide the basis for, and contours of, a "queer politics."[6] In short, Butler advocates *pastiche*—"that is, an imitation which involves a medley of identity forms and hence mocks any notion of an inner truth or original core self" (Beasley, 2005, p. 107). Thus, rather than draw on naturalized identity categories such as woman or gay as the basis for a political program, a queer politics opts for displacing these naturalized identity categories by way of proliferating identities and identity categories that mix up or crisscross the traditional assumptions regarding the supposed inevitable links between biological sex, gender, and sexuality—and in this way

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[5] The concept of female masculinity is introduced in Judith Halberstam's (1998) *Female Masculinity*.

[6] Judith Butler's 1990 publication, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, has been significant in providing a vocabulary for developing queer theory. However, *Gender Trouble* is first and foremost situated within the context and concerns of feminism and feminist theory, and in particular within debates about the efficacy of feminist identity politics. Drawing from other postmodern thinkers, especially from the work of Michel Foucault, Butler construes "resistance to power as resistance to identity itself" (Beasley, 2005, p. 100). For feminism, this means, according to Butler, that it must problematize its use of the identity categories of women and gender, its traditional terms of reference. Butler's resistance to identity politics, in this case to feminist/gender identity politics, highlights her concern that the deployment of identity categories, such as "women," as if they were natural, unified, and stable categories, (1) conceals how these categories are actually socially and politically constructed and (2) "homogenizes those in the category and creates a 'political closure.' This closure creates a norm that excludes everybody who does not fit, and polices those within it to ensure that they continue to do so. Feminist identity politics . . . produces fixed meanings of 'women' which [f]eminism claims to resist" (Beasley, 2005, p. 166). Accompanying her critical appraisal of identity politics is her discussion of a constructive stress on the unstable, incoherent, nonnatural, and "performative" account of gender and its possibilities for feminist politics in advancing a more egalitarian social order; and significantly, this postmodern feminist account of gender performativity has been one substantially important discourse for inspiring queer theorizing and critique.

underscores the non-natural and non-eternal character of all identities.[7] In terms of strategy, then, a queer politics "focuses on hybridity or ambiguity, on body, gender, and sexuality crossings" (Beasley, 2005, p. 109). As a queer politics emphasizing pastiche, the concept of queer masculinity constitutes one imaginative vocabulary for thinking about the ongoing possible formations of masculinity. These unlimited proliferations of masculinity can be understood as critical forms of "bodily generosity" that potentially create pathways for living out our gender and sexual identities and practices in ways that move beyond, while presenting challenges to, hegemonic socially prescribed ways of being. To put it another way: Within the context of operating as a politics of pastiche, a queer masculinity provokes "another discursive horizon, another way of thinking the [gender and the] sexual" (De Lauretis, 1991, p. iv) that contests the construction of these categories within the ontological purview and constraints of binary formulations.

The Queer Imaginative Body in *Gender Rebel*

Judith Butler (1990) notes that a person cannot be recognized simply *as* a person—that is, simply as human—because human beings are always already gendered within the binary oppositional categories of male or female, man or woman. From this perspective, a human subject *is* a gendered subject within the terms of binaristic thought. As Butler explains: "Persons only become intelligible through becoming gendered in conformity with recognizable standards of gender intelligibility" (p. 122). The idea that there are two distinct genders that correspond to two distinct and stable biological sexes—what Butler means above as "recognizable standards of

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[7] As an antinormative knowledge project that offers a deconstructive critique of normalizing ways of knowing and of being, queer theory pursues the critical strategy of *denaturalization*—that is, of showing how gender and sexual identities, such as gay or straight, masculine and feminine, are not natural, transhistorical categories, but rather are thoroughly socially constructed within particular cultural and historical contexts and are constructed as hierarchical binaries forged within relations of power. In short, to denaturalize sexual identities is to argue that such identities have histories. Within such a critical framework, gender and sexual identities are no longer assumed to be natural, biological facts but rather understood as formed "in the course of human history and culture" (Oksala, 2007, p. 11); in this way, sexuality, for example, "is not an essentially personal attribute but an available cultural category—and it is the effect of power rather than simply its object" (Jagose, 1996, p. 79). A classic illustration of the strategy of denaturalization can be found in French philosopher Michel Foucault's (1990) *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction*. Foucault offered the influential claim that the homosexual was not a name that referred to a natural kind of being. Rather, he argued that such an identity category was constructed by, and thus emerged out of, nineteenth-century scientific and medical discourses that required the specification of individuals in order to regulate and persecute peripheral sexualities and practices (Oksala, 2007). As Foucault writes: "Homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphrodism of the soul. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species" (1990, p. 43).

gender intelligibility"—is a deeply entrenched notion, psychically and institutionally. Within the context of a gender politics, such a hegemonic notion aggressively works to position ambiguous gender formations or queer embodiments outside the realm of language and, consequently, outside of the "real." Riki Wilchins (2004) eloquently highlights this point about the relationship between language and reality in her discussion of nonnormative genders. She notes:

> The privileging of language as the arbiter of reality has been especially hard on gender. [Indeed], most nonnormative experiences of gender are excluded from language, and what little language we have for gender transcendence is defamatory. Moreover, all aspects of gender that are not named are also assumed not to exist—to be make-believe. (p. 39)

As Wilchins suggests, for nonnormative gender identities and bodies, part of the process of coming into existence entails a "politics of naming," one that works to broaden the discursive scope of "recognizable standards of gender intelligibility" by challenging the terms of gender. By "the terms of gender," I mean contesting delimited hegemonic meanings of sex/gender categories—for example, what constitutes a "male body" or "masculinity/manhood"?—by way of drawing attention to an ongoing emerging range of critical narratives that illuminate the fiction of organizing sex/gender as discrete, stable binary categorizations. In what follows, I analyze the documentary *Gender Rebel* as an example of a text whose cultural politics can be read as creating a language in the form of what I refer to as the "queer imaginative becoming body" that works to challenge the terms of gender.

Gender Rebel documents the lives of three biological females—Jill, Lauren, and Kim—in their early to mid-20s who identify as genderqueer.[8] In the overview Web page about the show (on logotv.com), they are described as "shatter[ing] the confines of traditional gender identities." Similarly, in the opening segment of show, they are framed as being "on the newest frontier of sexual identity . . . identify[ing] not as male or female, but something that's a little of both—or neither," and they are further positioned as "blurring the boundaries and breaking the rules." In addition, they are situated as belonging to a broader and "powerful community that is challenging society's notions on gender and gender behavior." In this section, I will focus specifically on Jill as she struggles to live out her genderqueer body intercorporeally within a system of entrenched bigenderism. I frame her struggle as one that challenges the terms of gender, as I described earlier. In the next, and final, section, I will center my analysis on Kim—who also identifies as genderqueer—within a discussion of the politics and pedagogy of trans generosity.

Karen Saunders (2009) discusses the political significance of imagination as it plays out on the site of the body in ways that (in)form queer embodiments as modes of resistance. She states: "by adding *imagining* to forms of resistance it is possible to demonstrate the agency of queer subjects. To imagine oneself differently to that of the dominant social imaginary is an embodied act of resistance" (p. 33). Relocating imagination to the bodily level—that is, situating it as something that not only happens in the mind but also corporeally—challenges the longstanding mind/body split

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[8] Due to space constraints, I focus my analysis on Jill and Kim only.

that "has valorized the mind as the center of thought and subsequently the center of imagination" (Saunders, 2009, p. 34). In challenging such a split, the ingenuity of the imaginative body as a site of becoming and politics is highlighted. From this perspective, the body is able to be recast, in Saunders' terms, as an "imagining body," one that is constituted as a critically creative force that "acts and reacts to the social formation that seeks to constrain it" (2009, p. 34). In this setting, it becomes possible to talk about the *queer* imaginative body where queer imagination is understood as a form of "embodied criticality" functioning as a politics that undermines the hegemonic terms of gender. Thus, "the role of the [queer] imaginary . . . plays a major role in how bodies are shaped, lived and [in] how they negotiate the pressures to conform to rigid identity categories" (Saunders, 2009, p. 34).

In *Gender Rebel*, Jill, a self-identified genderqueer, challenges what Saunders (2009) calls the "hegemonic imaginary" that "seeks to cement the body in a unified fixed subject position based on sexual anatomy and gender" (p. 34). Indeed, in rejecting the biological sex that was assigned to her based on anatomy, coupled with refusing to be framed in "either/or" terms based on sex and gender, Jill reimagines, as an act of embodied queer resistance, a corporeal configuration that, while acknowledging "leans" more toward being male/masculine, can still account for "the possibilities of embodied multi-identifications or multi-imaginations across gender and sex" (Saunders, 2009, p. 34). As Jill states:

> I don't really mind being female; I just feel more comfortable being perceived as a guy. I bind because I want to pass. If I pass for every reason except for my chest, it disappoints me. I don't agree with the sex that I was born into, the biological sex, so I'm challenging that. My mindset when it comes to gender is probably 75 percent male, 25 percent female. I don't really fit into the binary gender system. I'm just genderqueer, kind of anti-gender.

Jill's narrative exemplifies how the queer imaginary, as an act of embodied resistance, potentially opens up the body, in terms of sex and gender, as a site of proliferative resignifications. Jill notes, for example, that she "binds"—the practice of the flattening of the breasts by using a constrictive material to "pass," in many cases, as the other gender. In Jill's instance, rendering her corporeal practice as one of just hiding her breasts to pass as a guy would be overly simplistic. That is, in addition to facilitating Jill's ability to pass, her practice of binding, similar to her practice of wearing men's clothing, can be seen as a form of embodied queer imagination that works to *actualize* "the [male/masculine] body that is already part of [her] bodily imagination and bodily comportment" (Saunders, 2009, p. 35). In this way, Jill's practice of binding calls attention to the role that queer imagination plays not only in challenging the hegemonic imaginary but also "in the shaping and 'becoming' of bodies" (Saunders, 2009, p. 35).

Jill's story throughout much of the documentary is framed around two main narratives: the first about her struggle to come out to her family, specifically to her mother, as genderqueer (she is already out as a lesbian) and the second about her ongoing process of becoming boy/boi.[9] These two narratives intersect in complex

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[9] The term *boi* has any number of different meanings depending on how it is understood and lived out by specific individuals and groups within the broader LGBT culture. In discussing Jill's

ways that, in my view, further illustrate the embodied dimension of the resistive queer imaginary. For Jill, coming out as genderqueer means, in part, making a verbal declaration about, while seeking recognition for, her becoming queer masculine embodiment, that is, her open-ended identification with, and embodiment of, masculine attributes as a biological female. However, coming out as genderqueer is also as much marked by an ongoing history of *embodied* declarations that, in Jill's case, can be situated as part of her corporeal process of becoming. The following passage, for example, can be read as a specific instance of Jill's embodied attempt, on the one hand, to come out as genderqueer and, on the other hand, to bring forth her becoming boy/boi body, in both cases by way of the corporeal practices of working out and of dieting. Recalling when she was a teenager, Jill explains:

> When I was like 16, I worked out all the time. People were like, "Are you trying to lose weight? Do you think you have an eating disorder?" And I kind of did. But it wasn't to have an ideal female body. It was to look more like a boy.

While Jill acknowledges that her practices of working out/dieting were, to a certain extent, accurately read by others as a reflection of an eating disorder, she also intimates that the response she received overlooked what those practices enabled. That is, in her statement, "It was to look more like a boy," Jill suggests that working out and dieting opened up for her a corporeal space to explore and, therefore, to potentially engender and embody (as a biological female) new images of the masculine gendered body—queer masculinities—that have yet to be imagined on a societal level, given how deeply ensconced the gender binary is as a form of hegemony in rendering genders discrete and static based on biological sex. Yet, as Weiss (1998) explains in the following passage, changes in the body image at the individual level, as in Jill's case, can feed into the cultivation of a new societal imaginary, one that is able to recognize and affirm the vast possibilities of what constitutes "gendered realness":

> Exploring the corporeal possibilities that have been foreclosed by a given culture's own imaginary, itself helps to bring into being a new imaginary—one that does justice to the richness of our bodily differences. Changing the body image, I maintain, must involve changes in the imaginary, which situates the body image within a vast horizon of possible significances. To change the imaginary, we must in turn create new images of the body, dynamic images of non-docile bodies that resist the readily available techniques of corporeal inscription and normalization that currently define "human reality." (p. 67)

Although Weiss seems to hold out a sense of promise that a societal imaginary could potentially develop into one structured along a vast spectrum that accounts for the "richness of our bodily differences," her hopeful vision is tempered by her use of the phrase, "readily available." That is, insofar as maintaining an entrenched system of binary sexed and gendered bodies, Weiss points out that "techniques of corporeal inscription and normalization" permeate the culture (i.e., are "readily available"), making resistance to bigenderism an uphill battle. These techniques are in place at

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genderqueer identity in *Gender Rebel*, I use boi to generally refer to a female-born or female-bodied person who only partially identifies as female or as a woman.

the institutional and interpersonal levels, and manifest in various forms, as the following exchanges between Jill and her mother can be read as illustrating. However, as the exchanges below also illustrate, resistance to these techniques marks a site of ongoing struggle, a counterhegemonic gender politics whose aim can be read as contributing to the cultivation of "dynamic images of non-docile [genderqueer] bodies."

Indirectly referring to the Papanicolaou test (the Pap smear/test), the first exchange illuminates how a discourse of care and love—in this case, a parent's genuine concern for the health and well-being of her "daughter"—inadvertently yet powerfully reinforces an unproblematized sense of bodies and genders as either male or female, man or woman:

Elaine (Jill's mother): And you have the doctor's appointment, right?
Jill: Yeah . . . .
Elaine: What day?
Jill: I don't remember. I don't know if I'm going to go.
Elaine: You have to go. It's been two years. You can't not go.
Jill's voiceover: I've hated the doctors since I really started binding and embracing my more masculine attributes. Getting undressed in front of them and having them examine me is stressful.
Elaine's voiceover: Why she is being so stubborn on this, I really don't know.
Elaine: Once . . . .
Jill: Is it time to go to the beach yet . . .
Elaine: Yes, one doctor. Come on, I say it 'cause I love you . . .

Jill continues, in the next exchange, to resist her mother's insistence that she receive a Pap test—presumably because such a test would work as a technique of corporeal inscription whereby Jill would be repositioned into a biological sex and gender category with which she does not wholly identify. From this perspective, Jill uses her resistance to broach the subject of her genderqueer identity/body:

Jill's voiceover: I've been rehearsing in my head what to say. I'm going to explain why I don't want to go to the doctor, why I dress the way I do. Just get it out on the table . . . .
Jill: Nichole says she talks to you on every lunch break to check up on me. She said she was making me a doctor's appointment. Did you give her all the information?
Elaine: Yeah, I told her. I said, "Make it." And she said, "Well, she looked like she was ready to cry when I made it." And I said, "Let her cry, just make it."
Jill: Yeah, but I don't like going to that kind of doctor.
Elaine: I know, none of us do.
Jill: Yeah but . . .
Elaine: Why don't you like to go . . .
Jill: It's mostly because of gender issues . . .
Elaine: Well, I'm sure they have done scans on gay girls before . . .

Jill: Yeah . . . it's . . . I look like a boy . . .

Elaine: No, you don't, I don't think so . . .

Jill: Kind of . . .

Elaine: Not really . . .

Jill: Yeah, but I dress and act like a boy . . . it's kind of the look I'm going for . . .

Elaine: Oh, you're going for a little boy look?

Jill: Little boy charm . . .

Elaine: Little boy charm . . . well, you still need a Pap test, little boy . . . I don't really see the things you're uncomfortable about . . .

Jill: Does it bother you that I dress like a boy?

Elaine: Does it bother me that you dress like a boy? I just never thought of it as boyish. I just thought of it as bad fashion . . .

After several unsuccessful attempts, at the end of the documentary Jill finally comes out to her mother as genderqueer, explaining what that means for her and in the process contributes a narrative, and hence an image, of a non-docile body, one that refuses bigenderism as the only version of gendered human reality:

Jill's voiceover: I pretty much knew I had to tell her today. I'm leaving tomorrow. Like I knew I had to get to it.

Jill: Like if you hear a word like genderqueer . . . I mean it doesn't ring any bells because you've never heard it, obviously . . . I'm genderqueer . . .

Elaine: I guess I'm not really very familiar with that . . .

Jill: I mean I was born into a girl's body. I don't feel like really a boy or a girl. I like just being in between . . . I'm pretty much gender ambiguous. Like sometimes I bind in order to pass more. Like Ace bandages. That's why I'm flat.

Elaine: Oh . . .

Elaine's voiceover: When Jill told me about the binding, it was more than just a fashion statement. You don't bind, you don't change your actual physical appearance, for fashion.

Elaine: People are going to be uncomfortable with it. You're a girl dressing like a boy. People are going to be uncomfortable with that. And I would lie if I said I'm not uncomfortable sometimes with that.

[Jill shows her mother her breasts wrapped in an Ace bandage.]

Jill: Are you going to disown me now?

Elaine: No, why would I do that?

Jill: Because some parents do.

Elaine: No, not me. I just want you to be happy and healthy, and play your music, and do well in school, and all the things I ever wanted for you when you were five. I'd be lying if I said I wouldn't want you to stay my daughter forever, but I guess I'd be happy if you stayed my child forever . . .

Jill's narrative about her struggle to come out and to live as genderqueer not only illuminates the political significance of the concept of the queer imaginary as an

embodied act of resistance to the hegemony of the gender binary with its vast networks of techniques of corporeal inscription and normalization but also lends insight into the transformative politics associated with another concept: "trans generosity." While it is conceivable that any number of meanings and practices might be associated with such a concept, in relation to Jill's story in *Gender Rebel*, I specifically define trans generosity as the capacity that genderqueer bodies and identities potentially have to critically provoke new kinds of sustaining (gendered) social relations and social spaces when genderqueer bodies and identities are lived "openly" in ways that problematize the delimited language, logic, and structure of bigenderism.

To further understand the concept of trans generosity, it might be useful to draw from the critical insights offered by Sara Ahmed, in her (2006) *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*, to consider what genderqueer bodies and identities "fail" at doing and what such failure makes possible. Ahmed notes that "when we follow specific lines, some things become reachable and others remain or even become out of reach. Such exclusions—the constitution of a field of unreachable objects—are the indirect consequences of following lines that are before us: we do not have to consciously exclude those things that are not 'on line.' The direction we take excludes things for us, before we even get there" (pp. 14–15). By not following, in other words, the plethora of lines that orient the body in directions that would reconstitute the hegemony of the gender binary, genderqueer bodies and identities potentially bring within reach—that is, generously open up the possibility for—social relations and spaces that might otherwise remain out of reach when those relations and spaces are thought and lived within the territorializing logic of two socially constructed sex/gender categories and the accompanying logic of fixed notions of identity. In Jill's case, coming out to her mother as genderqueer has brought into imaginative reach for Jill's mother, Elaine, the possibility of envisioning, albeit not without struggle, a new kind of mother-"daughter" relationship, one whose gendered meanings and practices, as the following comment by Elaine suggests, will have to be renegotiated to make more room for gender ambiguous formations (in Jill's case, a queer masculinity). As Elaine expresses shortly after Jill comes out as genderqueer: "I'd be lying if I said I wouldn't want you to stay my daughter forever, but I guess I'd be happy if you stayed my child forever." Elaine's comment, though brief, offers a glimpse of the generosity that Jill's queer masculinity—and by extension queer embodiments more generally—makes possible: it instigates "lines of flight" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) that deterritorialize "by disturbing supposed boundaries or demarcations. [These lines of flight] are nomadic wanderings fleeing from convention and obligation, creating new ways of becoming not yet visualized" (Saunders, 2009, p. 12). By moving across space and time "off line," then, queer bodies and identities have the capacity to create new (gendered) relations and spaces, that further afford opportunities for (gendered) "becoming[s], not yet visualized," and this enabling aspect of queer embodiments constitutes their generosity. In the next and final section of my chapter, I further explore the concept of trans generosity within the context and concerns of advancing a pedagogy of trans generosity in relation to teaching about queer masculine embodiment.

Queer Masculine Embodiment and a Pedagogy of Trans Generosity

> What is the relationship between women's studies, feminism, and the study of transgenderism and other non-normative genders? In asking after the place—or lack of place—of transgender studies within the rubric of women's studies, I want to suggest that feminism, particularly but not exclusively in its institutionalized form, has not been able to keep pace with non-normative genders as they are thought, embodied, and lived. . . . I want to suggest that, if it is to reemerge as a vital discipline, women's studies must become more responsive to emerging genders. Genders beyond the binary of male and female are neither fictive nor futural, but are presently embodied and lived, and the discipline of women's studies has not yet taken account of this. Until women's studies demonstrates a more serious engagement with trans studies, it cannot hope to fully assess the present state of gender as it is lived, nor will it be able to imagine many of its possible futures. (Salamon, 2010, pp. 95–96)

The above passage is from Gayle Salamon's (2010) *Assuming a Body: Transgender and Rhetorics of Materiality*. Salamon's critique of one of the defining absences of contemporary women's studies—that is, its inadequate attention to trans identities and, more generally, to trans studies—suggests that the issue may be one of reluctance or resistance to taking up nonnormative genders within the women's studies curriculum. This may be especially the case with queer-inflected, anti-identity, ambiguous gender formations. Indeed, one of the significant challenges of transgender identities is that they shatter the notion of unitary/coherent and binary models of identity and identification. Within the context of a curriculum organized around the category of woman (as an identity politics), the complexity of the relationship between trans (gender) and women's studies goes well beyond figuring out how to subsume another topic about gender under the auspices of women's studies. Rather, the issue may be that, in the face of trans epistemologies that destabilize coherent sexed and sexual identity categories, women's studies may find it more difficult to circumscribe the category woman as the object of study. As Salamon points out:

> In some ways trans studies is singular in the difficulty it presents to [women's studies]—a difficulty that becomes manifest if . . . we understand the task of trans studies to be the breaking apart of [the] category [of woman], particularly if that breaking requires a new articulation of the relation between sex and gender, between male and female. . . . The category of "woman," even if it is understood to be intersectional and historically contingent, must offer a certain persistence and coherence if it is to be not only the object of study but the foundation of a discipline, and a subject formation that describes a position of referential resistance might not be easily incorporated into such a schema. (2010, p. 98)

While the topic of the curricular politics that trans studies presents for women's studies is beyond the scope of this chapter, I begin by highlighting this topic because it is closely related to the issue of concern here: pedagogy, and specifically a pedagogy of trans generosity. That is, within the context of an introductory women's studies course, what sorts of challenges emerge when teaching about gender-ambiguous formations that seriously call into question, and potentially undermine, the very "ground" of the idea of natural female bodies or of a stable notion of what constitutes womanhood? To address this question, as well as related ones, in the remaining pages of this chapter, I return to the documentary *Gender*

Rebel, situating the story presented about Kim's female-to-male genderqueer body and identity within a discussion about the pedagogical significance of taking up queer masculine embodiment as a site of generosity within the women's studies classroom. From this perspective, I advocate what I refer to as a pedagogy of trans generosity.

As a professor of women's and gender studies, I sometimes teach the introductory course "Women, Culture, and Society." For this course, I like having my undergraduate students view the documentary *Gender Rebel* because it challenges them to consider the assumptions they often have about the category woman—namely, that its meanings and practices are fixed, stable, and knowable. That is, by utilizing a film that can be read as problematizing the distinction between male and female bodies, between masculinity and femininity, as well as complicating notions of coherent sexual identity categories, the certainty that many of my students have about what constitutes the identity woman (and by extension any social identity category) is thrown into doubt. Yet utilizing such a film in this way creates its own pedagogical challenges, especially—as Kim's story potentially illustrates—within a women's studies course context where representations (filmic or otherwise) about trans men might be decoded in ways that exoticize and/or demonize FTM bodies and identities in relation to more conventionally understood notions about what constitutes the female body, as well as the category woman. However, it is precisely because the queer masculine embodiments of biological females, such as in Kim's case, run the risk of being positioned across any number of cultural and social locations as a threatening "Other," especially in relation to delimited understandings of the category woman, that a pedagogy of trans generosity becomes a necessary critical intervention to challenge such a viewpoint. Such a pedagogy, I attempt to initially demonstrate here, provides an opportunity to situate queer masculine embodiments within a language of possibility that draws attention to the innovative quality of these embodiments as sites of generosity. That is, by way of their ongoing processes of becoming, they generously expand the meanings, as well as the possible range of lived experiences, of the (female) body and of gender/sexual identity in ways that queer these concepts so that they provide greater sustainability to a broader array of bodies and identities. A pedagogy of trans generosity also makes available an opportunity for students in the introductory women's studies classroom to consider the limitations of continuing to think with particular categories of identity and identification in relation to the evolving complexity of contemporary sexed/sexual embodiments, a sentiment captured nicely by Judith "Jack" Halberstam (2010) when she notes that: "the same categories of identification that were produced at the end of the 19th century in relationship to bodies and desires are with us despite the fact that they don't do a good job anymore of describing the kinds of embodiments that people currently live."

In the case of teaching about FTM trans men in the women's studies classroom, it might be worth considering for a moment the similar challenge of teaching about MTF transwomen. The transwoman has been cast at times as doing "harm" to women by invading or taking over the female body or by intruding into "real" women's spaces. Perhaps the classic enunciation of this radical feminist position is

in Janice Raymond's (1979) now infamous book, *The Transsexual Empire*, humorously yet critically described by Nikki Sullivan (2003) as conjuring "up a dystopian scenario, a transsexual empire, 'reminiscent of *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers*'" (p. 108). In the same way, the FTM trans man can be portrayed, however unwittingly, both as harming—that is, mutilating—the female body and as undermining the "authenticity" of coherent notions of gender and sexual identity categories. These two sentiments are potentially suggested, or can be read as such, in the representations in *Gender Rebel* that focus on "Kim becoming Ryan"—that is, that focus particularly on Kim's top surgery and decision to go on testosterone and on Michelle's—Kim's lesbian-identified girlfriend—response to, and struggle with, both.

As with Jill, Kim's story includes a set of narratives that highlight the problematic significance of her sense of her breasts in relation to her ongoing genderqueer identity formation (Kim notes, for instance, "Tomorrow is the day I've been waiting for since I was 6 years old—I told my sister I was going to become a bodybuilder, so that I would never have breasts"; and Kim further notes, "My breasts feel like two tumors on the front of my chest—I look at them and I just have to turn away because it doesn't feel like it's part of me"). Also similar to Jill's, Kim's corporeal practices highlight the queer imagination as an embodied phenomenon—in Kim's case represented in the form of having male chest reconstruction surgery. Arguably, however, because Kim is positioned as having made a decision to engage in a procedure to remove her breasts (whereas in Jill's situation she is seen only as binding/hiding them), the narratives presented in the documentary leading up to and immediately following her top surgery depict Kim as potentially violating her womanhood by mutilating her body, as well as robbing those closest to her of their long-standing sense of Kim as a woman, as the following five excerpts suggest:

Excerpt one (Kim):

My family's response to my surgery tomorrow is anger and sadness. None of them want me to go through with it.

Excerpt two (in a conversation between Kim and her therapist, Scott):

My mom called me. She was all torn up, and just kept crying, which made me just keep crying. She said, "If you go through with this, I don't know if I can see you anymore." My dad said that if I go through with this that I'm dead to him as well.

Excerpt three (Kim introducing and talking about her girlfriend, Michelle, in relation to Kim's decision to have top surgery):

Michelle grounds me to this earth. I just love her so much that if I lost her everything that I built my life up to be would completely shatter . . . When I first brought the issue up about my surgery, she said, "It doesn't matter if you don't have breasts, I'll still love you." As time grows nearer, she gets more scared about it because she's an identified lesbian. She doesn't feel comfortable around men. It makes me feel very sad and like we're not connecting because she keeps describing how she can't see herself with a guy. I keep trying to tell her I don't have to be the definition of a male or be the definition of a female. I want her to connect with my genderqueer side.

Excerpt four (Michelle on the day of the surgery):

> This morning on the way up here, I was feeling fine. But like when we were sitting in the doctor's room, [I was thinking], "Oh my gosh, it's actually going to happen." Kim's body is going to be different in a few hours . . . I just told her that we're going to have to take it day by day.

Excerpt five (Kim discusses a phone call she made to her brother after her surgery):

> When I talked to my brother on the car ride home from the surgery, he sounded kinda sad cuz I really did it. It happened, and there's no turning back from it.

In all of these passages, the implication is that a loss is about to take place, but a loss that potentially comes across as a kind of violence done to femininity and to the female body in order to achieve a certain kind of masculinity. From this perspective, it is important to provide students with a language of possibility that, in Kim's case, might be framed as "the becoming queer masculine body," one that challenges the arborescent logic of structuring biological sex, gender, and sexuality in a hierarchical system of truth and value, whereby biological sex is situated not only as static but also as connected to, and therefore, the root or base of the truth of gender and sexuality. In this way, the notion of the becoming queer masculine body challenges the tightly structured system of the relation between biological sex/gender/sexuality by calling into question its arborescent logic. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) note that "arborescent systems are hierarchical systems with centres of significance and subjectification, central automata like organized memories . . . an element only receives information from a higher unit, and only receives subjective affection along pre-established paths" (p. 16). If we understand "Kim becoming Ryan" within the terms of the becoming queer masculine body, then the "removal" of Kim's breasts is not positioned as lost elements that refer back to "a higher unit" of truth (i.e., female biological sex); rather, their removal is seen as another way to frame the meaning and range of (female) biological sex and of womanhood as these are reconfigured within a language of the becoming queer (masculine) body. Such a language provides students with an opportunity to call into question the convention of organizing what constitutes the intelligible body of female gender within a frame of dichotomous thinking: one that "rigidly map[s] body identities" in ways that "dampen and undermine [their innovative] exuberance" to "overflow stable ordered identities and spaces, potentially creating new [forms of gendered and sexed] actualizations" (Saunders, 2009, pp. 52, 39, 3).

Introducing the notion of the becoming queer masculine body also offers students an occasion to hold up to some kind of critical vocabulary, thus making problematic one of the quintessential and pervasive representations of trans men: that moment when, post top surgery, the trans man, removing his bandages, is potentially positioned to be viewed as revealing "'the horror of nothing to see,'" as exhibiting, that is, "missing breasts, rather than a male chest . . . *scars* rather than . . . *pecs*" (Salamon, 2010, pp. 111–112). A variation of the scene just described is part of the visual text and narrative associated with Kim's story in *Gender Rebel*. For instance, we witness Kim, one month after her top surgery, looking into the bathroom mirror, while she removes her bandages, with an expression that might be described as a mixture of apprehension and excitement about what she, and by extension us

as viewers, will see. In terms of what students potentially see, this image, followed by a second of Kim sitting bare-chested on her couch, certainly colors the narrative that accompanies this second image, where Kim says (presumably to the camera person): "I'm very, very happy. I'm excited to heal completely so that I have a nice-looking, more natural-looking chest." Between these images and the possible way they "speak" another story alongside Kim's actual statement (a story that might convey the sense that Kim has undergone something akin to a surgical violence in order to attain a chest), the question needs to be asked, what in fact do students see? Do they see, as Kim does, an emerging chest? Or, no matter what Kim says, do they see scars and missing breasts (i.e., "the horror of nothing to see")? Complicating what is discerned in this scene is Michelle's own humorous narrative, one that, on the one hand, invites us to perceive the naturalness of Kim's chest while, on the other hand, highlights and mourns the loss of her breasts. Applying lotion to Kim's chest, Michelle remarks: "When she had breasts, she kinda looked like a guy in bad drag. She just looks much more normal this way, much more herself. Like this is just what Kim should look like. But as far as me, like I miss her breasts sometimes. I didn't actually expect to, but I do sometimes."

Trans studies scholar Gayle Salamon notes that the fate of the breasts in relation to female-to-male transition—and how the "loss" of the breasts from top surgery has instigated for some mourning and panic—has become a recurring obsessive theme not only within popular culture but also within feminist discourse, suggesting that a critical conversation about that obsession needs to develop. As Salamon observes:

> Much of the anxiety and anger in discussions both popular and academic about FTM transition centers around the loss of the breasts from top surgery, so much so that the focus on breasts and their fate during transition is becoming an analog to the centrality of the penis in popular discussions about transwomen. The preoccupation with transmen's bodies extends beyond the physical presence of the scars resulting from top surgery to the question of what it is, exactly, that those scars signify. The excessive concern for the breasts, the desire to "save" them or to save the "young women" who are considering top surgery from "mutilating" their breasts and themselves in this way, understands transition to be a transaction whereby the transman purchases the nonmaterial privileges of the phallus at the price of the material flesh of the breasts. Thus an ostensibly feminist concern offers a disingenuous grieving for the removed breasts as a symbol of the transman's relinquished femininity, though I would venture that those breasts were rarely affirmed or avowed as such when they were still part of that transman's body. (2010, pp. 112–113)

Salamon's concern that the discourse regarding FTM transition continues to be dominated, indeed captured, by what one might term a "language of negation"—where negation in this context means the perceived mutilation of the breasts and the sense of disavowal of femininity that supposedly is the inevitable consequence of the trans man's top surgery—highlights the potential challenge in moving beyond this language, particularly within feminist contexts, including the women's studies classroom. From this perspective, in terms of teaching about Kim's story, the challenge entails situating her top surgery transition within a language other than negation, to push students, that is, to consider her transition within a language of possibility/becoming. A similar pedagogical challenge arises when trying to figure out what language will inform the classroom dialogue about Kim's choice, not long after her

top surgery, to go on testosterone—a decision that, given Michelle's response to and struggle with, may be perceived by students as negating (read: undermining) coherent notions of lesbian identity and lesbian community/"sisterhood," as well as "familial happiness" (Salamon, 2010, p. 112).

Consider, for example, the following passage where Michelle reflects on, and is clearly worried about, how Kim's decision to start taking "T" will impact her own identity and, by extension, her happiness:

> "T" is different than just not having breasts. It's going to be the thing that makes me change my world. I want to be in a world of women, and if men did fall off the face of the earth, I probably wouldn't even notice, let alone care. And I don't want to change my life. I don't want to change my identity. I don't want to have to explain myself to people. And I don't want them to think I'm straight. … [The testosterone], well that's changed things. It brings it home—you're with a guy, you're not a lesbian anymore. … It's a constant struggle. It would be easier if I walked away from it sometimes. … I always was around a lot of lesbians, and I thought they were really cool, and I was more than happy to fit in there. So now it's like who I want to be with doesn't fit into who I want to be.

From a pedagogical perspective, Michelle's fear of losing, and, hence, her insistence on maintaining, a stable and coherent sense of a gendered/sexual self, specifically in relation to Kim's evolving genderqueer identity, is significant. That is, given how the narrative of Michelle's internal conflict filters Kim's unfolding story in the documentary, Michelle's struggle has the potential to limit how students view Kim's overall transition, as well as how they are able to think analytically about it. In highlighting this pedagogical concern, I do not mean to minimize Michelle's struggle. Instead, I want to emphasize that the languages made available for students to think with regarding the topic of transition not only determine their breadth and depth of knowledge about "'gender complex' people" (Weeks, 2011, p. 217) but also impact their understanding of, and willingness to engage with, the highly contingent and dynamic aspect of identity categories and what this might mean for the students' own processes of gender and sexual becoming. More specifically, by exploring how becoming queer masculine bodies/identities, such as Kim's, problematize fixed and static meanings and practices of various gender and sexual identity categories and concepts (thereby potentially provoking new relations [and spaces] that can create the conditions for future becomings), students are able to reflect on the significance of the generosity of queer embodiments as a *language of possibility*. Such a language challenges students to rethink their entire approach to analyzing gender and sexuality by making transgender epistemologies *integral* to the study of gender and sexuality, and by extension, *constitutive* of how they live out these categories relationally in everyday life in ways that may afford greater ontological sustainability. From this perspective, transition can be understood as a highly enabling concept and process, one that, as Raewyn Connell (2010) notes, "is not a thing in itself … [but rather] is a process of relocation in the gender order, a relocation that creates new possibilities of action. That action may be simply the making of a survivable life. … But it may be more; it may indeed point to historical shifts in gender relations that reach far beyond an individual life" (p. 18).

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Chapter 17
Educating-Bodies: Dialogism, Speech Genres, and Utterances *as* the Body

David V. Ruffolo

Queer Theory

The relationship among identities, bodies, and culture has and continues to be a critical point of exposition for queer theorists. Queer theory's "official" conception in academe in the early 1990s created new spaces to rethink equity and social justice initiatives both inside and outside the academy.[1] Queer theory blurred the lines between academia and activism by establishing a new political consciousness among scholars, activists, researchers, educators, and politicians. The Stonewall riots of 1969 in New York sparked a heightened interest in the body as a social, cultural, sexual, and political site that could be self-determined as well as collectively disciplined, policed, and controlled. The body became a political statement for activists while becoming a declaration of normative politics for conservative proponents. The birth of queer theory is often seen as a building reaction to identity politics—specifically the exclusivity of gay and lesbian liberation movements. Queer theory, in its infancy, worked to make the shift from *identity politics* to a *politics of identity* where the body's relationship to identity categories became a highly contested space. The coining of the term "queer theory" by Teresa de Lauretis in 1990 marks not the authoritative insemination of queer but the further stimulation of queer theorizing.[2] De Lauretis created necessary opportunities to intersect what is happening inside the academy with what is happening outside the ivory tower. Groups such as Queer Nation and ACT UP challenged homophobia and provided a voice for AIDS activism. Scholarship and activism fused into each other in order to challenge hierarchical and patriarchal ideologies. Michael Warner's introduction

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[1] See, for example, Jagose (1996), Sullivan (2003), and Wilchins (2004) for introductory overviews of queer theory.

[2] Teresa de Lauretis is often credited with coining the term "queer theory" at a conference on lesbian and gay sexualities at the University of California, Santa Cruz, in 1990.

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of the term *heteronormativity* established a new framework for approaching the relationship among identities, bodies, and culture: heteronormativity exposes the injustices attributed to bodies that are minoritized at the expense of majoritized bodies—specifically how heterosexuality is defined and defines itself *as* culture (Warner, 1993). Warner's shift from tolerating the Other to challenging the practices that produce the Other established new ways for thinking and talking about equity and social justice in relation to self/other binaries. For instance, the minoritized body became less of a site for tolerance and acceptance and more of a political materiality capable of disrupting and rethinking the practices that further privilege the majoritized at the expense of the minoritized. The shift from identity politics to a politics of identity assumes a greater emphasis on equity over equality and difference rather than sameness. The disruption of binaries became a central interest for early queer theorizing. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's earlier work contributed to this concern by analyzing how binary identities are reproduced through social engagements. As an example, Sedgwick takes the binary heterosexual/homosexual as a specimen for examination:

> heterosexual/homosexual…actually subsist in a more unsettled and dynamic tacit relation according to which, first, term B is not symmetrical with but subordinated to term A; but, second, the ontologically valorized term A actually depends for its meaning on the simultaneous subsumption and exclusion of term B; hence, third, the question of priority between the supposed central and the supposed marginal category of each dyad is irresolvably unstable, an instability caused by the fact that term B is constituted as at once internal and external to term A. (1990, pp. 9–10)

Sedgwick explains how binary identities are conceptualized and reproduced through binaries: man/woman, gay/straight, masculine/feminine, able/disabled, etc. This explains how identity categories are constructed as binaries where identities are not based on what they are but what they are not: *x* is *x* because *x* is not *y*. The internal/external (Sedgwick) or inside/outside (Fuss, 1991) relationships explain why certain identities are privileged over others: why "us" versus "them" distinctions are upheld where the majoritized is often privileged at the expense of the minoritized. The complexity of binary categorizations—the simultaneous internal/external or inside/outside of identities—became a significant point of dissection for queer theory: *queer* is in many ways a third space outside binary categorizations where the existence of queer does not depend on a definitive Other. Queer theory is therefore not interested in creating new identity categories but is focused on disrupting fixed categories that bodies must assimilate into in order to be read as intelligible. In other words, queer theory offers a body that is less fixed and stable and more mobile and fluid: the body is an open materiality that is always shifting. In doing so, queer becomes less of a noun and more of a verb: a radical process of disruption committed to challenging fixed subjectivities embedded in normative practices. There are therefore no "normal" bodies but bodies that become normalized over time through (hetero)normative discourses.

Judith Butler's work on gender performativity transformed the understanding of how bodies are negotiated through their identities in culture (1990, 1993).

According to this (re)formulation, all identities uphold an historicized discourse where identities are reiterated through bodily performances. This implies that identities are not inherent to the body: identities become naturalized through the body's reiteration of specific norms attributed to identity categories. Performative identities function similar to Baudrillard's *simulacra*[3] where they are copies with no original: certain acts, gestures, and desires are reproduced over and over again to produce seemingly fixed and stable identity categories. For example, the particular attributes specific to masculinity are continuously reiterated among bodies to produce what is known as masculine identifiers: one need not go further than trying to answer the question, "what does it mean to be a *real* man?" The body performs gender through the reiteration of gendered norms that are attributed to gendered ideals. Butler consequently challenges the claim that sex is "natural" and gender is "constructed"—the nature/nurture debate: that the body is naturally male or female depending on its biological configuration and that the body's gender is socially determined. This configuration implies that sex determines gender: the body's biologically determined sex decides what gender the body will be even though the embodiment of gender is socially mediated. For example, male is equated with masculinity and female with femininity. In contrast to this normative reading of bodies and identities, Butler argues that gender precedes sex: it is through the reiteration of gendered norms that gendered identities are produced and it is through gendered identifications that sexed bodies are concretized. To put it another way, the body becomes gendered through the reiteration of norms that circulate among bodies to produce gendered categories. Sex follows gender in that its supposed naturalness results from the highly constructed gendered categories that are produced through the reiteration of gendered norms. The body, according to Butler, becomes materialized over time as a result of performative reiterations.

The works of Michel Foucault largely influence the various contributions that Butler makes to queer theory. Foucault's claim that the body is a surface of inscription resonates throughout the range of queer theorizing. *The History of Sexuality* series by Foucault (1978, 1985, 1986) explains how bodies are produced as subjects of the social. For example, in the introductory volume, Foucault moves away from the notion that sexuality is repressed (*the repressive hypothesis*) and opts for a reading of sexuality as a science (*scientia sexualis*). In doing so, sex becomes less something that is or is not permitted and more something that is mediated through discursive practices:

> The object, in short, is to define the regime of power-knowledge-pleasure that sustains the discourse on human sexuality in our part of the world. The central issue, then...is not to determine whether one says yes or no to sex, whether one formulates prohibitions or permissions, whether one asserts its importance or denies it[s] effects, or whether one refines the words one uses to designate it; but to account for the fact that it is spoken about, to discover who does the speaking, the positions and viewpoints from which they speak, the institutions which prompt people to speak about it and which store and distribute the things

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[3] See Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation* (1994).

that are said. What is at issue, briefly, is the over-all 'discursive fact,' the way in which sex is 'put into discourse.' (1978, p. 11)

Foucault explains how bodies become discursive subjects through continuous subjection to the triangular relationship among power, knowledge, and pleasure. Foucault's earlier work—*Madness and Civilization* (1965) and *Discipline and Punish* (1977)—explains how bodies become highly subjected subjects through the exposition of disciplinary techniques in the medical and penal institutions, respectively. Foucault demonstrates how power is not a "top-down" approach. In contrast, power is always a relational and productive force: "an action upon an action, on existing actions or on those which may arise in the present or the future" (Foucault, 2000, p. 340). The confession, panopticism, and examination are a few of the disciplinary techniques that produce bodies as intelligible subjects. Queer theory is therefore interested in exposing and reworking the disciplinary practices that attempt to produce "normal" bodies that are required to reproduce the normative ideals of society.

Queering Masculinities

The radical potential of queer theory lies in its ability to create more equitable spaces through the disruption of binary ideologies that discipline bodies. Queer theory is committed to rethinking its own potential while revisioning inequitable spaces that create a greater gap between majoritized and minoritized bodies. The process of *queering*—to disrupt what is considered essentially normal in order to expose what is normatively essentialized—has taken precedence over the use of queer as an umbrella term that describes multiple identities. Queer is therefore not as much of a noun as it is a verb. Queer theory's initial interests focused on the queering of sex, sexuality, and gender. This is most notable in Butler's reference to the *matrix of intelligibility* that attempts to uphold a strict linearity among sex, sexuality, and gender in order to produce coherent and fully knowable bodies.[4] Queering masculinity, for example, suggests not only to reconsider the boundaries and workings of the category masculinity (gender) but to also rethink masculinity's immediate connections with sex (male) and sexuality (heterosexuality). Troubling the gender binary between masculinity and femininity requires a simultaneous reconsideration of gender's relationships with sex and sexuality. The release of gender and sexuality from sex's inherent determinism is at the forefront of many scholars and activists' work toward a more fluid conceptualization of the body. Ann Fausto-Sterling's *Sexing the Body* (2000) radically challenges the fixedness of sex through a rereading of, for example, genitals, brains, and hormones. In doing so, Fausto-Sterling offers important implications for creating new opportunities to challenge the notion that gender and sexuality are biologically determined. Judith Halberstam's *Female Masculinity*

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[4] Butler (1990, pp. 23–24).

(1998) explores the diversity of gender through the lens of, for instance, lesbian masculinity, the transgender butch, and drag kings. Scholars such as Namaste (2000), Wilchins (2002), and Prosser (1998) also dislocate gender from sex: how gender is no longer strictly determined by sex.[5] Masculinity is therefore no longer directly equated to being male (sex), and it loses its specific affiliation with heterosexuality (sexuality). The very notion that sex is a stable category that is firmly biological is also dislodged from the matrix of intelligibility. Trans theories create the possibility of viewing sex as a fluid category much as gender and sexuality. The process of queering identities exposes how the body is highly unstable and continuously shifting as it circulates through culture.

Queer theory has been subjected to numerous challenges that question its very existence over the nearly 20 years since its initial introduction to the academic world. Queer theory has in many ways become normalized as it has predominately articulated white, gay male, middle-class culture. David Eng, Judith Halberstam, and José Esteban Muñoz's special issue of *Social Text* titled "What's Queer about Queer Studies Now?" (2005) addresses this concern: "A renewed queer studies...insists on a broadened consideration of the late-twentieth-century global crises that have configured historical relations among political economies, the geopolitics of war and terror, and national manifestations of sexual, racial, and gendered hierarchies" (p. 1). A greater focus on class, race, ability, and nationality is required in order to revision the potential of queer in both academic and activist arenas. Jean Bobby Noble's *Sons of the Movement* (2006) offers a radically important reconsideration of bodies in the twenty-first century. It is through theoretical and personal accounts of the FtM transition process that Noble brilliantly articulates a *post-queer cultural landscape*. Noble claims that queer is becoming an "unusable term" because it has the power to both destabilize *and* stabilize. Noble's specific attention to race and class redefines how bodies are conceptualized in queer politics where specific attention is given to how the body has become a commodity in contemporary capitalist societies.[6] According to Noble, "whiteness comes into visibility as whiteness when it is articulated through class" (p. 77). Masculinity, for instance, is not an isolated identity that functions singularly; masculinity is not an identity that is mediated strictly through the intersection of gender, sexuality, and sex. In contrast, masculinity becomes a highly contested space when it is also interwoven with race and class: various masculinities are articulated and reproduced through the body's relationship to race and class where whiteness, for example, is a "class-based race"[7] that reiterates specific forms of masculinity. Noble puts forth the argument that "masculinity is made by prosthesis and not essence or sexual difference" (p. 42). Gender is therefore post-queer in that it remains distinct from

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[5] See Stryker and Whittle's *The Transgender Studies Reader* (2006) for other important contributions.

[6] See Eng (2001), Ferguson (2003), Muñoz (1999), and Rodriguez (2003) for other important critical contributions that intersect race and class with queer studies.

[7] Noble (2006, p. 87).

sexual difference: "gender without genitals." In essence, Noble refigures the *matrix of intelligibility* by placing gender in a radically different space that is in many ways closer to race and class than to sex and sexuality. This offers important implications for thinking about masculinities in the twenty-first century: in addition to gender not being determined by sex, gender now functions as a radically different identity that circulates without immediate reference to biology.

Queering Education

Queer theory's intersection with education, as with queer theory's relationship to bodies, identities, and culture, is continuously shifting. Education, when explored using a queer lens, becomes a highly unstable space that is always being reconsidered through the intersection of identities, bodies, and the spaces these encounter. Foucault's interest in the triangular association among power, knowledge, and discourse offers education a poststructural *re*reading where the bodies occupying educational institutions become subjects that constitute educational spaces. The student-bodies become disciplined subjects that are subjected to specific educational discourses: how schools should be organized; how bodies should interact in these spaces; who is qualified to speak on the subject of education, and so on. Queering education is therefore largely concerned with exposing the subjugating practices that produce majoritized and minoritized educational subjects. The project of *queering* education quite often calls on researchers, teachers, administrators, and activists to expose the heteronormative practices that circulate in educational spaces in order to rethink education in ways that were once not possible. William Pinar's *Queer Theory in Education* (1998) in many ways marks a canonical relation between queer theory and educational studies. The edited collection creates opportunities to revision the potential of education from theoretical and practical perspectives where a large focus is placed on examining teaching and learning practices both inside and outside "official" educational establishments. Pedagogy is placed at the heart of early research on the topic of queering education. Deborah Britzman's "Is There a Queer Pedagogy?: Or, Stop Reading Straight" (1995) transformed the framework for looking at identities and bodies from a pedagogical perspective: Britzman rethinks the ways in which normativity is produced and circulated in education by bringing to light "the study of limits, the study of ignorance, and the study of reading practices" (p. 155). Queer theory's interest in educational practices and initiatives continues to push boundaries and disturb what is deemed "normal." Queering heteronormative structures, ideologies, procedures, and policies—to name a few—have been and continue to be the subject of many scholars working through the complexities of queer in/within/through education.[8] It is important that the initiatives of "queer" in education are not reserved for specific communities (i.e., queer, gay,

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[8] See, for instance, Kumashiro (2001), Mayo (2007), Rodriguez (2007), and Talburt and Steinberg (2000).

lesbian, bisexual, trans): it is possible for all educators to become *queerly intelligible* (Ruffolo, 2007). Queering education exposes how the bodies that constitute educational spaces function as individual entities that are collectively articulated. The body becomes a subject of educational discourse by negotiating itself using specific identities. The educational system ultimately becomes a highly normative space that disciplines and divides using the same identity discourses that constitute educational bodies: sex, sexuality, gender, race, class, and ability. Queer theorizations work to expose the social injustices that function to individualize bodies as intelligible subjects of the social through fixed and stable identities—practices that uphold binary distinctions between the self/other, us/them, and normal/abnormal. The educational system is one operation that in many ways contributes to the gap between majoritized and minoritized bodies.

Queer Masculinities/Queer Education

Masculinity and education remain distinct entities when they interact as collective domains that become individualized through the various discursive practices that produce bodies as subjects. *Queering* education and *queering* masculinities have opened new venues for scholars, researchers, activists, educators, and administrators to engage queer as a verb: to disturb, disrupt, and decenter heteronormative ideologies. Although these projects are important and continue to offer critical insights that are imperative to queer theorizations, a shift from *queering* to *queer* can create new spaces to rethink how bodies are constituted, articulated, and negotiated: a shift from *queering* education and *queering* masculinities to *queer* masculinities and *queer* education. I am not suggesting that queer replace queering; nor am I establishing a dichotomy between the two terms. In contrast, I am interested in exploring what it means to explore "queer masculinities" as they intersect with "queer education" where the body is not an individualized materiality distinct from "masculinity" and "education." In other words, I seek to expose the body *as* masculinity and *as* education through "queer masculinities" and "queer education." Although these notions are certainly not new to contemporary queer studies, these ideas are, however, predominantly focused on the body as a *discursive materiality*. I argue that this is largely realized through the frequently cited work of Butler and specifically her engagement with performativity. This chapter is therefore both a rereading and a critique of Butler's performativity in order to explore the body as a *materiality that is dialogically negotiated*. I will explore queer masculinities and queer education using a Bakhtinian lens to rethink the body through speech genres and utterances rather than performativity. Mikhail Bakhtin can be used to rework the concepts of queer, masculinity, and education themselves. In doing so, the body *as* masculinity and *as* education becomes an open materiality that is continuously becoming where bodies are dialogically negotiated in highly contextualized moments. Education, therefore, becomes less something that is done to the body and more something that is negotiated *as* the body: the educated body becomes an educating-body.

Performativity

Butler's groundbreaking work on gender performativity transformed the ways in which many queer scholars and activists approached identity politics.[9] Performativity offers a way to expose the social, cultural, institutional, and systemic practices that naturalize gender. In doing so, performativity subverts and disrupts the naturalization of gender that is upheld in patriarchal, hierarchical, and hetero-sexist discourses. Disrupting the *matrix of intelligibility* is at the core of Butler's project where the seemingly coherent link among sex, gender, sexuality, and desire is challenged. Performativity offers important insights into how identities are not essential to the body but instead become essentialized categories through the reiter-ation of norms among bodies. A focus on the politics of identity suggests that there are no inherent truths to the body as seen through identities. Butler uses Foucault's examination of power, knowledge, and discourse to decenter the "natural truths" of bodies. In *The History of Sexuality, Volume One* (1978), Foucault explains how sex did not become repressed in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries but rather became a discourse through the social, cultural, political, and economic administration of sex. Sex, vis-à-vis bio-power, became something that could be categorized, recorded, and controlled through the creation of a "population": birth and death rates, life expectancy, fertility, age of marriage, etc.[10] Sex ultimately developed into a public issue in which the state became involved in the sex of the citizens and the citizens became increasingly anxious about their sex. For example, sex was constantly under surveillance through the institution of marriage: obligated to marry, fulfill marital duties, uphold monogamy, etc.[11] In addition, the production of various pathologies around sexuality upheld the sanctity of "normal" bodies with "normal" sexuality: sex became a constant opposition to "peripheral" and "illegiti-mate" sexualities.[12] Foucault establishes a *genealogy* of sexuality where the focus is not on finding the "origin" of sexuality but on the emergence of events that produce a discourse on sexuality: genealogy works to "identify the accidents, the minute deviations…the errors, the false appraisals, and the false calculations that gave birth to those things which continued to exist and have value for us" (Foucault, 1998, p. 374). Foucault's genealogical examination of sexuality establishes new ways to approach the historical accounts of essentialized identity categories where it becomes possible to unmask the discursive practice that makes subjects out of bodies.

In *Gender Trouble*, Butler genealogically uncovers the emergence of gender as a natural category implicated in the matrix of intelligibility. Butler refutes the equa-tion of gender to culture and sex to nature: "gender is also the discursive/cultural

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[9] Gender predominantly is largely introduced in *Gender Trouble* (1990) and is explored further in *Bodies That Matter* (1993).

[10] Foucault (1978, p. 25).

[11] Foucault (1978, p. 37).

[12] Foucault (1978, p. 42).

means by which 'sexed nature' or 'a natural sex' is produced and established as 'prediscursive,' prior to culture, a politically neutral surface *on which* culture acts" (1990, p. 11). Consequently, the body, when read through performativity, is strictly *discursive* where, according to Butler, "[b]odies cannot be said to have a signifiable existence prior to the mark of their gender" (p. 13). In other words, the body, as Butler explains, is subjected to the discursive parameters of gender that remain within the framework of heteronormativity. The body therefore comes into existence as an intelligible subject through the discursive intelligibilities of gender that are tightly interwoven with sex, sexuality, and desire. The hegemonic structuring of identity categories upholds binary gendered divisions: predominantly masculinity and femininity. There is, therefore, a constant relationship with the other that is also deeply involved in reproducing the matrix of intelligibility: male/masculine/heterosexual and female/feminine/heterosexual. The detachment of "natural" and "essential" from identity categories results in a conceptualization of the body as discursive. The discursive body, I argue, is a performative body: the performative body becomes intelligible through the reiteration of particular discursive practices. Gender is performative in that gender is created through the reiteration of specific norms attributed to gendered identity categories; the body is performative in that it reiterates gendered norms that constitute not only gendered identities but also gendered bodies. The performative body is discursive because it does not come before the reiterations of gendered norms:

> gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed. . .There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the "expressions" that are said to be its results. (p. 33)

The body therefore becomes gendered through the reiteration of norms that simultaneously produce gendered identities. Heteronormativity is thus the result of continuously concretizing the cohesion among normative identities that result in a matrix of intelligibility. A genealogical exploration of gender explains how there are no origins of gendered identities. In contrast, such an exploration reveals how gendered identities are produced through the emergence of specific cultural, political, economic, and institutional events—emergences that are highly subjected to heteronormative ideologies that constitute identities in binary categories. The discursive body that performatively reiterates and subsequently produces gendered identities is always a copy of a copy with no definitive origin.[13]

Although Butler draws inspiration from Foucault's genealogical methodology to arrive at the performative body, she clearly differentiates her work from Foucault's by positioning the Foucauldian body as something that comes before discourse—the body is *pre*discursive: Foucault asserts that "the body is the inscribed surface

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[13] For example, Butler claims that "gay is to straight *not* as copy is to original, but, rather, as copy is to copy" (1990, p. 41).

of events" (Foucault in Butler, 1990, p. 165).[14] The prediscursive body is a materiality that is inscribed by discourse. In contrast, the performative body is discursive because it is not a materiality that exists prior to discourse: I read Butler's performative body as *discursive* because the body is a materiality that is produced *through* discourse. The discursive body comes into existence through performativity. For example, the discursive body performatively *performs* gender not as an explicit performance divorced from gender discourse but as a performance deeply embedded in the reiteration of discursive norms attributed to gender. It is through the performative reiteration of norms that gender identities are produced without reference to an origin:

> Gender is, thus, a construction that regularly conceals its genesis; the tacit collective agreement to perform, produce, and sustain discrete and polar genders as cultural fictions is obscured by the credibility of those productions—and the punishments that attend not agreeing to believe in them; the construction 'compels' our belief in its necessity and naturalness. (Butler, 1990, p. 178)

Gender becomes an apparently stable category through both the successful *and* unsuccessful reiterations of specific gendered norms. There are therefore no natural or essential genders—only gendered identities that become naturalized and essentialized through the performative reiterations of discursive bodies.

Butler's engagement with performativity presents a body that is articulated and negotiated through the reiteration of existing norms that are attributed to specific identities. The Butlerian body, as seen through performativity, is fundamentally discursive and therefore can exist only within the discursive realm of bodies that circulate norms. Masculinity is therefore restricted to the discursive reiterations of masculine norms that circulate among bodies: masculinity is always a copy of copy. Although, as Butler argues, variations of masculinity are created through the deviation of norms that are reiterated among bodies—Butler's claim for agency among performative bodies—I argue that such considerations restrict the ways in which bodies can be conceptualized. The performative body that is capable only of reiterating the past and at times is capable of developing new ways to articulate itself (performative agency) remains confined to the limits of discourse as seen through the performative lens. For instance, although "masculinity" is reproduced through performative reiterations and possibly reworked through performative deviations, the material body remains subjected to discourses of masculinity. To put it another way, performativity offers a way of *queering* the body as a discursive materiality that reiterates identity norms. This is of course an important project for queer studies as it creates the opportunity to think about how the body articulates and is capable of articulating itself in relation to discourse. A reading through of performativity using the works of Bakhtin can make the shift from *queering* to *queer*—from queering masculinity to queer masculinities. This is not to imply a rejection of performativity. I am arguing that new spaces can be created to explore "queer," "identities,"

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[14] See also Butler's "Foucault and the Paradox of Bodily Inscriptions" (1989) and "Bodies and Power Revisited" (2002).

and "bodies" by *reading through* performativity using Bakhtin as a lens to rethink the ways in which performativity is understood, considered, and utilized in queer theorizations. Bakhtinian conceptualizations of the body account not only for past and present bodily articulations but also for the future potentialities of the body.

Dialogism, Utterances, Speech Genres

Mikhail Bakhtin offers important insights for contemporary queer studies. I argue that Bakhtin's interest in Russian linguistics can provide a unique lens for reconceptualizing the relationships among bodies, identities, and culture. In *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981) and *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* (1986), Bakhtin examines how language vis-à-vis the novel functions through speech genres and utterances. Bakhtin develops a new vocabulary for talking about the production and circulation of language among bodies. The works of Bakhtin, however, are not limited to analyzing the use of language in the novel. I argue that new ways to explore the body can be created when reading through performativity using Bakhtin's utterances and speech genres where the body is considered a creative potential. I claim that, whereas Foucault and Butler conceptualize the body through discourse, Bakhtin's work can be used to assert the body as a dialogic relation that is deeply connected to the materialities of life itself. I introduce the *dialogical body* as a materiality produced through the dialogic relations among bodies in highly contextualized moments. The dialogical body is essentially an indefinite potentiality that is continuously *becoming* in the Deleuze-Guattarian sense (1987).[15] A Bakhtinian reading through of performativity not only rethinks how contemporary queer studies read the body but also offers important implications for thinking about masculinities and education—specifically how queer masculinities and queer education are produced *as* the dialogical body negotiated through speech genres and utterances.

The Bakhtinian world is *heteroglot*: everything is continuously shifting where meaning is produced in highly contextualized moments. Heteroglossia implies that *context* takes precedence over predetermined notions. Bodies, identities, and culture are therefore highly contextualized relations that are always being reworked. The body, for example, is always changing depending on its relations with other bodies: the body is always in relation to other bodies, identities with other identities, culture with other cultures, etc. Dialogism is the primary mode in which bodies are conceptualized, negotiated, and articulated. The "individual" body cannot exist in a world dominated by social heteroglossia: there are no "individual" bodies despite the individualization of bodies resulting from, for instance, neoliberal agendas. The body is a dialogic relation: it is always in relation to other bodies, identities, and cultures. The body is a part of a larger world that is deeply involved

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[15] I consider the creative potentialities of Bakhtin, Deleuze, and Guattari more thoroughly in my upcoming book *Post-Queer Politics* (2009). It is here that I introduce and explore what I refer to as a post-queer politics of dialogical-becomings.

in ongoing dialogue where every dialogic relation has the potential to influence the entire structure. The dialogical body is produced in contextualized moments that intersect the past, present, and future where the past informs the present and the present is directed toward the future. The future, however, is explicitly part of the past and the present where the future potentialities of the body are negotiated through dialogic relations. The body can therefore never be fully knowable or complete because it is always renegotiated through its relations with other bodies: the body is always another's body as a dialogic relation. Dialogism does not uphold a strict differentiation between the self and the Other: an "us" versus "them" polarity is challenged because a body becomes intelligible only through its relations with another body where both bodies are simultaneously produced in highly contextualized moments. *Meaning* is therefore produced in these contextualized moments through what Bakhtin refers to as the utterance.

The utterance, for Bakhtin, is a unit of language that is directly in relation to heteroglossia as an utterance is highly socialized, historicized, and politicized. For example, a word that is uttered from one body to another in a specific circumstance has a particular social, historical, and political implication attributed to the word. Its use in a certain situation is in many ways intended to echo the way in which the word has been used in the past. The meaning of the word, however, is produced through the dialogic relation between bodies: although each party has its own interpretations of the word, the actual meaning of the word is produced through the dialogic relations in a specific moment. Consequently, the meaning of a word in one instance will be different from its use in prior instances because of the contextualized moments of dialogical bodies. Utterances, however, are not strictly words—they are *units of language*. Every utterance is articulated and negotiated in relation to a larger structure that embodies both centripetal (stabilizing) and centrifugal (destabilizing) forces:

> Every concrete utterance of a speaking subject serves as a point where centrifugal as well as centripetal forces are brought to bear. The processes of centralization and decentralization, of unification and disunification, intersect in the utterance; the utterance not only answers the requirements of its own language as an individualized embodiment of a speech act, but it answers the requirements of heteroglossia as well; it is in fact an active participant in such speech diversity. And this active participation of every utterance in living heteroglossia determines the linguistic profile and style of the utterance to no less a degree than its inclusion in any normative-centralizing system of a unitary language. (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 272)

The utterance is therefore produced through the tension of centripetal and centrifugal forces: utterances are negotiated in relation to a larger system of language (centripetal) that becomes distinct in highly contextualized moments dominated by social heteroglossia (centrifugal). "Queer," for example, is created through the dialogic relations of bodies where its meaning changes depending on the contextualized negotiations at play: the dialogical process creates new ways to conceptualize the meaning of queer where there is a potential to negotiate the centripetal and centrifugal forces of queer. In other words, it is through the dialogic relations among bodies that queer is given "stylistic shape" that is unique to a specific context. It is the *tension* between centripetal and centrifugal forces that queer becomes a potentiality.

Consequently, meaning is not produced in isolation: meaning is created through the interactions of bodies. The utterance becomes individualized through the dialogic relations among bodies where utterances are always directed toward the "alien territory" of the dialogical other: every utterance upholds an internal dialogism that requires an answer. Answerability is a fundamental element of an utterance's constitution where, for instance, the utterance "provokes an answer, anticipates it and structures itself in the answer's direction" (p. 280). The dialogical other, however, is not to be considered an object: it is the "subjective belief system" of the dialogical other that is considered in the dialogical negotiations among bodies:

> The speaker strives to get a reading on his own word, and on his own conceptual system that determines this word, within the alien conceptual system of the understanding receiver; he enters into dialogical relationships with certain aspects of this system. The speaker breaks through the alien conceptual horizon of the listener, constructs his own utterance on alien territory, against his, the listener's, apperceptive background. (p. 282)

Utterances are given life through the ongoing engagements between speakers and listeners where the subjective belief systems of all parties are continuously interrogated in order to produce meaning. For instance, the various meanings of "queer masculinities" are negotiated through the dialogical relations among bodies where there is constant reference to a larger system of language attributed to "queer" and "masculinity." As a result, new meanings of "queer masculinities" are simultaneously produced through subjective belief systems that are largely influenced by social heteroglossia. Exploring queer masculinities using the Bakhtinian utterance exposes how bodies of meaning are highly contextualized and continuously changing through dialogic relations. There is therefore no unitary articulation of queer masculinities when read through heteroglossia because the body is an indefinite potential that changes over time through dialogic relations. The body, I argue, is an utterance: it is a materiality produced through dialogic relations with other bodies in highly contextualized moments. The dialogical body as utterance is heteroglot:

> it represents the co-existence of socio-ideological contradictions between the present and the past, between differing epochs of the past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present, between tendencies, schools, circles and so forth, all given a bodily form. These 'languages' of heteroglossia intersect each other in a variety of ways, forming new socially typifying 'languages.' (p. 291)

The body comes into meaning through the body's dialogic relations with other bodies where the body is negotiated as an utterance. The body is always another's body. It is a creative potential where meaning is produced dialogically.

Queer masculinities are therefore produced through the dialogic negotiations among bodies *as* utterances. Utterances, however, are not isolated entities where meaning is strictly created through bodies as isolated materialities. Queer masculinities are the result of the relationship between utterances and heteroglossia. In other words, individual utterances produced in dialogic relations are part of a larger structure: "Each separate utterance is individual, of course, but each sphere in which language is used develops its own *relatively stable types* of these utterances. These we may call *speech genres*" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 60). Every utterance is part of a

larger structure of utterances that constitute a speech genre. It is through speech genres and utterances that we can rethink how bodies are dialogically produced and how meaning is created through these negotiations:

> Any concrete utterance is a link in the chain of speech communication of a particular sphere. The very boundaries of the utterance are determined by a change of speech subjects. Utterances are not indifferent to one another, and are not self-sufficient; they are aware of and mutually reflect one another. The mutual reflections determine their character. Each utterance is filled with echoes and reverberations of other utterances to which it is related by the communality of the sphere of speech communication. Every utterance must be regarded primarily as a *response* to preceding utterances of the given sphere (we understand the word 'response' here in the broadest sense). Each utterance refutes, affirms, supplements, and relies on the others, presupposes them to be known, and somehow takes them into account. After all, as regards a given question, in a given matter, and so forth, the utterance occupies a particular *definite* position in a given sphere of communication. It is impossible to determine its position without correlating it with other positions. Therefore, each utterance is filled with various kinds of responsive reactions to other utterances of the given sphere of speech communication. (p. 91)

There are, for example, specific speech genres attributed to gender, sexuality, race, ability, class, sex, etc. The individual utterances negotiated to produce the meaning of gender, for instance, are in constant reference to the speech genre of gendered identity categories. Speech genres represent the social, cultural, and political stabilities of gendered categories. The body becomes gendered through a duality of dialogic relations: the dialogical other's subjective belief system of gender and the overall stability of gendered speech genres that are mediated by social heteroglossia. As a result, new ways to conceptualize gender are produced through the dialogical negotiations among bodies. Furthermore, gendered speech genres become altered when bodies renegotiate the meaning of gender through their dialogic interactions that are in constant relation to the overall speech genres of gender. Every individual utterance is connected to a series of utterances: "Any utterance is a link in a very complex organized chain of other utterances" (p. 69). Consequently, there is always the potential to change the entire structure of a speech genre. What makes the utterance unique is that it is always finalized where it opens up the possibility for the dialogical other to respond: meaning is dialogically created. It is through the interactions of bodies as utterances that new (gendered) meanings can be produced because the utterance "has a *direct* relationship to reality and to the living, speaking person (subject)" (p. 122). The radical potential of the dialogical body is its ability to negotiate with bodies as utterances that are highly contextualized—not simply bodies as objects of relation. Meaning is therefore never definitive: there is always a chain of meaning that is reworked through a chain of utterances. Queer masculinities, I argue, are the *creative potentialities* of the body that are produced in relation to "queer" and "masculinity"—not as separate identity categories but as deeply implicated speech genres that are dialogically negotiated among bodies as utterances: "queer masculinities" are the utterances produced in highly contextualized moments among dialogical bodies in relation to "queer" and "masculinity" speech genres. Queer masculinities are the creative potentialities of bodies that renegotiate the meanings of "queer" and "masculinity"—not as distinct entities but as

dialogic relations that are conceptualized through utterances. The dialogical body is less a copy (performativity) and more a quote: "Units of speech communication— whole utterances—cannot be reproduced (although they can be quoted) and they are related to one another dialogically" (p. 128). Queer masculinities are quotes, not copies, of queer and masculinity: the dialogical negotiations of the body quote the speech genres of queer and masculinity while producing new meanings of queer masculinities through the interactions of utterances.

Queer Masculinities *as* Educating-Bodies

Reading through performativity using a Bakhtinian lens exposes a dialogical body that is continuously becoming where queer masculinities are produced through the dialogic relations among bodies vis-à-vis the body as utterance. I have argued that Bakhtin can be used to rethink the relationships among queer and masculinity by reworking the concepts themselves through a critical reconceptualization of bodies: the quoted body, in comparison to the copied body (performativity), radically refigures the speech genres of "queer" and "masculinity" through the body's dialogic relations. The dialogical body also offers important implications for thinking about education. The performative body, as asserted above, reiterates the past and becomes concretized over time through the reiteration of norms. As a result, education becomes something that the body reproduces: the body copies existing educational practices as norms. Performativity, as it stands, is unable to account for the highly contextualized negotiations among bodies that produce education *as the body*. Reading through performativity using a Bakhtinian lens presents education as a creative potential where education is produced dialogically. Consequently, education is not something that the body reiterates but something that the body creates through its relations with other bodies. Education is a dialogic relation— education *is* the body. The dialogical body as utterance is not an "educated body" but an *educating-body* that always produces something new out of something given—it is a quote. Education is never predetermined but is negotiated in highly contextualized moments among bodies and spaces—it is a creative potential. The Bakhtinian utterance and speech genre offer a creative way to explore education where it is produced through the dialogic relations among bodies. Education, when read through dialogism, implies an *open* creativity where what is produced cannot be fully determined before the dialogic relations among bodies. Monologism and the "individual" body are not part of this reconceptualization of education: dialogism takes precedence over monologism where individual utterances are negotiated through dialogic relations. Rereading education as such displaces the individualized educational subject—the educated body—while opting for a popular notion of education that *is* the body—the educating-body. As a result, education is not an absolute entity: it is indefinitely produced in the moment where speech genres are reconsidered while new ones are established. Teaching and learning are contextualized potentialities where all academic participants are implicated as dialogic

relations. For instance, "knowledge" is never fixed but is extremely complex and is always being reevaluated and reassessed through the dialogic relations among bodies. Also, the seemingly fixed bodies of students, teachers, and administrators can be challenged through dialogic encounters that are open to continual critique: the meanings of "student," "teacher," and "administrator" are disrupted when more emphasis is placed on ongoing inquiry into the various subject positions in educational spaces rather than on reproducing stable subjectivities that are often hierarchical. The speech genres attributed to the teacher as the expert and the student as the seeker of this superior knowledge are reconsidered when it is exposed how "knowledge" is produced through the dialogic relations among students, teachers, and those determining "required" knowledge (i.e., standardized expectations, objectives, requirements, etc.). Knowledge becomes less of an acquisition and more of a structure in place to uphold what is referred to as "the education system." Educational policy also becomes a significantly contested terrain when social heteroglossia is taken into account: vast generalizations can be discredited as it is realized that the educating-body, as an utterance, is continuously shifting as it is dialogically negotiated in different educational spaces. There is therefore no unified educational body that can be policed, controlled, and disciplined because the educating-body is a creative potential that is always changing. Bakhtin's notion of the chronotope (time-space) is particularly important here where temporality and spatiality are embodied in dialogic relations.[16] The educating-body in one instance is a different body in the next. Consequently, less focus is placed on individualizing bodies, and more attention is given to the contextualizations of dialogic relations. Education can be radicalized through the use of a Bakhtinian lens where education becomes less interested in *content* and more concerned with *context*.

Education is a creative potential. It is produced in highly contextualized moments that can never be fully predetermined. Education is not a set of practices done to the body. Education *is* the body: the educating-body is an utterance connected to a chain of utterances that continuously renegotiate educational speech genres through the dialogic relations of bodies. Queer masculinities are educating-bodies: the body does not reiterate existing forms of queer masculinities because queer masculinities are produced in the dialogical moment. Queer masculinities, as with education, *are* the body. To differentiate queer masculinities and education from the body implies an inscriptive technique. The body as utterance produces the meanings of queer masculinities and education through the body's negotiations as an utterance that is always in reference to a larger sphere of utterances—speech genres. It is through the utterance that education and queer masculinities become the body—the educating-body. Reading through education and queer masculinities using a Bakhtinian lens is a reconfiguration of the concepts themselves. The process of reconceptualizing "queer," "masculinity," and "education" is not an interrogation of isolated concepts,

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[16] See the chapter "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel" in *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981, pp. 84–258).

and it is not an intersection of the concepts that lead to their creative potentialities. This is a rethinking of the body itself that provides a unique lens to reexamine queer masculinities and education: the dialogical body as utterance implicated in speech genres brings queer masculinities and education closer to materiality where the body itself is constituted through the negotiations of speech genres and utterances attributed to queer masculinities and education. The dialogically negotiated body as utterance *is* queer education and *is* queer masculinities.

A Bakhtinian reading of queer masculinities and education offers a critical lens to rethink how bodies are conceptualized in contemporary queer studies. In particular, a Bakhtinian reading provides a new framework for thinking about agency. Agency is no longer restricted to variations on performative reiterations because the body is not confined to discursivity. The dialogical body, in contrast, is a creative potential since this body is always in a permanent state of becoming. Agency is negotiated in contextualized moments among dialogical bodies: the body as utterance has access to a larger sphere of utterances—speech genres—where negotiations can occur only at the dialogical level. The body is therefore not predetermined or reserved to performative reiterations. Bakhtin offers a creative way to conceptualize how bodies are constituted, negotiated, and articulated in social heteroglossia where the potential for agency is alive in the dialogic relations among bodies: something new is always created out of something given in dialogism.

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