Interrogating Masculinities: Regimes Of Practice

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Researching Masculinities

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CHAPTER SEVEN

Attending to the Researcher's Grammar of the Term 'Masculinity'

Introduction

In this chapter the researcher's understanding of the normative ties between the category of masculinity and a diverse set of activities and practices associated with a group of adolescent boys are investigated. Through developing a particular exercise for use with students it was considered that it would be possible for the researcher to:

(i) interrogate the criteria by which he himself is able to identify particular instances of masculinity;
(ii) use the exercise as an instrument for identifying specific norms that govern particular modes of thinking and conduct for a specifiable group of boys in terms of the formation and enactment of various masculinities.

In this way, attention is focussed, firstly, on the practices of the researcher (Coleman, 1990) and, secondly, on the role of the survey as a research tool (Mottier, 1995) for inciting subjects to produce responses which then can be used to trace the specific effects of knowledge/power and ethical relations implicated in the formation of gendered subjectivity for a group of adolescent boys. Moreover, such data are used to examine particular techniques of subjectification that can be traced to their development within specific regulatory technologies of normalisation.

Doing Research

This methodological approach is informed by the work of Coleman (1990) who advocates the need for researchers to interrogate the criteria by which they identify first, particular instances of masculinity and second, what is to count as an instance of masculinity. He argues that there are a range and diversity of practices, tasks,
experiences, beliefs, which could be considered 'typically masculine activities', but that these practices or ways of thinking cannot be directly attributable to the fact that they merely are associated with or simply performed by a male subject. This is because a variety of behaviours, activities and experiences are common to both men and women. He argues that the concept of the *occasion* on which specific behaviours, practices and ways of thinking are judged to be connected to a particular form of male behaviour such as *machismo*, could be a possible solution to the problem confronted by researchers of masculinity. However, as it is argued in this thesis, the theorist already has learned a set of capacities for identifying what constitutes *machismo* behaviour in the first place. In other words, the researcher is already working with an *a priori* category of what constitutes or designates male *machismo* behaviour:

Indeed, the very notion of a *criterion* governing the proper attribution of the label 'masculinity' depends upon the ability to make these identifications in the first place, an ability common to the theorist and her readers alike (Coleman, 1990:190).

This leads Coleman to attribute theoretical problems - associated with establishing a 'rigorously defensible criterion for what is to count as masculinity' - to sociologists favouring approaches to interrogating masculinities which privilege causal analysis (190). He rejects such an analysis (which he perceives to be at the heart of subject-agency debates) for an approach which takes as its focus the skills and capacities of social researchers to identify specific instances of masculinity. In other words, since the latter has developed specific skills for identifying instances of masculinity, in following Wittgenstein (1958), Coleman argues that these are the grounds on which their investigative practices must be made the object of social inquiry.

Wittgenstein employs the term *grammar* to refer to the specific and shared competencies that adult members build up and which enable them to engage in particular practices and to execute certain tasks according to the learned rules of the *game*. Thus, human subjects acquire skills according to a recognisable set of rules or formulae. In this sense, Coleman
argues, researchers have learned a set of capacities and are skilled in the *grammar* of their use. Moreover, it is on this basis that they are able to identify specific instances of masculinity.

In light of these observations, Coleman argues for an approach which includes the following imperatives:

(i) that the occasion on which the sociologist asks the question, 'What sustains or counts as masculinity?' be treated as an instance of 'doing theory';

(ii) that the practices of the sociologist, and their deployment on specific occasions, be treated as 'internal to the theoretical construction of masculinity' developed by the researcher;

(iii) that sociologists attend to the *grammar* of the terms 'masculine' and 'masculinity' and ask, 'What are the specific rules for the use of such terms which enable the sociologist to render particular practices of boys/men visible as objects of social inquiry?'

It is necessary to understand that the theorisation of masculinities elaborated by the sociologist is an effect of a specific set of practices, protocols and regimens for doing research under certain conditions and on particular occasions. It is for this reason that social theorists need to attend to the category of masculinity and the *grammar* that they are using and its deployment within a research methodology designed to make visible specific practices and behaviours of men/boys as the basis for social inquiry.

Since there are normative ties between a category such as 'masculinity' and a diverse set of activities and practices, Coleman advocates the need for researchers to examine the occasion and the basis on which particular attributions of masculinity are made. This is because on certain occasions the link between masculinity and a specific practice may not be relevant or invoked. However, Coleman argues that the theoretical and methodological
focus should be on what enables the theorist to use the category of masculinity in the way that he/she does:

Gender is a normative issue, and arguments concerning masculinity involve questions concerning the proper attribution of gender activities, gendered things, gendered motives, gendered experiences, and so forth. The theorist relies upon and uses the fact that everyone knows that not only are there men and women but that activities, experiences, things, tasks, places, and so on, can also be seen as gendered. These attributions are often contested - as we know. But disagreement over proper attributions requires that parties to a disagreement already possess a notion that activities, things, experiences, places, and so on, can be, are, and should be seeable in gender terms. Indeed, it is by means of such ties that between the category 'man' and, say, the activity 'fixing the car', that a person is seeable as a proper (or otherwise) incumbent of the category 'man'. The very fact that gendered activities, things, places, and so forth are known to exist (by theorist and reader alike) is what enables the theorist to use the concept 'gender' in the way she does, contrasting it with what is asocial or biological (194).

What is significant about Coleman's analysis of the practices of the sociologist is the attention he draws to questions of normativity in attending to the grammar of the category of 'masculinity' and the occasion of its use (see also Foucault, 1987: 121). Since theorists are skilled in 'doing theory' and, hence, in attributing gender, such capacities themselves should become the object of a social analysis which draws attention to the normalising practices which are implicated in the use of such categories (see Mauss, 1973; 1985):

Competent persons-in-the-society can be assumed to be skilled in the attribution of, avowal of, use of, and engagement in gendered activities, things experiences, beliefs, motives, things, places, and so forth. It is by using their skills in the grammar of gender categories that persons-in-the-society are able to identify others and to display themselves as proper incumbents of such sorts of men as 'tough
guy', 'lady's man', 'father', 'husband', 'feminist', 'wimp', and so on (Coleman, 1990: 195).

Thus, by attending to the grammar of the term masculinity it is possible to identify the normative basis of the practices adopted by the researcher in rendering the activities, experiences, behaviours of men/boys visible as topics of social inquiry. However, while the use of such a category may serve to invoke a diverse range of practices, which become identifiable as the 'doings' of men/boys, Coleman appears to be arguing that the specific occasion and the imperatives for behaving, acting and thinking in a certain way, which are tied to that particular occasion, are what must be targeted for consideration in the social analysis of masculinities.

'Being a man', therefore, is what Coleman refers to as an 'occasioned matter' and is tied to the deployment of specific gender categories. It is according to the grammar of such categories, in the Wittgensteinien sense of the term, that researchers are able to identify certain practices as gendered and for boys/men to display themselves as certain sorts or types of men on particular occasions. And, as is argued in this thesis, it is on the occasion when a man/boy risks having his masculinity brought into question that the normalising practices at play in the policing and monitoring of specific behaviours of adolescent boys at school can become the object of analysis in attending to the social and cultural construction of masculinities.

The practices of the researcher, therefore, are placed under investigation in this chapter in terms of the particular competencies that he has built up and which enable him to attend to the grammar of the term masculinity and the occasion of its use in rendering the activities, experiences and behaviours of a group of boys visible as topics of social inquiry. That is, the researcher, as a member of an academic community and as a result of his insertion into a set of cultural practices, has developed an understanding of the range of experiences, tasks, behaviours and modes of thinking which count as particular instances of masculinity (Coleman, 1990).
The point is that criteria for identifying such instances of masculinity have already been established and that it is important for researchers to interrogate the bases and the occasion on which specific practices, activities and ways of thinking are judged to be connected to particular forms of male behaviour. In other words, the researcher works with specific criteria in attributing the label 'masculinity' to a set of variable social practices, tasks and behaviours performed by male subjects. It is for this reason, as Coleman (1990) argues, that researchers need to attend to the category of masculinity and the grammar that they are using in its deployment within a research methodology designed to make visible specific practices and behaviours of adolescent boys as the basis for social inquiry.

What is also important to reiterate, as Moon (1993: 7) points out, is that all research involves the production of readings and certain 'truths' within a regime of practices involving selection and 'interpretation' which are dictated by a specific logics. Since the possibility of 'objective' analysis is invalidated by the post-Foucauldian theoretical position adopted in this thesis, this is unavoidable. However, Coleman's focus on attending to the grammar of categories adopted by researchers is useful in marking out the limits within which certain 'truths' about the behaviours of adolescent boys in schools are produced.

The Research Instrument

In drawing on exercises developed by Thompson (1980) for encouraging students to interrogate masculinity, the idea of devising a series of situations, which involved boys or men engaging in certain practices, informed the construction of a particular research instrument deployed as part of this thesis. He provides a series of situations which involve men displaying emotions. Students are then asked to consider whether they would approve or disapprove of the actions of the man in each situation given (see Appendix A). While such exercises are used by Thompson to raise students'
consciousness about the impact and effects of sex-role socialisation, in this thesis, similar situations involving men or boys are devised as a heuristic device to interrogate what is to count as particular instances of masculinity for boys on specific occasions. In this way, through devising such exercises, it is possible to place under investigation the bases on which the researcher’s attributions of masculinity are made.

The following situations were devised according to the researcher’s understanding of the normative ties between the category of masculinity and a diverse set of activities and practices associated with boys as gendered subjects. Specific occasions on which boys might be required to display or not to display themselves as certain sorts or types of men, in terms of enacting a particular stylised form of public masculinity, are outlined.

**Situation One:** A boy who plays with dolls.

**Situation Two:** A boy who would rather read than play football.

**Situation Three:** A boy who is very muscular and enjoys working out at the gym.

**Situation Four:** A boy who cringes at the sight of blood.

**Situation Five:** A quiet boy who is not an active sports person.

**Situation Six:** A guy who hugs his friend, another man, when they meet unexpectedly in the street.

**Situation Seven:** Two men who are sitting down crying together.

All of the above situations, except the third, involve stipulating occasions on which a man/boy might risk having his masculinity brought into question (see Ward, 1995;
Frank, 1990; 1993; Nayak & Kehily, 1996; Butler, 1996; Connell, 1989; Kessler et al., 1985; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Walker, 1988; Epstein, 1997; Parker, 1996; Hite, 1980; Lehne, 1989; Whitson, 1990). For example, playing with dolls (Wilding, 1982; Green, 1987; Martino, 1995b), preferring to read rather than engaging actively in sport (Martino, 1993; Nichols, 1994), displaying overt forms of emotion and affection for the same sex and demonstrating vulnerability (Kid, 1990: 40) are practices which have been identified as established and regulated as inappropriate instances of masculinity according to specifiable norms on particular occasions (Hite, 1989; Mottier, 1995). Researchers have already identified the extent to which heterosexual masculinities are policed through practices in which boys learn to attribute effeminacy and homosexuality to those boys who talk, act and behave in certain ways that are considered to contravene specifiable norms (Epstein, 1997; Jordan, 1995a; 1995b; Parker, 1996; Nayak & Kehily, 1996; Kehily & Nayak, 1997). Such research highlights the extent to which those boys who display any mannerism, posture or behaviour that is considered to be associated with girls or 'femininity' can lead to the former becoming targets of homophobic harassment (see Hite, 1980; Segal, 1990; Butler, 1996; Ward, 1995; Frank, 1993; Beavis & Laskey, 1996; Steinberg, Epstein & Johnson, 1997; Epstein, 1996; 1994; Lehne, 1989; Whitson, 1990). It is in this capacity that certain normalising practices for policing heterosexual masculinities are targeted as an object of analysis. The development of a research instrument which can be strategically deployed to incite subjects to textual production provides a locus for examining current regimes of truth and practices of the self involving the deployment of sexuality (see Mottier, 1995). In other words, devising such situations and then using them as a research tool is one way of analysing specific norms in terms of their role in regulating and policing the stylised enactment of certain forms of masculinity within specific regimes of practice.

It is important to acknowledge that such an instrument may be considered inadequate in terms of its tendency to simplify a complex dynamic of constantly shifting power/knowledge relations in which the production of masculinities is imbricated. Furthermore, it may be argued that the effect of such a research practice is to homogenise
boys and to downplay intra-gender differences. Moreover, some of the situations are framed in terms of encouraging students to take up either or positions in producing a particular reading. While acknowledging such limits, it is emphasised that on this particular occasion, this research tool is used both to highlight and to problematise the effects of specific norms governing the conduct and practices of adolescent boys, as well as to draw attention to the researcher's grammar of the term 'masculinity'. Thus, it provides the basis for strategic investigative work into the production of masculinities, while allowing attention to be drawn to the practices of the researcher in terms of specifying the grounds upon which defensible criteria for what is to count as masculinity are predicated (Coleman, 1990: 190).

Through inciting the students to textual production in this way, it becomes possible not only to trace the effects of particular regimes of truth, but also simultaneously to work on adjusting or problematising the norms around which particular models of heterosexual masculinity are organised. Thus, in targeting the norms operating in the formation of dominant models of heterosexual masculinity, it becomes possible to work upon the 'matrices of transformation' of specific knowledge/power relations in which a particular gender order is implicated (Mottier, 1995; Connell, 1987; 1994). It is in this way that practices can be developed for producing knowledge about the specific norms that govern the way these boys relate to themselves and to others as gendered subjects on particular occasions.

Normalising Practices and Regimes: Homophobia and the Production of Heterosexual Masculinities

The above situations were presented in 1994 in the form of a survey to two groups of students attending a Catholic, coeducational school in metropolitan Perth (see Appendix B). While many students attending this school are from predominantly white Anglo middle-class backgrounds, a small percentage are of Asian (Malaysian, Singaporean, Indonesian) and European (Italian, Polish) descent. At least fifty percent of the students
completing their final year at this school enter University. Most of these students' parents are professionals or have their own businesses.

The survey was administered to one Year 10 class (aged 15 years) and one year 11 class (aged 16 years) of students (n = 55). Thirty of the students were boys and their responses are the focus of analysis in this section. They were asked to explain what they thought about the boy and his actions in each of the situations and to give reasons for their responses. A decision was made not to include the girls' responses to avoid using the latter's readings as a benchmark for evaluating how the boys' were responding to the situations. To compare boys' responses with those of girls is to already presuppose that differences between the former and the latter will emerge in their readings of the situations on the basis of gender. While not wanting to deny that gender does indeed impact on the reading practices of both boys and girls (Martino, 1993; Gilbert & Taylor, 1991; Davies, 1995; 1993), it is argued in this thesis that it is an occasional matter. In other words, gender is not assumed as a general principle to account for the way boys and girls read on all occasions. Rather, attention is drawn in chapter thirteen to how students are required to read and how this is tied to specific pedagogies which are not necessarily organised around the imperative to read for gender. However, this is not to say that students, as a result of their insertion into a set of gendered regimes, operative across other departments of social existence, have not already acquired certain capacities for reading gender which bear on the way they read texts at school. The point is that to set out to compare boys' responses with those of girls is to employ a critical frame which presupposes masculinity and femininity as binary oppositional categories.

The above research instrument proved useful in that it was possible to deploy the students' responses to trace the effects of certain normalising regimes and practices in the formation of what becomes recognisable for the researcher as instances of a stylised masculinity. What was particularly significant was the performative role of homophobia, traceable in the tendency of many of the boys' responses to assert a normative heterosexual masculinity to almost all of the above situations (see Nayak & Kehily,
1996). In this capacity, it was possible to identify the role of certain norms operationalised within a regime of practices in which sexuality is treated as an index of subjectivity and, hence, as a mechanism for policing heterosexual masculinities. In fact, a general overview of the boys' responses indicated that the policing of sex/gender boundaries appeared to be effected through the deployment of homophobic strategies and techniques whose formation, it is argued in this thesis, is tied to regulatory technologies of the self explainable in terms of boys learning to govern themselves in quite specific ways (see Foucault, 1988a; 1988b; 1993).

The data are used to highlight the extent to which sexuality is linked to the production of a central 'truth' about what it means to be male. That is, it appears that the boys have learned to govern themselves and to monitor their own behaviour and that of others through using sexuality as a means of discovering the truth about themselves as gendered subjects within a regime of self-fashioning practices (Foucault, 1988b; 1988f). It is in this sense that the data are used to study identifiable 'forms of experience', according to certain criteria for judging what is to count as an instance of masculinity, in terms of an ensemble of self-fashioning practices in which knowledge/power relations are imbricated (Foucault, 1984d: 334). Foucault's attention to the deployment of sexuality within such regimes of practice shifts the focus here away from the formation of subjectivity in the discursive space of consciousness, to the ensemble of techniques and homophobic strategies that this group of boys have learned to apply in establishing stylised forms of heterosexual masculinity (Foucault, 1978; 1985a; 1986).

**Analysing the Data**

Below the 'situations', as previously outlined, are listed with some of the boys' responses which are discussed.
(i) **Situation One:** A boy who plays with dolls.

Most of the boys produced critical, homophobic readings of this boy and tended to call into question the boy’s sexuality:

1. The boy is going to have a serious problem with his male sexuality when he grows up. I would classify him as weirdo.

2. The boy, assuming he is young, is okay if it’s phase. But if it continues I would be worried about his sexuality.

3. A boy who plays with dolls is somewhat ‘different’ to other boys. You must question his sexuality and his sexual practices. You would try not to drop the soap in the showers next to this guy.

These boys immediately identify the practice of playing with dolls as a marker of an alternative sexuality and, therefore, as an act of deviance. Student one, for example refers to the boy as a ‘weirdo’. These responses indicate that boys risk having their sexuality questioned if they engage in practices which are considered to be sex-inappropriate for males. Hence, student three’s comment about ‘dropping soap in the showers’ is a reference to the bodily display of homophobia. Nayak and Kehily (1996) also document in their research the ritualised exchanges between males which involve references to ‘not bending down’ in the presence of gay men to highlight the enactment of homophobia at the level of performativity (225).

What is important to emphasise is that the boys have already learned to define certain practices as sex-inappropriate. Since playing with dolls is a practice that is associated with girls any boy who chooses to engage in such an activity transgresses the norm for establishing what is considered to be acceptable masculinity. Moreover, this research also points to the very significant ways in which sexuality is deployed in enacting desirable
forms of heterosexual masculinity. Through a normalising set of techniques of surveillance that identify acceptable and unacceptable forms of masculinity, certain practices/behaviours/mannerisms (such as playing with dolls in this instance) become designated as indicators of homosexuality. It is in this way that boys are actively involved in the policing of a particular form of masculinity (See also Kessler et al, 1985; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Martino, 1995b; Walker, 1988; Ward, 1995; Butler, 1995; Flood, 1997).

Other students constructed this boy in equally disparaging terms as a mummy’s boy or as manifesting pathological or deviant behaviour:

4. He is a mummy’s boy, a ponce; either this or he was a test tube baby who went to a perverted lesbian couple.

5. A boy who plays with dolls is a few slices of bread short of a loaf. In other words, he’s a little weird or screwed up. He may be a ponce or has psychopathic ideas - a person to avoid in a dark alley and not one to be in the showers with after a footy game. The boy has had something happen to him when he was young - sexual abuse.

The use of the word ponce in both of the above responses is a derogatory term used here to signify effeminacy. These students read the boy who plays with dolls as behaving in a ‘feminine’ way and, hence, as deviating from the established norm regulating appropriate forms of ‘masculine’ behaviour.

Some boys, however, reiterated that a reading of this situation depended on the age of the character, but emphasised that he should be outside playing sport:

6. He’s a fag or it depends on his age. If he’s about fifteen he should be out playing sport or other things.
7. He's a bit of a gay poof. If he's really a young kid then it's not so bad, but if he's older he's a bit weird. He should be outside playing sports or sitting down and watching TV. No normal guy I know plays with dolls in their spare time.

These responses highlight the role of sporting and other practices, such as watching TV, in the production of a desirable model of masculinity. Active participation particularly in team sports for boys appears to function as an indicator of acceptable masculinity. The 'footballers' in Kessler et al's study, for example, condemned those boys who did not engage in competitive sports, referring to them as 'the Cyrils', an indicator of effeminacy. This also relates to the way the three friends in Walker's study were targeted as 'poofs' in their refusal to engage in football and in terms of their modes of talking and involvement in drama. Whitson (1990) also claims that sport is one of the central sites in the production of a desirable heterosexual masculinity and the data here draws attention to its crucial role for boys in learning to establish a form of heterosexual masculinity.

The following responses also highlight the extent to which homophobic practices are imbricated in a rejection of those activities which are associated with girls:

8. He's a fag, sissy, dickhead, should be shot, ponce.

9. He ought to get beat up. He is a queer, a poofer.

10. Depends on how he plays with them - if he dresses them up then he is a ponce; if he pulls them apart or something else more masculine and manly then he is acceptable.

11. I think that this is wrong because the boy might think that it's ok to act and play like girls. This maybe could mean that he will grow up to be a fag.
Responses 10 and 11 are significant in that they draw attention to the normalising practices by which boys are made into men and which involve the deployment of sexuality as a index of subjectivity or of truth about the self. Here certain practices, such as playing with dolls, are designated as sex-inappropriate for boys and form the basis for attributions of homosexuality. In short, the way these boys respond to the situation of the boy playing with dolls is tied to the effects of a particular 'policing of ourselves' within a regime of practices whose genealogy can be traced to a particular hermeneutic principle developed within Christianising technologies of the self. Through confessional practices and techniques of self-decipherment and self-problematisation, individuals were incited to discover the truth about their sexuality as an index of their subjectivity and then to verbalise this truth to others (see Foucault, 1978; 1985a; 1986). On the basis of the boys' responses to this situation, it would appear that the effects of such technologies of the self which incite individuals to search for the truth about their sexuality are tied to these boys learning to relate to themselves as gendered subjects.

(ii) **Situation Two:** A boy who would rather read than play football.

The majority of students constructed the boy in derogatory terms. While this may have been influenced by the placement of the item alongside the previous one which targeted the practice of playing with dolls, the data are used to draw attention to the fact that these boys have already developed particular capacities for interpreting particular behaviours as sex-inappropriate for boys. In short, it is argued here that they have been subjected to forms of social training which enable them to produce particular kinds of readings in the first place.

The responses of these boys tend to highlight how certain practices become gender inflected within a regime in which boys learn to establish an acceptable and publicly validated masculinity (see Connell, 1987; Nayak & Kehily, 1997). Engagement in sport has already been established in the literature as an exemplary instance of masculinity. Moreover, it has also been established that boys who do not actively engage in sport and
prefer drama or reading are often rejected and ostracised by those boys who are usually actively involved in team sports and who, as a consequence, are able to acquire a position at the top of a pecking order of masculinities (See Walker, 1988; Kessler et al, 1985; Frank, 1993; Martino, 1993; 1994; Nichols; Millard, 1997; Hall & Coles, 1997; Connell, 1989; 1994; Kessler et al, 1985; Parker, 1996; Skelton, 1993). The extent to which this boy who preferred to read is rejected is indicated by the following response:

1. He’s a defect, a loser, a square, teacher’s pet, a geek, a nerd; no social life. By doing this people at school would begin to call him names like a square or make fun of him.

This response highlights the ways in which masculinity is policed in relation to specific social practices involving literacy and sport. The list of expletives provided by this boy are an effect of a set of normalising practices through which a particular currency of masculinity is enacted. Within such a regime for the policing of masculinity, discursive strategies such as labelling and teasing boys who do not measure up are learned and used to maintain a particular form of masculinity.

However, many boys stressed that it depended on what the boy was reading. In this sense, they foregrounded both the occasion of reading and type of text in determining a specific gendered subjectivity. For instance, if the boy were reading pornography his masculinity would not be brought into question. The role of pornography in boys learning to establish heterosexual masculinity is indicated by the following boys' responses (see also Measor, Tiffin & Fry, 1996):

2. The nature of the book would determine the level of testosterone, ie. Shakespeare - no penis; Playboy - testosterone squirting out of his ears.

3. He’s a dickhead if he’s not reading Playboy.
4. It depends on what he reads. If he reads romance then he’s a ponce. If he reads *Playboy* then he is acceptable.

Students two and four tend to frame their understanding of reading practices through deploying oppositional frames of reference in which pornography is set against other kinds of texts such as those derived from the literary canon (Shakespeare) or from the sub-genre of romance fiction. What is interesting is the extent to which sexuality is deployed in these instances to validate a desirable masculinity through gender marking certain texts as inappropriate and, therefore, asemasculating.

Holland, Ramazanoglu and Sharpe (1993) have also stressed that establishing a desirable masculinity for many young men involves a complex interweaving set of socio-cultural practices and strategies involving the assertion of their heterosexuality through sexually objectifying women. Other studies have equally demonstrated the extent to which engaging in homophobic, competitive, aggressive practices involving boys boasting about their sexual exploits with women constitute instances of a display of heterosexual masculinity (Willis, 1977; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Haywood, 1993; Kehily & Nayak, 1997; Frank, 1993; Flood, 1997; Steinberg et al, 1997). For example, the above responses point to the role of pornography and to the sexual objectification of women in the formation of publicly validated heterosexual masculinities.

Not all boys, however, produced such readings, but responses, such as the one below, were atypical of the way boys responded overall:

5. This is ok. He might not like to play sports; he might be really smart. He may instead find enjoyment in reading.
(iii) **Situation Three**: A boy who is very muscular and enjoys working out at the gym.

Many of the students approved of this boy and read his actions as conferring heterosexuality and, hence, a desirable form of heteronormative masculinity:

1. He is big, muscular and probably gets all the girls. I hope he does not use steroids.

2. That is good for him, he is strong and can do anything he likes. He will get a lot of girls who will absolutely die at the sight of his muscles. It's good for him. As well he can defend himself in any situation no matter what.

3. This is fine if he wants to make himself fit - good on him. This is good also because at the gym there are heaps of chicks to meet.

4. That's fine, he probably wants to impress the women.

Most of the boys reiterated the benefits of having a muscular body in terms of attracting the opposite sex. Also as student two indicates, having such a body is aligned with physical strength and, hence, the power to defend yourself 'in any situation no matter what'. The following response also highlights the physical strength of body builders and, hence, their power which is considered desirable:

5. I can't see anything wrong with this guy. I'd like to have him as my friend because I wouldn't want him as an enemy because he would probably beat the living shit out of me.

Several boys constructed the boy as narcissistic and linked his behaviour to a latent form of homosexuality:
6. Someone who probably got bashed and wants to wreak havoc and revenge on the person that bashed him up or else someone who loves himself and thinks he looks good in the mirror, and probably thinks that he is a 'hunk'. Probably has a tendency to be a 'fag' or maybe a 'punce'.

7. This boy really loves himself and thinks he's pretty tough but he's really just a dumb idiot. He's a poof and likes looking in the mirror.

These responses once again highlight the extent to which these boys establish their masculinity in terms of a stylised performative practice of the self that is organised around a particular normalising relation of the self to the self. In other words, attention is drawn to how sexuality is deployed within a regime of practices in which boys are incited to relate to themselves and to their bodies in quite specific ways. In this instance, such practices of admiring one's body are bound up within a regime of techniques of self-decipherment in which the intensification of sexual desire functions as an index of subjectivity. These responses also emphasise how homophobic practices are tied to policing and intensifying heterosexual masculinities. The following boy's comment is interesting in this regard:

8. Perfectly normal - provided he does not go there to engage in friendly contact with other males.

It appears that for many boys there is often this fear or questioning of another's masculinity which is built into a normalising regime of cultural practices in which sexuality functions as an index of a publicly validated subjectivity.
(iv) Situation Four: A boy who cringes at the sight of blood.

Once again, many students called into question this boy's masculinity and constructed him as a 'ponce':

1. Obviously lacking in testosterone and a penis, although this is hard to tell.

2. Should be shot.


4. This boy is a punce. He does not watch violent movies such as 'Texas Chainsaw Massacre' but instead enjoys family entertainment such as 'Care Bears Go South' and 'Happy Little Elves'.

5. That's sensitive and caring. He's a wus and will get a lot of shit for it.

These responses again highlight the role of sexuality in policing and regulating a set of practices within the limits of which desirable forms of masculinity are enacted for adolescent boys. Student five's response, for instance, emphasises the extent to which those boys who demonstrate the capacity for sensitivity risk becoming targets of sex-based harassment. Moreover, student four's response would seem to indicate that boys receive some of their training for enacting particular masculinities from their viewing of the polarised genres of action adventure movies, which are targeted at sex-specific audiences (see Moon, 1993, 1997).

But there were some boys who constructed the behaviour as 'normal':

6. He has a natural phobia. Ok, those boys who make out that they are not really afraid of the sight of blood just want to look cool.
'Looking cool', therefore, apparently involves learning to establish a particular demeanour or style which is tied to acting tough, a practice that is enacted through rejecting outwardly and publicly those attributes associated with girls (see Jordan, 1995a; 1995b). This is reiterated by the following boys who draw attention to the imperative for boys to be desensitised to violence and the sight of blood through exposure to it or what may be termed more appropriately a specific training:

7. First impression of blood must be bad but the sight of a person being mutilated is pretty bad. This guy should watch action movies.

8. He should look at more blood - get used to it - so he doesn't cringe. He shouldn't be such a wimp or a pussy. He's too sensitive.

The assumption at the basis of both of these responses is the requirement for boys to be 'toughened up' in order to enact an appropriate masculinity. For student 8, to cringe is to demonstrate weakness. The student's use of abusive terms such as 'wimp' and 'pussy' perform a dual function, that of policing a non-appropriate behaviour and of signalling his membership of an acceptable form of masculinity. The point to be emphasised here is that such techniques of the self need not be theorised as grounded in a putative consciousness. Neither need they be seen as emerging as an effect of a repressive mechanism which drives the feminine underground to the symbolic space of the subconscious where it is expelled in the form of a violence (see Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Rutherford, 1990; Easthope, 1986; Simpson, 1994; 1996; Wood, 1987). This thesis rejects the notion of a repressed underside of masculinity buried deep within the hermeneutic subject. Rather, it is argued that such modes of subjectification, involving homophobic techniques and strategies, are tied to the deployment of a political technology through which a 'set of effects [are] produced in bodies, behaviours and social relations' (Foucault, 1978: 127; 1988a). Homophobia is not treated as tied to a conceptualisation of masculinity that emerges as a general fixed category of oppression at the basis of which is
the repression of a feminine consciousness. Rather, it is proposed as a set of techniques for relating to oneself and to others that are learned within the limits of specifiable regimes of practice.

(v) Situation Five: A quiet boy who is not an active sports person.

This situation where a boy risks having his masculinity brought into question is highlighted by Nayak and Kehily (1996) who document how a quiet boy in class becomes the target of homophobic abuse. Because he does not engage in disruptive behaviours or enter into various forms of verbal abuse to gain the attention of his mates, he becomes a target. Furthermore, he does not engage in a form of loud sex-talk as a means by which to enact a 'performative style' of heterosexual masculinity to make himself 'look big' (218) (see Kehily & Nayak, 1997; Haywood, 1993; Willis, 1977; Walker, 1988). Thus in attending to the grammar of the category of masculinity informing the construction of this item, it is important to draw attention to the researcher's assumption that a particular demeanour, defined against sport, may provoke judgements from the students about the requirement for boys to display themselves as proper incumbents of a certain category of masculinity.

There was a range of responses to this boy with some students rejecting him and others considering him to be quite 'normal'. For example, the following student immediately calls the boy's sexuality into question due to his lack of involvement in sport:

1. Bloody pooper, he should be a man, not a bloody faggot.

Other students emphasised that the boy would have problems socially and would not be popular at school amongst his peers:

2. This is normal but he's missing out on a lot of social events so he's gonna have no friends.
3. A bit weird because he doesn't socialise and talk, so he's probably a real nerd or real boring guy with no friends.

4. This shows that it is an option to be a sports person or not. The boy is perfectly right if he chooses not to play sports but the only draw back is that he might not be accepted into the 'cool' group of guys.

5. It is ok but he would probably be picked on by other students because he is not like an active person.

While these students acknowledge that it is 'okay' or 'normal' for the boy not to engage in sport, they highlight the cost involved for his refusal to do so. Their responses draw attention to the investment that many boys have in sport which relates, it is argued here, to enacting a desirable form of masculinity that confers status on those boys who are active and successful in this arena (see Walker, 1988; Kessler et al, 1985; Parker, 1996; Messner & Sabo, 1990b; Sabo & Panequito, 1990; White & Vagi, 1990; Connell, 1995). This is indicated by student four's reference to the 'cool' group of boys who are perceived to have a acquired a status due to their active participation in sport. Moreover, it would appear that those 'cool' boys, through their participation in sport, acquire the power to police and regulate particular forms of masculinity which confer status. This is highlighted by student five who indicates that those males who choose not to engage in sport risk becoming the target of harassment at the hands of other boys. Sport, therefore, becomes an arena for boys to publicly display a desirable form of masculinity through demonstrating that they are active and can use their bodies in particular ways. In this way, they are able to achieve a certain social status, popularity and visibility and to display themselves as incumbents of particular categories of masculinity.

One student even went so far as to claim that those boys who choose not to become involved in sports become invisible:
6. Not much attention is given to these boys and hardly anyone notices them enough to make assumptions.

Some students, however, did indicate that it was acceptable for a boy not to be actively involved in sport:

7. It's ok to be shy, that's a part of your personality. Not everyone has to be outgoing.

8. It's his decision. He wouldn't be as popular as someone like the captain of the footy team but I can't see anything else wrong with him and I wouldn't hold it against him.

9. Everybody should want to be what they want to be. If he's quiet then it's ok. He might excel at other things such as computer games or thinking games.

Student nine's response is significant because it draws attention to the various ways in which a boy might negotiate another form of 'acceptable' masculinity through engaging in an alternative set of practices. While this boy may not be able to enact a desirable masculinity through his involvement in sport, he is able to do so through playing computer games. This indicates that there are a range of practices which confer a particular status and masculinity for adolescent boys. This is highlighted by Nichols (1994) in her study about fathers and literacy. For instance, when one father realises that his son will not be able to engage successfully in sport, which functions as an indicator of desirable masculinity, he shifts ground from valuing sport to endorsing his son's academic achievement. This highlights the extent to which the production of masculinities is imbricated in a regime of normalising practices and emphasises that the possibility of a non-normative masculinity does not exist.
Overall, these responses once again highlight the normative criteria by which boys learn to judge what is to be considered an instance of appropriate or desirable masculinity. Thus, by using such a research tool, it is possible to target specific social norms governing the conduct of adolescent boys for analysis in terms of their role in establishing sex/gender boundaries.

(vi) Situations Six and Seven: A guy who hugs his friend/Two men crying.

The boys repeatedly read these men as gay:

1. A handshake would have been appropriate. I hope I don’t end up like them.

2. No way, that’s gay. Why hug? Why not just a normal handshake. You only hug chicks, not other guys. They must be gay.

3. These guys are as gay as hell. Society doesn’t let people do that. If anyone saw them they’d be dead shit by now.

4. They’re bloody poofers and should be shot, but if they haven’t seen each other for a long time or it’s a very emotional circumstance then that’s ok.

These comments highlight the role of homophobia within a regime of practices in which sexuality is applied as a measure of masculinity. The above responses indicate that the boys have learned to identify certain practices such as hugging between men or displaying overt signs of bodily affection as indicators of homosexuality. Moreover, threats of violence, directed against those identified as gay, is common practice for regulating and policing heterosexual masculinities. Student four, however, while rejecting such practices, in homophobic terms, does draw attention to the occasion on which it is appropriate for men to behave in this way. Like the following boys, he
highlights that an overt display of affection amongst men would be acceptable only in extreme emotional situations and circumstances:

5. This sounds gay but if they haven’t seen each other for years then that’s alright.

6. He hasn’t seen him for a while and they are good buddies and hugging is just showing that they’re good mates.

It is interesting that in the Australian context, student six relates such a practice to a form of mateship and, hence, to a mode of male bonding, understood as a stylised form of relating to other men.

However, apparent cultural differences in the way men express their friendship were mentioned by some boys to explain such modes of relating. For instance, several boys read the men as ‘ethnic’ - Italian or Arabic. For the majority of the boys, such ways of relating or social practices were considered inappropriate for Australian men:

7. European ok, Aussies, no way! In the eyes of most Australians they would probably be bashed by anybody who saw them or else they would be treated badly, slagged on etc.

Once again this response indicates how the mechanism of homophobia is used to police sexuality for boys. Homophobia, therefore, is a strategy which is used by boys as a means of regulating the boundaries within which desirable masculine behaviour is proscribed. Any boy who exhibits behaviours or mannerisms which are outside this boundary is delegated an inferior status and their masculinity and sexuality are brought into question. Hence, expressing emotion or affection for a person of the same sex may be read by boys as an indicator of homosexual desire:
8. They’re faggots! Shaking hands is acceptable but kisses, hugs, licks, pats on the ass are unacceptable which means the people are gay.

The above response is particularly interesting in that the student uses language such as *kisses, licks and pats on the ass* to construct the men as engaging in a homoerotic practice. Such responses highlight the extent to which masculinity is enacted bodily through a set of practices involving acceptable modes of relating to the opposite sex. Moreover, attention is drawn to the performative level of establishing desirable masculinities within a regime of normalising practices in which boys learn to use homophobic strategies and techniques (see Nayak & Kehily, 1996).

The boys produced similar homophobic readings in response to the situation in which the men were described as crying. Once again, if the situation was extreme and involved the death of a family member, the behaviour of the men was perceived to be legitimate, otherwise they were considered gay:

9. If someone who is very close to them has just died then that’s alright. But if they’re crying because of some goofy little reason then they should be shot. Bloody poofers, all should be shot.

10. I think that these men are gay although it depends on whatever the reason.

11. Depends. If someone has died etc...it’s fine, but men who release their emotions for the sake of clearing their minds are viewed as sissies.

12. Gays....sends shivers down my spine.

13. Why have you placed so much emphasis on gay relationships? The two men have each been dumped by their gay lovers and will soon begin a harmonious loving relationship.
14. Homosexuality must have come into this situation at some point. I really don’t want to know about it.

What is interesting about these responses is the underlying assumption that the men in these situations are homosexual. Student 13’s response is particularly interesting in that he reads all these situations as signifying homosexual behaviour or orientation. His rhetorical question also appears to implicate the researcher in endorsing gay relationships. That is, in making ‘masculinity’ an object of analysis, the researcher risks being seen as either transgressing or endorsing the transgression of particular boundaries of appropriate masculine behaviour, or possibly both. Moreover, this student resorts to a particular form of humour which has been identified by several researchers as an instance of establishing a stylised form of heterosexual masculinity (see Kehily & Nayak, 1997; Haywood, 1993; Willis, 1977). In fact, Nayak & Kehily (1996) claim that ‘sexuality may then be an uncertain realm which gives rise to posturing displays, joke telling, abuse and hyperbolic performance’ (225).

The idea of two men alone and crying does become an indicator of homosexuality for many boys. Moreover, some boys did not consider crying natural for men unless in extenuating circumstances. For example, as one boy states: ‘If someone died it would be natural for them to be crying’. Comments such as these draw attention to the norms governing what is considered appropriate manly behaviour for adolescent boys. It would appear that boys learn to relate to themselves and to others within a regime of practices governed by specific norms on certain occasions. The use of sexuality within such regimes structures relations with the self and others according to an assemblage of norms governing appropriate displays of heterosexual conduct for boys. Such norms are a part of a regime of practices in which homophobic displays and performances become the means by which boys learn to enact a publicly validated and, hence, desirable heterosexual masculinity. On certain occasions, particularly those involving peer group dynamics, such normalising practices can impose limits on boys' developing intimate
relations with each other based on self-disclosure and an expression of feelings (Hite, 1980). Within such a regime, boys learn that it is it is not acceptable for them to express their feelings in 'inappropriate ways' in their relationships with friends of the same sex, since to do so is to risk becoming the target of homophobic abuse. However, it would appear that this rule is not operative on all occasions. The specific dynamics involved in modes of relating and the occasions on which such rules for relating may or may not be operationalised require further investigation (see chapters eight, nine and ten).

The following data are used to emphasise the extent to which masculinity is policed for boys in terms of following such rules:

15. Men don’t show their emotions; it’s ok as long as they don’t touch each other. I mean it’s ok to be with a chick and let her cry but not guys.

16. Doesn’t happen often [men crying] because men are supposed to be tough or that’s how most men see it. If maybe someone close died it might happen.

Thus, these responses draw attention to how boys' rejection of expressing certain emotions may be linked to what is considered to be sex-inappropriate conduct on certain occasions. In fact, the expression of such a fear of intimacy or emotional involvement for boys with members of their own sex is tied to effects of a normalising regime of practice in which such modes of relating are identified as an indicator of homosexual desire. However, it is important to emphasise that the expression of emotion - anger, joy, despair etc. - is allowed, but only in certain contexts and on particular occasions.

**Conclusion**

Overall, using the situations in the classroom did appear to incite students to textual production. Their responses were used to draw attention to the role that sexuality appears to play for adolescent boys in the production and enactment of certain stylised relations of
the self. The data are deployed to identify (and to problematise) a regime of practices by which boys learn to relate to themselves and to others according to quite specific norms for governing their conduct. In this way, attention is drawn to the policing of sex/gender boundaries in terms of how certain limits are marked out and proscribed within which specifiable behaviours and capacities are designated as displaying or enacting an appropriate heterosexual masculinity.

The researcher, in working with specific criteria for attributing the label of masculinity to a set of variable social practices and behaviours associated with boys, was also able to use the research instrument to highlight the particular effects of such normalising regimes for those boys who are judged as failing to display themselves as proper incumbents of a certain gender category. The data were used to draw attention to the limits of such practices and to analyse particular grids of perception which are established according to an assemblage of norms for governing the conduct of boys in terms of enacting particular currencies of heterosexual masculinity. In this way, the researcher attempted to render visible specific practices of boys as a basis for identifying the norms which, it is argued, need to be adjusted if versions of masculinity, that are not organised around a particular normalising relation of the self in which sexuality functions as an index of subjectivity, are to be elaborated.

This is not to claim that a non-normative version of masculinity exists, which is obstructed through the impact of 'culture' (Hunter, 1994a) and which needs to be released so that boys can somehow achieve a 'full humanity'. Rather, it is argued that an alternative set of norms for encouraging boys to relate to themselves and to others in less abusive and punitive ways needs to be specified and acknowledged as the basis for developing particular educational programs for boys in schools (see chapters thirteen and fourteen).
CHAPTER EIGHT

Interviewing Adolescent Boys in School: The Interplay of Differentiated Masculinities

Introduction

In this chapter a microanalytic focus on the interplay of masculinities is provided in an attempt to identify the occasions on which specific norms are operationalised. Attention is drawn to how a group of adolescent boys at a particular high school deploy specific strategies and techniques for enacting stylised forms of masculinity within a regime of practices which is tied to historically contingent regulatory technologies of the self (see Foucault, 1978; 1988a; 1988b). While considerable research has been conducted into the interplay of masculinities within school settings, as demonstrated in chapter six, this study adopts an alternative approach to employing research instruments such as observational methods and semi-structured interviews (Quinn Patton, 1990). In applying a Foucauldian interpretive analytics, it makes an original contribution to current research conducted into the formation of masculinities in schools. This is elaborated by focusing on the situationally specific dynamics involved in a group of adolescent boys enacting specific masculinities and the occasions on which they are required to do so in one particular school.

Moreover, it is important to emphasise that data are not treated as providing privileged access to a putative consciousness in terms of an expressive/repressive bind whose limits are marked out by the effects of ideological mechanisms (see Frank, 1993; Connell, 1987; 1989; 1994; Kessler et al, 1985; Willis, 1977; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Askew & Ross, 1988; Walker, 1988; Jordan, 1995a; 1995b; Parker, 1992; 1996; Skeggs, 1991; Skelton, 1996; Haywood, 1993; Frank, 1990; 1993; Kenway, 1995; Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997; Davies, 1995; 1996; 1997). In this sense, appeals to the hermeneutic
subject as a site for the formation of a gendered subjectivity, which emerges in the symbolic space of consciousness, are refuted.

**Using Semi-Structured Interviews**

The main reason for using semi-structured interviews was to provide a means by which the dynamics, involved in adolescent boys enacting particular stylised versions of masculinity, could be placed under investigation. For example, it was thought that specific knowledge about individual boys' experiences at school, home and with their friends could be produced through employing such an instrument. In this way, a basis could be established for identifying the specific occasions on which the boys are required to display themselves as particular incumbents of certain categories of masculinity (see Coleman, 1990). Thus, the data collected are used to explore the ways in which boys learn to relate to themselves and to one another according to an assemblage of specific norms, while also enabling an examination of the manner in which they negotiate particular relations of power (see Foucault, 1978; 1980c; 1982b).

In following Mottier's (1995) discussion of the Foucauldian implications of the research methodology adopted by Hite (1980; 1994), interviews, conceived of as confessional research techniques, are used in this thesis to incite the boys to disclose information about their *subjective* experiences at school and within the context of peer group relations. In this way, data are deployed, not in terms of designating a surface of emergence for accessing the consciousness of this group of boys, but to trace the specific effects of knowledge/power and ethical relations implicated in the formation of gendered subjectivity (see Foucault, 1984b; 1980a). No appeal, therefore, is made to a hermeneutic principle or to a project of cultural completion (Hunter, 1994a) which is predicated on the imperative to restore the subject to a full and positive relationship with himself (see Hunter, 1994a) - a relationship which has been obstructed by ideological and repressive forces (see Foucault, 1987: 113-114).
By using a Foucauldian interpretive analytics, therefore, the interview data are rendered analysable in terms of a regime of normalising practices in their historical deployment. In this sense, a methodological basis is provided for investigating the workings and relations of power in the everyday social practices of a group of adolescent boys in a particular school. This approach also involves shifting the focus to exploring how particular instances of masculinity are manifested in the lives of these boys, not as some kind of essence or discursively constructed identity formation which is implicated in culture, but rather in terms of the deployment of regulatory technologies of the self and the assemblage of norms within specific apparatuses for governing their conduct as gendered subjects. Thus, an analytical approach, informed by the later work of Foucault (1991a; 1991b; 1991c), elaborates a grid of intelligibility which refuses appeals to a putative consciousness in accounting for the formation of subjectivity in these boys’ lives in school.

Alternatively, the political technologies of normalisation, through which the social relations of this group of boys are shaped, become the target of specific analysis in terms of highlighting:

(i) how specific strategies, techniques and practices of the self are used to establish stylised masculinities and the specific occasion for doing so;

(ii) the extent to which particular practices are tied to historically contingent political technologies of the self in which sexuality functions as a mechanism for policing sex/gender boundaries;

(iii) the logics and specific modes of rationality embedded in the regimes of practice through which boys learn to enact heteronormative currencies of masculinity within the institutionalised context of school.
Specific questions were used as a guideline for conducting a 'conversation' with students (see Appendix C). These were designed to prompt boys to discuss aspects of their life at school related to: (i) their involvement in learning and the curriculum; (ii) their relationships with their friends and (iii) gender related issues specifically pertaining to masculinity. However, since the usefulness of such questions depended on the flow of the conversation and the willingness of the respondent to engage, they were not always strictly adhered to (see Quinn Patton, 1990: 227-359). In addition, by asking certain questions which required boys to discuss the concept of 'masculinity', an attempt was made to strategically target the limits of their knowledge and understanding of this phenomenon (see chapter ten).

It is important to stress that both the selection of certain questions and the interpretation of data are dictated by a specific regime of practice (see chapter seven). Moreover, such a practice is assembled according to a set of defensible criteria for what the researcher has established as identifiable instances of what is to count as masculinity (Coleman, 1990). It is in this sense that the analysis produced is both partial and interested (Moon, 1993: 7; Walker, 1988: 13). It is necessary, therefore, for the researcher to attempt to map the limits and possible effects of his/her practices in using certain research instruments designed to incite subjects to textual production (see Mottier, 1995).

**Attending to Some Methodological Issues**

Wolpe (1988) in her study on sexuality and schooling notes that the relationship between researcher and student is an important one in terms of the data that is produced. For instance, she claims that 'the type of information boys would give a female researcher is likely to differ from that given to a male researcher' (160). Meyenn (1979) also indicates that girls in his study were reluctant or refused to disclose private facets of their lives with him as a male researcher. While not denying the role that gender regimes might play in influencing the way students engage in practices of self-disclosure, attention here is drawn to the function of the role of researcher as 'sympathetic friend'. This specialised
function, it is argued, is produced within a machinery of already existing techniques and
confessional practices deployed within the supervisory and disciplinary space of the
school and the classroom (see Hunter, 1988a). It may well be that the students in
Meyenn's study were rejecting his role or function to incite them to self-disclosure on the
basis that they perceived the researcher as not entitled to gain access to such personal
details about their lives.

This is an important methodological consideration within the overall context of Walker's
comments about the crucial significance of the relationship between researcher and
subjects particularly with regards to studying adolescent boys in school. For instance, he
claims that data needs to be interpreted 'in the light of specific relationships between
researcher and subjects' and that:

[these] will be affected by many factors, including the background of the
researcher, the persona or set of personal and institutional roles adopted by or
given to the researcher, the mode of access to the subjects, the conditions and depth
of entry into the subjects' individual and group activities, and the degree of rapport
established between researcher and subjects. Personal and institutional
relationships affect the nature, quality, amount, validity and reliability of all data in
social scientific research ... (13).

This is important because Walker appears to be highlighting the role of the subject's trust
and acceptance of the researcher as a crucial factor in determining the effectivity of using
research instruments involving semi-structured interviews and participant observation.
Furthermore, he also seems to be emphasising that the role the researcher adopts, or
his/her institutional authority within a specific school, may influence the rapport with and
the extent to which he/she is accepted by the subjects of his/her study. It would appear
that Walker is advocating that the researcher adopt a particular function and role similar to
that of the 'sympathetic teacher'. This 'special kind of person' (see Lambert, 1997),
however, is produced as an effect of an already available technology of pastoral
techniques through which the supervisory role of the sympathetic teacher is enacted. In other words, the researcher is required to adopt a function understood in terms of a sympathetic embodiment of unobtrusive norms (see Hunter, 1988: 58). In light of such observations, it would appear that a certain kind of sympathetic relation between researcher and adolescent subjects is required. This is made possible by the deployment of a confessional research methodology designed to incite the latter to disclose information and details about their lives (see Mottier, 1995).

Thus, by establishing this kind of sympathetic relation, through the use of already available pastoral techniques and confessional practices of the self, the researcher is able to incite the student to self-disclosure. In this way, the interview functions as a disciplinary space in which particular confessional techniques and practices of the self are re-deployed in the interests of establishing a certain kind of 'sympathetic researcher-student relation' within the context of producing what Hunter (1988a) terms 'the social personality of the teacher' (58). In other words, the role of researcher is not unlike that of the 'sympathetic teacher' working to incite the student to self-disclosure through a tactics of 'supervised freedom'. It is in within the context of developing such a 'sympathetic teacher-student relation' which students feel comfortable with the researcher that they are encouraged to talk about certain aspects of their lives and relationships with others. In relation to boys, or girls for that matter, if they perceive the interviewer to be a threat, they may refuse to engage in the interview process. That is, the researcher may not be validated as entitled to know certain details about their lives. Furthermore, some boys might resist speaking about matters which they consider to be 'personal' or 'private' out of fear of contravening acceptable norms for conducting themselves as appropriately masculine on the occasion of being interviewed. Thus, in light of these observations, it would appear that establishing a particular sympathetic relation with the student being interviewed is consistent with the production of a 'social personality' (Hunter, 1988a) which is built into the role of the researcher to incite 'confession'.

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However, as Mac an Ghaill (1994) points out, establishing such a relation can raise key methodological and ethical issues about the social relations that develop between the participants and the researcher. For instance, he speaks of the risk, for the male ethnographer researching adolescent male peer groups, of establishing 'a form of male bonding' in developing a mode of relating which requires gaining the trust and acceptance of the latter (174). This may involve the researcher being positioned, at times, within what may be considered homophobic and sexist regimes of practice (see Walker, 1988).

Moreover, Mac an Ghaill highlights the risk of the interview situation slipping into a form of therapy where boys feel safe to speak about 'private' matters. This involved making critical decisions about using such data within the limits of this study. For instance, before using certain data, the consent of the subject in question was sought and total anonymity was ensured despite the fact that the boys' themselves, their parents and the Murdoch University Ethics Committee had already granted approval to conduct these interviews (see Appendix B).

About the Boys and their Relationship with the Researcher

The first round of interviews was conducted with twenty Year 10 boys aged 15 in 1995. Other students from this cohort were also interviewed in 1996. Some of the boys were interviewed more than once. Three Year 12 students aged 17, who expressed interest in the research were also interviewed. Each interview lasted approximately forty five minutes. It is important to emphasise that these students were selected from a different cohort than the one used in the research documented in the previous chapter, though they attended the same school. Many of the boys were well acquainted with the researcher since he had worked at the particular school in question for six years and was undertaking part-time work there during the course of conducting his research. In fact, he had taught many of the boys interviewed (though not all) and, as a consequence, had developed a particular rapport or 'sympathetic teacher-student relation' with them. Consequently, many students expressed a willingness to be interviewed.
However, despite the benefits of having established such a relationship with the boys at this school, in terms of their willingness to engage and participate in the interviews, it is important to point to some of the limits of such a practice, other than those delineated by Mac an Ghaill (1994). In short, the close involvement of the researcher with the boys might also have had some other unintended effects:

(i) While students might feel more comfortable with and trust a researcher they know with more 'intimate' responses, there could also be a tendency for them to produce specific responses because they realise what the researcher expects and wants them to talk about. In this way, they may not produce responses which necessarily correspond to their particular social experiences.

(ii) Having taught some of the boys might mean that they have already acquired a vocabulary and an understanding with which to articulate specific issues. Consequently, they might be more aware of the researcher's language use, tone, inflection. In this sense, it is important to acknowledge that some students may have already developed quite specific capacities for reading and positioning the researcher in particular ways as someone who has a particular interest in gender issues.

(iii) Having been subjected to the researchers' teaching methods might mean that some boys are already equipped with a particular knowledge about gender and masculinity which might influence the way they respond to questions asked of them.

Despite these limitations, however, what cannot be denied is that there are certain benefits involved in the researcher being acquainted with the interviewees in terms of the latter feeling comfortable and open to expressing their thoughts and opinions without the fear that their masculinity will be brought into question. The specific nature of such a relation is understood in this thesis as an effect of pastoral pedagogies developed within supervisory technologies of cultural regulation (see Hunter, 1988a).
Using Observational Methods of Analysis

The initial set of interviews with boys were conducted toward the end of 1995 within a time span of one month. Prior to interviewing, the researcher spent one month 'out in the field' with the expressed purpose of documenting some of the social practices of Year 10 boys at this particular school. It is important to emphasise that the interview questions formulated by the researcher are informed by these documented observations of the boys' practices within the context of peer-group social relations and networks at this particular school. In this way, attention is drawn to the use of observational data in this thesis, not so much in terms of documenting as accurate a representation as possible of what was going on, or of what the researcher thought was going on, but to highlight the need to interrogate the researcher's practices and normative frameworks within which particular grids of perception become established. In this way, it was possible to place under further investigation the criteria used by the researcher to establish what is to count as instances of masculinity at this particular school. In short, it is argued that such data can be used, within specifiable limits, to describe both the setting and the social dynamics of the boys' practices, as observed by the researcher, in such a way as to render visible the perspective of the latter as an instance of addressing the question of "What is to count as an instance of masculinity?" (Coleman, 1990).

During this one month period prior to interviewing the boys, the researcher spent time with them during recess and lunch breaks observing their behaviours and modes of interacting (see Thorne, 1989; 1993; Jordan, 1995a; 1995b; Cornwall & Lindisfarne, 1994). After each session, he would record his observations and discussions with students in the form of journal entries. The purpose of such a practice was to document instances of masculinity according to specific criteria and norms for understanding the behaviour and actions of boys (Coleman, 1990). Tripp (1994a; 1994b) has already highlighted the usefulness of this method of research as a way for teacher-researchers to monitor their own and others' professional practice (1994a: 65). In this way, he argues, educators are able to analyse particular incidents and practices in their classrooms.
However, it is argued here that such a practice can be applied to other social sites of interaction within schools (see Thorne, 1993; Walker, 1988; Willis, 1977; Jordan, 1995a; 1995b).

Through recording events that occur in the everyday lives of boys at school, it is possible to identify what Tripp (1994a) terms 'critical incidents', which 'are rendered critical by the author by being seen as indicative of underlying trends, motives, and structures ...' (69). Thus, he highlights the usefulness of observational methods for placing the teachers' practices under investigation. However, while he appears to be targeting teachers' use of the professional journal to enhance their understanding of their own practices, his comments apply equally to any researcher investigating social practices in schools:

Introspection is something anyone can do. Because teaching is in many ways a very routine activity, we can often recall similar occasions from which we learned to respond in a particular way to a current event. By recording thoughts and events, we are moving beyond the 'it happened that' stage to 'that happened because' stage. It is in accounting for what happened that we have to consider not only the social and material conditions of our practice but also who we are. It is the latter that inevitably creeps into the record ... The record facilitates and formalises our telling or retelling and encourages awareness of the way we inevitably reshape the experience, highlighting or suppressing features according to the way we are feeling at the time of writing. This is not only natural, but useful. In the reshaping, we allow our subconscious to write things that we may recognise as important only after they have appeared on paper (72).

While not disputing the benefits of using professional journals as a tool for placing the researcher's practices under investigation, attention here is drawn to a particular mode of rationality informing Tripp's comments. For instance, he argues that the journal can be deployed as a means by which to engage in practices of introspection which will enable
the researcher to gain access to some deeper consciousness or ideological process. He proposes the hermeneutic subject as a site for introspective analysis. In other words, he appears to be arguing that the professional journal and, hence, observational methods of research, can be used to access some kind of interiority buried within the subconscious (see also Tripp, 1994b). In this way, he claims that certain features of perception are not available to consciousness, but can be unearthed through engaging in an interpretative practice designed to expose the suppressed underside of consciousness. While not denying, as Quinn Patton also argues, that 'human perception is highly selective', it is important to stress that observational methods of recording critical incidents, as a particular research instrument, are used here to render visible the researcher’s practices as an object of social analysis in terms of investigating the normative ties that are established between attributions of masculinity and a diverse set of practices associated with adolescent boys in a particular localised site of social interaction.

Quinn Patton (1990: 203-205) highlights the following benefits of using observational data which relate specifically to this study. Such methods:

(i) enable both the researcher and those reading the study to develop a better understanding of the limits of the situation described and the context in which certain observable practices and activities are noted as specific instances of boys enacting masculinities;

(ii) allow the researcher to document both the routines and practices imbricated in the ways that boys relate to one another within the peer group context at a particular localised site, while also drawing attention to specific occasions on which certain norms may not be operationalised;

(iii) allow the researcher to learn about specific practices that the boys might not be willing to discuss in an interview situation;
(iv) allow the 'selective perceptions' of the researcher to be made available for specific analysis;

(v) permit the knowledge, experience, reactions and practices of the researcher to become part of the data to be used in attempting to understand the limits and possibilities of the theoretical frames deployed in the study (see Quinn Patton, 1990: 241-242).

Critical Incidents and Observations

In this section the researcher's journal entries are offered for specific analysis. Firstly, attention is drawn to how such data can be used to map a typology of distinctive groups of boys observed at one particular co-educational school. Secondly, it is demonstrated how specific practices of boys enacting various masculinities are rendered visible through using this strategy. Thirdly, the skills and capacities that the researcher has developed for identifying particular instances of masculinity are focused on. In this way, the criteria for analysing the social dynamics of various groups of boys at this particular school, in terms of establishing what is to count as an instance of masculinity, as well as the context in which they take place, are rendered visible for readers of the study.

About the School

Skelton (1996) argues that not all schools 'operate within identical constraints'. In light of her claims about differences related to specific institutional sites, it is important to draw attention to some of the characteristics of the particular school in which the study was conducted. It was known as the 'football school' and had a reputation in the wider community for producing outstanding football players. The school had won a state competition in Australian Rules Football for five years consecutively and assemblies were frequently held to acknowledge the success of the football team. Many of the students had, in fact, expressed irritation about the emphasis placed on football at the official level. Several boys from this school played for one of the local state football teams and had
been drafted to the AFL (Australian National League Football). In this school a definite culture of football was established and supported strongly by many of the parents.

What follows is a discussion of selected journal entries documenting the researcher's grids of perception in relation to a group of boys' practices at one particular co-educational high school.

**Journal Entry One: Distinctive groups of Year 10 boys**

There are distinctive groups of boys at this school. In certain areas clearly identifiable groups of students congregate. The major group consists of about 20-30 boys who occupy a space on the oval. They often play football during the break which accounts for why they congregate here. They identify themselves as 'footballers' or 'surfies'. Another smaller group of about 7 Year 10 boys stand together at the other end of the oval apart from the main group of footballers. These boys also play football during the break, but are referred to as the "try hards" by the 'footballer' group. Another group of boys who play basketball always stand and talk in the grassed area marked out between two buildings. They identify themselves in terms of their involvement and interest in basketball, but not to the same extent as the 'footballers'. At the opposite end of this grassed area, another distinctive group of boys is identifiable. They are referred to by other boys as the 'loner types'. Some of the boys in this group are quiet and make an effort to set themselves apart from other groups through the way they act and talk on occasions. The final group of boys are identified by the 'footballers' as 'handballers'. This group consists mainly of boys who are high achievers and who enjoy playing handball or who are actively involved in drama and debating. There is also a group of quiet boys who keep to themselves. One boy, Ryan, chooses to associate only with a group of girls and he is targeted for abuse by other boys.
Set up here is the researcher's classification of specific groups of boys at this particular school. Certain labels are used to identify specific friendship groups and are used here as a heuristic device for investigating the social dynamics both between and within various peer group networks at this particular school. Such a practice is informed by earlier work conducted into the interplay of masculinities in schools (Willis, 1977; Kessler et al, 1985; Walker, 1988; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Haywood, 1993; Parker, 1996).

The journal entries also are useful in drawing attention to certain key observations about the dynamics between and within each of the above groups, which are described in more specific terms by some of the boys themselves in interviews. For instance, the role of overt heterosexist regimes of practice within all groups, except that of 'the handballers', was observed in many of the entries (see Epstein, 1994). While there appeared to be tensions between the various groups, within each group the boys engaged in certain practices which were clearly identifiable as instances of enacting a particular stylised form of heterosexual masculinity. For instance, in the following journal entry, the 'basketballers' engage in 'taking the piss' out of one of the other boys. This involved enacting a performative stylised practice of relating which, in the researcher's eyes, was readily identifiable as an exemplary instance of masculinity:

I asked one of the guys his name - I didn't really know him because I had never taught him. Then his friends started telling me that he liked a girl in Year 8 by the name of Melissa. They proceeded to describe what she looked like. She's going bald, they claimed, with hand motions to indicate that her hair was pulled right back to the centre of her head. They also indicated that she had 'big iits' and gestured with their hands in front of their bodies to indicate the size of her breasts. They were all laughing during this episode. I told them that I was going to write this down and interview them about it and they laughed and said, 'No problem'. (Journal Entry Three)
What is interesting about such banter is the performative dimension of the sexist practices in which these boys engage. The way they use their hands to indicate the size of the girl's breasts and the central role of humour in relating to one another become identifiable instances of boys enacting heterosexual masculinities (see Kehily & Nayak, 1997; Nayak & Kehily, 1996; Haywood, 1993; Wood, 1984). This is also clear in other journal entries in which such practices are documented as having a significant role to play in the way that these boys learn to relate to one another. For example, the following observation is of one of the 'footballers' talking about an 'R' rated film which supposedly included scenes of nude women:

*Journal Entry Twenty Two: Adrian talking about 'Show Girls'*

I walk up to a group of the 'footballers' at lunch time and start talking to them. They are laughing and joking, 'taking the piss' out of one another. Adrian, at one point, makes the comment: 'Hey, I saw *Show Girls* on the weekend, I got it out on video'. The guys start laughing and joking around about the nude scenes in the film and the size of the women's breasts.

Other journal entries also tended to highlight the significant ways in which girls became the target of boys' misogynist practices:

*Journal Entry Twenty Five: Talking to Glen at lunch time*

I am talking to Glen and a group of other 'footballers' at lunch time. I ask Glen where Simon is because he always hangs out with this group of boys. In jest, he indicates that Simon is a 'pansy' because he is off at a music lesson - Simon plays a musical instrument. At one point in the conversation he points to Jane, a Year 11 girl, who is standing with her friends nearby and is adjusting her track suit pants. He indicates that she is a 'whore bag'. I ask him why he calls her such a name and he replies that she sleeps around.
Journal Entry Twenty Six: Steve and the football

The bell has rung and I have just spent recess talking to the ‘footballers’. As I am walking with them from the oval to class, Steve shouts out to his friends, 'Hey, watch this!' And before I can even do anything, he has kicked the football into the path of two girls who are walking in the distance. They jump in fright. His mates laugh.

In Journal Entry Twenty Five, Glen engages in two identifiable instances of enacting a particular currency of heterosexual masculinity. Firstly, he labels Simon a 'pansy' because he studies music, a practice which, by implication, is associated with the 'feminine'. The researcher, in this case, as a result of developing certain skills and competencies for reading masculinity establishes normative ties between this practice and a particular category of masculinity. Secondly, Ben targets Jane as 'whore bag', who has clearly gained a reputation amongst the boys for 'sleeping around' (see Lees, 1986; 1993).

In Journal Entry Twenty Six kicking the football into the path of two girls is one way for Steve to impress his friends and, hence, to enact a particular publicly validated masculinity. Such an action functions to establish a rebel form of machismo and bravado, which is so much a part of this peer group's enactment of a particular desirable form of heterosexual masculinity.

In many other entries the practices of homophobia are also identified as being tied to establishing this form of heterosexual masculinity. However, while identifiable instances of such practices are clearly associated with the 'footballers', other groups are also implicated. For example, 'the loners' are also targeted for homophobic abuse by the 'basketballers':

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Journal Entry Four: Talking to two groups of Year 10 students during lunch: 'Basketballers' vs 'Loners' (Scott and Raymond identified as the 'other')

Today I got talking to the 'basketballers'. As I was on my way to speak to the 'loners', Chris from the former group stopped me. They wanted to talk. I chatted for a short while and then made my way to the 'loner' group of friends who were sitting there under the tree. As soon as I arrived, Scott made a comment about Chris's group - some comment which indicated that he disliked them. (He had seen me talking to them). I asked him why. He said that they always called him and his friends names. Scott proceeded to explain that this group of boys would often call out names to them like 'anal pains' and that they would call Raymond 'gaymond'. Scott then proceeded to talk about how he dealt with such homophobic abuse. He said that on one occasion he started to walk in a funny manner as he passed by them and claimed that it was because he had just had sex with Raymond.

A part of the dynamics between various groups of boys at this school involved homophobic name calling as a means of establishing some kind of pecking order of masculinities (see Connell, 1987; 1989; 1995). What is interesting is that Scott engages in a parody of a performative camp style of gay masculinity to subvert the homophobic practices of these boys (see Mac an Ghaill, 1994). This performative parodied practice is also noted on another occasion as part of Journal Entry Eighteen:

At one point during this session with the boys, I ask Scott if he could return the permission slips for my interviews. Scott asks me about the other students that I am interviewing. I mention some boys' names from the 'footballer' group. In response, Scott deepens his voice in an exaggerated macho kind of way and says, 'So you're interviewing the burlies!' I ask him what he means by that. He says, 'You know, the guys who think they're tough'.
The way that Scott deepens his voice here is significant in terms of enacting another parodied instance of the style of masculinity that the 'footballers' embody and which he clearly rejects. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that the boys in Scott's group are very quiet - they have a different demeanour, a different style - and this perhaps accounts for why they are visible targets for other groups of boys. However, while not actively engaging in homophobic practices themselves, 'the loners' also adopt a particular stylised banter and form of 'piss taking' which is associated with many of the other groups such as the 'footballers'.

Journal Entry Ten: Male bonding in the 'loner group' (Laughing and joking together)

I have decided to spend some time with Scott's group. Today I see a different side to the friendship dynamics of this group. Today they are quite lively and engaging in joking banter with one another. Scott appears to be the leader. I am able to engage with the group through him only. The other boys tend to be more shy or quiet, whereas Scott is the one with the social and communicative skills. He is the one who does most of the talking - when I'm around anyway. I enter this situation which involves the boys joking around with one another. However, one boy, Colin, seems to be the object of the other boys' humour. He has darker skin than the rest and he wears glasses. (He tells me when I ask about his nationality that he is not from India (the others tell me that he is) - his mother is from Singapore and his father is Australian). Scott, apparently in a joking way, makes a comment about him being black and about his glasses. Colin appears not to be offended and, if anything, is enjoying the attention. The other boys are also laughing. It seems that they really enjoy egging Colin on. Then Scott says you should see what he brings for lunch and mumbles in a low voice with an Indian accent, 'Curry, curry!' Everyone is laughing and the banter continues in this way.
Thus, while rejecting the macho practices associated with other groups of boys, such as the 'footballers' and the 'basketballers', the 'loners' can relate to one another in terms which resort to a particular form of humour which, on this occasion, is suffused with racist overtones.

In the following journal entry the researcher's observations draw attention to the occasions on which a particular group of 'footballers' targeted other boys as objects of homophobic harassment:

**Journal Entry Six: Year 10 english class: Talking with the boys in class**

It is almost the end of the class. I have let them relax for the last couple of minutes. It is the final period on a hot summer's afternoon. I'm talking to a group of boys on the far side of the classroom - Mark, Dan, Shaun and Ashley. They're all members of the 'footballer' group. The whole class is relaxed and talking amongst themselves. Ryan, another student from another class walks by. He is laughing and talking loudly with another female student who is by his side. I am in a classroom which has large windows flanking two walls - it is a corner room - so he is clearly visible and, because of the loud laughter, also audible. The attention of the boys with whom I am speaking, therefore, is diverted in Ryan's direction. Anyway, both his loud voice, laughter and movement draw the attention of these boys. One of them makes the comment that he is 'a fag'. I quietly mentioned that it wasn't fair to label people and anyway why did they think that. Ashley said that he didn't have any male friends and Dan made the comment that he had a 'faggy voice' and that he didn't 'act like a guy', that he was 'very feminine'.

Homophobic references to Ryan are also made in the following journal entry:
Journal Entry Twenty One: Ashley, Mark et al. in english talking about Ryan

It is the end of class. I am standing near Ashley's group. Ryan, the student who has been targeted as gay by the footballers, knocks on the door to give me a note from another teacher. I notice Ashley looking at him in a disapproving way as he enters and leaves the room. What is particularly noteworthy is Ashley's facial expression. I look at him and after Ryan has left the room he makes the comment that he hated 'that guy'. When I ask him why, he says, 'It's pretty obvious, isn't it?'. I say no, that I think Ryan is alright. I ask them what's wrong with him. Mark adds without any prompting, 'Actions, gestures, body language'.

On another occasion these boys also target Scott as gay:

Journal Entry Eleven: The 'footballers'' homophobic references to Scott in a Year 10 english class

I have given the class time to work on their assignments. They have the opportunity to ask me any questions about their work. I am sitting down helping one particular student. The 'footballers' - Shaun, Ashley, Dan and Mark - who always sit together are nearby talking and laughing. At one point, Ashley makes a comment about someone's hair indicating that it's like Scott. Scott is targeted as different. I indicate to them that I do not think it is appropriate for them to make fun of Scott in this way. Ashley says that he is a 'fag' and that he wears nail polish, red nail polish, on one of his fingers. One of the other guys calls Scott a 'fag' who likes to wear dresses on the weekend. When I question them about this, they claim that he actually wore a dress to the city on the weekend on one occasion. They become very defensive when I tell them that I don't like way they are targeting another student and they demand to know why I am defending Scott. I tell them that I think it is unfair for them to label another student in this way.
What is interesting about the way that both these boys are targeted is that they are considered 'not to act like a guy' and on this basis become visible targets in the eyes of other boys. They are either perceived to engage in practices associated with girls or as a result of bodily actions, gestures, posturings and tone of voice are identifiable as gay. The requirement to act in a particular way and the rules governing the ways in which boys learn to embody a stylised heterosexual masculinity are also targeted in the following two entries:

*Journal Entry Twelve: Talking to Miles and Paul at lunch time: Joking around, voice breaking and how to hold your folder*

The bell has just rung for lunch. I have arrived at this time so that I can talk to the boys. I am carrying a manilla folder with me which has a lot of papers in it. I was on my way to the English office when the bell rang and thought that I would just make my way to the oval so as not to waste time. Miles and Paul, when they see me approach, start to talk to me. I am holding the folder to my chest with my arms folded. Miles indicates that I shouldn't be holding the folder like that. He takes the folder and proceeds to demonstrate how I should be holding it. He indicates that the file should not be held close to my chest as if I am hugging it, but that it should be grasped with one hand and held against the side of my body or thigh.

Paul and Miles also start teasing me about my voice. I have a cold and my voice sounds slightly high when I speak. They start joking around with me. Paul starts to tease me about the fact that he thinks my voice is breaking. Miles joins in on the joke and starts laughing. They really enjoy joking around with me in this way. This kind of joking is a common practice for many boys and is how they relate with one another in their peer groups.
Journal Entry Twenty Four: Border Patrols - Walking with Simon and Miles

I am walking out of the main block with Simon and Miles, two year 11 students. We're just chatting. All of a sudden, Simon jabs or touches Miles on the back in a friendly way to get his attention. Miles calls out, 'Get your hand off me, you fag!' and simultaneously pushes him. I interject and ask 'Why are you calling him a fag? Why can't we just have contact with one another without worrying about being labelled in this way?'. It seems to me, I tell them, that girls are allowed this kind of contact but that guys aren't. Simon, however, says that girls who touch one another are called 'lesos'.

In the first instance, Miles instructs me how to hold the file in accordance with a specifiable norm for bodily enacting masculinity. In short, he indicates that I need to posture myself in such a way that is considered to be an appropriate embodiment of masculinity. This shows that Miles is very aware of how males should use their bodies to enact a stylised masculinity at the level of performativity (see Butler, 1990). (This is also supported by Scott's parodies). Since the way I was holding the file was quite clearly defying a recognisable norm in their eyes for acting out a publicly validated heterosexual masculinity, it was necessary for Miles to instruct me to enact a more 'masculine' style or posture. Perhaps one of the ways many boys learn these techniques of the body is through their induction into sporting practices such as football etc. (see Messner & Sabo, 1990; Whitson, 1990; Kidd, 1990; White & Vagi, 1990; Daly, 1996).

In the second instance, the patrolling and policing of sex/gender boundaries are observed (see Steinberg, Epstein & Johnson, 1997). The way in which Simon grabs Miles and jabs him affectionately in the back is immediately read as contravening established boundaries within which certain limits of bodily contact are acceptable for boys/men (see chapter seven). Simon is immediately brought into line through the latter's homophobic practice for patrolling the boundaries and limits of intimacy between males. What is
interesting is Simon's comment regarding girls who touch one another as being stigmatised as 'lesos'. It is, therefore, a particular sexualised mode of contact which constitutes a form of border control for establishing heterosexuality as a normative practice for both boys and girls in this boy's eyes.

Overall, in using such observational methods it is possible to render visible - from the researcher's perspective - a set of social practices and heteronormative regimes at this particular school through which the boys learn to enact their masculinities. In this way, it becomes possible to draw attention to the specific criteria that the researcher uses to identify what are considered to be 'critical incidents' in the lives of adolescent boys in this context. Hence, the 'selective perceptions' of the researcher are placed under scrutiny in terms of following certain protocols and rules for 'doing research' (Coleman, 1990; Hearn, 1996). Attention, thus, can be drawn to the category of masculinity and the *grammar* that the researcher is using to make sense of the social practices of a group of adolescent boys in one particular school.

**Analysing Interview Data: The social dynamics of enacting masculinities in peer group situations**

Through interviewing the boys observed at this particular catholic school and asking them about their friends, it was possible to document a specific dynamic of social relations between and within various groups of boys. In identifying themselves as members of a particular peer group, they indicated what it was like socially for them in terms of how they had learnt to relate to other boys. While there was considerable overlapping in terms of documenting the kinds of practices and modes of relating that were to count as specifiable instances of masculinity across all peer groups, there was definitely a hierarchy established with the 'footballers' wielding the most power and those boys considered to be feminine or gay being attributed a subordinated status (see Connell, 1989; Kessler et al, 1985; Walker, 1988; Willis 1977; Haywood, 1993; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Parker, 1996; Jordan, 1995a; 1995b). Many of the boys from other peer groups -
ie. 'basketballers', the 'try hard footballers', 'the loners' and 'the handballers' - spoke at length about the abusive practices of the 'footballers'. They all commented on the size of the group which consisted of about thirty boys. However, it was also interesting to note that many of the 'footballers' themselves mentioned that they disapproved of the way that some of their friends acted or behaved on certain occasions, but did not openly express this criticism.

It needs to be emphasised that while knowledge about the interplay of masculinities in schools has already been produced, this study makes an original contribution to the field in terms of the analytic frames it deploys to makes sense of the data. Moreover, since, as Skelton (1996) argues, not all schools 'operate within identical constraints', further knowledge is produced about the complexity of the situationally specific dynamics involved in a group of adolescent boys negotiating and enacting their masculinities in a particular middle class school.

Rejecting School and 'Mucking Around' in Class

What is interesting is that many of the interviewees tended to document the overt rebellious behaviour of the 'footballers' in terms of a certain attitude to study. Many of the former highlighted the latter's rejection of the value of education which was embodied in their overt disruptive behaviour in class and in their open derision of those boys who studied or achieved. Nathan, for instance, a 'footballer' himself and a high achiever, describes many of his friends as scorning the value of the education school provides:

71 Nathan: A couple of them hate school. Every now and then they say 'Oh I'm staying home today'. They never do work, they don't have any respect for any teachers, their work or life while they're at school. They just see it as they have to stay there until Year 10, then they're just dropping out and getting some manual job where they don't have to do much, 'cause they don't care what education is doing to them, but then I've got a couple of friends who are like me and they like
the education that they're getting and they want to use it. And then there's other guys in between - they take the education and use it but they still really don't see all it's going to do for them in later life. But they are guys who are just sitting in between, you know, in General classes and that, who are passing, getting B's and that which is still good, and they think that they're doing sufficient so they don't have to try as hard 'cause they'd rather be in an average than an extended class.

At this particular school, students are streamed. The top ten percent of the Year 10 cohort were allocated to 'Extended' classes for high achievers and gifted students with most other students studying 'General' courses in each of the core learning areas. There was also a small class for those students who experienced learning difficulties or who were very low achievers. What Nathan draws attention to here is the particular 'don't give a damn attitude' about schoolwork which constitutes a particular demeanour that comes to count as a specific instance of displaying a protest form of masculinity. Many of his friends reject mental labour and its rewards (see Willis, 1977). What is highlighted, however, is that these boys' rejection of school and its rewards, which enables them to establish the 'cool' demeanour of a rebel in enacting a particular currency of masculinity not dissimilar to Willis's 'lads', cannot be tied to a working class location. Rather, it would appear that such practices are linked, in complex ways, to a peer group social dynamics in which the imperative to 'act cool' is imbricated in the investment of a particular masculinity. Moreover, it would appear that being skilled at playing Australian Rules Football is also a major factor in helping boys to establish a desirable masculinity which is differentiated from the demeanour of the stereotyped 'high achiever' who studies hard. In fact, the role of such sporting practices will be targeted for specific analysis later and in subsequent chapters to highlight how boys learn rules for socialising with other boys according to specific norms for displaying that they are 'socially bright'. In other words, there are certain requirements for boys to gain acceptance from their peers. Failing or refusing to learn these rules, understood in terms of being 'socially bright' - knowing
how to relate and to socialise with other boys according to particular norms for governing their conduct - results in being derided, demeaned or ostracised.

This rejection of school is also documented in Pete's interview when he refers to the 'footballers' as not wanting to display the demeanour of a hard-working student:

28 Pete: Yeah, this [those boys who play football on the oval] is my group type of thing. Like Josh, he's pretty like quieter than the rest of them. I think he's pretty smart even though he doesn't do that well, I'm not sure. He just doesn't try as hard as he should.

29 Wayne: Why do you think that is?

30 Pete: Probably 'cause it looks geekish to try real hard and not talk all the time and that, not sure.

31 Wayne: So are a lot of guys like that in your group?

32 Pete: Yeah I think most of them don't try 'cause it's not seen to be 'cool' to try. Nic - he doesn't really try that much. He just sits around and does whatever. But he's good, he's funny. He doesn't go out lots Nic doesn't, he just sits around And John, he's probably got a bit of brains too, but he doesn't use them much.

33 Wayne: Why is that? For the same reason?

34 Pete: Yeah, just like you don't want to be seen working real hard and that, trying, listening and that. Dunno why, probably just 'cause the four of us especially we're like a pretty tight little group within the main group and that and don't want to see each other working, I guess.
35 Wayne: Is this mainly guys who have this kind of idea?

36 Pete: Yeah I think so. Most of the girls in the class all work really hard and all want each other to do really well and that. They work and don't distract each other and that.

Pete highlights the requirement for many of the boys to demonstrate what Majors (1989) terms 'a cool pose' which, in this case, involves working hard at not 'looking geekish'. This is demonstrated or performed through the bodily enactment of disrupting classes which enables these boys to acquire the desirable status of rebels. For example, Miles talks about establishing a 'cool pose' through engaging in such practices in English, but differentiates between the way members of his peer group and other boys in that class behave in terms of 'mucking around':

40 Miles: Well most of my friends are in that class and it's not all serious. It's more laid back, not as hectic as the other classes, but we still get our work done, so it's good.

41 Wayne: Has it always been like that?

42 Miles: Yeah, oh, sometimes we've gone a bit too far, and got pulled back in line, but most of the time it's all right.

43 Wayne: What about other students in that class? Can you explain what they're like?

44 Miles: Some students in that class, like Chris and Matt ('basketballers'), they're just trying to make the other people more like notice them and other stuff in class.
45 Wayne: What do you mean?

46 Miles: Like they just try to be noticed and stuff.

47 Wayne: How do they do that?

48 Miles: Like sitting around them and making fools of themselves and being smart and stuff like that.

49 Wayne: So they do what?

50 Miles: They muck around and try to act funny in front of the other kids and stuff like that.

51 Wayne: What about your group? What's your group like in class?

52 Miles: Oh we all muck around and put each other down (laughs) and stuff like that, it's all fun, we muck around.

53 Wayne: In class, you're talking about?

54 Miles: Yeah and outside, we're all the same, we give and take, stuff like that.

Thus, part of the stylised demeanour for many boys involves 'mucking around' in class and putting each other down. However, Miles rejects such practices when they are enacted by boys from other peer groups. In fact, he constructs these boys in derogatory terms as 'attention seekers' (section 44). This practice is perhaps best explained by Nathan when he reiterates how the category of 'loser' and its attribution shifts depending on one's allegiance to a particular peer group:
99 Nathan: Yeah you get you know, like say the group that thinks they're the best they'll think 'Oh they're all right, they're all right' then there's a certain group they think are 'losers' and none of them's worth anything. But then everyone would think like that ... they'd class some people as 'losers' and some people as being all right. Then you get the 'loser' groups would think 'Oh those big guys they think they're good' - they reckon they're 'losers'. So it's really like it's just who your friends are 'cause you might think if one person's a loser you might influence your friends to think they're 'losers' and then the group who are thought of as 'losers' think that group's alright, so, it's like everyone thinks of each other in certain ways.

This is supported by one of the 'basketballers' who rejects the way Miles, and other 'footballers', act in class:

49 Wayne: Can you tell me about what other students are like in that class? How you see other people in that class? What you think of other groups in that class?

50 Bret: (Pauses) Um, like Nick and all that I think they just talk for the sake of it and I think they're idiots (laughs).

51 Wayne: Why? So you see them as having one group, Nick's group?

52 Bret: Yeah, oh, and just the people that hang around down the back sometimes.

53 Wayne: So there's a group at the back? Is it mainly Nick's group that you're talking about?

54 Bret: Um, yeah, Smith and guys ['footballers'] like that just try and muck around for the sake of it.
Wayne: Why do you think they do that?

Bret: They think they're 'cool', mucking around.

Wayne: And you don't see yourselves as mucking around like that?

Bret: Well not really 'cause ... well as long as you do the work and like you listen when the teacher's trying to tell you something important. Like if everyone's mucking around and the teacher's having a bit of a laugh as well, you can go along with it. But like, especially like Miles, 'cause he does quite well, and like I reckon he shouldn't muck around, 'cause he's pretty good at english. He doesn't need to muck around and act 'cool' and all that.

Here, Bret seems to be highlighting a particular requirement for behaving in a certain way to gain acceptance from other boys. He refers to Miles 'mucking around in class' as an instance of acting 'cool' and suggests that perhaps such a demeanour masks the fact that he is a capable student who achieves in english. Bret also talks about how the 'footballers' target those students who work, particularly the quiet boys from the ' loner' groups. He mentions, however, that the girls are also more hardworking and not as 'childish':

Wayne: So who are the people that work?

Bret: Mainly the girls, like Andrea, Laura, Karen, Sharon, Kate and all those other ones that hang out together.

Wayne: So the girls work, you're saying, more than the guys?

Bret: Yeah.
65 Wayne: Why do you think that is?

66 Bret: Not sure. Maybe they're not as childish as us or something. A bit more mature.

67 Wayne: What about some of the other guys in that class?

68 Bret: Um Brian and Adam, Peter ('loners')?

69 Wayne: How are those guys treated do you think by other people in the class?

70 Bret: Pretty badly.

71 Wayne: Why?

72 Bret: 'Cause they're trying, and like making ... trying to use it to their advantage for next year and all that. Like the other people who talk and muck around, they think it's cool to muck around. Anyone else who's working - they put them down a bit.

73 Wayne: How do they put them down?

74 Bret: Like, if they get good grades and that they call them a square and that.

75 Wayne: Does that happen a lot?

76 Bret: Yeah, sometimes.

77 Wayne: Outside of class ... it mainly happens outside of class?
78 Bret: Yeah mainly.

79 Wayne: So they call people who do well *squares*?

80 Bret: Yeah, *squid* and stuff.

81 Wayne: Who does the name calling - is it mainly one group?

82 Bret: No they don't go around saying, they wouldn't go out of their way to call you that, but if they see those boys by themselves or in the library or going to class early or something, they might call them a *square* and all that. And if they find out someone's got really good marks or if they're in the area and they over hear they got a good mark, they might just call them *square*.

83 Wayne: Who's the 'they' you're talking about?

84 Bret: The group that thinks it's 'cool' to muck around.

85 Wayne So it's mainly guys who do it?

86 Bret: Yeah.

It would appear that the 'footballers' - the boys who 'muck around at the back of the class' - are able to establish a 'cool' demeanour in accordance with a particular desirable masculinity through putting other people down and targeting those students who achieve as 'squares' and 'squids'. In fact, Bret highlights how those boys who do not conform to an established norm for enacting a stylised form of 'cool' masculinity become visible targets in the disciplinary space of the school where their behaviours and practices are readily visible. Thus, the 'footballers' and other boys differentiate themselves from those
boys who do not play football or who choose to work hard in class or who go to the library at lunch time to complete an assignment. This is enacted verbally through the use of derisive labels such as 'square' and 'squid' to police the boundaries of a particular form of 'cool' masculinity. It is in this way that many of the 'footballers' are able to acquire the reputation of rebels. It is also interesting that he sees the girls as more mature in their behaviour which sets against that of the 'footballers' who denigrate the value of education and who think 'it's cool to muck around'. Dave Freidman, another boy, also differentiates between the behaviour of boys and girls in these terms in his interview which is discussed in the following chapter.

A Pecking Order of Masculinities

All the boys interviewed mentioned the 'footballer group' as distinctive in the way that its members fashioned a particular style of masculinity. A quiet boy, who is a member of another distinctive peer group, for example, makes the following comment about the 'footballers' and their behaviours:

120 Wayne: Can you tell me a bit about what other friendship groups are like at school? How you see them?

121 Brian: Which group though?

122 Wayne: Any group that you tend to notice more than the others.

123 Brian: You mean like Miles and Ashley and all those guys on the oval and that?

124 Wayne: Well, is that one group that you really notice?

125 Brian: Yeah.
126 Wayne: How do you see them in relation to your group?

127 Brian: I don't know... um ... they're kind of more like rebels.

128 Wayne: What do you mean? Can you explain that more?

129 Brian: They're more, I don't know, more responsive to violence.

130 Wayne: What do you mean by that?

131 Brian: They enjoy violence more, I suppose.

132 Wayne: What makes you think that about them?

133 Brian: I don't know, just the way they behave and so on, like you know what they do in class, they're loud they talk up, they kind of stuff around and mess about in class

Brian differentiates members of his group from the 'footballer' group in terms of the latter's responsiveness to violence. He also draws attention to the 'cool' stylised demeanour which such boys enact as an instance of asserting their masculinity - they are loud and disruptive in class (see Willis, 1977; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Dixon, 1997; Walker, 1988; Kehily & Nayak, 1997). However, in the course of this discussion about peer groups at school, he mentions a boy, Ryan, who chooses to associate with a small group of girls only:

201 Brian: Like, there's Ryan's and Sharon's group, they're a much smaller group.
202 Wayne: So how do you see them?

203 Brian: I don't know. They don't like violence.

204 Wayne: And other groups do?

205 Brian: Yeah.

206 Wayne: What do you mean they don't like violence?

297 Brian: Well, they're more into like the type that watch soaps and so on.

208 Wayne: What makes you think that?

209 Brian: I don't know, just the way they behave and so on.

210 Wayne: So how do they behave?

211 Brian: Like girls. They talk more about girls' stuff like soaps and so on.

Here, Brian differentiates Ryan in terms of his association with girls and, hence, what he talks about (see Jordan, 1995a; 1995b; Segal, 1990; Connell, 1987; 1995). He sees Ryan, in aligning himself with this group of girls, as engaging in discussions about soaps which are targeted at a sex-differentiated audience. Brian also distinguishes his own practices and interests from those of girls and this is significant in counting as an instance of masculinity. While the 'footballers' appear to be enacting a 'cool' masculinity through differentiating themselves from other types of boys, such as those who like handball or those who are quiet and work hard, like Brian, it would appear that the latter is tending to enact his masculinity against boys like Ryan who associate with girls (see Clark, 1993).
This kind of dynamic of social differentiation is also highlighted by Nathan when he mentions the 'handballers':

91 Nathan: ... everyone's really friends, but are mainly friends together in like certain groups.

92 Wayne: Tell me a bit more about those groups, so there's the popular group?

93 Nathan: Yeah you've got the popular group, you've got the groups that play football, you've got the basketball groups, the groups you know that hang around, play kingpin. And like there's either groups that go to the library and then there's just groups that just sit around and talk in different areas around the school and then they all hang around together and they do stuff on the weekend. Like they're still all friends, but they're more friendly with the groups they hang around with.

94 Wayne: Tell me about kingpin. What's kingpin?

97 Nathan: It's a game that they play with a tennis ball. You would hang around with groups like people who are the high achievers and that, they often hang around together, 'cause normally you get someone who's really smart being in classes with others who are really smart and they start to get together and talk about similar things, so they can relate to each other and sit down and talk whatever. And then other people join other groups - it's just who your friends are really. Like some people might just think of them as a loser group if they're not very good achievers or if they're not socially accepted for any reasons then they're thought of as the loser group whatever.

Nathan highlights the differentiation amongst certain groups as documented by the researcher's observational data. What is interesting is that certain practices such as
football and handball are imbricated in enacting particular versions of masculinity or, rather, form the basis upon which certain attributions of masculinity are made (see Walker, 1988). For instance, Nathan indicates that the 'handballers' are high achievers who are also differentiated in his eyes through engaging in 'kingpin' as a particular stigmatised practice which is set against the tougher sport of football. Many of the boys, however, engaged in practices of differentiation which were operationalised both within certain peer groups, in terms of how boys related to one another, and in terms of the way they related to other friendship groups.

Racist and Bullying Practices

Brian discusses the racist and bullying practices of two boys from his friendship group who, in this way, work to establish a rebel status which is once again related to the latter learning to establish a particular currency of masculinity. What is also interesting is that they 'just stand and talk' rather than play football. This immediately leads them to be differentiated from the 'footballers'. However, as other boys reiterate, not anyone can just join in and play football with the 'footballers'.

143 Brian: At recess we just hang out near the other end of the oval and we just stand there and talk.

144 Wayne: Who are your friends?

145 Brian: Oh, Jamie and Terrence, but they're more of the rebels in the group, they pick on other people. Jamie got told off just earlier.

146 Wayne: Why? What happened?

147 Brian: He was fighting with a year 9. He was calling him 'nigger, nigger'.

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148 Wayne: Why was he doing that?

149 Brian: I don't know, he just likes to call people 'niggers' and so on. I don't know, he's just racist.

150 Wayne: Does it happen a lot, that kind of name calling?

151 Brian: Yeah, quite a bit.

152 Wayne: But you don't do it?

153 Brian: No, it's only Jamie and Terrence who just pick on people.

While this group appears to occupy a subordinated status in the hierarchy of masculinities established within this particular school, boys like Jamie and Terrence engage in racist practices, which involve targeting younger boys as a means by which to bolster a stylised masculinity and 'cool' demeanour in the eyes of their friends. However, such racist practices are also operationalised in a different register by the 'footballers' and directed at one of their 'mates' who they refer to as 'boonga'. But, as Glen points out, this racist label is deployed in humour and takes the form of a 'piss taking' practice which appears to help the boys to establish a particular form of male bonding (see Willis, 1977; Walker, 1988; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Kehily & Nayak, 1997):

125 Glen: There's one guy, he's not actually hassled, they just call him a name 'boonga', like he's not Aboriginal, but he sort of looks like one so they call him 'boonga' or 'coon' or whatever, but he can take it ... he's not 'abo' or anything, Aboriginal, he's just, we just call him 'boonga' instead of calling him his normal name.

126 Wayne: How does he react when you call him that?
127 Glen: He just smiles, but when it gets on his nerves he might punch you in the arm or whatever.

128 Wayne: Are you saying that you do it just for fun and that you don't really mean anything by it?

129 Glen: Yeah.

130 Wayne: Do you think he gets offended by it?

131 Glen: If you like kept calling out his name like 'coon' or whatever, 'nigger' and stuff like that, it might get a bit on his nerves, otherwise I don't think he really minds.

It is important to note the differential ways in which racist practices are being deployed within two different peer groups. In the ‘footballer’ group boys engage in such practices on occasions to establish a mode of male bonding, whereas in Brian’s group they function apparently as a means by which two of the boys can establish a rebel masculinity in the eyes of their friends.

What is interesting is that Raymond, who is a member of the 'loner' group, talks at length about the 'footballers' in disparaging terms and refers to the above mentioned practice of racist labelling:

125 Raymond: There's a couple of real idiots in that group, you know, the people that can't play football are still in that group, they're real knobs that you don't like at all. It's strange how all the groups are divided. The people who I do actually hang around with, they're just more interesting people and they're nice.
126 Wayne: Tell me a bit more about the guys you hang around with.

127 Raymond: Well there's about five of us and Scot and I are the popular ones in our group. Adam, I like him, he's a nice guy, he's interested in 'Star Trek' and that sort of thing. I like that as well. The other three Mark and Colin, they were like friends in Year 8 and they were never popular and there's Tom, he was never popular. Tom's really quiet. I just like him because he's just there, he's always quiet and was always thinking we might reject him but we didn't. He didn't talk at all so we were going to reject him but we didn't we stopped.

128 Wayne: What stopped you?

129 Raymond: I don't know. We started liking him a bit more. I think his parents are really restrictive because I was sleeping over at Colin's place and he was going to come along but his mum rang Colin the day before and said he can't because he's got this flu like symptoms. I thought that was stupid. He could have at least called. It's like his parents stopped him from going for some reason. We'd never see him going out with anyone, we'd never gone with him to a movie or Perth or Fremantle or anything like that. He came over one day, but he had to leave at midday. It's just strange. There's been a couple of other times.

130 Wayne: As a whole then, how do you see your group then in relation to other groups?

131 Raymond: We're sort of laughing at people, the other groups. We find the funny side of them, like we tease them within our group and say they're the footy kickers. We hang around outside the Metal Work rooms and like the tree there, we climbed up that a couple of times (laughs). But the teachers don't like that. Is there a rule against doing that?
132 Wayne: I'm not sure.

133 Raymond: Most teachers just tell us to get down. We also kick the footy and say, 'Oh 'boonga'. There's this guy they call 'boonga'.

134 Wayne: Who calls who 'boonga'?

135 Raymond: The guys in the 'football' group do. They call one of their friends that. His name's Mark, he's got darker skin.

136 Wayne: Why do they do that?

137 Raymond: Just for fun, everyone calls him that. He doesn't really care I don't think. Probably just like to tease him, you know 'Kick the footy boonga' and that sort of thing.

138 Wayne: So you're saying then that in your group you kind of set these guys up, is that right?

139 Raymond: Yeah, that's what we do.

What is interesting is that initially Raymond comments on his own positioning within his peer group. He refers to Scot and himself as 'the popular ones' and then proceeds to discuss how all the other boys in his group 'were never popular'. His references to Tom, and the extent to which his social interaction with his peers seems to have been restricted by his parents, serve as an implicit explanation as to why the latter has experienced a lot of rejection. Also, the order in which Raymond mentions the boys would appear to signal a descending hierarchy of positions within the peer group, with the latter and Scot at the top of this micro social order. Just as Jamie and Terrence are able to establish their position within a hierarchy through teasing other boys, it would appear that both
Raymond and Scott achieve a similar status at the top of a pecking order, albeit a different and less abusive one. They achieve this through capacities to orchestrate parodying practices as a means of dealing with the 'footballers' who themselves have targeted these boys as 'losers' and 'faggots'. Moreover, what is also interesting is that these boys also engage in acts of defying institutional authority by climbing the tree which becomes recognisable as an instance of the latter enacting a protest form of masculinity (see Willis, 1977). This is indicated when Raymond laughs in making reference to teachers disapproving of this practice.

"It's all a bit of a mess really!"

Scott in an interview also draws attention to the pecking order of masculinities that exists within this particular schooling context:

51 Wayne: I want to ask you what you do at recess and lunch time at school.

52 Scott: It depends really. I mean if there's something on, someone I want to speak to particularly I'll go and speak to them but um average lunchtime would be Raymond, Colin and there's a few other kids who sort of, you know the sort of kids who just want a little group to come to? Other guys don't accept them and we have about three guys like that - we don't really have much in common with them. Everyone else has sort of kicked them out and we can't be bothered doing that cause we don't mind having them around, we're not threatened by them sort of. It doesn't bother me. But I sort of, I don't know, I've never thought of myself as one of those kids even though I have been one of those kids who've sort of bounced around and not been liked by groups, but I've always felt sorry for the kids who have been, whereas I don't think anyone has ever really felt sorry for me about it. I just don't want to put anyone else through that anymore. It's really awful, I mean it's sort of...
53 Wayne: So you've been targeted?

54 Scott: Yeah, I've been like that from say early primary school and all the way through to Year 8 and stuff. I'm sort of the outsider kid. I'd get pushed around by all the different groups and end up with a few friends who sort of tag along 'cause you have to have these friends and if you don't everyone is going to call you names. You've got to have somewhere to go. It's the same at this school. If you sit with one person no one says anything but if you sit and read a book and someone sees you they start making fun of you and it's really strange and they want to hassle you and stuff.

So Scott reiterates how certain boys are targeted within normalising regimes of practice in which particular boys are targeted as 'outsiders'. Those boys who do not fit the dominant heterosexual model of masculinity are harassed. In this instance, Scott draws attention to how a boy who chooses to read a book at school can be targeted by other boys. This particular student is located on the 'outside' through a set of practices which work to reinforce an oppositional structuring of gender relations. Within such a hetero/sexist regime, certain practices or behaviours, such as reading or 'expressing' emotions, appear to conflict with what boys consider to be sex-appropriate conduct (see Martino, 1994a, 1996).

Scott proceeds to elaborate on the dynamics involved in the way that the 'footballers' relate to one another:

64 Scott: ...To be in the in group you have to be hassling someone else and they're all hassling each other. There are quite a few groups like that at this school.

65 Wayne: Can you talk to me a bit more about these groups ... So is there one main group?
66 Scott: Yeah there's probably that large group, the football playing surfie sort of guys, and they're one big group. But what I've found I haven't *really* hung around their group since early last year, but when I did I mean it was always someone's the brunt of all the crap for one day and then it's someone else the next day.

67 Wayne: You mean within their own group?

68 Scott: Yeah. And you know they have their kids that tag along and they're not liked that much and it varies - I was probably one of those kids, I used to get it every now and then.

69 Wayne: So you'd hang around with that big group?

70 Scott: Yeah, in Year 8 and Year 9.

71 Wayne: How many are in that group that hang around together?

72 Scott: Um, I wouldn't know. It's probably more than half of all the males in Year 10 anyway. It's a pretty big group. I think a lot of people hang around there sort of trying not to be noticed by the sort of more bullying people. But there are sub-groups and when I was trying to fit into them their fun part of it would be trying to hassle other people and sort of, yeah, dehumanise them and just keep hassling them.

73 Wayne: So is that the way they relate to one another?

74 Scott: Yeah. What I'm saying, the reason I was probably picked on was I couldn't do it at that level, so maybe they could see that weakness. I mean,
probably more subconscious and that, they probably wouldn't sit down and think about it. They ... get at you easily. I don't know, I never felt like I fitted into those groups. I don't feel like I want to go back there or anything. It's just sort of pointless. But at the same time, I feel sorry for them a bit. I mean their relationship with other people is a bit of a mess really.

75 Wayne: What do you mean?

76 Scott: Um, I don't know, they just sort of get by hassling everybody and just having a few people they turn to and get them to laugh at the other people and it's all a bit of a mess really.

77 Wayne : So why do you think they behave like that?

78 Scott: Oh I don't know ... um ... it's just what they perceive as what they've got to do to be accepted, I suppose. I don't know, there's probably a better reason than that but, um, that's what it looks like.

This interview with Scott emphasises the role of bullying practices in establishing a hierarchy of masculinities produced through a system of verbal abuse and 'put-downs' (see also Connell, 1989; Kessler et al, 1985; Jordan 1995a, 1995b; Haywood, 1993; Parker, 1996). The boys who wield power, according to Scott, are those who belong to the footballer-surfie group. In fact, many of the boys mentioned the 'footballers' as perpetrating these kinds of practices. Some boys felt intimidated by this group who, according to many of those interviewed, achieved a particular status and popularity through their involvement and profile in sporting practices such as football. Scott even suggests in section 72 that some boys choose to be a part of this group to avoid being bullied.
Other 'footballers' also provide commentaries on such abusive practices, 'from the inside', which support the account provided above by Scott as a targeted 'outsider'. For instance, Aaron draws attention to what he terms 'emotional bullying', perpetrated by this group, to police certain boundaries within a regime of practices in which only certain boys are able to acquire the privileged status of a desirable masculinity:

45 Wayne: I want to know more about what you do at lunch time and recess and what you see happening around the school.

46 Aaron: What I see is there's not a lot of physical, I don't think there's a lot of physical bullying in this school, but there's a lot of emotional bullying. This guy, you know Matt [high achiever], he used to come down to the oval and kick the footy or whatever, and people used to throw dirt at him and constantly keep throwing dirt at him and calling him names and whatever, just until he went away.

45 Wayne: Why did they do that?

46 Aaron: I don't know. I couldn't understand it. I couldn't understand why they'd do it. He hadn't done anything to them. He'd just sort of come down and kicked the footy like everyone else. He didn't have a lot of friends at that time and was sort of a loner I spose, so people just thought he was a 'loser'.

47 Wayne: Who was actually doing the bullying then?

48 Aaron: Darren, you remember him, he's left now.

49 Wayne: He was a part of the 'footballer' group on the oval.
50 Aaron: Yeah, but it wasn't all of them, probably only about four or five or six. The others were sort of standing back laughing though. They weren't actually a part of it.

51 Wayne: So the other guys would laugh when ...

52 Aaron: Yeah, when the other guys would just throw dirt at him or whatever. It's pretty bad, it's happened before, it's happened to a few other people.

53 Wayne: Why does it happen though? You said it's happened not only to this guy but to other guys?

54 Aaron: Yeah, I think it just happens when people are sort of lonely, I suppose, they've got no friends, they think they're a bit weird I suppose, they're a bit different. I don't know, they're different so why not pick on them. I think that's the reason I'd say. I can't think of any other reason why they would do it. They're harmless, you know, they've got no friends, they do nothing and they just try to get down there, so that's the only reason I can think of.

55 Wayne: What do you mean get down there?

56 Aaron: Get down there and just try and make friends, try and get down there on the oval and just have a kick of the footy and sort of socialise with everyone else, be accepted by that group down there.

57 Wayne: So guys want to be accepted by that football group?

58 Aaron: Yeah, I think so.
Thus, it would appear that football plays a significant role in the hierarchy of masculinities that is established in this particular middle class school. The links that Aaron draws between playing football and boys socialising with one another are important because they highlight one of the significant ways in which the latter learn to relate to one another through using their bodies to perform and to enact a particular stylised heterosexual masculinity (see Nayak & Kehily, 1996; Epstein, 1997; Holland et al, 1993). Aaron also indicates his disapproval of the abusive practices that are directed at those boys who are 'sort of lonely' and who try to gain acceptance from the 'footballers'. He struggles to try to understand what motivates the latter to degrade and humiliate other boys whom he classifies as 'harmless'. The references he makes to Matt in these terms are significant in that they highlight the extent of his empathy for those boys who are unjustly treated and unnecessarily humiliated by the 'footballers'.

Raymond also highlights the significance of football in terms of boys wanting to gain acceptance from their peers. Moreover, he draws attention to the status that is conferred upon those boys who demonstrate a capacity for playing football:

97 Wayne: What about the popular group? Why do you call them popular? Why are they popular do you think?

98 Raymond: Just because that's just what they always were from Year 8. They're always teasing everybody. Gary (a member of the 'footballer' group), I sort of like him, I don't hang around him or anything, but he's not evil or a teasing sort of person, so he's alright to talk to. The other ones are just too good for you. They think they're too good for you but they're just basically stupid. Popular because they play football, that's why. I was never really accepted there because I didn't play football until last year, and so I started playing in a team with all the guys I went to primary school with, the people I actually like. That's why I think they got popular, because they all liked the ones that did good at football, because I couldn't really kick the football. That's how they get popular
I remember in the start of Year 9 David came and Joel came. I'd met Joel a couple of weeks before school started so I just sort of knew him because we went to a party because our families knew each other, so I talked to him for a while. On the first couple of days of Year 9 I was still with them, and then everyone started playing football. I talked to Joel and David and David looked like he'd never played football in his life, and Joel he was really, really good. So instantly, Joel was popular and David wasn't ... So a person who was good at football, he became popular. It doesn't make sense but that's what happens.

Raymond emphasises here the role of playing football in boys learning to establish a 'cool' demeanour and gaining acceptance from other boys. Being skilled at football, it seems, can lead to acquiring a particular status and popularity. This is emphasised when Raymond claims that he 'couldn't really kick the football' which appears to function as a prerequisite for establishing a stylised bodily enactment of a valorised form of adolescent masculinity. This is also highlighted by Nathan:

88 Wayne: So um what would lead someone to be rejected then?

89 Nathan: Well it could be like you know, say there was a school of like a group of guys that played a lot of sport and that or hang around together and the person comes from overseas or whatever, a new school and is like, you know sits at lunchtime and reads on his own, doesn't play much sport, he's gonna get hassled by the guys that play sport and that. They'll want him to come out at the start maybe, come and play sport, but he'd rather read or like be on his own or whatever and then so they think oh we don't need him and he can sit there and have his book the whole time and it'll just, people will ... you know how people talk about others and people will get influenced by that and that person is just rejected.
Nathan's reference to the person from overseas may well be read as another instance of a subtle form of racism which is implicated in the everyday practices of these boys, as already indicated by the previous data. It is also interesting to draw attention to the way in which football, as a desirable practice, is set against other activities such as reading (see Martino, 1993). Moreover, both Nathan and Raymond emphasise that engaging in football practices and demonstrating an apparent propensity for this kind of sport are a prerequisite for being accepted by the 'cool' boys. However, as Raymond also points out, not all skilled football players necessarily maintain their status in this group. Steve, the captain of the school football team was rejected by the 'footballers':

104 Raymond: There's couple of guys in that group ['footballers'] that I talk to in class sometimes. But a lot of them are pretty ... I mean, I've got no reason to hate them, it's just some of them, if they're in their group they think they're good. They'll start teasing and are interested in like body boarding and that sort of thing. I hate going to the beach and so I sort of find them a bit annoying. But there's that other group of guys ['try hard footballers'], Steve's group. He was rejected heavily by the footballer group. He's like the best footballer, maybe Joel is better, I suppose, but he's like one of the really good footballers, captain of the team, and he got heavily rejected because he's really up himself. He thinks he's really good and all the girls like him. There's one girl who used to like him and then she found out he's really up himself but she still liked him.

So it would appear that a particular demeanour, defined in terms of being 'really up yourself' or 'big headed', constitutes on this occasion and in this social context the basis for disenfranchising one boy's status within the peer group. In fact, Steve, who was also interviewed by the researcher, discusses his involvement with the 'footballers' and comments on their practices:

3 Wayne: I want to know overall what life at school is like for you or what you think of school.
4 Steve: Ah for me it started off not too good, but it's coming all right now.

5 Wayne: This year didn't start off too well?

5 Steve: Na. Year 8 was all right. Year 9 was a pretty shitty year and then Year 10's pretty good.

6 Wayne: Why didn't it start off too well?

7 Steve: I don't know. Just sort of got picked on by the group down on the oval in Year 9. So I just left 'em and found a new group and Year 10's all right.

8 Wayne: What group in Year 10 are you talking about?

9 Steve: Like Smith and all that - all their group.

10 Wayne: Were you a part of that group?

11 Steve: I was yeah.

12 Wayne: Right. Why did they pick on you?

13 Steve: Dunno, wouldn't have a clue.

14 Wayne: How did they pick on you?

15 Steve: Like well if we play footy I might mark it over the top of them and they just give me shit like 'Oh yeah Stevo - you've got the ball' and stuff like that. Sounds as though they were jealous of me getting the ball or something like that.
16 Wayne: So you ended up by not hanging out with that group anymore?

17 Steve: Yep.

18 Wayne: Tell me about the group of friends that you have now. What are they like?

19 Steve: They're a good bunch of blokes. Like you can be yourself around them. You don't have to worry about acting a certain way. You just be yourself.

20 Wayne: So, being a certain way - are you saying before you had to be a certain way?

21 Steve: Yeah you had to sort of act the way everyone else wanted you to.

22 Wayne: Can you explain?

23 Steve: You had to act like the way they wanted you to like um I don't know, it's a bit hard. Like if they were acting, like they'd pick on someone, you had to do that and I didn't like that so I left them.

24 Wayne: Did they pick on people quite a lot?

25 Steve: Yeah.

26 Wayne: In what way?

27 Steve: Like if someone beat them at something, they'd pick on them because they didn't like being beaten.
28 Wayne: So how did they pick on them?

29 Steve: They'd call them names and all that shit. You know names like 'cockheads', 'dickheads', all the, you know, common names.

Steve draws attention to the way the 'footballers' relate to one another and, since he has been the brunt of their abusive practices, he readily rejects these boys and joins another group where 'you can just be yourself'. Moreover, in section 27 the competitive dimension of the 'footballers' abusive practices is highlighted when Steve mentions how the latter would resort to 'picking on' people when 'someone beat them at something'. Later on in the interview, Steve elaborates on the sex-based harassment directed at other boys perpetrated by certain members of the 'footballer' group. He also provides a brief overview of the way he sees other friendship groups:

50 Wayne: Can you to explain to me how you see your friendship group in relation to other friendship groups at the school. Is it different from other groups of guys that hang around together?

51 Steve: Yeah 'cause we don't hassle other people or do anything like that. There's three groups, right?

52 Wayne: In Year 10?

52 Steve: Yeah there's sort of Smith and his mates - all their group that hangs around the oval. And then there's sort of our - oh there's about four actually ... And then there's ours. And a group that hangs around the basketball court. And then there's that sort of ... how would you name that group? ... Dan Brent, Ben Green - all that group. And then there's another group - they sort of - well Smith's group think they're all 'faggots'.
55 Wayne: They think who’s a ‘faggot’?

56 Steve: The fourth group which is Murray, Rob Murray, Friedman.

57 Wayne: So how do you know that they think they’re ‘faggots’?

58 Steve: ’Cause I used to hang around with them.

59 Wayne: So they used to talk about them?

60 Steve: Yeah.

61 Wayne: Why? What leads them to label them in that way, do you think?

62 Steve: Maybe because the other group that hang around - they're girls and boys. So they like sit around in a circle. They'll sit around with girls and everything whereas Smith and all that, they'd sit around just boys and then the girls would be off somewhere else, so they used to think these guys had a bit of feminine side to 'em, so they'd tell them they're 'poofers' or something like that.

65 Wayne: What made them make that judgement - because the girls were there - they talked to girls?

66 Steve: I dunno. Well Ryan, he's got a sort of a 'poofer' voice which everyone picks up and gives him shit about.

67 Wayne: And he's a part of that group?

68 Steve: Yeah.
69 Wayne: Right.

70 Steve: And then Friedman, well he was, there was a rumour going around that he got kicked out, or he left X school because he got caught wanking himself or something like that - I'm not quite sure. So everyone labelled him as a 'faggot'. But I talk to him all the time, he's all right. We associate with this group all the time, so it's all right.

71 Wayne: So you're saying these guys who talk and sit with the girls get treated badly by just that one group, by the 'footballers'?

76 Steve: Yeah, they're teased yeah.

What is interesting is that Ryan and Friedman are members of two distinct friendship groups. Ryan has a small group of friends who are all girls, but Steve places him in the same group as the 'handballers' - those boys who are distinguished as 'non-footballers' - who also sometimes sit and talk to girls during the break. Perhaps this is beside the point because Ryan, and other boys who form part of the 'handballer' group, are targeted by the 'footballers' on the basis of their assumed homosexuality. They are differentiated by the 'footballers' on a number of counts, but primarily in terms of their engagement in handball and their association with girls as friends. This leads them to be viewed as 'having a bit of a feminine side to them' and forms the basis for attributions of homosexuality. Moreover, Ryan is considered to have a 'poofy voice' and Friedman also has a reputation from a previous school because he 'got caught wanking himself'. What this data draws attention to is the regime of homophobic practices and strategies of surveillance that these boys use to police sex/gender boundaries. Scott also comments at length on the preponderance of such homophobic regimes of practice perpetrated by the 'footballers':
86 Scott: ... they walk past and hassle all these other groups and make comments about them.

87 Wayne: What comments? Like?

88 Scott: 'Oh I hate him, he's really gay' or 'Gee, those guys are real whatever'. I mean it always gets back to gay with all these guys, it's sort of like the big insult.

89 Wayne: They call other people 'gay' do they?

90 Scott: Yeah, and we've had one guy right through from Year 8 and he got stuck with it and everyone decided oh you know, oh he's definitely, he's a 'poofter', we hate him. You can tell the way he talks, he's friends with a lot of girls more than guys. I mean, it's his choice really, but everyone's sort of stuck him with that tag and what surprises me when you talk to him, he's actually really homophobic himself. So it's odd that he's sort of been hassled so much with it and he's like that as well. It's funny that. He doesn't say it as such, but he wouldn't call people gay all the time, but yeah he's definitely homophobic. Strange, 'cause I would have thought that if you got hassled with it ... that's like with me I got switched off to it all sort of.

91 Wayne: You got switched off - what do you mean?

92 Scott: Well I sort of got switched off to this thing where everyone who's supposed to be gay has got a behaviour ... if someone mentions 'gay' you've got to like jump back ten metres and everything 'cause I mean it's really silly.

93 Wayne: Why do you think that happens?
94 Scott: I don't know, I think when people mention 'gays', they think of people who, like men who are interested in men and it's all they think about, whereas really, if you think about it, one, well, girls are interested in ... you know, females are interested in males or whatever but it's not all they think about. So really, if someone's gay it doesn't mean they're going to be pushy and if they are, like, you should be able to tell them, like any girl, like no thanks and that's it. You shouldn't have to push them around for what they are. I don't know I think it's a bit stupid, sort of that whole idea that anyone who's homosexual is definitely, that's all they want, that's all they're thinking.

95 Wayne: But why do they label certain people homosexual and not others, do you think?

96 Scott: It varies from simple things like the way they talk, um, or maybe the way they dress, though that's probably less 'cause of school uniform and that, or um, I suppose like with tucking your shirt in - that might be something they can get you with. Or, um, someone who might comb their hair every day and be careful with it - that sort of thing, just simple things. And then I suppose things you could say would make them jump on you.

97 Wayne: Like?

98 Scott: Um, I don't know, whatever, just something like, whatever, anything ... I can't think of one off hand, but I know that when you say certain things it's like 'Oh, you're obviously gay'. That's exactly how they say it, it's just laughable really.

In section 88, Scott highlights the extent to which sexuality is deployed by the 'footballers' as a definitive index of subjectivity with his comment that 'it always gets back to gay with all these guys' (Foucault, 1978; 1988g). Moreover, he appears to be
emphasising that sexuality is not always the basis for the way that people relate to one another. However, his reference to the student who was targeted 'right through from Year 8' by other boys as a 'poofier' also highlights the extent to which certain boys are placed under surveillance on the basis of an imputed homosexuality. He also draws attention to the criteria that are used in attributing homosexuality to particular boys who bodily enact what may be termed an alternative version of masculinity (see Nayak & Kehily, 1996). Moreover, he observes that the boy who is targeted for homophobic harassment himself displays homophobic attitudes. Thus, this boy apparently feels compelled to adopt techniques of self-surveillance within a normalising regime of heterosexist practices.

As result of his own experiences of being targeted, Scott has developed quite specific capacities for reading the effects and limits of homophobic regimes of practice. For instance, in section 94, he points to the limits of a particular logic informing a certain category of the homosexual. Within such frames gay men are defined solely in terms of the deployment of sexuality that dictates the way the latter relate to other men on all occasions in terms of desire for homoerotic contact (see Foucault, 1978). It is in this sense that the interview data can be used to draw attention to the specific capacities that individual adolescent boys have acquired for reading the effects of particular regimes of practice within which certain versions of masculinity are imbricated.

Conclusion

In this chapter the focus has been on describing a particular social dynamic amongst a group of adolescent boys in terms of using interview data to draw attention to what are considered to be identifiable instances of enacting a stylised heterosexual masculinity. While an attempt has been made to include interviews with boys from different peer groups, the focus has been on targeting the impact and practices of the 'footballers' who occupy a position at the top of a pecking order of masculinities at a particular catholic co-educational high school. However, by mapping a typology of the interplay of
masculinities between various peer groups in this educational site, attention has also been drawn to certain instances of boys enacting masculinities within specific peer groups. Overall, the emphasis has been on highlighting the performative enactment of a stylised masculinity explainable in terms of a 'cool' demeanour which is fashioned through a set of individualising social practices and techniques of subjectification (Foucault, 1982b; 1984b). Within the limits of such normalising regimes, the boys learn to act, speak and think in specifiable ways on particular occasions according to the assemblage of quite specific norms for governing their conduct.

Attention is also drawn, in this chapter, to the grammar of masculinity that has been used by the researcher to render the interview data analysable in specific terms and according to particular criteria for assessing what is to count as an instance of masculinity (Coleman, 1990). Through using observational research methods, the researcher's own practices were placed under investigation in terms of drawing attention to how particular grids of perception were operationalised to make sense of the interview data. Moreover, such grids of perception and frames for analysing what is to count as an instance of masculinity were rendered visible as objects of social inquiry in targeting the practices of a specific group of boys at a particular school. Thus, these data were not used to necessarily establish the 'truth' or accuracy of the researcher's claims, but to enable a correlation to be established between the researcher's accounts of certain social practices and those provided by the boys themselves. In this way, such data were used to juxtapose various accounts that the boys provided of a particular student or social practice within an overall framework of the researcher's grid of perception for identifying what is to count as an instance of masculinity (Coleman, 1990).
CHAPTER NINE

'Cool Boys', Rebels and Arseholes: Enacting Stylised Heterosexual Masculinities

Introduction

In this chapter the interviews are used to extend an analysis of the normalising practices for policing heterosexual masculinities provided in the previous chapter. Attention is focussed on several boys' understanding of the self-fashioning practices that are required to enact a stylised heterosexual masculinity and the occasions on which this occurs (see Haywood, 1993; Holland et al, 1993; Epstein, 1994; Ward, 1995; Butler, 1996; Skelton, 1996; Hite, 1980; Frank, 1993; Connell, 1995). In this way, the regimes of homophobic and abusive practices, already identified by several boys in chapter eight, are placed under further scrutiny in an attempt to strategically target the effects of specific norms for regulating the conduct of adolescent boys and the conditions under which this takes place at school.

This chapter makes an original contribution to its field of enquiry in terms of producing 'new' knowledge about the ways in which boys learn to relate to themselves and to others as an occasional matter in enacting particular instances of masculinity. For example:

(i) it provides specific knowledge about boys' experiences of homophobic harassment but refuses to ground the effects of such practices as emerging in the repressed consciousness of individual subjects;

(ii) it draws attention to the ways in which boys' rejection of mental labour is negotiated by a group of middle class boys in ways which have not been documented in previous research;

(iii) it highlights specific capacities that boys have acquired for analysing 'masculinity' within the normative frames of reference established by the researcher.
Dave Friedman: Working at the limits of heterosexual masculinities

Dave Friedman, a 'handballer', who is mentioned by Steve in the previous chapter as being targeted by the 'footballers', talks at length about the homophobic harassment he received at his previous school at the hands of a particular group of boys:

17 Wayne: How did these guys hassle you?

18 Dave: They didn't really, well not all of them, it was only a select few. There was myself and I know a couple of other guys, it was largely on the subject of being gay.

19 Wayne: So they targeted you and other guys as well?

20 Dave: Yeah, they targeted me, another guy, there might have been a couple of others, but it was largely associated with the fact that a lot of the things we did were perhaps stereotypical of what they saw as being related to homosexuality.

21 Wayne: Like?

22 Dave: Like at the time I did ballet, and the guy I knew, his posture and manner and everything he did was supposedly leading towards something that they suspect that he would turn out homosexual. So, they abused him for that, and me for that. I remember a couple of others, I can't remember what they did, but I remember distinctly that they were harassed for being homosexual. Well, they weren't, but they were seen as homosexual, whether they had a girlfriend or not, it was just that they paid no attention to sort of the facts.

Here attention is drawn to a regime of normalising practices in which homophobic strategies are used against boys who are identified as homosexual on the basis of their
posturing, manner or involvement in ballet. Thus, there are certain mannerisms and performative practices involving body posturing, as well as the kind of voice a boy has, which lead particular boys to be categorised as gay (see Walker, 1988; Nayak & Kehily, 1996). And furthermore, such practices are imbricated in the way that many boys learn to establish their masculinities, at the level of performativity, through processes of differentiation in which indicators of homosexuality are readily recognisable as markers of deviance from a heterosexual norm, and hence an appropriate masculinity (See Epstein, 1994; Steinberg et al, 1997; Redman, 1996; Willis, 1977; Connell, 1987; 1995).

However, what is interesting is the way that Dave develops an understanding of what motivates boys to behave in this way. In fact, he uses the interview to try to account for the reasons as to why he was treated in this way. Firstly, he attributes such practices to the bullies' own lack of confidence in themselves:

Socially they were really, they stuck to one group and they all drew on each other for support because I don't think they could have really survived on their own, and to get energy, I think, for confidence building. They didn't have any confidence themselves and they take pleasure in bringing other people down, tall poppy syndrome. They take other people down which gives them a sense of satisfaction and everything, because the people they hang around with weren't really their friends. I really doubt that they were friends, but they were drawn together by a common sense of lower self-esteem and they needed support and they drew themselves together and they were able to profit from hurting other people.

Secondly, he implies that they engaged in such practices to gain acceptance from their peers:

... everyone was wandering around aimlessly, looking for a leader and at that time that group had leadership over a sort of pack.
Thirdly, he attributes their behaviour to innate drives or energies and lack of maturity. In fact, he mentions at significant points the influence of girls in quelling boys' tendency to display this kind of violence:

But a lot of boys didn't behave like that, they just went along with the leaders of the pack. A lot of them had influence from females from outside the school which I think with them they reach a higher maturity at a younger age, so I think they did have influences there, but really I think with boys its in their own nature. You see boys grow up, you've got Adolf Hitler and that type of thing. They have a lot of energy in them that can be expelled either positively or negatively, and I think girls tend to be an energy that can nullify it, that if it is destructive they can stop it from going over the top. I mean because it is girls that make it seem as socially unacceptable, they condemn that type of behaviour, like violent, real racist, prejudiced attitudes, that type of thing and they do influence guys greatly I think, their attitude towards everything, socially, at home, at school and at the work place when they grow up, and all that type of thing.

Here Dave tends to attribute the boys' behaviour to innate drives which predispose them to act in violent ways. This is reinforced in his reference to the boys' energy that must be 'expelled either positively or negatively'. What is particularly interesting is that Dave explicitly mentions the role of girls in terms of their higher level of maturity which is implicitly tied to their tendency to 'nullify' the violence that is enacted by boys against other boys. He appears to be drawing attention to the different norms for governing the conduct of girls who police boys' bullying practices through a condemnation of violent behaviours. This highlights the differences he encountered between the single sex boys' school and the coeducational school he is now attending in terms of the varying levels and overt enactment of homophobic violence in each of the above mentioned educational sites. In fact, he appears to be suggesting that such a 'culture' of violence was officially endorsed and socially sanctioned in the single sex catholic boys' school he attended:

414
43 Dave: I remember from say Year 5 that there were these every strong, very anti-homosexual feelings, everyone was very much against it. Maybe because, knowing that in the school, at this private catholic school, the all-boys school, it was felt that obviously it was not socially acceptable and that it was very bad to feel like that. If you were a homosexual, it was very bad, it was against what society is meant to be. The values that they experienced, it said that homosexuals were just a lower form.

44 Wayne: So how did they know if someone was homosexual?

45 Dave: No, they don't. They assume, if they like the person, they won't press it, if they don't like the person, which is usually the case, that is if they show any sign of weakness or compassion then other people jump to conclusions and bring them down. So really it's a survival of the fittest. It's not very good to be sensitive. If you have no feeling and compassion or anything like that, you would survive in a place like that.

46 Wayne: So they might target you if you're sensitive? Is that what you're saying? As homosexual?

47 Dave: Well, I think they'd start first if they really wanted to get you. They'd target your areas where you do really well, that you're outstanding in. They'll manipulate that in such a way as to make it seem unacceptable. A lot of people, very few people, have an ability to lead as in they can lead people like sheep. So you've got sort of this shepherd and he gets this idea in his head that this person is unacceptable for what he's doing, because of this, this and this, which he manipulates from the situation. He says to his sheep, alright this guy's wrong, I'm criticising him because he does this, this and this, you do it too. So the sheep follow one another and they go ahead and do this and totally destroy this person
who was maybe outstanding and they don't care. Once they've done that, either they can work on something else that they think needs to be brought down or they'll go and work on another victim which is I suppose a kind of simplified way of saying it but this is how it happens. They definitely have no remorse, they just keep going and they methodically cut down person after person until there are a very few shepherds who still have that hold over other people, and the sheep which may be joined by those who have broken down, or maybe just the sort of flip side of the same coin to the type of person that the shepherd is like, and becomes another destroyer. So, it's pretty grim.

48 Wayne: It's not too good.

49 Dave: This is my own personal point of view. Maybe it's a bit extremist but it's just the way I see what happened to me in that environment. And now that I'm out of that environment, I've had a chance to analyse it and sort of observe it. I'm not viewing it with any emotions but seeing it analytically - this is what they do and how they do it.

Thus, Dave uses the confessional space of the interview as a form of therapy (Mac an Ghaill, 1994), but also as a means by which he is able to make some sense of his experiences. Here, the regulatory behaviour of the boys in terms of cutting down the 'tall poppies' intersects with gendered regimes of practice in which particular forms of masculinity are regulated. Attention is drawn to a regime of bullying practices in which those boys who are sensitive or who display 'any sign of weakness' risk becoming targets of homophobic violence at the hands of a 'pack' of other boys who acquire and maintain a status at the top of a pecking order of masculinities (see Connell, 1987; 1995). This is highlighted in Dave's reference to the 'survival of the fittest', which once again signals that he is drawing on a particular body of gendered knowledge that is grounded in a form of biological determinism to account for the behaviour of his peers. Such behaviours, which involve enacting a form of power, are interpreted, in this particular
case, as instances of boys publicly enacting and performing a stylised form of heterosexual masculinity (see Nayak & Kehily, 1996; Haywood, 1993; Parker, 1996; Epstein, 1997; Dixon, 1997; Redman, 1996; Skelton, 1997). This power is also constructed in terms of the shepherd metaphor which is deployed to illustrate the effect of a regime of practices in which many boys are constructed as blindly following a leader like sheep. Within such a regime, the requirement to deny feeling and sensitivity - to act tough - is enforced. Those boys, who visibly exhibit behaviours imputed to homosexuals or engage in practices deemed to be sex-inappropriate for boys, risk being targeted and harassed at school.

Many of the boys interviewed focused on the ways in which sexuality is used to police sex/gender boundaries and highlight some of the specific occasions on which it occurs in their peer groups. What is particularly interesting about Dave's final comment in the excerpt above is that it draws attention to the techniques he is adopting to make sense of his experiences at his previous school. It is being physically removed from that environment, he indicates, which enables him to develop capacities for analysing how particular modalities of power are operationalised within certain disciplinary regimes of practice.

Dave is then asked about what life is like for him at his current school and whether he has experienced this kind of harassment there. While he claims that he has not encountered forms of violence and abuse on the same level, he does mention how the 'footballers', when he first came to the school, targeted him in this way. He talks about how the 'footballers' knew some of the boys from his previous school and continued the homophobic abuse that they had enacted against him. However, in this co-educational community, he seems to highlight the extent to which the perpetration of such forms of violence was modified by the influence of the girls.

53 Dave: Generally I think that I'm accepted here now and I seem to be respected even though I might not be liked by everyone. I'm respected and that's what I
really want. But I do remember in Year 9 when I first came to this school, word had seeped from X school by friends who know friends who know friends and all that type of thing, to young boys at this school about my exploits in ballet which I had done for six years and which was a very big thing. In fact, the year that I left was the worst because I recently won an award for the best dancer in Western Australia. So when I came here, it was like the pinnacle of what was socially unacceptable. I was at the top level of what is socially unacceptable, I was the worst of the worst, get away, keep away, destroy, bring down. So this school I think pretty much at first was like the other school in some ways, but I think with the girls here, I don't know, it was an overall a more mature environment because of the influence of maybe this community and the women. The girls who are in the school community offer a bit of maturity to the boys. So I think it's an overall mature community so I don't think I was treated as badly. At first I was still condemned for what I did by some boys, but I had friends now that were willing to stand up for what I thought, no matter what I thought, it wasn't important to them, it was just friendship. That was very strange for me because a lot of people wouldn't do that, that I had known at my other school. It was a great feeling to have someone to stand there while someone was giving me crap for whatever reason and I fought back and so would they. So I was being supported instead of being thrown into the lion's den.

However, despite the fact that levels of homophobic violence at this school were not as great, due to what Dave considers to be the feminising influence of the girls in a co-educational context, he still draws attention to the perpetration of such practices particularly by the 'footballers':

54 Wayne: How did they give you crap?

55 Dave: It was again for my dancing. A lot of stuff like 'ballet boy', I don't know, they were very unimaginative. Just a lot to do with being a woman, being
homosexual was a big thing again because of dancing. That was the main problem!

56 Wayne: Who was doing that here?

57 Dave: It was a large group at that time in Year 9 ... I was condemned by that big group of footballers who had characters like Carl Roberts, Miles Teller, John Green and a few others.

58 Wayne: So is that the big group on the oval?

59 Dave: Yeah.

Here Dave highlights the role of normalising practices which involve designating ballet or dance as a feminised activity. Once again, the policing of heterosexual masculinities is framed in terms of identifying sex-inappropriate practices, which then form the basis for imputing homosexuality. It is not so much dance 'itself' that poses a problem, but its association with the 'feminine'. This link is produced through a regime of practices that are imbricated in regulatory technologies of the gendered self (see Laskey & Beavis, 1996; Mason & Tomsen, 1997; Steinberg et al, 1997; Parker, 1996; Haywood, 1993). What is emphasised by Dave and many of the boys interviewed is that the popular group of 'footballers' perpetrated such sex-based harassment which, it is argued here, functions as a means by which the latter are able to gain a 'cool' or tough status as 'masculine' subjects within a hierarchical peer group network of social relations (see Walker, 1988; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Willis, 1977; Kessler et al, 1985). Thus, a certain demeanour, defined in these terms, becomes identifiable for the researcher as a particular stylised form of heterosexual masculinity which is embodied at the level of performativity (see Nayak & Kehily, 1996; Steinberg et al, 1997).

60 Wayne: So how do you see that group on the oval?
61 Dave: I'd see them as a group that thinks themselves the most popular.

62 Wayne: Popular? How are they popular?

63 Dave: Socially acceptable I think, compared to the other groups whom they see as maybe inferior to them in their social acceptability.

64 Wayne: What makes them popular do you think? Is it the things they do, their interests, the way you see them behaving?

65 Dave: I think it was for the boys their masculinity. They had a lot of football players, fights, threats, male attitudes were very much bolstered by each other. They kept each other going. So you had practically everyone in that group doing football, drinking beer, smoking, anything rebellious yet within the lines ruled by society as acceptable. They also talked about the women they had ... they believed they had good looks ... they ignored other people. I think this accounts for the whole group, they ignored others who were not in their rank and they always kept to themselves. They considered themselves good looking and had a lot of girlfriend/boyfriend relationships and having sex was big talk. The younger you were when you had it the first time the better. It seems pretty primitive, but that was very big for them.

What is interesting is the normative ties that Dave establishes between the category of 'masculinity' and a range of social practices. For Dave, displaying masculinity for these boys is linked to asserting publicly their heterosexuality by boasting about their sexual exploits with girls (see Holland et al, 1993; Willis, 1977; Hite, 1980; Wood, 1984; Walker, 1988; Kehily & Nayak, 1997; Haywood, 1993; Frank, 1993). He also highlights the extent to which these boys bolstered such a stylised form of heterosexual masculinity through social practices that involved playing football, smoking and drinking.
On the basis of engaging in such practices and 'having good looks' these boys were perceived to acquire a high status masculinity.

Dave also mentions a group of popular girls who always talked about the 'footballers' in their group and discusses their role in enforcing this model of masculinity:

67 Dave: The girls also talked about it [sex] by themselves and about the boys ... they had top ten lists for the boys.

68 Wayne: The girls had top ten lists?

69 Dave: Yeah, that group of popular girls, yeah. They judged the boys on good looks and their masculinity and how manly they were. It was sort of like you had the men as the roosters with them preening their feathers and going around the school kicking dirt into the face of other people and you had the girls watching to see who was the strongest, the most dominant. And the boys also would accept that male figure as the most manly of them all, the most socially acceptable, and they would look up to him. The girls would acknowledge that and also view him with the same attitude as the guys did but it was constantly changing though.

Here, Dave indicates how the practices of a group of girls contributed to the boys' acquisition of a particular stylised masculinity and, hence, social status. The role of the girls in reinforcing a heterosexual masculinity is emphasised. Moreover attention is drawn to the performative dimension of this masculinity by the comparison of the boys to 'roosters preening their feathers'. This is indicative of the boys posturing their bodies to establish a particular heterosexual masculinity which is on display, not only for the girls, but for other boys as well. The analogy is significant because it highlights the extent to which these boys learn to acquire a particular demeanour, which is readily recognisable and identifiable as an instance of displaying a stylised heterosexual masculinity (see Butler, 1990).
What is also important to note is that Dave's reference to the 'footballers' 'kicking the dirt in the face of other people' describes another aspect of these boys' demeanour which is explainable in terms of their own sense of social superiority and embodied power over other boys:

70 Wayne: The 'kicking of dirt in the face of other people', can you explain what you mean by that?

71 Dave: I think that's more ignorance of other people. That those not in their group they pay no attention to and consider them not to be worthy of their attention. They're just totally ignored and they feel that they don't need to interact with them at all or need to be with them at any time ... Also Manual Arts for these boys is a big thing, woodwork, metalwork, that type of thing, technical drawing ... alcohol, sex, really manly things like ropemanship, callused hands, that type of thing, they find these things important ... a lot of people are drawn into that category. You still have a lot of nice people who have a lot of potential who are drawn into this category. They're trying to be like that. I just really hope that they get out of it because a lot of people have potential in other areas and they're wasting their time I think.

72 Wayne: So why do you think they want to be like that? What's drawing them into that category?

73 Dave: Maybe it's those who are already there who are advertising it as good ... Advertising it as excellent to be in if you can get into it. So they go over there, but I have never really experienced a need to display my masculinity or, if I was to, if I was actually inclined to that area as in being very technically minded, not showing emotion, you know the very masculine type thing, then I would go into
that if that was what I wanted, but I don't waste my time trying to be where I
simply am not supposed to be.

Dave's use of the word 'advertising' with regard to boys displaying their masculinity is
also very important because, in this way, attention can be drawn to the public aspect of a
stylised heterosexual masculinity which many find desirable and alluring. It is precisely
because of its desirability and the power it confers that many boys, as Dave indicates,
choose not to develop capacities outside of the specific requirements for establishing such
a model of masculinity. Moreover, what is also indicated here is how involvement and
participation in certain subjects such as Manual Arts and Woodwork, as well as doing
'manly things' such as drinking alcohol and having or boasting about sex, are tied to a
particular category of masculinity which many boys find desirable and apparently alluring
(Willis, 1977; Kehily & Nayak, 1997; Holland et al, 1993). Thus, specific practices,
including participation in certain subjects at school, become an identifiable means by
which boys can establish this currency of heteronormative masculinity which confers a
particular social status (Martino, 1993; Thomas, 1990; Hudson, 1972).

The desirability of enacting such a form of heterosexual masculinity is further emphasised
when Dave is asked to explain what he means when he describes these boys as displaying
their masculinity:

74 Wayne: Can you talk to me about what you understand about displaying
masculinity? Like you referred to that group of guys as having masculine
attitudes. Can you explain what you mean by that?

75 Dave: I'm not sure, but what I see as a masculine attitude is that they value
certain things like bodily physical strength and attractiveness like they have to be
physically attractive to the opposite sex as in they have to be very strong,
handsome, charming ... able to get attention of the opposite sex readily and easily
whenever they wanted. They also have to be sport orientated, very sporty, very
fit, able to do any sport and do it well. Intelligent, well it's not always good to not have a brain so they definitely want a bit of intelligence but they don't put too much emphasis on being brainy, it's more like not being too thick or stupid.

Once again what is significant about Dave's comments is that they can be deployed to draw attention to the stylised demeanour of the 'footballers'. The requirements for displaying a particular heterosexual masculinity are spelt out in terms of demonstrating physical strength, being able to attract the opposite sex readily and engaging actively in a range of sports. Moreover, Dave claims that boys need to balance not appearing too stupid, while at the same time avoiding the risk of presenting themselves as too intelligent, because both positions contravene the normalising boundaries within which a high status masculinity is enacted. Moreover, what needs to be emphasised is Dave's capacity to identify particular practices and behaviours as instances of what is to count as masculinity (see Coleman, 1990). The point is that he has already developed capacities for identifying instances of what constitutes masculinity. The implications of this are investigated in the following chapter.

**James: The Pervasive Role of Homophobic Practices**

The effects of such a regime of practices in which sexuality is deployed as a means of policing gender boundaries for boys is also highlighted by James, a Year 12 student who had been harassed on the basis of his imputed homosexuality. In fact, his interview is used to describe a regime of social relations and practices in which heterosexual masculinities are policed through the deployment of homophobic strategies that are bodily and verbally enacted (see Nayak & Kehily, 1996; Ward, 1995; Butler, 1996; Mills, 1996; Flood, 1997). He had been the brunt of homophobic abuse and used the confessional space of the interview to try to make sense of why he had been targeted. He recounts a series of experiences involving encounters with various groups of boys on the bus that he caught to and from school. On his way to school one morning, a group of boys from one of the local high schools started calling him names. Initially, he
was targeted as an 'Art boy' because he was carrying an Art file. But the harassment escalated and they began calling him 'fag boy' and to throw coins and bits of paper at him. Moreover, he claims that what exacerbated the harassment was the fact that one of his friends, Andrew, who always caught the bus with him, was a Year 9 boy aged 14. He describes Andrew in the following way:

To me he is like my little brother because I don't have a little brother, he just comes over whenever he wants and does whatever he wants, he's good to be around. Even though people might think why hang around with a 14 year old but I don't really care because he is like a good friend and he like catches the bus, he always follows me around sometimes.

The homophobic harassment persisted and Andrew also became implicated in the abuse that is directed at James, with their sexuality being brought into question. The boys at the back of the bus continued to target James and Andrew, calling out names like 'fag Art boy' and throwing objects at both boys. James indicates that he became very angry and tried to ignore the harassment. Eventually he ended up by catching another bus in an attempt to avoid being targeted. However, another group of Year 10 students from his own school start to harass him in much the same way as the previous group of boys from the local high school:

This time it was a group of guys from this school. I mean it sounds like pretty stupid, I'm 17 and they're 15 but I'm not the sort of person who wants to stand up to them and get physically involved because I know they will say, "Yeah, what are you going to do?" and if I say something else he'll just go smack and then if I hit him back it'll start something else. Looking at me you wouldn't think I would last in a fight, would you, because I'm pretty bloody thin. I'm not exactly the biggest of builds. I know that, people see that, and I know it for a fact so I avoid fights, but I'm not saying I'm totally hopeless ... Anyway, they started throwing little bits of paper and that went on for a few days and I was getting
really annoyed. Andrew used to catch the bus as well, and this is another label
thing that really annoyed me because I could hear them calling out "fag boy" and
stuff like that, these year 10 guys. They would throw bits of paper and stuff and
then Andrew used to always catch the bus with me and then he got billowed. If I
didn't catch the bus and Andrew was there they would just go, "Oh, where's
your boyfriend, you fag?" you know and things like that and he would come and
tell me.

In order to avoid this kind of harassment, James and Andrew once again caught two
different buses. But they could not seem to escape the homophobic abuse. As James
was standing at the bus stop where he was waiting for another connection, the bus that
he used to catch passed by and those Year 10 boys, with their heads hanging out of the
windows, started screaming homophobic comments at him all over again:

And this bus goes past almost every day of the year and every time I'd get 'art
boy', 'faggie', 'you're going to die poofter', 'fuck you', hands out of windows,
heads screaming like the back quarter of the bus and I'm thinking, 'Yeah, great
guys!' and Andrew who is with me is just looking around and I go, 'It's ok, it's
all for me, fella.'

His account highlights the performative practice of homophobia in terms of the boys
shouting abuse with their hands out of the windows of the bus (Nayak & Kehily,
1996). In his interview, James questions why he has become the target of homophobic
practices. He attempts to search for reasons and explanations for these boys' behaviour:

I mean like I don't even know these people and they call me 'Art boy' because
I've got my file. No matter how many people are there at the bus stop they always
do it, no matter what, and I don't know why. I mean I don't know why these
people insist on labelling, singling me out, they don't even know me. Maybe I
look like a fag or something or I deserve to be called a fag because I do Art, hey,
I just can't stand it. The thing that really irritates is the fact that the bus is full of all these students from other schools as well and you can see them they just look out for me and they just go, 'Yeah, those guys must be right!' They just look at you while the idiots at the back are abusing you and they just look and think, 'What's going on?' or you know, 'Oh, yeah, he looks like a fag' or they just look at you blankly, They don't really give a shit and you think one of them might turn around and say, you know, 'What the hell are you doing that for? You don't even know him'.

James here calls for support in a situation in which he feels quite helpless and angry. This call for help, which is underscored by an appeal to a sense of justice which he believes should motivate others to act on his behalf, is also reflected in his reference to the need for bus drivers to address the problem:

Almost every day when I catch the bus in the afternoon, I mean the bus I catch now in the afternoon there is hardly anyone on it. I like to catch a bus, now when I go home from school I just like to be on my own. I hate it when there's groups of people coming my way, I get very intimidated because of all this shit ... I get really intimidated easily now... you think the bus driver might have done something like stop the bus and say don't do that, don't hang your heads out of the window. I mean one driver did but it's never the same driver, but one driver did once and I thought, 'Oh, shit, they're going to get off and big mouth me or something and say, 'it's your fault, fag boy.' ... It's that sort of shit that is bloody irritating you know, just because I've got a file and I do art, I'm a fag boy. I mean its probably stupid in a way that we all consider them 'cool'. We don't actually think they're 'cool' but because they're in their group with their friends they think they're cool.

What is interesting is James' reference to these boys being considered 'cool'. He seems to be emphasising that homophobic practices are a means by which these boys are able
to establish a particular demeanour that is tied to enacting heterosexual masculinities. The effects of such sex-based harassment on James are clearly documented in terms of his low self-esteem:

Because like the shit that I have had to put up with for almost the last year from these idiots and those dickheads from other schools who I don't know, it sort of gets to you. It's like I've got a chip on my shoulder. It's like if I see a group of people when I walk home from the bus stop the people walk towards me and I'm walking their way I feel intimidated so that I have to look at the ground or just look the other way. I don't want to look them in the eye. I mean I've had plenty of bad experiences with people and with all the shit I've been given.

This interview with James draws attention to the regime of normalising practices in which sex/gender boundaries are policed for adolescent boys. Those boys who do not measure up to imputed heterosexual norms of conduct are abused. In this instance, James is targeted because of his bodily enactment of a subordinated masculinity which is signalled partly through the art folder he carries. This leads a group of boys to label him as engaging in a sex-inappropriate practice which brings his masculinity into question. In fact, many of the boys highlighted the extent to which engagement with the curriculum was imbricated in a regime of gendered practices (see Thomas, 1990; Martino, 1993; Theobald, 1987; Armstrong, 1988; MacDonald, 1980; Kelly, 1987). Moreover, the other rule that he apparently has broken on this occasion is befriending a younger boy which immediately confirms their suspicions that he is gay.

**Aaron and the Occasion of 'Dobbing'**

Aaron, like Dave, also draws attention to the abusive practices of the 'footballer' group of which he clearly disapproves. What is particularly pertinent is that he is a member of this peer group and, like several other 'footballers' who were interviewed, is critical of the way his peers relate to one another. This is perhaps linked to his experiences of being
targeted on one occasion by his friends because he was accused of 'dobbing' (betraying his friends by reporting them to school authorities). He begins his interview by talking about the 'shaky beginning' he had to the semester because he had lost many friends over a set of circumstances surrounding a fighting incident which had led to his suspension. He explains what motivated him to engage in a fight with another boy, Greg, from the 'basketballer' group. A group of boys met at an oval nearby after school for the fight which did not end up by taking place:

Aaron: Greg Wallace, this guy at school, well he was telling everyone that he wanted to smack my head in and all that stuff and everyone heard about it and you know what the pressure's like, everyone was saying, 'Come on'. I didn't want to lose and all that but everyone was just telling me to do it. So, I did it, smacked him in the head (laughs). No I didn't you see. He started pushing me so I sort of pushed him away and then got him down and just said quietly to him, 'Look, do you want to go home because we're going to get our arses kicked by the school?', and he says, 'Yeah, alright'. So we both went home, everyone went back to their houses and everyone started calling him a 'wus' for backing off and stuff. But Mr X [Deputy Principal] still thought it was a fight and we got suspended for two days.

Aaron's attempt to fight Greg is an identifiable instance of a public display of a particular masculinity which he felt required to perform according to specific norms for governing his conduct on a particular occasion (see Canaan, 1991). Despite the fact that he was afraid of getting 'his arse kicked by the school', he was prepared to engage in such a practice because in refusing to do so, he risked having his masculinity brought into question. However, he cleverly orchestrates the situation so that he does not have to fight in an attempt to avoid both the institutional reprimand for engaging in such a practice and to save face in front of his peers. It works because the other boy is perceived as refusing to fight and, hence, is labelled a 'wus' by the 'footballers'.

429
The situation, however became complicated because, according to Aaron, Greg accuses Andrew, another footballer, of being responsible for organising the fight. However, Greg had supposedly told Andrew that Aaron was responsible for 'dobbing him in' to the deputy. This resulted in Andrew telling all the other 'footballers' that Aaron 'had dobbed him in' and many of them turned against him. Thus, by being placed on the outside and ostracised by many of his peers, Aaron adopts a critical perspective of the 'footballers' practices and ways of relating. Like Dave, he also argues that certain 'credentials' are needed to gain acceptance by the 'footballer' group:

They're the sort of rebel group, you know, they get pissed on the weekends, smoke mull, get all the girls, that sort of stuff. So you sort of want to be accepted by them I suppose ... They're good by themselves, like you get them in class or you sort of talk to them by themselves and they talk to you like a normal person but around their mates and all that, they're the tough guys and they give everyone crap and stuff.

What is also interesting is that Aaron in his interview points to a hierarchical pecking order of masculinities within the 'footballer' group with the 'drop kicks' at the pinnacle of this social order. For example, he mentions a small group of boys who 'just try to make fun of everyone and if they make a good joke, they're good and proud of themselves' and he refers to these footballers as 'drop kicks':

60 Aaron: I still sort of hang around that group because I've still got friends down there. Adam would never do that [make fun of everyone and feel proud of it], Andrew wouldn't do that, he might laugh but he wouldn't actually get involved in any of the real bullying of it. Robert wouldn't, Adrian would probably laugh, Damian probably wouldn't. Like those guys some of them have left now you know, Brendan, Jason, Tom, Matt, that's about all 'drop kicks' who are left. They were the main group but there's still other guys.
61 Wayne: *Drop kicks?* What do you mean?

62 Aaron: Like they're pretty bad at school. They're no-hopers really. They just sort of stuff around in class and don't do any work.

63 Wayne: Why do they do that?

64 Aaron: To get attention I think. It's sort of their way of getting acceptance from the group.

65 Wayne: Is that how you get accepted, by mucking around?

66 Aaron: Yeah.

Aaron proceeds to elaborate on a particular dynamic within the 'footballer' group which tends to support Dave's views of these boys as sheep who follow the shepherd:

Aaron: All the popular guys are loud mouths, they say what they want to say and all the other guys will just keep quiet, you know sensitive guys, they don't say anything. They don't have their opinion about anything. Oh, they do have their opinions but they don't voice them because they're afraid the group will rubbish them, give them crap, whatever.

Overall, Aaron draws attention to the ritualised behaviours of enacting a form of heterosexual masculinity which involves having the personality as well as being able to relate through 'drinking piss on the weekends, getting stoned on the weekends, [and having] girls like you'. These are the *credentials* which Dave also identifies as specific requirements for establishing an acceptable demeanour which counts as an instance of a valorised heterosexual masculinity (see Epstein, 1997).
'Squids' and 'Party Animals'

Another 'footballer', Josh, who is also one of the most popular members of the group indicates the extent to which a particular kind of social behaviour is a prerequisite for enacting a desirable form of heterosexual masculinity. He refers to his group as being 'laid back and just easy going', a demeanour which he distinguishes from that established by the 'handballers' who he labels as 'geeks':

123 Wayne: How do you see your group in relation to other groups?

124 Josh: I think we're different.

125 Wayne: In what way?

126 Josh: Just in the way we act sort of, like we're more laid back and just easy going, we're more easy going type of people whereas a lot of other people I dunno they're just 'geeks'.

127 Wayne: Like who you do you mean?

128 Josh: Those guys who play handball and real childish games like that.

129 Wayne: Handball?

130 Josh: Yeah, you know hitting the ball around with your hands and shit. Just like four square. Have you heard of four square.

131: Wayne: Is that a game the Year 8s play?
Josh: Yeah but there's still some Year 10s that do it - it's a bit childish I think.

Wayne: So that's what makes them different in your eyes? You see them as 'geeks' kind of? You used that word I think?

Josh: Yeah but I try not to use it, I didn't really want to use it. I just think they're a bit behind, just not socially bright sort of. It doesn't mean you're not academic, you know?

Josh sees the 'handballers' as socially inept because they do not engage in activities which enable them to establish a publicly validated heterosexual masculinity. Their engagement in activities such as handball leads him to see them as not 'socially bright' and, hence, as not being able to relate according to specifiable norms for establishing a desirable masculinity. While he appears to be uncomfortable with using the word 'geek' to characterise the 'handballers', perhaps because he does not want to be seen as criticising the latter, he seems to be arguing that being academic is not incompatible with the stylised demeanour that he finds socially acceptable.

Both Nathan and Adam, who are 'footballers', talk about balancing the social and academic aspects of their lives at school in terms of negotiating their position within the peer group hierarchy. It is because they are 'socially bright' and have the credentials of which both Aaron and Dave speak, that they are still able to acquire a status masculinity despite their commitment to high academic achievement. Their involvement in social activities and practices such as football and surfing, as well as their understanding of the requirements for relating with their peers outside of school, enable them to escape being labelled 'geeks'.

433
Nathan, like Scott, draws attention to how those boys who perform well at school or read are feminised or labelled in pejorative ways. In doing so, he illuminates a particular facet of the 'cool' demeanour which is recognisable as an example of a stylised masculinity:

22 Nathan: Yeah, and I think there's two extended classes and I think we might be the top one. We've got like a lot of debaters in it so it always makes it tough when we do debates because they come out on top by a long shot.

23 Wayne: How many girls and guys in that class?

24 Nathan: There's about thirty altogether isn't there?

25 Wayne: Yeah.

26 Nathan: There'd be about twenty girls, ten guys.

27 Wayne: So twice as many girls?

28 Nathan: Yeah, there would be.

29 Wayne: Why is that do you think?

30 Nathan: Um I think it would be because a lot of guys don't like reading maybe and they're not as good at english as others.

31 Wayne: Why do you think they don't like reading?

32 Nathan: Maybe they don't think it's masculine or whatever to read books, but um, I don't know what the other English class is like - how many guys and girls there are in that one.
33 Wayne: Not very many.

34 Nathan: 'Cause you know when you're brought up as a kid girls always read more books and that - it's just the way you're brought up really.

35 Wayne: What are you saying then?

36 Nathan: I'm saying that it's like a stereotype, you know, girls read more and they don't go out and play sport and, well they do, but it's just like the way most of them have been brought up, like they do a lot of work, do a lot of reading, so they're normally the ones who do better at school and get to the top classes.

37 Wayne: And guys don't?

38 Nathan: Oh guys do, but you know like they're afraid to um ... I know a lot of friends who are really smart but they don't want to try because they think they'll get called names and stuff for trying hard, doing extra work and that.

39 Wayne: What kinds of names?

40 Nathan: Oh you know like 'squares' and 'squids' and 'suckers' and that but most of the time you just ignore it. You just say you're going to go somewhere and they're not, so then they shut up.

41 Wayne: So you think that stereotype influences attitudes - is that what you're saying?
Nathan: Yeah, there's a lot of stereotyping. You know guys are supposed to be big, strong, girls are supposed to be really smart, weak and that. Well, in some cases it is but not all the time.

Wayne: Is the stereotyping strong do you think at school?

Nathan: I think it is because a guy that does well, they always get called names and that. Girls do it as well, but they're more accepted to be smart than guys are, so it's, I mean, of course they wouldn't want to be called 'squids' and that but they still, they don't really mind it.

Wayne: Why do you think they don't mind it as much?

Nathan: Because they like, 'cause they are smart so they think about what's going to happen to them when school finishes and they're the ones who are going to have a better life so they don't really worry about it as much.

Wayne: And guys don't think as much about it?

Nathan: Oh they do but they don't like, most guys now don't want to sit around a desk and do work for their lives and that. They'd rather be out playing sport, watching TV so they'd rather not think about their education and how smart they want to be 'cause they don't think that when they're older they'll have to work. They just don't want to work, you know, they sit at home and don't want to be stuck behind a desk from 6 till 7 or whatever. They'd rather be out doing something else. A lot of girls have the same attitudes but, um, I just think the majority of them are smarter in what they want to do in their future careers or their lives and that.

Wayne: Are you saying they think a lot more about, more carefully about ...
Nathan: They think about the consequences in life, you know, like what they do now is going to reflect and lead to what they're going to do when they're older, so if they do well now they're going to do well in the upper school, get a good job and then have a good life, get a lot of money and have a family and that. I suppose a lot of guys don't really see it the same way. They think they can just get through school like on the borderline or whatever, just get a job as a brickie or something that they don't need a lot of education for but they will get paid for it so they think they can get by just doing that.

What Nathan draws attention to here is how a stylised masculinity is enacted by the 'cool footballers' through their rejection of academic achievement and reading. They would rather play sport or watch TV than 'sit around at a desk' and study. Moreover, it would appear that these boys are enacting a particular differentiated form of masculinity involving the manual/mental division of labour of which Willis (1977) speaks. It is through a practice of labelling as 'geeks' those boys who achieve or who are avid readers that the 'footballers' and the 'surfies' are able to establish a 'cool' demeanour. In fact, Nathan indicates that boys his age feel compelled to live up to a particular standard in which sport functions as an indicator of desirable masculinity:

Wayne: What would you say then are some of the problems that boys your age experience?

Nathan: Well because they have to live up to a certain standard they have to try and sometimes the things that - like education and that - they'll put it off then because they'd rather be out doing sport than doing education. So then they'll put education off even though they think that it's important to them. So they take a step down in life 'cause you're missing out on your education because you'd rather be ... - instead of being you know like smart, they'd rather have heaps of friends and not worry about their education because they think they
might lose friends by studying more and spending time in the library and things. They don't want to get stereotyped out of being important and having heaps of friends and that. They don't think it's like 'cool' and macho to do homework and to go to the library when you've got an assignment, going in at lunchtime to do extra work. They think it's really 'uncool' to do that. But then, what else, um, you have to live up to a standard and if you don't make it you get put down.

So for Nathan, the requirement to enact a particular version of masculinity imposes certain limits in terms of circumscribing specific social practices. These practices entail once again carefully fashioning a 'cool' demeanour which involves avoiding a public association with or commitment to educational ideals (see Willis, 1977; Walker, 1988).

However, what is interesting is that Nathan, as a high achiever, has been able to successfully negotiate a position of acceptance within this group without compromising his academic performance:

126 Wayne: So how do you fit into this picture then, like 'cause I'd see you as being accepted and quite popular and yet quite a high achiever?

127 Nathan: Yeah well 'cause I play a lot of sport I fit into the real sporting group and I surf so, surfing is like, if you surf you're quite 'cool' which a lot of people think that so they try and take it up and then you get more friends by people trying to do what you do. But I've got another friend who plays football, surfs and they're really smart - we get on really well - and I also hang around with people who have similar interests even though they don't care anything about education. So we're still linked - it's mainly by sport that we've all hung around together. We're all linked by that as our basis, but a couple of them are bogans, a couple are surfs, a couple are just ... all they do is play sport ... and then a couple of us actually commit ourselves to schoolwork - we can find time for both so we
might lose friends by studying more and spending time in the library and things. They don't want to get stereotyped out of being important and having heaps of friends and that. They don't think it's like 'cool' and macho to do homework and to go to the library when you've got an assignment, going in at lunchtime to do extra work. They think it's really 'uncool' to do that. But then, what else, um, you have to live up to a standard and if you don't make it you get put down.

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balance out as being in the accepted group by the way we are and the sport we play even though we do spend more time than others doing work.

128 Wayne: But sport's the key thing then?

129 Nathan: Yeah I think sport's the main thing that brings people together 'cause like when you go to someone's house, you don't really just sit there and talk, you want to go out and do something. So you might not invite somebody over to your house because you know they can't play basketball so you invite people that can play basketball and you get friends like that, so you're not in a team with your friends. I think sport is the main reason why people are friends. 'Cause in our group we've got, say there's like ten guys, there's like three of us who are in at least one extended class and there's four of them that are in modified classes because they spend more time playing sport than they do with their education so they miss out on the education side but some are top athletes or football players and that.

Nathan highlights the crucial role of sport in terms of the way he learns to relate to his peers. In section 129 he mentions that boys do not 'just sit there and talk' when they visit their friends at home, highlighting the role of sport within a regime of normalising practices in which being communicative and expressive are not specific requirements. Moreover, to sit down and to talk is framed in opposition to sport which draws attention to the dualistic frames of reference that are deployed by Nathan on this occasion to make sense of what becomes recognisable as an identifiable instance of adolescent boys enacting masculinity. Thus, it is a combination of 'playing footy' and being 'socially bright' which permit Nathan to avoid the label of 'geek' and, hence, to gain the acceptance of the 'footballers' despite his academic achievement at school.

Adam also talks about the role of football and socialising as important factors in his involvement in and acceptance by the group:
26 Adam: ... Like we all, most of us, just about all of us, play footy and most of us for the same team and so that sort of bonds us together a bit and we also see a fair bit of each other outside of school.

The role of sport as a 'credential' which confers social acceptance and as a means of socialising is further stressed in the following comment:

73 Wayne: Why is sport so important?

74 Adam: Well I think that it's a, a sort of aspect of life I suppose or something that all guys can sort of get into, like whether it be footy or cricket or basketball or whatever, you know it's something that I think society sees as something that males can do and males are good at you know, like whether it be you know, whatever sport, there's always a sport that a male is good at, you know what I mean? That's what everyone sort of perceives you know, to be the case and so I think boys in general are not pushed so much but, um, are expected to be involved in these sort of sports and also I think that it's a good relief sort of sometimes for guys just because, um, so that they can go down and, you know, be with all their mates and that and have a good time and that sort of stuff. So it can be very important I think.

Here Adam draws attention to the role that society plays in influencing boys' involvement in sport. However, he indicates that not all boys in the 'footballer' group are involved in sport, but are still perceived to be 'cool'. This is because they engage in other social practices which equally confer status. For example, two of the high achievers in the group who are not actively involved in sport are members of a heavy metal rock band:

75 Wayne: Are there guys who aren't that interested in sport who are a part of your group?
76 Adam: Yeah, for sure.

77 Wayne: How are they perceived by the other guys?

78 Adam: Yeah, that's not bad if they've got, if there's something else that they do that seems like the 'cool' sort of thing, like um say music, you know like a band or something like that, like a rock band. Like, there's a couple of my friends who don't really play sport at all but um they're in a band and um, like you know, no-one sort of thinks, 'Oh you know, he doesn't play sport, he's a real loser' sort of thing, you know because we're all interested in music and that as well and that's sort of an alternative which not many people do at all, so it's not too bad. But that's in my immediate friends, but I think other people who don't play sport at all are not in the same friendship groups, you know what I mean? Like you'll often find that, I think that the people in the different friendship groups all do the same things. Like in my group, you know, all those guys play sport and then in other friendship groups which we don't really have much to do with, they don't, you know. So I really think that if you don't play sport, you don't associate with people who do, you know what I mean. It seems that way, that it just fits in, you know, because you don't have common interests ... So I think that there's a sort of separation there between the guys who do play sport and who don't and there's just a border where no-one sort of really interacts with the other people.

Furthermore, he indicates that he sees himself as different from many of the other boys in his group in terms of his commitment to his studies:

34 Adam: I think some of them, we're not sort of that similar in terms of wanting to go well at school and that sort of stuff. Like there's a couple of us, including myself who sort of, you know it's quite important for us to do well, but there's a couple of my friends who, sort of you know, just come to school, one, because they feel that's the only thing you sort of have to these days and, two, because
their parents sort of, "make him go" because you've got to, they reckon you've got to finish year twelve and that sort of stuff. So I think that in terms of school, we're a little bit different in that some people really just come and like plod it out and don't really worry how they go or worry about the grades they're getting, whereas others um, like I said, place more of an emphasis or more of a value on the schooling aspect of their education, sort of thing.

Moreover, he continues to relate boys' rejection of school and learning to the influence of society. Whereas Dave tends to account for particular behaviours in terms of differential levels of maturity between boys and girls, Adam emphasises the role of social expectations in the way that they impact upon particular orientations to learning at school in terms of gender:

102 Adam: Well, um, a lot of the time I think girls, sort of want to be like right from the very start many, most girls really want to go well at school and get straight As on their Report Card, whereas for guys a lot of the time that's second. Perhaps it's different priorities if you know what I mean? Like that might be the top of the list for the girls, like you know how the school comes first and all that sort of stuff, whereas for most guys, without a doubt, that takes a back, school takes a back seat.

103 Wayne: Why is that?

104 Adam: Um, I don't know, maybe it's not looked on as 'cool' by everyone else, 'No-one else, you know, cares about school so you know, why should I', sort of thing. But I don't know, in a personal sense, school is important to me, but also I don't really enjoy school in the fact that all the homework and that you get, 'cause like I'd certainly rather be down the park kicking a footy or over at one of my mate's place you know, watching TV or something like that. So I don't know, I think that probably the way, even the way that society sort of um constructs girls and that, they're the ones who you know, they're sort of expected to be home and do their homework and that sort of stuff, whereas guys are sort of
treated as being more outgoing and more likely to get up to mischief you know, and muck around in class and that sort of stuff. So, once again I think that influence is passed down on the actual people.

105 Wayne: But you're different, you're not like that? How do you explain that then?

106 Adam: I don't know, um, I've had the influence that, you know, I want to go well at school and I've got an older sister and she's going to uni and that sort of stuff. And I want to go to uni because I want to sort of set up the rest of my life and that sort of stuff, you know. I've sort of been taught by people, not taught so much, but influenced by other people that you've got to get into uni so you can sort of set up the rest of your life sort of thing and even though I know my dad in particular wants me to go to uni and that, he sort of has put the influence, sort of you know thing on me that if you're happy with what you're doing, you know that's fine sort of thing and he said that all along, like you know, 'I don't really care if you go sort of thing as long as you're happy doing it', and even though as much as he said that from the word go, I still think uni's the only way to go for me, because I think that's the way you get the big jobs and that sort of stuff, and I think I've probably got the capacity, it's just a question of whether I want to you know, apply myself. And that's what everyone's always told me, like you've got the capacity, just whether you want to apply yourself and so I know it's up to me and so, and I realise that, I think. And I think maybe a lot of guys don't, like especially my friends, you know, don't realise that. I don't know whether they do, or maybe they just cover up that they don't you know, but I know a lot of people don't acknowledge that anyway, that you know, that you have to work now in order to, for it to pay off later. And I think now I do, I do realise that and so that's why I probably work, but at the same time, I'm like all my friends and that, you know, I'd rather be doing other things like kicking a footy and listening to music and that, but instead I'll probably have to sacrifice that in order to do a bit of work at home and that.
So Adam is different because he has learned the rewards of investing in mental labour without compromising his masculinity (Willis, 1977). He realises that he will be able to 'get the big jobs' and that the sacrifice of doing 'a bit of work at home' will eventually pay off. Thus, for Adam balancing the academic and social sides of his life is necessary so that he is still able to enact a desirable masculinity which is invested in sport and establishing a particular demeanour:

108 Adam: So I don't know, I think I'm sort of a mixture of both, if you know what I mean. So it works off, it works out alright though. Like I think that I can sort of balance that you know, quite well the social side of the school and the education side, 'cause I think there is two sides to school, the socialising and the parties, and the parties and all that sort of stuff but also the education and you know you're, it always seems that you have the two groups at school like all the people, who are worried about education or the guys that just think that socialising is the way to go and I think that I'm sort of a mixture of both ... it works out pretty well, but it can often be a bit of a drag sort of, you know trying to balance both the social and the education sort of sides of school.

Hence, meeting the requirements associated with what appears to be two disparate departments of social existence can be 'a bit of a drag' in that it creates certain pressures for Adam:

110 Adam: So yeah, but I see that it works out okay and you know, you still have your same friendship groups and that sort of stuff so it's quite good. And I think that's probably a problem that a lot of guys face, is um whether they choose to be in the you know, just the social side, just worry about that or whether education is going to be the main priority you know, in their lives. So I think that it's a pretty common problem.

111 Wayne: So there's a pressure there?

112 Adam: Oh yeah, for sure. I think you sort of work out whether you're going to be the one who's going to be the social person and sort of school takes a back
seat or you know, school's the number one thing and social life sort of comes second. So, I don't know, there is a pressure there to either, to be one or the other and whichever one you choose also, I think, determines what friendship group you're in.

113 Wayne: Hm, hm.

114 Adam: So, you know, there is certainly once again a point there, whether you're the 'squids' or whatever you want to call them or whether you're the person who's going to be sociable and be a 'party animal' sort of thing who goes out all the time and that sort of stuff.

In short, Adam is caught between two positions - a 'squid' and a 'party animal' - which involves a balancing act to ensure that his masculinity is kept intact in maintaining a 'cool' demeanour:

115 Wayne: So guys wouldn't see being smart then and being a high achiever necessarily as being 'cool'?

116 Adam: Oh no, not at all, not at all. It can, it sort of, it can be on various scales like um, not you know, being the high achiever um a lot of the time isn't 'cool', it *really I think depends on how you act and how you take it* because if you're like the person who is the high achiever and that, then that's your life sort of thing, achieving you know is the higher thing and you can't get past that, or whether you're the person who does that and at the same time is sort of humble about it but also you know it's not their 'be all and end all'. You know, there's also the social side of school and that too you've got to worry about.

117 Wayne: So are you saying that if you are a high achiever, you can't afford to show that too much?

118 Adam: Yeah, yeah for sure ... not so much show that but it really depends on *how you take that on*, whether that makes you, if you achieve higher, a person who is really stuck-up and big-headed and that sort of stuff or whether that
makes you a person who sort of you know, builds your character and builds your personality and makes you go out and say 'hello' to people and meet people and that sort of stuff. So it can sort of work both ways in that sense.

What is significant here is Adam's emphasis on acting and taking on a particular demeanour which must be carefully orchestrated to risk slipping into the category of a 'squid'.

This point about high achievers gaining acceptance by the 'footballers' is also emphasised by Scott who draws attention to the crucial role of sport and an associated set of practices in helping the latter to avoid the stigmatised status of being a 'squid':

128: Scott: ... there's popular guys who do really well and are smart and their friends hassle them about it but it doesn't make them 'uncool'.

129 Wayne: Why is that?

130 Scott: I don't know. Like Adam Jones, he can give long speeches at assembly and he does really well at all his classes, and people sort of go, 'Oh Adam squidgy', or whatever, but at the same time, he goes down and plays football and everything. So I suppose that redeems him or something in their eyes.

131 Wayne : So it's the football that redeems him in their eyes?

132 Scott: I suppose, because he's still a popular guy, but he does all this academic stuff. He's one of those rare people who are all right in the eyes of everybody, sort of, I suppose. Everyone sees him as all right, nothing wrong with him.
133 Wayne: So what is it about football that makes a guy all right?

134 Scott: I don't know - it's just the whole thing that comes with it. You know, if you play football you're sort of, I don't know, that macho idea, I don't know, football ... at one stage or another you're sort of involved with drinking and stuff and I suppose growing your hair long and all that sort of macho things.

What is significant about Scott's assessment of the high achieving 'footballers' is that he illuminates a set of practices associated with football, such as drinking and growing long hair, which he identifies as 'macho' practices and which others refer to as markers of a rebel masculinity. In this capacity, he highlights how high achievers, like Adam, are able to redeem themselves by enacting a stylised demeanour which counts as an instance of a desirable masculinity that counteracts any attempts to position the boys as 'squids'.

A Bunch of Arseholes and Rebels

The limits of such normalising regimes of practice are also marked out by another boy, Shaun, aged 16, who was interviewed in 1996. He was a member of the 'footballer' group, but did not actually play football himself.

Shaun speaks at length about the 'footballers' and their practices. Despite the fact that he is a high achiever like Adam and Nathan, and does not play football, he is able to enact a desirable masculinity and establish a 'cool' demeanour through his involvement as a drummer in a heavy metal band. Adam, in the previous section, actually makes reference to Shaun and Jason in terms of the extent to which they are considered to be 'socially bright'. However, Shaun also emphasises the extent to which there was a kind of hierarchy established within this peer group with those boys who are skilled footballers and underachievers wielding most of the power. What is interesting is that many of these boys, who Aaron refers to as the dropkicks, left school midway through 1996 to take up apprenticeships or to study at TAFE (Technical and Further Education). But
Shaun stresses how these boys were almost idolised - people just wanted to talk to them and to be around them. He explains why in the following excerpt:

91 Shaun: I think it was because they were pretty popular with the girls, kind of like popular with the popular girls that, you know, stood out. And they were also like, you know, good at stuff like footy and stuff like that and that was why people would want to talk to them... they wanted to say something funny around them. Like, it's pretty strange when you hear about it, but it actually did happen... But it's strange because, there was this kind of thing that they were like some sort of, you know, rebels, like bad guys, they were cool and they would stuff around in class, they'd get in trouble and like they wouldn't do their work as well. That was kind of like a big thing with these guys. I don't suppose they thought of themselves as being like 'hot' or anything, but it's like you'd see it when people would want to like sit next to them and talk to them and stuff like that. But a lot of it is like they just had this kind of air about them, like, you know, they were some sort of idol or something.

Shaun indicates that being popular with the girls and being skilled at football appear to be the prerequisites for displaying a particularly desirable heterosexual masculinity which confers status on those boys who fulfil these requirements. In fact, certain 'footballers' were idolised by other boys and he draws attention to how such boys who displayed a high status masculinity dictated the ways in which many of the other boys related to one another:

93 Shaun: ... And then all the 'cool' guys that were so 'cool' just like left, so now everyone doesn't know what to do really because they haven't got anyone to like follow any more like they used to. Because when you think about it was really stupid how people used to go ... like one of the 'cool' people would say, 'You know this guy's an idiot', and then he'd walk off and everyone would walk off behind him. And a lot of that happens. It's like you're ... um ... my mate, kind of,
you know, "He's my mate, so he'll back me up and like, you know, you're a dickhead'. So he walks off and his mates walk off with him and like this person's left standing there, like just taking it and they go off and have to find their own friend.

Also, apart from 'stuffing around in class' and being able to play football, Shaun also reiterates that 'being cool' also involved 'giving crap' and getting a laugh from your friends (see Kehily & Nayak, 1997):

97 Shaun: ... Now there's a lot of stuff like ... um ... there's a lot of stuff that goes around like how much crap you can give to someone else and like kind of humiliate them, but it's like joking as well and a lot of the 'cool' guys and that, they were good at like you know giving crap and people could like say something funny and everyone would laugh at it and it was really good. And then the people who couldn't do it were kind of excluded from it.

The dynamic involved in the way that these boys learn to relate involves almost a competition to prove who is the most powerful. Those who cannot retaliate and use verbal 'put-downs' are considered to be weak. Thus, through the use of 'put-downs' in the form of 'giving one another crap', a pecking order is established within the peer group in which each boy's masculinity is put to the test:

105 Shaun: ... I suppose it's also like a test as well, like you sit there and it's almost like a test to see who can come up with the funniest and like the quickest joke. And that's how a lot of it is. A lot of the guys like will say something funny or do something funny and then go, 'Yeah, come on, where's your comeback? What are you doing?', and like the person's sitting there and they're racking their brain over something. If they can't do anything then they'll just sit there and they end up taking it ... they just have to be humiliated in front of this like big group of guys.
Those boys who are not able to compete verbally with a quick 'comeback' resort to violence as a means of enforcing a stylised masculinity as a performative practice:

106 Wayne: So the test then is to come out on top?

107 Shaun: Yeah, it's like um, it's pretty funny because a lot of the guys that don't do it, they have to maybe resort to violence. Like they will get up and they'll like you know, push you and they'll start scragging around or whatever, stuffing around like that and it's all a big joke. But you know like people will still get kind of offended if they can't come up with something funny and people will make fun of them and they just like to get angry and that or try to take it out on you by trying to humiliate you by like, you know, pushing you over and stuff like that. So it is a kind of test really. It's pretty strange when you think about it, but it does happen like that. But you get a whole lot of laughs out of it as well.

Shaun draws attention to the regime of practices which proscribe the limits within which a particular bodily enactment of masculinity is played out (see Butler, 1990; Dixon, 1997; Nayak & Kehily, 1996; Walker, 1988; Mac an Ghaill, 1994). This involves physically pushing other boys and scragging as well as trying to get a laugh. While on one level Shaun appears to be drawing attention to the limits of such practices, on another he indicates that he derives a form of pleasure from engaging in this social dynamic. For instance, he claims that 'you get a whole lot of laughs out of it as well'.

When asked to describe how boys act and behave in his peer group, Shaun makes the following comment:

110 Wayne: How would you describe to someone how they act and behave? Maybe you could give me an example or talk about a specific situation.
Shaun: I suppose that you could say that they act like a bunch of arseholes really. You stand back and you see this big group of people all gathered around the bench under that tree on the oval and I remember one thing happening, um, there was a dog shit lying there on the side there right near the bench but no one could see it and people who knew about it would like sit there and they'd be drinking and sitting around there and like try to get someone to walk into it. Finally, some poor bastard actually did step in it and everyone cracked up and just laughed at him and like there's this poor person standing there with crap on his foot and he was totally humiliated and there's this big group, this big pack of guys around and they were totally like laughing at him, you know, just trying to humiliate him even more and stuff like that. And it's like one way they relate, they like work on other people's weaknesses and stuff like that.

Shaun provides an account of a particular occasion on which 'piss taking' practices of 'giving crap' to other boys constitutes an exemplary instance of enacting a stylised masculinity. He reiterates that those boys who are unable to 'give crap' are excluded:

Shaun: Now there's a lot of stuff that goes around like, um, how much crap you can give to someone else and like kind of humiliate them, but it's like joking as well, and a lot of the like 'cool' guys and that, they were good at like you know, giving crap and like people could totally like say something totally funny, everyone would laugh at it and it was like really good. And then like the people who couldn't do it they were like kind of excluded from it.

Part of learning to establish a stylised demeanour for these boys, therefore, also involves 'giving crap' as a means by which to enact a particular form of masculinity.

Like Dave, Shaun refers to the 'credentials' or the rules that boys need to follow to gain acceptance from their peers and to establish a stylised heterosexual masculinity. He talks
about how some of the boys play fight and tumble on the oval so that they can 'be seen as rebels':

113 Shaun: ... with the 'cool' guys, people used to like you know, put up this big front that they were 'cool' as well you know, 'Oh look, they're doing it so I'll do it as well', but sometimes it wasn't really them and you knew it wasn't them ... I remember one guy, just a whole bunch of guys were like stuffing around and fighting and that and um, a rule came out that no more scragging was allowed.

114 Wayne: What do you mean by scragging?

115 Shaun: Um when the guys just you know, get each other in headlocks and jump around and like roll around on the grass and stuff like that. And that was their new rule and these guys were like, and they like had the footy and they were like doing that as well and I remember one guy that came in and the teacher broke it up and said, 'Who did that?', and I remember the guys who did it owned up and they were going, everyone was going, 'Oh, they're going to get in trouble', and this was like a couple of years ago and then a couple of guys got up and said they did it as well when they didn't and they just did it to say, to like kind of be in with the 'cool' guys that got in trouble. You know they'd join in to whatever was happening with them just to be as 'cool' as they are. And that happened quite a lot when people would ... like if they got in trouble, they would go and try to get in trouble with them and stuff like that. So that, some people kind of wear a mask but lately um, I know that with my small group of friends, we don't, we don't really wear any mask or anything, we talk to each other, we can make fun of each other and we can also talk to each other seriously at the same time. But then when it comes to other groups, it's kind of like either they don't want to talk to us and we don't want to talk to them so we just give each other crap kind of, if you know what I mean.

Thus, while Shaun targets a particular occasion for enacting a rebel form of a protest masculinity, he appears to be rejecting the way certain 'footballers' feel compelled to
establish a 'cool' demeanour. This is understood in terms of 'wearing a mask' which involves enacting a stylised practice of the self organised around engaging in horseplay and verbalised banter/put downs (Kehily & Nayak, 1997; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Haywood, 1993). Furthermore, he indicates that since his small group is a kind of a subgroup within the 'footballer' contingent, they choose not to engage in certain practices. On certain occasions, he claims that they may 'give crap' to some of the other 'footballers', but differentiates this from the way the boys in his immediate group relate to one another. He claims that his close friends do not 'wear a mask' in the sense that they can both talk to one another seriously, as well as 'give crap'. Moreover, Shaun rejects the other 'footballers' engagement in scragging practices which, on this occasion, constitutes a stylised act of establishing a 'cool' demeanour.

In addition, he states that the latter are only engaging in such practices to blatantly contravene school rules in an act of rebellion (see Willis, 1977). And it is through such practices, enacted on certain occasions, that these boys learn to establish a particular form of masculinity:

120 Shaun: There's a lot of stuff about being a bad ass. I give this teacher crap and stuff like that and I got into trouble, like I wrestle when you're not allowed'. There are guys out there that will get their shirt and take it out and they are not doing anything and they just take it out just to be cool or break a rule or something like that. It's pretty stupid when you think about what some guys will do just to be either accepted in the group or because they feel they just have to do it. Like if they're like this guy and people see them they'll think they're a rebel or something, like they'll give the teacher crap and they'll take their shirt out, they won't do their work and stuff like that.

Here Shaun indicates that on certain occasions boys follow particular rules for enacting a stylised demeanour, understood in terms of defying institutional authority. In following certain rules for governing their conduct on certain occasions, these boys are in the
business of fashioning a particular gendered subjectivity which is operationalised through their insertion into a regime of individualising practices that are tied to the deployment of quite specific technologies of the self (see Foucault, 1988a; 1988b; 1986; 1985a; 1982b). However, while Shaun mentions that he rejects particular rules on the above mentioned occasions at school without apparently having his masculinity called into question, he highlights that there are some rules that boys cannot afford to break. One of those rules is that 'guys are meant to have guys as best friends':

125 Shaun: I know that there's this one guy, Ryan, who hangs around with a bunch of girls and people call him a 'faggot' and that's because he hangs around a bunch of girls and he hasn't got any guy friends really. I suppose it depends on the situation also because this guy hasn't got any real male friends people call him a 'faggot'. Like if everyone was fighting, I'd just sit there and go, 'I don't care', you know. I'd see it as a waste of effort going over there just to jump on some guy, but then again maybe some people wouldn't care about that or see it as important because it depends on the situation. There's a lot of stuff like if a guy doesn't follow the expectation then a lot of guys will give him crap or just some guys might just say something or like their best friend might try to say something and try and coax them into doing it. I know a lot of times a whole group does something and maybe there will be some person left there and everyone is running off and their best mate will turn around and go, 'Oh, come on, come on and do it with us'. So it depends on what rule you're breaking and how you go about breaking the rule or whether sitting down and saying, 'I don't care', or going to the extreme of totally breaking the big rules that all guys are meant to have guys as best friends, not guys and girls being best friends and stuff like that.

Thus, Shaun appears to be drawing attention to the extent to which enacting masculinity is an occasional matter (Coleman, 1990). He seems to be emphasising the highly contingent nature of following rules which is dependent upon the set of circumstances which a boy encounters. For instance, choosing not to engage in scragging and rough
and tumble play on the oval with other boys (Thorne, 1993) does not necessarily constitute an act of defying a particular code of masculinity. However, there are apparently certain rules that boys must never break, as Shaun indicates by his reference to Ryan whose sexuality is brought into question for choosing to have girls as best friends. He also mentions that there are certain requirements for boys to socialise with one another:

126 Wayne: I wanted to ask you what you think then are some of the big rules that some guys cannot afford to break?

127 Shaun: I know that there are rules like being best friends with other guys and going and doing stuff with friends and like with other guys. I know that one guy, he was new here and he has already left this year and he didn't talk to anyone at all, only to me. This guy, Allan, he would come here and everyday he would go down there and sit down and never talk to anyone. I suppose that's one of the rules as well, getting along with other guys. One guy, it was his first day, I remember Joel's first day here and because he played footy with the guys down there, he was like pretty much best mates. I remember I was sitting down and eating my lunch and the guys got the footy out and there was a couple of us there and this guy [Joel] and someone said, 'He's got a really good kick', and then everyone went up and started talking to him and going, 'Oh yes, how did you learn to play footy like that?', and stuff like that. So there's a rule of doing stuff that other guys do, like playing sport, playing footy, and also like you have to join in with them because I remember this Allan guy he didn't do anything at all, he sat on that bloody bench for the whole time and didn't talk to anyone. People would talk to him but he didn't want to talk to them, he would be all shy ... so there's like a whole bunch of rules that you have to follow, almost like you come pretty much all the time down to where all the guys are and like do something with the guys on the oval...
Shaun highlights, therefore, how certain rules of conduct must be followed in enacting a stylised heterosexual masculinity (Epstein, 1997; Steinberg et al, 1997; Butler, 1990; Ward, 1995; Butler, 1996; Walker, 1988; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Connell, 1989; 1995; Dixon, 1997). This involves doing things with other boys such as playing football or learning to interact with other boys in terms which constitute a level of being 'socially bright'. It also involves on occasions breaking rules to establish the demeanour of a rebel. These observations on the imperatives for boys to behave in particular ways within specifiable regimes of regulatory and individualising practices (Foucault, 1982b), are further stressed at a later point in the interview when Shaun mentions that 'guys don't really care about what girls think, they care more about what other guys think'.

However, Shaun is intent upon emphasising the occasion on which a particular rule is followed or broken in terms of understanding the ways in which boys enact their masculinities. For instance, he refers to an incident when 'a whole bunch of the guys' decided to leave the school grounds to buy a drink from the local deli. He claims that some of the boys did not want to contravene school rules but were influenced by their friends:

127 Shaun: ... I remember some guys saying that they didn't want to do it and then their friends would come up and start saying, 'Oh, come on, come on and do it' and they would go and do it just for the sake of being with their friends and doing something that was like bad or 'cool', so it depends on the situation and the rules are different every time. It's like you don't know what the rule is until you come across it and like break it almost. ... it was like in this situation if you didn't go then you might be a wus or you weren't bad enough to hang out with these guys ... each situation you're in that's when the rule comes up and you find it. I know that there was a rule about that guy who hangs around other girls and I didn't know that was such a big offence to hang around with other girls until I found out that guy, that other guys were calling him a 'faggo' and stuff like that.
because he was hanging around with the girls and he didn't have any male friends.

(my emphasis)

Thus, Shaun draws attention to the importance of boys interacting with other boys and learning the rules for relating to one another within a regime of practices in which sexuality is deployed to police gender boundaries (see Steinberg et al, 1997). He highlights how he learnt the rule that 'guys should not hang around other girls' in the context of peer group relations which are imbricated in certain individualising and normalising regimes of practice. Moreover, what is emphasised is the indeterminate grounds on which such rules are followed that are tied to the contingencies of particular social occasions.

Conclusion

In this chapter the analytic focus of investigation has been on describing specific strategies and techniques that a group of adolescent boys use to enact stylised masculinities and the occasion for doing so. Moreover, the extent to which specific practices and norms are tied to the deployment of regulatory technologies of the self in which boys learn to socialise with one another has also been highlighted. In fact, attention has been drawn to a regime of normalising practices in which particular heterosexual masculinities are enacted antagonistically on occasions against those boys who are 'non-footballers' or perceived to be gay or 'feminine'. However, the focus has been primarily on documenting several boys' capacities for understanding the behaviours of their peers in terms of learning the rules for enacting particular currencies of heteronormative masculinity.
CHAPTER TEN

Masculinity and its Discontents: Boys Talking About Their Problems

Introduction

In this chapter the focus is on using interview data to identify specific problems that boys claim to be experiencing as males. It is argued here that such problems are related to the impact of certain practices that become identifiable as specific instances of the limits of enacting a particular stylised heterosexual masculinity. However, when asked to explain what they thought it meant to be masculine, many boys found the question difficult to answer and indicated that they had never been asked to think about issues of masculinity at school. Interviews with several boys are analysed to explore some of the implications for developing gender equity policy (Martino, 1997a) and implementing particular pedagogical practices for adjusting the norms around which certain forms of heterosexual masculinity are enacted (Martino & Mellor, 1995). This chapter, therefore makes an original contribution to its field of enquiry on two counts:

(i) it draws attention to the categories of thought that boys deploy to make sense of what constitutes masculinity;
(ii) on the basis of this knowledge it signals what the pedagogical implications might be for addressing the politics of masculinities in schools.

Heteronormative Practices

Interview data are used in this chapter to document further the constraints of particular individualising regimes of practice within which specific currencies of heterosexual masculinity are proscribed. In fact, many of the boys commented on the pressures that they felt were imposed on them as a result of their gender. Tied to such a regime of practices is the rejection of behaviours associated with 'femininity' (see Clark, 1993; Jordan, 1995a; 1995b; Connell, 1989; 1995). This leads to the use of homophobic strategies as a means of regulating the ways in which boys communicate and relate to one
another. This is highlighted by Jason when he is asked whether he thought it was easy for boys to express what they really think and feel with one another:

73 Jason: Um, it sort of depends, like I think it's a hell of a lot easier for females to do it.

74 Wayne: Why is that?

75 Jason: Because they're more in to that kind of thing ... it all comes back to masculinity and stuff like that. Like females sort of, they can talk to each other about personal stuff on a more personal level, I think, than guys. Guys are sort of like, you can talk to them about personal things, but not really like inside feelings that you might really think. You have to sort of go along with the flow a bit. Like you can definitely be your own person, but you sort of have to follow on some kind of line. Like you can't really talk about your innermost feelings. If you're quieter or not as rough and stuff as some of the other ones, people might get crap for that.

76 Wayne: How? What do you mean, 'they'd get crap'?

77 Jason: Oh, just like in terms of people might call them 'wusses' and you know, 'poofs' and stuff like that.

78 Wayne: Why?

79 Jason: Um, because I suppose not following the trend of everyone else. So like if you don't conform, you're sort of cast out almost.

80 Wayne: So conforming for guys means what then?
81 Jason: Security I suppose, security in a group. Not so much popularity, yeah, just like security. So if you conform you're sort of accepted, but of course there's always exceptions and stuff. So a lot of guys, I think, and you can tell, they're just like riding the cart or something, riding on the roller coaster, just following everyone else and not really doing what they want to do and stuff. It all comes down to peer pressure and stuff as well, in terms of what they want to do and what everyone else wants to do.

In this interview, Jason draws attention to how boys relate to one another in peer group situations which becomes identifiable as an instance of enacting a particular form of heterosexual masculinity. Moreover, he is able to identify the specific practice of boys' avoidance of talking about personal feelings with one another as an instance of masculinity. He claims that such individualising practices, which involve a public rejection of expressivity or display of emotion, are related not so much to questions of popularity, but to issues around establishing security. This sense of security, however, is also tied to maintaining one's position within a hierarchy of masculinities in which certain currencies of gendered subjectivity are valued over others. In fact, he points to how specific behaviours are regulated within a regime of practices in which sexuality is deployed as a mechanism for policing masculinity within a peer group context. He claims that boys are more cautious about expressing their innermost feelings out of fear for they risk having their masculinity or sexuality questioned by other boys who might label them a 'wus' or a 'poof'. These labels within the Australian context are used in a derogatory way to set the limits of a high status masculinity which is policed by marking out those behaviours and practices that contravene specific norms for enacting certain forms of gendered subjectivity. As some of boys have already indicated, to be gay or to be associated with 'feminine' attributes is to have one's masculinity brought into question. 'Wus', in fact, is a sexualised term which is a derived from 'weak pussy' and refers to the female genitals.
What is important to emphasise is that gender and sexuality are operationalised here through a set of discursive practices involving the process of learning to be a heterosexual male which is based on an avoidance of the femininity and homosexuality (see Clark, 1990; Jordan, 1995a; 1995b; Martino, 1995a; Frank, 1993). Moreover, this avoidance of the 'feminine' is often built into a stylised demeanour which has already been identified in terms of the 'cool pose' that is performed according to the assemblage of quite specific norms for publicly displaying a heterosexual masculinity. Those boys who do not measure up to what is considered to be appropriate *manly* behaviour - who are not 'socially bright' - are positioned as the 'other' and situated outside of the normative frames of reference for attributing desirable heterosexual masculinity.

**Practices of Self-Surveillance: The Gendered Dimension of Displaying Emotion**

This regime of practices is also highlighted by Adam. He comments on the limits proscribed for boys in terms of the ways in which they learn to relate to one another according to the deployment of quite specific norms for governing their conduct:

37 Wayne: Can you just explain for me about how you see boys acting and relating to one another?

38 Yeah, well um I really think that they relate to one another in a way where they don't often enter or talk about sort of the 'deep and meaningful' side of life, you know we sort of, even though we are really close, we sort of don't tend to - well, like when we're just sitting around talking and that - you don't tend to, you know like, sort of delve into the sort of emotional side of life though, where I think girls probably do, you know, compared to guys.

39 Wayne: Why is that do you think?

40 Adam: I don't know, like I really don't think that we're sort of worried about what everyone else is going to think. I don't know, I think it's just that guys tend
to just keep everything to themselves and they sort of don't really feel that they should be sharing that with everyone else and they're worried. Like I said, maybe they are a little bit ashamed to say anything in case they get ridiculed or something like that.

41 Wayne: Why would they get ridiculed?

42 Adam: I don't know, well, it's like I said because we are a fairly big group of people and people you know, like to make a bit of a joke out of it and that sort of stuff. And so, I don't know, perhaps if it's a, like say a 'deep and meaningful' sort of an issue, maybe it wouldn't be well received and I don't really know what the reasoning for that would be, just that it seems to be one of the trademarks, I suppose, of guys. They seem to not receive it that well or maybe they don't know how to act in a situation where one of our mates might bring up some subject. We think, oh you know, we might be worried about it or not really know how to react or you know, scared maybe, and not really know what it's about and so maybe that might be an easy way out you know, to sort of make a bit joke out of it.

43 Wayne: So sometimes guys might deal with stuff that they feel uncomfortable about by making a joke out of it, is that what you're saying?

44 Adam: Yeah, yeah, that's for sure. Like because one, they don't know how everyone else will receive that if they bring up that issue and two, because they might be a little bit scared themselves.

What is stressed here are the norms governing the public display of a particular currency of heteronormative masculinity which is organised around an avoidance of communicating on an emotional level in peer group situations. And the boys see this 'communication' as an expression of inner being, rather than as a stylised technique for relating to the self.
Bruce, another Year 11 student, also highlights that there is a requirement for boys not to express their emotions when relating to their peers. He reads this capacity as 'feminine' and claims that this is because girls are 'more in touch of their emotions':

111 Bruce: Girls are kind of more open. I guess if guys all kind of opened up to one another, it sounds strange, they might find out that they're all really the same and that they could accept one another. Say, I open up my emotions to people and some guys, still they'll reject you. They don't want you to say that the guy is in touch with his 'feminine side', I guess. I say 'feminine side' because females can get in touch with their emotions and they're not afraid to talk about them, while a lot of guys are. So you talk to these guys who are real masculine and don't like talking about it when they're with their friends who make fun of women and treat them as objects, but when they're by themselves, they start to open up as well and you see the real them and they talk about what they like and how they feel about certain things and they're alright ... They're by themselves so they don't have to prove themselves to anyone. And then say you talk to one of their friends and they're the same and you think, 'Why couldn't you two be like this together?', but instead they have this kind of thing where they kind of compete to see who can make the sickest comment about the females and they make all these comments and see who's the funniest and things like that, you know. They just treat them like objects.

Bruce here identifies a particular mode of relating which is organised around quite specific norms for governing gender specific conduct. On one level, he seems to be suggesting that enacting a particular currency of heterosexual masculinity involves an avoidance of emotions. This is reinforced through engaging in sexist practices as a principal mode of relating to other boys (see Parker, 1996; Haywood, 1993; Wood, 1984; Holland et al, 1993; Easthope, 1986; Willis, 1977; Segal, 1990; Simpson, 1994). He also highlights the role of competitive power plays amongst boys in enacting a stylised heterosexual masculinity in terms of who can make the 'funniest' or 'sickest' comment about females. However, Bruce does draw attention to the fact that the rules governing such behaviour
are not necessarily operative on all social occasions. While indicating that such modes of relating are characteristic for boys in peer group situations, he appears to be emphasising that individual boys on a one to one basis do not feel as compelled to prove themselves. But, of course, there are still occasions on which two boys may engage in competitive modes of relating, as the interview with Dave will later demonstrate.

Bruce continues to elaborate on a generalised rule for behaving or relating, which he reads as an instance of heterosexual masculinity. The rule that boys should not show their emotions is also one that he identifies as constraining the way in which he would like to be able to relate to his male friends:

114 Wayne: So why do you think guys are afraid to express their emotions?

115 Bruce: Rejection.

116 Wayne: Rejection from their friends?

117 Bruce: Yeah, well I think it all comes back to rejection.

118 Wayne: What would they be rejected for then? Why would they be rejected?

119 Bruce: Um, for showing their emotions because this attitude of masculinity and this stereotype has been built up for so long, passed on from their fathers, it just keeps getting passed on generation after generation.

120 Wayne: So it's not really just a stereotype thing, is that what you're saying, that it's kind of quite 'real'?

121 Bruce: It's 'real', definitely, with a lot of people. I'm not saying everyone's like that but you will find a lot of it in most people. Even I must admit, um I feel uncomfortable say, giving my best friend a big hug in front of other guys.

122 Wayne: Why?
123 Bruce: Um, because that's not accepted by them, they reject that kind of idea of showing your emotions because you like this person even though it's platonic. There's nothing sexual about it, it's just that you really like this person, you can't show that because it's like that's reserved for the opposite sex, you don't do that kind of thing, that's showing your emotions too much and that's how we've been conditioned into being after so long, whereas females, they hug each other all the time, that's the way they are because they're friends and they like each other, they're not afraid to do that and other females condone that, they don't reject it. So I guess there's a lot less prejudice when it comes to a showing of emotions in the female side than the male side, they're still very, I don't know, closed. They're like that little town on Shame, the little closed community within themselves, they're not allowed to show the real them, they have to hide that. I guess that could be attributed to years ago when the male was the breadwinner, the woman stayed at home and that power that goes along with men and by showing your true emotions that kind of doesn't. It doesn't reflect your power, I guess, you could say. One of the attitudes and emotions that go along with power is that you are very, you're hard, you're cold, you strive to achieve, you, um, I don't know, it's hard to express. Powerful people aren't usually real kind, friendly, open people if you know what I mean? They have a mission or a purpose and they try to achieve that without letting emotions get in the way and I guess maybe that's been passed on through guys because guys have always been the powerful dominant figure, going back to say the 18/1900s and that's the way it's just come up and something's going to have to be done.

Bruce links boys' avoidance of expressing emotion to an 'attitude of masculinity' which has been 'passed on from their fathers'. In so doing, he emphasises the pivotal role of fathers and adult men in establishing norms for governing their son's behaviour as gendered subjects. Moreover, what is significant is that Bruce has developed quite specific capacities for reading masculinity and is applying them to his own practices and those of other boys. For example, his reference to the Australian film Shame, which dealt
with the pack rape of a 16 year old girl in an outback town, is pertinent in this respect. This film was studied in an English class conducted by the researcher where issues around masculinity were discussed at length. Bruce is drawing on these understandings to make sense of his own lived experiences of masculinity. He reiterates the extent to which specific norms govern regimes of practices for boys in terms of policing sex/gender boundaries (see Laskey & Beavis, 1996; Steinberg et al, 1997; Flood, 1997). Within such limits, expressing emotion and overt affection are circumscribed as sex-inappropriate for boys/men. Bruce accounts for such practices in terms of power, particularly when he makes the observation that powerful people 'aren't usually real kind, friendly open people'. In this sense, he highlights that behaving in accordance with certain rules for establishing a stylised demeanour, explainable in terms of being hard, constitutes for boys an exemplary instance of enacting a heterosexual masculinity.

Scott: Self-Fashioning Practices

Scott also alludes to the specifiable limits of such a currency of masculinity which is policed within a particular regime of normalising practices. He draws attention, however, to how such limits are marked out by parents in terms of designating the kind of clothes that 'you're allowed to wear'. In fact, he claims that boys tend to be more restricted than girls in terms what they can wear:

138 Scott: I suppose it depends on your actual upbringing, your parents and stuff, but what starts off is like the clothes you wear and you're like allowed to wear. Because I know my parents sort of...I don't know... parents sort of want you to...they don't want their kids to turn out funny or anything. So they don't want them sort of wearing girls' clothes or wearing boys' - I suppose girls wear boys' sort of clothes and it's more acceptable for a girl to have short hair than a guy to have long hair and certainly you don't see guys walking around in dresses and stuff without people sort of looking at them really strangely. Just that whole thing, whereas a girl can wear jeans and parents have no problem. So I suppose
girls on one level have it easier than the guys in that idea, but then there's like the whole pregnancy thing where a girl's got it worse than the guy because the guy's parents don't have to find out I suppose, as necessarily. Not they don't necessarily have to find out, whereas the girl's family's got to know about it, and that sort of thing. But I don't really have any experience of that sort of situation ... only like clothes or whatever.

139 Wayne: So you're saying in terms of clothes guys are more restricted?

140 Scott: Yeah, like, if a guy dyes his hair or something, that's happened with me, everyone's going, 'Oh no! He must be a queer person'. It's died down now, but people still bring it up to me and stuff. It doesn't bother me.

141 Wayne: Is this at home as well, or is it more so outside?

142 Scott: More so outside, but I know my mum sort of gets a bit annoyed.

143 Wayne: Annoyed?

144 Scott: Annoyed with me sort of not caring ... like you know, if I do girlish sort of things ... um ... I don't know, that whole idea they don't want to have kids being sort of funny, don't want a funny, queer sort of kid or something. (He holds up his finger with red nail polish painted on it). I know like um that's really annoyed my mum 'cause I did that.

145 Wayne: The nail polish on your finger?

146 Scott: Yeah, mum got annoyed about that. Sort of strange really, 'cause I can't see it means anything.
Wayne: Why do you think she got annoyed?

Scott: Um, I dunno.

Wayne: You got nail polish on one finger, is that all? Just one finger?

Scott: Um, on my foot as well, but I mean Mum just got really annoyed, so I took it off my foot, but I left that (Holds up his finger). I don't know ... whatever ... it's just the way my parents are.

Scott indicates the regimes of normalising practices at home in terms of the role his parents play in policing a particular model of masculinity by attempting to regulate what he wears and how he chooses to present himself. The reason for this, he adds, is because parents don't want their children to 'turn out sort of funny'. The other version of the story is that parents may be concerned about their children 'acting differently' for fear that they will become targets of the type of bullying practices described by the boys in this thesis.

Scott proceeds to talk about the different regimes that are operative for boys and girls, explainable in terms of differential norms for governing their conduct. However, he claims that his experiences of such normalising practices are confined to wearing clothes and issues pertaining to how he chooses to present himself. The decision to dye his hair and to paint one of his fingers and toes with red nail polish - which he defines as 'girlish sort of things' - appears to be an act of working at the limits of a particular model of heterosexual masculinity that is imposed upon him, on this occasion, by his parents (see Foucault, 1987; 1984g; Simons, 1995).
Chris aged 16 is another student who talks about problems that he is experiencing at school and home which are related to the effects of what is identifiable as an instance of a particular model of masculinity. Many of his problems are tied to his family situation and previous experiences of bullying in primary school. The interview data are deployed to highlight (i) the dynamics of masculinity as an occasional matter; (ii) the limits of a specific form of masculinity in terms of proscripting particular modes of relating and (iii) the need for adults to develop specific kinds of capacities for relating to adolescent boys.

Chris's parents are separated and he lives with his dad. He speaks at length in the interview about the problems he has had in communicating with his father which have resulted in frequent arguments.

25 Wayne: So what were some of the specific kinds of problems? What led to some of these kinds of fights that you were having with your father?

26 Chris: My school work and stuff like that. I don't do study, I study at home, but not as much as my dad wants me to. So he thinks I'm absolutely gone, just not trying hard enough at school or anything. So he gives me big guilt trips about how I'm going to fail in life and how I'm never going to do anything. I try to fight him back, I always seem to relate things to when he was having trouble with mum, just to get him back for what he said. That's generally where it starts because I get all depressed and go on psycho and my thought gets muddled up and it just, I can't express things properly, I can never express things properly anyway. I can't say what I feel without making a mistake somehow. I know later on he will use that against me for ... because I go into such a down cycle that I start babbering on and I say some stuff and mix it up with others and he goes, 'No, it's not true', and the instant he says that I know he's going to bring it up some time later on, so it's just really scary from then on.
27: Wayne: So you get scared about some of the things that you say because you think they're going to be ...

28: Chris: He's going to use them against me and there's no way I can beat him. That's what annoys me and it just makes me even more depressed and I go way down. Then all of a sudden it's sort of like, it goes back to school work and if I don't do well now, I'll never make it in the real world, and then I go how much the real world sucks and how it's all money oriented and how someone like me, unless you've got money and power, you can never actually change it, it's always the same. They're all just going to worry about themselves and stuff all the little people.

Chris appears to be grappling with the imposition of a form of power that is identifiable as an instance of enacting a particular currency of masculinity. He rejects such a form of masculinity which is embodied in his father's dictums about 'making it in the real world' and earning a lot of money. He seems to be rejecting such rewards which are guaranteed through investing in mental labour at school (Willis, 1977). He identifies with the 'little people' and attempts to establish his masculinity against the model that his father tries to impose. Such a practice of identification also tends to highlight Chris's frustration and sense of powerlessness in the face of what becomes identifiable as an imposition of a particular form of masculinity. However, the way he relates to his father on this occasion appears to be linked to the practices of bullying that he was subjected to in primary school:

97 Wayne: Do you think that your dad understands you?

98 Chris: No, he doesn't understand me, no one does. If you had to understand me, you'd have to go back into when I was in primary school and things like that.
99 Wayne: Do you want to talk about some of those things? Can you talk maybe about primary school?

100 Chris: In primary school I always wished I could change everything, like my whole attitude, my whole physical look and everything. I still do now. I just wish I could go back and change everything. I could do things so much better because I know where I went wrong, but it's at that point where it's too late to change. In primary school, I think most of it started from Year 4 when my parents first started fighting and stuff like that. Me and my sister couldn't cope and it was really hard on us. It's pretty harsh on someone that small. I know lots of kids have and say, 'We went through that, I don't know what your problem is'. It wasn't just that, there was one guy who tormented me for my entire life. After a while, you start believing it, after the first year you start believing it because he just keeps on pressuring and pressuring and calling you names and getting everyone else to hate you.

101 Wayne: What did he do, just call you names?

102 Chris: Called me names, beat me up, all sorts of things.

103 Wayne: What kinds of names did he call you?

104 Chris: Well back then I was really huge, I was like fat everywhere and I hated me, I couldn't stand me, I couldn't stand the sight of me, I just didn't like it. He used to absolutely, he knew I didn't like it and he knew that I tried to change and it was hard, and he just put so much pressure on me that I'd end up straight back where I began. He used to hit me all the time for standing in line, he'd line up purposely next me and just start punching me in the head and in the arms and in the guts and everything. He started calling me names and how I'd never get anywhere and stuff like that, but I think the trouble was that I started believing
him and started convincing myself that I can't do things, that I'm an idiot, that I
can't do anything right, and in the end I just stuffed up everything. I stuffed up
my work, I didn't get very high marks and things like that. No one really cared, I
was like the invisible kid.

105 Wayne; You were an invisible kid?

106 Chris: Yeah, no one paid any attention to me.

Chris's self-loathing and low self-esteem are linked to a set of bullying practices which
were perpetrated against him in primary school and he still appears to be living with the
scars of such violence. What is documented both in terms of his relationship with his
father and his experiences at primary school, is an overwhelming sense of helplessness
and vulnerability. This is emphasised when he refers to himself as the 'invisible kid'. He
felt totally insignificant in an institution where such violence was enacted against him.
Moreover, there appeared to be no apparent strategies or official policies set in place for
dealing with such practices.

However, Chris mentions one teacher in Year seven who offered him support. The way
this teacher is constructed as relating to him is significant because it signals the effectivity
of specific norms for governing a particular type of teacher/student relationship which,
Chris acknowledges, was conducive to the kind of learning and support he needed at
school:

115 Wayne: Did anyone help you at school?

116 Chris: No, no one did. There was one teacher in Year 7 ... and she was the
best teacher I ever had. She encouraged me, she was just saying, don't worry,
you can do it, you're not as bad as you think you are, or as some idiots say. She
was the best. It was the only actual positive influence I had in a while. It's just
something about it, coming from someone, not a complete stranger, but a stranger in the sense that you're not really good friends with and stuff like that. When it comes from your family it means shit all, it's just like you're supposed to say that, you're family you can't say anything mean. No it just felt really good.

Thus Chris highlights the role of his teacher in encouraging and supporting him. This becomes an instance of the sympathetic teacher-student relation which is tied to techniques of pastoral care deployed in a supervisory technology within the apparatus of popular education (see Hunter, 1988a). However, while offering him support, Chris claims that his teacher was unable to address the bullying problem and the extent to which he had been targeted at school:

123 Wayne: What about this teacher in Year 7? Did you tell her about it [the bullying]?

124 Chris: Yeah, she knew, she knew all about it and she couldn't do much. She made sure I wasn't in his class because she knew me at the end of year 6 and I told her about that then and I wasn't in his class the next year, and she always used to influence me in my writing and stuff like that. She said, 'You're very good at it, keep it up'. She'd always go blabbering on about the good things and only mentioned the bad things slightly, it was like everyone else just used to cram on the bad things, and she'd say pretty good for whenever you did something like when I got 100% on a test or anything.

125 Wayne: So she had a real positive influence on you then?

126 Chris: Yeah.

127 Wayne: So how would you explain the influence she had on you?
128 Chris: I don't know.

129 Wayne: She was obviously a pretty important kind of person when you look back.

130 Chris: Very important. I'd consider her, I don't know, I spose probably one of the best friends I'd ever had, probably close to even considering as family because it's like she was sort of like your mum. She was always there when you needed help and things like that. I wouldn't go as far as all the love and crap - the friendship part between you and parent was there and that was the best, it was really good, I could tell her anything just about. I never told anybody anything, I bottled everything up because I didn't want anyone to know how I was feeling, that's why no one could help me.

Chris's comment that this teacher was 'sort of like your mum' is significant in that she is identified in terms of her capacity to nurture. It would appear that gendered regimes of practice intersect here with an already available pastoral technology in which the teacher functions as a sympathetic friend. Thus, a certain practice of the self is deployed as a norm in a pedagogical relationship which, Hunter (1988a) argues, is linked to the historical emergence of popular education as an administrative apparatus of moral training aimed at re-shaping the attributes of and managing whole populations (ix). What is significant is that Chris is advocating a particular pastoral practice of the self organised around the sympathetic teacher-student relation. This is understood in terms of his emphasis on the importance of friendship in relationships between all adults and children which relates to what he perceives to be lacking in his relationship with his father. Chris appears to be advocating a 'non-coercive' relationship with significant adults in his life, along similar lines to that of the sympathetic teacher-student relation, produced as an effect of deploying techniques of pastoral surveillance (Hunter, 1988a: 266).
On this basis, it would appear that the effectivity of managing student behaviour in schools may be enhanced by implementing programs that are organised around adjusting and instituting specific norms for governing the way teachers relate to students in unobtrusive and non-coercive ways. What needs to be emphasised, however, as Hunter (1988) illuminates, is that these techniques of individual pastoral surveillance are already available and deployed as an apparatus of moral supervision within the administrative and disciplinary structures of popular and literary education (see chapters 11, 12 & 13).

In light of these claims regarding the interdependency of the 'organisation of the pedagogical space and the goals of popular education', it is argued that already available techniques of pastoral surveillance can be redeployed to target particular norms governing the embodied practices and social relations of certain forms of masculinity. The point is that since the inception of popular education, techniques of moral supervision and pastoral surveillance were redeployed within administrative apparatuses in the service of cultural regulation (Hunter, 1988: 290). Moreover, since the special personality of the English teacher has emerged within such a purpose-built milieu as embodying certain norms and social functions organised around harnessing the 'sympathy' of students as 'part friend, part parent, part director of conscience', within the context of a non-coercive relationship, it is argued that the literacy classroom may well be a productive site for deploying such a technology for addressing issues around the formation of masculinities (Hunter, 1988a: 59).

Moreover, it would appear from Chris's interview that specific programs and policies for dealing with bullying need to be implemented in schools in terms of adjusting particular norms governing social practices which are identifiable as instances of boys enacting a specific form of heterosexual masculinity. However, while such programs have been developed for use in schools, how effective they have been, and the extent to which they have been used, need to be monitored in terms of their success in helping students to develop specific capacities for interpreting the effects of particular forms of masculinity (see House of Representatives Standing Committee, 1994; Ollis & Tomaszewski, 1993;
Chris in his interview also draws attention to the issue of feeling shamed, which accounts for why he was unable to talk about his experiences of being bullied. However, the role of the teacher who did support him draws attention to the significant social function of the sympathetic teacher as produced within a machinery of cultural regulation and pastoral surveillance. Moreover, it points to how such pastoral techniques might be redeployed in the service of helping students to develop capacities for examining the effects of masculinities on their lives. In other words, by entering into a non-coercive relation with students, strategic attempts can be initiated in an attempt to address the politics of masculinity in schools. By using such pastoral techniques and pedagogies, the voluntary acquiescence of students can be mobilised in the interests of adjusting particular norms governing the production of heterosexist and homophobic forms of masculinity. The point, however, is that there needs to be an official policy set in place and one that educators will operationalise in attempting to deal with violence and sex-based harassment in schools. It would appear that there was no officially sanctioned harassment policy or procedure at Chris' primary school because he makes the point in section 124 that his teacher 'couldn't do much' about the bullying that he was subjected to.

Chris then launches into a discussion about how such treatment affected his grades and how it is only now, in Year 11, that he is trying to address specific problems at school related to improving his achievement. But he emphasises that he feels the pressure to perform and low self-esteem still remains an obstacle for him:

136 Chris: ... Everyone's putting all this pressure on me because I'm in the last couple of years of school and they say you're terrible, you're doing bad, you're never going to succeed in life. It's just they're wondering why I'm a screw up now and stuff like that.
137 Wayne: So who are you talking about, your parents?

138 Chris: No, this is teachers, parents, everyone.

139 Wayne: Like people see you as a screw up? In what way?

140 Chris: They're trying to change me. What took all my, practically all my primary school life and part of high school life, they're trying to change it in one year and it's physically and emotionally impossible, and it's really hard and I can't do it. That's why I get so depressed every now and then and I just go way down.

Here, Chris reiterates that significant adults in his life are coercing him to conform to particular standards and to perform at school so that he can be successful in life. However, he appears to reject certain 'rules' for governing his conduct at school that are built into a regime of competitive educational practices in which he is incited to achieve in order to reap the long term benefits of mental labour. Thus, while rejecting what may be identified as one particular version of masculinity, he establishes another rebel form of masculinity which is enacted against the former in terms of a 'personalised opposition to authority' (Willis, 1977: 11). Thus, it is a strategy that not only working class boys use to establish a particular stylised demeanour which in the research literature has come to count as a recognisable instance of a form of protest masculinity (see Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Kessler et al, 1985; Walker, 1988). It would appear that Chris refuses to follow certain rules for governing his conduct that are established by his father and teachers at school. He identifies a one to one correspondence between the rules of formal education espoused by teachers at school, in their emphasis on achievement, and those established by his father at home. And he appears to be rejecting these rules. Moreover, emotionally, he feels that he has not developed the capacities to address the kinds of problems he is facing at school because of his past experiences of bullying.
This raises questions about the ways in which norms may be successfully implanted to effect change in behaviour. For example, the attempt of 'trying to change' the abusive practices enacted by certain boys at school involves what many of them would perceive to be equally an imposition of authority or infringement of their rights. They may read their practices as harmless or merely as a joke. The issue, it would appear, is one which involves the deployment of pastoral techniques of surveillance, which are unobtrusive and non-coercive, to strategically achieve particular objectives - ie. to highlight the extent to which certain practices have abusive effects. In this way, an attempt to help students to develop capacities for interrogating masculinities, according to specifically designated norms, can be orchestrated.

Chris seems to be calling out for help and for significant adults at school and home to support and understand him which raises the question about the need for pastoral techniques and pedagogies:

141 Wayne: So you don’t think they really understand you?

142 Chris: They can’t understand me, it’s impossible, they’ve only known me for a couple of periods and that’s it.

143 Wayne: So you’re talking about teachers there?

144 Chris: Everyone, teachers there and parents they never listen. You try and tell them, that’s why everyone says, ‘What did you do today at school?’ ... ‘Oh nothing’.

145 Wayne: If you could kind of tell them, and you knew that they would listen, what would you say to them?
146 Chris: Help! But they're too busy to help me properly. Everyone is. If they had absolutely all the time in the world. I'd tell them, 'Help me, help me deal with my problems, help me do better in school, help me mentally, I really need some fine tuning and stuff like that'. That's all I'd say, I'd just say, 'Help me'. If I can get that done, I think I can take things from there.

147 Wayne: So you feel that there's not really a lot of support then, emotionally maybe?

148 Chris: Yeah, it's just like, my mum tries and is not very good but it's something. My dad, he doesn't know how to. He tries but he hasn't got a clue. People always wonder why I'm so cold or so quiet or appear to be, some people even say I'm evil and stuff like that. It's just like, it's the way I've been brought up, it's the way I've taught myself. I never open myself up because if I open myself up I'm open to hurt and all that sort of stuff. I've never talked to anybody about my feelings. I never explain anything, I'm just quiet. I bottle everything up because I don't want anybody to know. I don't want anybody's pity either. I just don't want everyone to go, oh look at that kid, he's so sad, we should do something to help. I wish they'd just go away, you don't need that.

Thus, Chris learns to 'shut off' from other people, refusing to 'open himself up' to others for fear of being hurt. He has learned to follow this rule within a regime of practices which require him to conduct himself in quite specific ways according to particular norms which he refuses to abide by. On the basis of what he has indicated about his experiences at home and school, it would appear that he is advocating the need for alternative modes of relating which are organised around a different set of rules such as (i) listening to and respecting young people's point of view; (ii) granting young people in schools the right to present and to articulate their own point of view (iii) avoiding confrontational approaches to dealing with conflict resolution; (iv) involving young people in decision making processes (see McLean, 1997). For example, Chris would like, it seems, to have a better
relationship with his parents according to these kinds of rules, but his mother does not appear to have developed adequate skills to support him emotionally and his father just 'doesn't know how'. This highlights, once again, the significance of the sympathetic relation produced as a function of a particular social personality embodied in the role of teachers/parents who are required to support those children/students in their duty of care.

Chris, however, specifically mentions that Tai-Kwon-Do provides him with a pressure-free space where the above mentioned rules apply. Here such a sympathetic embodiment of unobtrusive norms are produced in a teacher-student relation, understood as an effect of a pastoral pedagogy of ethico-moral supervision (see Hunter, 1988a; 1994b). Consequently, he feels supported and does not fear reprisal for the mistakes he might make:

170 Chris: It's the only place where you go and you cannot be judged. It's not like a tournament situation, or like a school scenario where people rely on you. If you look, there will always be a winner and there will always be a loser. But with this there's never one. You never feel the pressure of the other kids, they never laugh at you, they never tease you for what you look like, they encourage you, they say that's a good technique, but you might want to do it this way. They're always helping and they're never criticising. It's just like a free environment. It's my only escape that I can ever get away. It's my little world where I live and can be anything I want and no one cares. They support whatever I do and it's just great. I love it. They really care though ... you can go to some places and they'll say, ok you can come in only if you do this and this, and if you don't you're terrible, you're an outcast, go away. That is, try to do this and this and if you can't we'll help you. They don't say you have to, they say you can try if you want to and if don't like it, we'll figure out something else for you. They'll modify for you and it's just great, it's wicked and I love it.
Wayne: So you're kind of not pressured and they understand and support you rather than judge you?

Chris: Yeah

In his 'little world' of Tai-Kwon-Do, Chris does not feel pressured in the sense that he is not subjected to coercive and obtrusive regimes of practice. He feels understood rather than judged. It is significant that he chooses an alternative Eastern sport rather than a Western competitive team sports. In Tai Kwon Do there are no winners and losers and Chris embraces this non-competitive ethic. What emerges here, once again, is his rejection of a system of rules for governing conduct that both his father and teachers at school require him to follow in terms of attaining a high level of achievement and relating to others in the 'real world' on a competitive basis.

Later in the interview Chris is asked about his friends and their role in his life:

Wayne: So we've talked about quite a lot. Talk to me a bit more about, I was thinking as you were speaking, about your friends. Have you got any good friends now? You haven't mentioned your friends ... I was just wondering about whether you feel that you can speak to any of your friends or whether you have close friendships with maybe some of the guys or one guy, or one person that you feel you can talk to?

Chris: Probably you and Leon would be the only ones I can talk to. I can sort of talk to Justin because he can relate in some ways, but I can't tell him the things that I can tell you and I can tell Leon. I don't feel pressured. I don't feel like I have to conform to something when I'm talking to you or Leon. It's the same as Tai Kwan Do, it's a pressure-free area sort of thing. I can say pretty much anything I want.
It is significant is that he identifies two friendships which are important for him because they provide him with a 'pressure-free' space where he is able to 'express' what he is feeling. However, when he is asked about how he sees other boys relating to one another, he highlights what he perceives to be their inability to express themselves which is something he values:

197 Chris: I see them as a bunch of people who can't express themselves ... they have difficulty finding someone to talk to, they have difficulty being honest and open, and I see school as encouraging people to be quiet and to conform. I see school as a regular pain in the arse. I can't stand it. I just reckon the only thing they're worried about is their dignity, their respect in the outside world ... the school just tries to churn out a reputation so they can get respect and go higher up. I think that's all they're concerned about. You only get a few good teachers that will actually stop and pay attention and actually help instead of worrying about how good it makes them look.

What is significant about this comment from Chris is that it highlights his rejection of a particular set of rules which both his father at home and his teachers at school require him to follow. In much the same way as Willis's working class lads refuse to follow these rules, Chris despite his middle class background, also takes up such a counter position. This would seem to indicate that such a stylised demeanour is not just an instance of what may be termed an aspect of a working class masculinity. Rather, a boy's refusal to follow such rules for investing in mental labour is an occasional matter which is not necessarily tied to a working class location (see Hindess, 1989). In short, it would appear that such a refusal is part of establishing a stylised demeanour which is recognisable as an instance of enacting what may be termed a rebel masculinity in response to a specific modality of power (Foucault, 1982a; 1978).

This interview with Chris has been used to advocate a specific teacher/student relationship, developed as a function of a particular social personality within a pastoral
technology of moral supervision (1988a), to help boys to develop certain kinds of capacities for reading and understanding the effects of a particular currency of masculinity. In fact, on the basis of the data included in this chapter, it would appear that the teacher has a key role in developing 'sympathetic' modes of relating to boys which, it is argued, are a necessary precondition for teaching them to develop capacities for reading masculinity and its effects in their own lives and in the lives of others. In other words, it is argued that the harnessing of this 'sympathy of companionship' (Hunter, 1988a: 59) - in the form of a non-coercive pedagogy in which unobtrusive norms are embodied in the sympathetic teacher - may facilitate attempts to encourage adolescent boys to engage in critical practices which place the politics of 'masculinity' under a particular kind of investigation in schools.

Boys Interrogating 'Masculinity' in Schools

Many of the boys interviewed were willing to discuss the impact of 'masculinity' in their lives within specifiable limits and according to particular norms and knowledge about gender. However, while some boys like Adam and Bruce were able to draw on knowledge about 'masculinity' as a socially constructed practice, it will be demonstrated that students like Dave Friedman still draw on developmental theories of maturity to account for the way boys behave. It is important to mention that both Adam and Bruce had been subjected to reading practices in their English classrooms which had explicitly taught them to read for masculinity and to understand its effects in terms of cultural, social and historical configurations of power. Their interview responses would appear to indicate that they are mobilising such discourses in accounting for the impact of what are recognisable instances of masculinity in their own lives. However, they are willing to engage in such a practice when being interviewed because the researcher, as 'sympathetic friend', functions as an effect of a confessional pastoral technology of surveillance in which certain norms are deployed, in unobtrusive, yet strategic ways, to produce particular effects. These effects are perhaps best understood in terms of certain conditions and contingencies that are produced as a result of using techniques for the care of the
student within the highly normative confessional space of the interview. For example, many boys felt comfortable to discuss a range of issues without the fear of being ridiculed or threatened.

It would appear, on the basis of the interview data, that many boys are prepared to discuss their experiences or practices of 'masculinity' within the context of a pastoral relation in which the researcher functions as a 'sympathetic friend'. Furthermore, some of the boys advocated the need to discuss 'masculinity' and its effects in schools, indicating that opportunities for them to do so had not been provided. For instance, when the boys were asked to explain what they understood about 'masculinity', many indicated that they had not been encouraged to think about such issues. One boy, Shaun, during his first interview appeared to be stumped by the question. He is asked initially to explain what he thinks life is like as a male:

144 Shaun: I think that um, I've never, I've never thought about that type of a question because I've never been confronted with the situation that I've had to think about it. I've never had to think about something like that ... I've never had to like grasp or like figure out that you know, me being male and I have to do it this way and stuff like that. I don't think anything like that has ever happened to me, so I've never had to sit there and go, 'Why did I act this way or why did I act that way and like how am I supposed to act?' And, um, so that's probably one of the reasons why I've never thought about like what it feels like being a male, because I sure as hell don't know what it feels like being a female, but like it's hard to explain what it is.

145 Wayne: Maybe if I ask you what do you understand about masculinity? Does that make it easier?

146 Shaun: I suppose um saying, I suppose there's instead of...Um, another reason that I probably won't be able to answer that question is because like guys don't talk about their emotions and stuff like that and like I don't like to sit there and think about my emotions. But like the things that I can talk about probably
maybe to get like the kind of idea of what it is like being a male is my experiences or like problems I have with it and the problems I have with other like people. And so mostly ... hm, being a male? Um ... I haven't really thought about it, but I have got like you know, some sort of idea I suppose of what masculinity would be ... It's pretty hard because I've been, like when people say masculinity, straight away I think of the big strong guy who doesn't cry, who will like, you know, stand up and he will like work his like guts out and he will do all this and that. Straight away that thought comes to my mind, but then I don't, I don't know what I actually am meant to think about. I suppose there's a lot of stuff like in the media and that and like the world that has like shaped kind of my ideas of being like a male and like a lot of things such as you know, lately how everyone's been talking about instead of being um a masculine guy who doesn't cry, like start crying and stuff like that, if you know what I mean, like they've like done the total opposite.

151 Wayne: Like the sensitive new age guy, the 'snag'?

Here, Shaun emphasises that he has never been confronted with a question pertaining explicitly to issues of masculinity. However, he is able to articulate what he understands to be the normative ties between certain practices, such as 'guys not talking about their emotions', 'guys not crying', displaying physical strength, working hard, and a particular category of masculinity. He proceeds to use the confessional space of the interview to try to sort through his understandings:

152 Shaun: Hm. But then um you know, it's kind of almost a question that I don't know if anyone could be right about and no-one could like know the answer to, 'cause I suppose being a male is just like being a person and the only thing that really makes you male is having you know, your testicles and like your penis and stuff like that and like being totally different from a female. And I suppose that because of that, like guys and girls think differently as well, because of our physical like shape and our aspects like and stuff. I wouldn't be able to, I suppose I wouldn't be as emotional as say another female to a son or a daughter
... You know, how a mother gives birth to their child and they have that with them and like, and they, you know, breast feed and stuff like that and that kind of thing. Like that almost deceives me on what I am meant to think about and what I am not meant to think about. It's a very good question as well because it makes you think a lot about what it is like to be male, but I just find that it's hard to explain it, if you know what I mean?

Thus, at first, Shaun appears to be appealing to biology to explain what he understands about masculinity, but is unsure. On one level, he seems to be indicating that the only real differences between males and females are biological and implies that this should have no impact on the way men and women behave and relate. However, on another level, he is unsure and his confusion stems from an understanding that capacities for nurturing and expressing emotion are somehow grounded in the reproductive differences between males and females. The practices of women giving birth and breast-feeding are linked to what may be interpreted as a maternal bond between mother and child - one, apparently, which a male could never establish in quite the same way.

In the following excerpt, he appears to be indicating that there are social influences that account for the formation of what he understands masculinity to be:

158 Shaun: 'Cause um a lot of people would say that their thoughts of masculinity would, or their thoughts of like being a female, I don't know if they could have figured it themselves out because there's so much stuff going on in the media. Like, you know, if someone says, 'What's your idea on masculinity?', I could have straight away said, 'Oh you know, I'm a SNAG, you know, I try to deal with my emotions and stuff like that'. I mean someone could be saying, 'Oh yeah you know, this guy's right or this guy's wrong', but that wouldn't be exactly what I've like encountered or what I've thought. That would have been like the media kind of showing me which way is the right way to think. So I suppose that thinking about being masculine is almost like saying that males and females have differences, it's like right and it's wrong as well. They've got obvious differences because of the way the world has like led them to think, but like on a totally
different scale. They kind of think the same and they kind of look out for the same thing, they like want to be most successful in life. I suppose a lot of people want to have like kids and want to have a house, or they want to be like whatever, famous and stuff like that. A lot of people, like when you come to school people are just like people, so it means if guys and girls are the same, are they just like pupils, if you know what I mean? That if you like take them out of class and the guys do guys' things and the girls do like girls' things and that's where a lot of the differences come out and I suppose that's a lot of the way that people start to think about what it's like being males and females.

Shaun indicates that boys and girls are required to engage in differential sets of practices which confer either masculinity or femininity. But, here, such gender differences are linked to the social influences of the media and to enforced institutional practices in schools which lead to girls and boys being separated. He also elaborates on this imposed heteronormative 'separation between the two sexes' in relation to sport, with specific reference to 'football' and the role of fathers and grandfathers in perpetuating certain gender regimes:

159 Wayne: So they do, there are girls' things and there are guys' things. Can you explain what you mean by that?

160 Shaun: Well I suppose there's a lot of um separation between the two sexes, there's um, for instance there are guy sports and there are girl sports to do, which you know guys do footy and the girls do netball and stuff like that and that's one of the things that like separate the two people, the sexes. There's like um, like you know, I suppose everyone wants to go to parties and everyone wants to do certain things, but like doing a male thing and doing like a female thing is like totally different ... It's almost as if like um, because of what happened in the past, we're like doing the same as it was. Like you know football, guys played football so we're going to keep playing football because our dads and our grandfathers and that, they played football and like it's almost as if like because of the um older times and the older way that people thought, people are just going to keep going
on that way. Like some people will come and change something and that but I suppose it's still going to just keep going on and on. I don't know, how it...

Shaun proceeds to talk about an incident on a camp to highlight this point that certain strategies are deployed to enforce a heteronormative separation between boys and girls in schools:

169 Wayne: So there are expectations there then almost?

170 Shaun: Yeah, it's almost like it is. People use a lot of the references like you know, 'If you don't do this, you're a fag'. I remember one teacher, when we were on camp we were talking about um, it was one of those Student Leader camps and it was just the year tens. They were trying to extend us and they had like a fake student council meeting and someone brought up the topic of hair and I stood up straight away and said, 'You know, instead of making like two different rules, why don't we just have one rule and like tie it up in a ponytail?' Another teacher stood up straight away and said - and he was a male - and he said, 'If you're going to have long hair and you're going to put it up in a ponytail obviously you've got something wrong with your head, obviously you're gay or something like that'. And this teacher said it outright and like that is like, I suppose the problem that sets us apart between the two. There's always going to be people that will sit there and say, 'Hey, you know what? They'll go on like, 'I don't know, you do this, you're gay' And like, or if you do that you're like, or if a girl does something, like you know, 'She's a butch', and stuff like that, so then like there's this expectation that the guy shouldn't try to delve into the female things and the females shouldn't delve into like the male things and like they should just stick to their own. And that's, that's like the thing that sets us apart and really kind of almost stuffs it up.

Thus, while initially stating that gender differences are grounded in biology, Shaun moves to a position of examining the impact of social and cultural practices in enforcing
the oppositional categorisation of masculinity and femininity. He draws attention to the role of a teacher's homophobic strategies for policing and patrolling sex/gender boundaries for boys. What is particularly useful about this interview is Shaun's assertion that he has not been required on any occasion to discuss 'masculinity' or related issues in the terms framed by the questions posed to him by the researcher. He has difficulty at first responding to such a question because he has not been given the opportunity to adequately develop particular skills for reading masculinity.

In a second interview he highlights this point in discussing the occasion on which he was required by the researcher to analyse a short story called 'Manhood' in class (see Mellor, O'Neill & Patterson, 1991). It is about a father who wants his son to grow up as a man and to be active in sports, despite the latter's lack of interest or desire to engage in such practices:

131 Wayne: I wanted to ask you about that story we did in class, 'Manhood' because that talked a bit about the expectations that were placed on this guy by his father to be a man and the pressures involved in that. Do you think more kind of discussions like that would be useful in getting guys to think about expectations and masculinity? Did the story make you think about maybe some of the pressures about being male in particular?

132 Shaun: Yes, because I never came across something that said or dealt with any form of whatever kind, something that talked about being a man or how you are meant to act or how you are even expected to act and I suppose that because I know that in primary school everything's pretty much of a joke, you just go through it because I remember I came here pretty much not knowing anything. I got a C in English, I got an A in Maths because I was good in Maths, but that was easy. They pretty much taught most things in Year 8, 9 and 10 and now in Year 11 and in primary school no one did anything, no one cared and they never said anything like about being guys or being girls or what they are meant to do and
they never talked about stuff like. As you mentioned that 'Manhood' story, how
like people are expected to act and things like that.. I know that in Year 8 and Year
9 and Year 10 I never came across anything that had to do with how to be a man
or how to act. I knew that there were expectations around, but I never openly
talked it or came across it and after the last interview I sat down and thought about
it for a long time, sitting there like talking to maybe anyone, my dad or my
brother, my friends and stuff and there's no opportunity for guys to get down and
think about they're doing and why they are doing it and stuff like that.

Shaun reiterates that he has not been given the opportunity to discuss issues pertaining
to masculinity and appears to be advocating the need for such issues to be addressed in
schools. His comments support the need for specific pedagogies and curriculum
practices to be deployed which target masculinity as a specific object of study (see
Martino & Mellor, 1995; Martino, 1995a; 1995b). Such strategic tactics need to be
elaborated in accordance with establishing a set of objectives designed to teach students
to read for masculinity and to assess its effects in their lives. As indicated above by
Shaun's interview data, studying a text such as 'Manhood' within a regime of reading
practices designed to target 'masculinity and its discontents' did appear to be useful in
helping him to develop specific capacities for understanding the impact of 'masculinity'
in his own life. And this is what we would expect, given the fact that english is the
ready made site for using such techniques of ethical moral self-problematisation (see
Hunter, 1988a; 1984b; 1983; 1982).

Dave Friedman also attempts to explain his understanding of the differences between
boys and girls and uses certain gender categories to do so. However, tied to his
philosophy is the view that as boys get older, they develop more maturity and, hence, a
greater capacity for transcending enforced sex/gender boundaries:

490
105 Dave: Generally about age fifteen or sixteen, I'd say that boys would share a relationship that would be maturing, definitely noticeably different from say ages thirteen, fourteen.

106 Wayne: How?

107 Dave: In that they are more mature and more accepting and the boundaries that groups set are less defined.

108 Wayne: Can you explain?

109 Dave: Say we used that 'footballer' group, the very masculine attitude group, say they were to expand their boundaries, there would not be so much emphasis put on being physically attractive, sporty, charming, attractive to the opposite sex. They would expand and they might value intelligence more and would add something like the talents of a musician or someone in the arts who are able to communicate with the whole community. Say, for instance, if they were good at public speaking, they were able to add that sort of credential into their lists of who were accepted so a bigger range of people could enter if they so choose to go into that group, or they may simply disband and join groups that they found more attractive than the one they were in. So it is dependent on when the groups expand, which is I think at my age, fifteen/sixteen, then I think boys' attitudes towards each other in a friendship are not so influenced by girls and their list of objectives or credentials needed.

On one level, it would appear that Dave is mobilising developmental discourses of maturity to account for changes in the ways that boys learn to relate which, he argues, occurs at ages fifteen/sixteen. Thus, a certain age appears to function as a threshold for developing a wider range of behaviours and an acceptance of them outside of the limits of a set of credentials for dictating the exclusivity of a particular form of heterosexual
masculinity. The fact that this observation does not appear to be supported by other boys' comments in terms of their reference to the practices, particularly of the 'footballers', is interesting. Dave's use of the word 'credential' is also significant, demonstrating an understanding of the norms operating within a regime of practices in which the Arts are differentiated as sex-inappropriate for boys (Armstrong, 1988; Martino, 1993). However, Dave draws on his own experiences with his best friend as a basis for grounding the above mentioned generalisations:

Let's talk about myself, my best friend, he's very much like me as we both enjoy artistic creativity, we value and respect that highly. But he does tend, more than I do, to have intelligence in mathematical excellence and engineering and that type of thing he views highly as well whereas I don't as much. So maybe if say we both had these attitudes earlier on, he might have been in a different group to me so we would have been apart. But since everyone expands, everyone is more accepting, we've come together and we've been able to accept each other for what we are. I think I'm really lucky though. In general we accept what each other's faults and weaknesses are, we know what they are and we accept them for what they are, but that doesn't come into the part of the friendship in terms of values of trust, honesty which are the main things for me and for him, which are important in a relationship, not credentials, and really being able to listen to each other when we need to. We're very much almost like family and take on the role of what parents and brothers and sisters could do. So I'm very lucky to have something like that because you don't find that a lot. But generally, I think the people I hang around with have much the same qualities that I have but there are still barriers between a lot of people that were in place when say at twelve, thirteen, fourteen years of age, which have not been brought down.

Thus, Dave appears to be drawing a distinction between a friendship based on credentials - certain requirements such as those needed to publicly validate a heterosexual masculinity - and one based on certain values such as trust, honesty and the capacity to listen and to
support one another, which is how he describes his relationship with Paul. But while he has a close relationship with his friend, he comments that there are still a few barriers that ‘have not been broken down’:

110 Wayne: What are those barriers? Can you explain the barriers and try to tell me what they are and why you think they’re there?

111 Dave: Barriers as in people feel the need, perhaps it’s from their own upbringing or society, or whatever, that they need to be reserved about displaying emotions and putting up a shield is very difficult for someone to remove those barriers and definitely if you just met someone in the street, the barriers would be at their strongest, but if you met a stranger and you saw that stranger often the barriers would slowly be destroyed as you gained trust and honesty with each other and that type of thing. Paul and I, Paul’s my friend, most of those barriers have been broken down. There are still a few, but barriers are a sort of invisible emotions that we keep out of view from those we’re not sure we can trust.

And such barriers are tied to Dave’s understanding of what he terms ‘power plays’ with Paul which are linked to a set of norms around which a particular style of masculinity is established. Dave claims, for instance, that ‘power is not such an issue for girls’ in their relationships with one another, as a basis for differentiating what his friendship with Paul is like:

129 Dave: It is not such an issue for girls, the subject of power, to have power is not as important in their friendships.

130 Wayne: How does that come through in your observations though? How have you arrived at that conclusion?
Dave: Well, I see it with guys whenever say both students do Science and they are friends and if one does slightly better. Now if he knows that he is slightly better than the other person, then he has already an advantage over the other person, and if he decides to bring that out in the open, they might both know it, but one thinks, oh God I hope he doesn't know that he got better than me because then he'll hold an advantage. And so I identify that as in I have had experience with that. I do have power plays with Paul and like it is an issue from time to time, even we don't get out of it. Generally, I see that a lot with people I know, guys I know, my age, go through that type of thing whether it be academic, sporting or anything really, even social. I've got a girlfriend who may be physically more attractive than your girlfriend who's more intelligent than your girlfriend meaning he's got the pick of the crop and you've got the dregs'. There's all little bits of power here and there but I sort of expect more from girls, I expect a more mature attitude. Maybe that's just my sisters, but also with girlfriends of mine, when I see them communicate with each other, the way they do it, it's very non-threatening, there's very little sense of power. They never talk about test scores, how did you go in that race, where did you come. It's more how are you, is everything alright at home, sort of very much more at a personal level and the barriers are definitely not as high.

Thus, while rejecting the set of credentials associated with the 'footballer' group for enacting a particular heterosexual masculinity, it would appear that the effects of such a model of masculinity are still at play in the way that Dave has learnt to relate to his friend on certain occasions. In short, there appears to be a set of norms governing the conduct of adolescent boys which are operative across all peer group sites in their capacity to determine particular interpersonal modes of relating on certain occasions. However, in drawing attention to the role that competition plays in the way that he relates to his friend, despite the fact that he claims they have a close relationship, Dave confines such practices to boys which he differentiates from the relationships girls have with one another. His references to power differentials in certain interpersonal modes of communication that are
adopted by girls are noteworthy. He claims that there is 'very little sense of power' in the way that he sees girls relating to one another. And at this point in the interview he states outright that such differences are related to differential levels of maturity between boys and girls which are genetically determined or inherited:

132 Wayne: So why are the barriers not so high for girls? Why do you think that is?

133 Dave: I think the best I could come up with is that they are more mature just genetically, hereditarily, they are more mature. Apparently it's been proven.

Thus, it would appear that, while Dave has acquired highly sophisticated capacities for reading and interpreting both the practices of the 'footballers' and his own behaviours as identifiable instances of a particular model of masculinity, he has also learnt that differential gendered behaviours and modes of conduct are somehow genetically determined. On the basis of this interview, therefore, it would appear that making available more knowledge about the construction of masculinity for adolescent boys might prove to be a useful and necessary undertaking in terms of helping them to understand their own behaviour, conduct and modes of relating.

Another boy, Eric, a Year 12 student aged 17, also demonstrated a willingness to speak about masculinity and its effects, while at the same time advocating the need for further discussions about such gender-related issues for boys in schools. This student makes some important observations about the pedagogical practices to which he was subjected at school by referring to one teacher who attempted to deal with issues of masculinity in the literacy classroom.

In his interview Eric talked at length about homophobia and about particular 'versions of masculinity' that are considered to be acceptable in society:
Eric: ... There seems to be a real thing about homophobia around males which I don't think I understand that well. The only explanation I could come up with is that they are insecure about their own feelings, so that's why they're afraid of other people, other people who are different to themselves.

Wayne: How do you think that could change? Could it change?

Eric: It would be hard, it's not going to be easy. It would have to begin with schools, your parents, society, TV, newspapers ... everything is seen as the one type of male stereotype, but it's a particular version of masculinity. You have to be at least sort of interested in sports, you have to like girls and all the rest of it and it is always fed to you from day one ... and you've never actually seen the other version of masculinity which is perfectly normal in the sense that it is just a different way that guys feel about other people, but it's not seen as you are growing up. So, when people see that other people are different to what they've been made to believe all their lives then obviously they will want to reject that sort of behaviour or that sort of person because it's something different and everyone hates change, everyone wants to stick with the things that they know best and all of a sudden you just see this other version of masculinity and you've never like, you know, through your education, you've never been told about it, you never know about that sort of person until you hit high school and that's when people really start calling you names and labelling.

*Eric has developed quite sophisticated capacities for discussing masculinity. He interrogates certain norms associated with a particular category of masculinity. When asked about the terminology he was using such as 'versions of masculinity', he indicates that he learnt it through studying texts in english (see Martino & Mellor, 1995):

Wayne: You keep using this expression 'version of masculinity'. Where did you pick up this term?
Eric: Well in English we learnt that society has particular versions of masculinity and particular versions are accepted and others not.

Eric is able to apply these understandings to his own life through engaging in practices of ethical self-problematisation:

Wayne: How do you think we could actually get other guys to start thinking about changing the way they relate to one another? Do you think we should try to get them to change in some way?

Eric: Well, obviously yes, because some people feel you would need to be going through school you need to show people that it is ok to be this other type of version of masculinity. As you're growing up I'm saying that you show them its ok to cry, it's alright to be emotional, it's ok to be with your friends and to be there for your friends instead of being stand offish and saying, 'I won't express my emotions, I'll look like a man, if I cry then I'm being a woman' sort of thing and I know that's seen in a lot of cases. I coach under 14 and under 12 players in basketball and also under 16 and especially with the under 12s, if they fall over on the court and hurt their leg and I go over and check and I get them back on the bench and put them down and make a fuss like the mum and dad um he goes, 'Oh stop going on like a girl', and automatically the guy thinks, 'I'm not supposed to cry'. Even for little things and even for bigger things he will be quiet and keep the feelings inside him. So, it would be good if we could change the way people treat guys, you know the way you're not supposed to cry and how you to have be the tough male sort of thing. It's the only way that you can change it by changing some of the values and attitudes of society and even with newspaper and TV you see it, you always see particular versions of masculinity, although sometimes as in studying English, they show you other versions, sort of different versions, but
it seems that the dominant one is the typical male which also sends a message to young kids that you're not supposed to show your feelings.

Thus, Eric talks about the rule of not crying and about acting tough on the occasion of sustaining an injury on the basketball court and points to his role as coach in not requiring boys to behave according to this norm. However, he emphasises the role of parents and the media in enforcing such rules for governing the conduct of adolescent boys. He also reiterates that other versions of masculinity are not readily made available and implies that english is perhaps the only site in which attempts have been made to place 'masculinity' under a particular kind of investigation. What is significant, though, is that he illuminate the role of the teacher as a crucial factor in determining the extent to which boys will engage in such discussions about masculinity. In the following excerpt he discusses a short story he studied in English entitled, 'The Altar of the family' (Martino & Mellor, 1995), which deals with a father rejecting his son, David, for playing with dolls:

Wayne: So you learn about versions of masculinity in english?

Eric: Well, I learnt it in english but I'm not too sure that many other people did because you know not everyone's interested in the same texts and when we analyse them we see how society is critical of this sort of particular version of masculinity. Then other people read it and they think this guy, they automatically see, say, you know David in 'Altar of the Family' as very timid and shy and he wants to play with flowers in the forest while his dad says that he has to play cricket or something like that. So I'm saying that people who study it might automatically get turned off especially males because they'll go, 'He's a sissy! He's a gay! He's not really male!' So they're already turned off the text, so they don't really understand what it's saying.
He continues to elaborate on this point about some students not caring about engaging with the issues and draws attention to the role of pedagogy and the teacher in encouraging boys to do so:

Eric: ... It's like the teacher, I mean I've been in all sorts of classes with teachers but the ones that just say, 'Oh, take notes on this and what do you think the issues are', and you sit there and take notes and she gives you out notes and you just go to that class and sit there and she goes, 'Oh this is what this text is trying to tell you, these are the issues its trying to deal with', instead of getting people involved in reading especially like in discussion. If people have to write everything done, they already get turned off ... it's like homework, it's like schoolwork, you don't want to do it ... but with discussion, I think you bring a lot of issues out and the whole class listens to them if they are really involved and if you open the discussion between actual boys, like one or two boys, then the actual boys will be more involved in it, even if the teacher was just there to make sure it doesn't get out of hand.

Eric here seems to be pointing to the effectivity of a pastoral pedagogy, deployed within a supervisory technology of ethico-moral invigilation, for encouraging students to debate issues of masculinity. This practice is advocated rather than just providing students with a body of knowledge about certain versions of masculinity through reading selected texts:

Wayne: So are you saying that you don't really have an opportunity, a lot of the times, to have discussions, that its mainly more looking at what the text constructs and how it constructs the issue?

Eric: Yes, but it also depends on the teacher, I would say, because of the way the teacher does whatever she wants, or he wants, like if or she wants to get through a text quickly because you have to cover it before exams and no discussion will happen, it will just be bang, bang, bang, like these are the techniques, what are
the techniques quickly. But sometimes when they spend more time on it the class still doesn't get involved so you have to do something to get the class involved. I know it's hard but you know..

Thus, Eric appears to be emphasising the importance of the teacher in initiating discussion and debate about masculinity in terms of implementing particular pedagogical practices in reading texts in the classroom. His comments are useful because they are used here to emphasise that merely providing knowledge about masculinity is not necessarily adequate. Consideration must be given to particular pedagogical practices and to establishing a sympathetic teacher-student relation in determining the extent to which boys will engage with issues of 'masculinity'.

Shaun also makes the point about the need to address issues of masculinity when he claims that in schools 'there's no opportunity for guys to get down and think about what they're doing and why they doing it and stuff like that'. When asked to explain why he thinks that this is so, he makes the following comment:

I'm not sure. I think one thing is that...it's almost as if, it's like a mismanagement of what they teach in schools. They teach Algebra and Maths and stuff like this that we will never use later on in life but they won't teach us stuff that is important to us and that we should know and learn. We have to find it out for ourselves and if we don't then we're stuck. Instead of learning how to divide this and do that and stuff that isn't that useful to us in life, maybe they should start teaching us stuff that is related to us and that we need to know about, so like if a situation does occur and people are expected to do something, they can handle it more instead of just sitting there and going I have to do what these guys say. There has been stuff about don't fall to peer pressure and stuff like that but that's nothing as deep as going into stuff about how you feel about being masculine or what is masculinity. I'm not sure why we don't have the opportunity. It could be an error on our part but I think it's mostly the people that have to teach stuff that
maybe they should turn around and look at what they're teaching us. Right now they are teaching us pretty much crap that we will never need to know later on in life but this [masculinity] is something that is pretty important to a whole lot of people.

Shaun appears to be advocating an approach which assists boys in developing specific capacities for critical thinking about the impact of masculinity in their lives. He also draws attention to the need to develop and to teach a curriculum which is more relevant to the daily lives of students (see Walker, 1988).

Conclusion

In this chapter the focus has been on documenting boys' understanding of the limits of certain normalising practices for enacting heterosexual masculinities. Rather than using interview data to access a putative consciousness of adolescent boys, attention has been drawn to the specific capacities that many boys have developed for reading masculinity and its effects in terms of how certain practices and norms impact on the way they relate to one another on certain occasions. Attention has also been directed to examining how certain practices such as displaying and expressing emotion are caught in a heteronormative regime in which certain categories of masculinity are imbricated. It is in this capacity that identifiable instances of what is to count as 'masculinity' are documented through undertaking an analysis of specific norms for governing the conduct of adolescent boys on particular occasions and under certain conditions.

On the basis of the data included in this chapter, it is argued that many of the boys were willing to discuss the particular social dynamics involved in the ways in which they have learnt to relate to one another on certain occasions. In fact, many of them have already developed quite sophisticated capacities for doing so. While the data have been used to extend further an analysis of specific instances of boys enacting a particular stylised heterosexual masculinity, attention has also been drawn to specific pedagogical effects.
which have led to inciting boys to produce such knowledge within the context of using
countessional research methodologies (Mottier, 1995). Thus, the role and function of
researcher and teacher as 'sympathetic friend' in determining the effectivity of inciting the
boys to a particular kind of textual production have been emphasised. This knowledge
has been applied to a consideration of the pastoral pedagogies that might need to be
operationalised in schools to encourage boys to discuss issues of 'masculinity' and its
impact on their relations with others (see chapters thirteen and fourteen).

What also needs to be emphasised is that the interview is a positive technique for
producing particular knowledge about masculinities - which is required and which is
highly normative in terms of the selection of subjects and the researcher's sympathetic
response. In short, the boys were invited to consider the problems of 'being masculine'
within the confessional space of the interview. For example, Shaun, moved from an
initial reading that failed to offer a desirable response - one which was required by the
researcher - to a position where he produced a range of responses that are given a
particular status of 'truth'. If he had replied that he had never thought about 'masculinity'
or considered it to be a problem, his response might have been seen as not useful in terms
of research, or as useful in indicating his lack of knowledge. The point is that interviews
are tied to a technology of moral training and function in the same way as techniques of
pastoral surveillance deployed as part of the supervisory disciplines of the apparatus of
popular education (Hunter, 1994b; 1988a). In this sense, the students' responses are
produced within a highly normative space of the interview and deciphered according to 'a
grid of normalising observation' which, it is argued, is inescapable.

In light of this research, some considerations have been suggested for redeploying
already available pastoral pedagogies in the service of a particular form of cultural
regulation designed to work at the limits of existing regimes of practice in which boys
learn to establish their masculinities. It is in this capacity, it is argued, that strategic targets
and objectives may be outlined in terms of adjusting the norms around which particular
currencies of masculinity are enacted. In chapter thirteen particular texts are used to incite
students to textual production in the literacy classroom as a means of assessing the
effectivity of achieving such objectives. These texts are deployed within a regime of
practices designed to assist boys to develop specific capacities for reading and discussing
masculinity. The effects of particular pedagogies and strategies for encouraging boys to
develop such capacities are investigated in light of the research conducted in this chapter
into the claims, made by boys themselves, about the need to address what is identifiable
as the politics of masculinities in schools (see Lingard & Mills, 1997).
CHAPTER ELEVEN
Boys and Reading: A Post-Foucauldian Perspective

Introduction

In this chapter a post-Foucauldian theoretical perspective on boys and reading is established. An overview of both the current literature on boys and literacy and Hunter's theorisation of reading and English are presented. By treating boys' reading behaviours as governed by a materialist set of socio-cultural practices in their historical deployment within specific regulatory technologies of the gendered self (Moon, 1993), a challenge is mounted to critical literacy and cultural studies models approaches which wed reading texts to a fundamental subject-language relation (see Luke, 1993; 1994; deLaurentis, 1987; Gilbert & Taylor, 1991; Davies, 1995; 1992; 1997; Gee, 1990; Christian-Smith, 1993; Kress, 1985; Fairclough, 1989; 1992; Comber, 1993; Comber & Kamler, 1997; Janks, 1997; Kennedy, 1996). Such approaches, it is argued, treat readers and texts as connected to the social domain through the representational capacity of language to render experience in consciousness via the act of reading.

Luke (1993), for example, makes the following observation:

What remains unresolved in contemporary feminisms [and] social theory ... is the question of the consequences of textual representation on subjectivity (xii).

However, Hunter (1982; 1983; 1984a; 1987; 1991a; 1988a; 1988b; 1989; 1991) argues that reading is irreducible to a fundamental relation between language and subjectivity (see chapter one). Rather, he treats reading as the effect of an ensemble of aesthetico-ethical practices of moral self-problematisation which are themselves formed within specific regulatory and disciplinary technologies of surveillance operationalised through pedagogical routines in the English classroom (see Hunter, 1988a; Mellor, 1992; Moon, 1993; Patterson, 1993b; 1996; Mellor & Patterson, 1994; 1996b).
Reviewing Research into Boys' Literacy Practices

The first major study conducted into boys' literacy practices was undertaken by Martino (1993) in which he argues that there is link between masculinity and boys' under-achievement and under-representation in subject English. Prior to this study, comments had been made about the disparity between boys' and girls' performance in subject English (Kenway, 1987; Curtis, 1992) and to their differential reading preferences or boys' rejection of reading (Gilbert & Rowe, 1989; Lee, 1980; Poynton, 1985; Johnson & Greenbaum, 1983; Sheridan, 1983; Downing, May & Ollila, 1983). In more recent times, boys' low levels of literacy have become the target of bureaucratic intervention at the level of policy formulation and governmental strategies in education (see Gender Equity Taskforce, 1997; O'Doherty, 1995; NSW Department of School Education, 1996; Office For Standards In Education, 1993), as well as surfacing as an issue in debates conducted within the public media (Arndt, 1994; Zuel, 1994; Painter, 1995). There has also been a recent major National Professional Development Project funded by the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs in Australia which has focussed on the development of literacy intervention strategies for boys (see Alloway et al, 1996). The stated aims of this project were as follows:

(i) to identify issues relating to masculinity and literacy;
(ii) to identify school organisational practices which cultivate a climate conducive to boys' commitment to literacy;
(iii) to develop specific teaching techniques for facilitating effective and critical literacy for boys. (NPDP Submission, 1995: 1)

Many of these targets have also emerged in a range of papers included in a special edition of *Interpretations* (Journal of the English Teachers' Association of Western Australia) which deal with issues pertaining to boys' engagement with literacy (Wearing, 1994; Martino, 1994b; Rhodes; 1994b; Kenworthy, 1994; Pallotta-Chiarolli, 1994). Papers have also been included in a recent special edition of *Gender and Education* in the United
Kingdom on 'Masculinities in Education', with several papers also dealing with boys and literacy (Davies, 1997; Millard, 1997; Hall & Coles, 1997). Nichols (1994) also explores the gendered construction of literacy within the context of the traditional family, along the same lines as Martino (1993), and points to how reading is perceived by fathers as a sex-inappropriate activity for their sons.

What is significant about most of these investigations conducted into the link between masculinities and boys' involvement in literacy is that they deploy discourse analysis and/or appeal to subjectivity as a discursive construct to account for boys' experiences of reading or refusal to engage in such practices. Martino (1993), for instance, provides an analysis of students' perceptions of subject English which he claims 'are mediated via specific discursive frameworks' (1). Drawing on poststructuralist theory, he claims that 'the structuring and regulation of students' perceptions of subject English within phallocentric discourses at the basis of which is an oppressive binary logocentrism' accounts for girls' and boys' differential involvement in literacy (1-2). Thus, he argues that boys' positions in particular gendered discourses, which validate a 'hegemonic' form of masculinity, are responsible for their rejection of English and reading as feminised practices. In other words, it is 'the cultural construction of gendered identity within phallocentric discourses which limits and defines certain behaviours for boys and girls in society and in the English classroom' (2). Hence, a general relation between subject and society is established as mediated via discourse. That is, subjectivity is treated as manifest in the structure of language as an instance of discourse, but given the opportunity or appropriate conditions in the literacy classroom, the individual has the possibility of constituting alternative subjectivities through gaining access to alternative discourses.

Discourse, as an explanatory trope deployed within poststructuralist and cultural studies frames, is tied to a fundamental grounding of meaning in consciousness. Yet, as both Hunter (1984a; 1988b; 1991a) and Wittgenstein (1958: 67-68) argue, language use cannot be understood in terms of its referential capacity to ground subjectivity in consciousness.
Subjectivity can have no general form which is realised through discourse in the consciousness of the individual.

Such theorisations of subjectivity, which treat discourse as providing privileged epistemic access to consciousness, are limited in accounting for the ensemble of institutional practices and assemblage of norms governing boys’ involvement in English and reading. Dialectical theorisations of subjectivity as grounded in discourse are troubled by a fundamental circularity in which the subject is pitted against oppressive social forces. Typically, the individual is blinded by ideology in the form of inhabiting a state or states of false consciousness. Such a mode of rationality, which grounds experience in a fundamental subject-language relation, has built into it the imperative to effect a reconciliation between the opposing poles of deterministic state and the self-determining subject. This is accomplished via the restoration of a critical consciousness to the blinded subject. That is, the ability to see through the ideological distortions of a patriarchal symbolic order is granted to the self-realising subject in an instance of discourse. This leads Martino (1993) to argue that despite the limits imposed on individuals as a consequence of their positioning in particular gender discourses, they have the possibility of taking up positions in alternative discourses:

Individuals are not just mechanically positioned in discourses deterministically - alternative subject positions can be made available and, hence, possibilities for change, informed by a libidinal politics, can be elaborated within such a poststructuralist framework (76).

In other words, the subject is not just constituted in discourse, but is also able to constitute alternative and less oppressive forms of gendered subjectivity. Thus, a fundamental oscillation is operationalised through a dialectical mode of rationality involving the interplay between the poles of subject as designated in language and the language which is an expression of that subjectivity (see Hunter, 1991a: 38). On the one hand, language as an instance of discourse, is accorded a privileged status of realising the
possibility of subjectivity and, on the other, subjectivity is guaranteed expression in and through discourse. This leads Martino to argue that 'a counter-hegemonic space can be created in the english classroom':

[A] counter-hegemonic space can be created in the english classroom which, within this poststructuralist-psychoanalytic framework, is constituted as a sociopolitical site designated as a specific 'surface of emergence' not only for the production and reproduction of certain dichotomised versions of masculinity and femininity, but as a site for critical intervention in the form of challenging and dismantling gender based ideologies. Hence, the aim of this thesis is to raise awareness of the constructedness of masculinity and femininity as gendered categories produced within specific discourses and to define a pedagogical practice conducive to elaborating other spaces in the power-knowledge apparatus of patriarchal structures within which alternative subject positions for boys and girls can be constructed (96).

Here Martino provides an exemplary instance of the limits of such a dialectical theorisation of gender as an effect of discourse. Once masculinity and femininity are treated as socially constructed categories which emerge on the surface of english as dichotomously structured in binary oppositional terms, he is able to establish a threshold around a general subject-language relation as the basis for setting the terms of an emancipatory politics. Martino's position and the forms of rationality which underscore his poststructuralist theorisation of gender regimes within subject english are grounded firmly in a liberatory politics which is expressed in terms of breaking free from the chains of ideological bonds which fix masculinity and femininity in biological sex differences (see Weedon, 1987: 85-86).

Martino, however, inserts the psychoanalytic category of the unconscious into his poststructuralist critique of gender and reading practices and in so doing targets relations of power in terms of a fundamental mechanism of repression:
Henriques et al, therefore, believe that through implicating subjectivity and psychoanalytic practices within a poststructuralist framework of discourse analysis, the nexus of power-knowledge relations governing attempts to reduce psychological differences between men and women to biological differences can be foregrounded. It is in this way that a more effective theorisation of change can be elaborated in terms of providing alternative discourses and subject positions for women and men to take up which will lead to more socially just practices. Such a poststructuralist position clearly relates to the whole notion of how boys and girls differentially position themselves and are positioned within discourses regulating the discursive constitution of subject english and the production of the male/female dualism (see Davies, 1989). The discursive production of subjectivity and signification within gender differentiated discourses cannot be dissociated from how classroom and curriculum practices work to make certain positions available for boys and girls to take up in terms of conferring upon them a particularised sense of masculinity and femininity respectively, in accordance with the dictates of a patriarchal-capitalist culture. It is by drawing on Lacanian psychoanalysis, therefore, in its emphasis on signification and the symbolic order of representation that a link can be forged between unconscious psychic processes and the social, political and cultural milieu in which such processes are enmeshed; it is within such a framework that boys' under-achievement and under-representation in subject english must necessarily be located (80-81).

Thus, Martino's dialectical form of cultural critique leads him to theorise the relations between subjectivity and agency in terms of an extra-governmental space in which cultural technologies are reduced to representations at the level of consciousness. Within such a symbolic space, the formation of the subject is caught in the play of conscious and unconscious processes and desires which can be accessed via the representational functions of discourse. Thus, an emancipatory politics is elaborated on the basis of an imperative to free the subject from the repressive chains of a patriarchal symbolic order. It
is in this sense that Martino's socio-cultural critique treats the 'knowing' subject as grounded in an ideological state of false consciousness who has to be restored to full critical awareness (see Hunter, 1988a). In this way, a general relation between reading and society is established and, within such a regime, the hermeneutic self is invoked (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982; Foucault, 1993).

Martino, thus, conceptualises subjectivity as organised around the mutually exclusive categories of expression and repression. Within such a regime, the individual's capacities and attributes are reducible to representations in consciousness (see Hunter, 1993b). Critical literacy models of reading, such as those deployed by Davies (1992; 1995; 1997), Luke (1994), Gilbert & Taylor (1991) and Rhodes (1994a), are also driven by a fundamental logics to search, within discourse itself, for a consciousness which is buried, but which can be revived through a particular mode of deconstructive critical analysis. This is particularly noticeable in deLauretis's (1987) dialectical theorisation of the links between gender and reading:

To assert that the social representation of gender affects its subjective construction and that, vice versa, the subjective representation of gender - or self representation - affects its social construction, leaves open the possibility of agency and self-determination at the subjective and even individual level of micropolitical and everyday practices.

This intersection of representation and identity is at the heart of the tension of analyses of women's reading and popular culture - between the role of social structure, ideology and ultimately, text (ie. social representation) in constructing gender, and the possibility of agency and self-determination at the 'micropolitical' level of everyday practices (9).

Her theorisation swings between the poles of determination and freedom to effect a reconciliation of such oppositions in the representational space of consciousness which
emerges as a privileged site for the formation of subjectivity. What needs to be emphasised is that such reading practices reinvolve the hermeneutic subject as a site for political resistance and presuppose that the effects of culture are unavailable to or blocked from consciousness. Thus, through instigating a particular reading practice centred around the development of critical consciousness in the reader, such theorists advocate critical literacy pedagogies which are designed to incite the subject to undertake a particular work on the self in the form of ethical self-problematisation (see Hunter, 1988a; 1982; 1991a; 1984a). Reading practices imbricated in such forms of cultural critique are organised around a fundamental binarism involving oppressive power versus oppositional politics, structure versus agency (Cousins & Hussain, 1986), deterministic state versus self-determining subject, determination versus freedom (Hunter, 1993b). In this way, effects of power are reduced to ideology and are manifested in the structure of language within the symbolic space of consciousness.

The limits of such a mode of rationality are endemic in many cultural studies models of reading which draw on poststructuralist theories of the subject (see Moon, 1993; Mellor, 1992). Davies (1997), for instance, makes the following claim with regards to developing critical literacy practices which target the construction and deconstruction of masculinities:

Gender is constructed, through language, as two binary categories hierarchically arranged in relation to each other. This construction operates in a variety of intersecting ways, most of which are neither conscious nor intended. They are more like an effect of what we might call 'speaking as usual'; they are inherent in the structures of the language and the storylines through which our culture is constructed and maintained. The structure of the language and the dominant storylines combine, with powerful effect, to operate on our conscious and unconscious minds to shape our desire. The male-female binary is held in place because we come to see it as the way the world is and therefore ought to be - what is constructed as truth becomes an (apparently) absolute unconstructed truth (9).
In this way, Davies treats the structure of language as providing privileged epistemic access to the subjectivity of boys. But it appears that the subject is caught in an ideological state of false consciousness from which he or she must be freed through engaging in such critical literacy practices. In other words, for Davies, the subject is not only shaped by culture, but can also shape the culture in which he finds himself. This, she argues, has implications for the development of an interventionist literacy practice designed to dismantle 'hegemonic' forms of masculinity:

As Grosz points out, the culture cannot simply be understood as shaping and constraining individuals from outside themselves; rather, their patterns of desire, what she calls their 'inner body', are shaped such that they also actively create the culture in which they are inserted (16).

Thus, in terms of developing a critical literacy practice designed to address issues of masculinity, Davies uses a mode of rationality which involves oscillating between the two poles of the determining state and the self-determining subject (see Hunter, 1993b). In this way, the individual's capacity for making choices and for acting on them are reduced to the interplay between an overarching social structure in the form of patriarchal culture and a portfolio of embodied beliefs and desires (see Hindess, 1989). Davies, thus, treats agency as tied to an emancipatory politics which is realised at the level of consciousness involving the subject's awareness of and attempt to break free of the ideological chains of repression or false consciousness (see also Davies, 1990: 320-321; 1991; 1993; Fairclough, 1989; Giroux, 1990).

This is also the case in the study undertaken by Rhodes (1994) into the literacy practices of a group of adolescent boys in a private coeducational school in South Australia. She claims that the action adventure narratives which boys compose are related to the discourses of masculinity within which the latter discursively construct themselves as 'gendered beings' (1) (see also Davies, 1995). She draws predominantly on the work of Davies (1989, 1990) and Giroux (1990) to invoke a conceptualisation of agency and
subjectivity that is caught in a problematic circularity involving the interplay between freedom and determination which becomes reconciled in the discursive space of consciousness:

Giroux (1990) also emphasises the importance of postmodernist re-theorising of subjectivity:

No longer viewed as merely the repository of consciousness and creativity, the self is constructed as a terrain of conflict and struggle, and subjectivity is seen as the site of both liberation and subjugation. (p.25)

Fairclough (1989) makes a similar point when he says that the word 'subject' can signify not only the active role of 'the one causally implicated in action' but also 'one who is subjected, existing or being placed under the authority of another'. (p.39). Giroux (1990), however, criticises the tendency of postmodern writers to make the subject disappear completely by saying it is entirely constructed by textual and linguistic operations:

The subject is constructed but bears no responsibility for agency since he or she is merely a heap of fragments bereft of any social consciousness regarding the contradictory nature of his or her own experience. There is little sense in many of these accounts of the way in which different historical, social and gendered representations of meaning and desire are actually mediated and taken up subjectively by real, concrete individuals. (p.27)

The dilemma is, of course, that if we accept the fact that we are constrained by the discursive positions available to us, then our freedom of choice is also limited by these discourses. This has enormous implications since, as teachers, we cannot
just introduce the language of libratory discourse and presume that we thus released a more authentic state of being. However, what we can presume is, as Davies (1990) says, that some discursive practices constitute some speakers as agentic, in that they give them the opportunity to make choices. By introducing students to these alternative discourses we give them an opportunity to be critical of the way discourse positions them and to be more aware of the social and personal implications of accepting this position ... Agency, then, is not a means of freeing oneself from discourse, but the capacity to recognise that while one is constituted by discourses, it is possible to resist, subvert and change them (9-10).

And so the pendulum swings from text determining subject to subject as agentic in producing resistant readings of the text, a fundamental oscillation which becomes reconciled in discourse as providing some privileged access to the putative consciousness of the reader. The problem with such conceptualisations of agency is that consciousness emerges as the privileged site for the formation of subjectivity through the deployment of resistant reading practices designed to challenge the ideology of the text. In other words, the hermeneutic subject is invoked as a site for resistance expressed in terms of accessing alternative discourses. Thus the domain of consciousness, as Moon (1993; 1997) argues, defines the limits of such critical literacy reading practices. It is in this sense that boys' readings of texts and their writing practices are irreducible to a general relation between subject and society as realised in discourse:

... knowledge is not stored in consciousness as a vague set of ideas which predisposes the reader to experience [the text] in a particular way; rather, it takes the form of a set of routines assembling readings ... This suggests that reading is less an interpretive practice than an iterative one, in which the accepted terms for speaking about a particular object are "duplicated" rather than extracted/derived (Foucault, Archaeology 100-105). (Moon, 1997: 4).
Here Moon draws attention to the production of readings as effects of a specific ensemble of routinised practices which do not have a teleological foundation in consciousness. Rather, in following Hunter (1982; 1988a; 1991a), he argues that reading practices deployed within the literacy classroom are tied to specific technologies and apparatuses in which the assembling of norms within 'a kind of institutional machinery' are instantiated for governing the conduct of individuals. It is useful at this point to turn to Hunter and his theorisation of subject english and reading because he provides a basis for understanding the ways in which the links between masculinity and boys' engagement with literacy are framed within the context of this thesis.

Reading Practices and Regimes

Hunter points to the problems of critical literacy approaches to reading such as those outlined above by Davies (1997; 1993; 1995), Rhodes (1994a) and Martino (1993) which are grounded in an appeal to a putative consciousness and a general logic of 'full' cultural development realisable in the structure of language or discourse. For Hunter, however, english, and its associative reading practices, emerges within a disciplinary space marked out by a governmental educational apparatus:

English is not the manifestation of literary culture: neither of its 'true' form as the vehicle for a complete development of human capacities, nor of its ideological form as the means of repressing this development in the interests of a particular class. It is not to the great dialectic of culture and ideology that we owe the emergence of English, but to the construction of a special social technology: the apparatus of popular education (67).

Within such an apparatus of popular education, the teaching of english became imbricated with new techniques of pastoral surveillance and new forms of social organisation which combined to form a technology of moral training (Hunter, 1988a: 266). In this way, literary pedagogies took shape within the normalising regimes of governmental
technologies, aimed not only at the 'individual soul', but at the cultural improvement of whole populations. In this way, by drawing attention to the role of specific cultural technologies and practices of the self (Foucault, 1988a; 1988b; 1993) in the emergence of English as a specialised pedagogical discipline, Hunter refuses to appeal to a logic of complete cultural development in which a fundamental division in 'the ethical substance' of the subject becomes reconciled (6). This division around which the split subject is organised, Hunter argues, assumes a dialectical interplay between intellect and feeling, freedom and determination, consciousness and social being, culture and society which had its inception in the deployment of the Romantic aesthetic within an ethical practice for 'shaping the self as subject of moral action and knowledge' (266).

Hunter accounts for such divisions, not so much in terms of them surfacing or being buried in the consciousness of the hermeneutic subject, but in terms of the use of an ethical minority caste practice which initially was circulated through the journalism of the educated middle class (267). Such a practice, he claims, was later redeployed within the normalising apparatus of popular education in which the teaching of English became organised around the imperative to reconcile the divided subject through a tactics of moral supervision and ethical self-shaping:

The links between the minority practice of self-cultivation and the machinery for normalising the cultural attributes of target populations were not being forged inside a single domain of human development: 'society' or 'culture' pictured as a 'line of common growth'. The attributes of the working-class children and their teachers were inseparable from a specific cultural technology, in which the life of the family and the neighbourhood was relayed through the supervisory disciplines of the school (133).

And English emerged within such a disciplinary space of 'supervised freedom' and correction in its redeployment of such practices of self-cultivation in which the surfaces of text and reader responses emerge as sites of moral training and the formation of cultural
attributes of a citizenry (214). Within such an ethical regime of moral invigilation, which is at the basis of current cultural studies and critical literacy models of reading, students are incited to 'express themselves' and to produce readings of texts which are then deciphered by the teacher-critic according to a grid of normalising observation.

The means by which such confessional practices and pastoral techniques of the self became wedded to specific reading practices within subject English is also accounted for by Hunter through the historical redeployment of hermeneutic practices developed within adjacent fields and departments of existence such as the Sunday school, psychology and the institutions of public health. As a result of the development of such disciplinary technologies and administrative apparatuses, the 'domain of the social took shape as a sphere of regulated interventions into the life of target populations'. And, as Hunter argues, it was such a domain in which there appeared 'a series of new, inter-linked administered spaces [that] the deployment of social norms was accompanied by a dissemination of individualised personalities' (49). In this way, English assumed the form of a hybrid technology in which ethical and therapeutic functions or concerns were combined with a tactics of normalisation effected through self-expression (see also Patterson, 1993a):

The demand that the student respond in terms of his own thoughts and feelings, rather than via something learned, was not testimony to the privileged access that literature has to the soul. It arose only after literature had assimilated the techniques of moral supervision through which the 'true character and dispositions' of the student were revealed to the teacher. It was in this apparatus that literature acquired a privileged access to the soul: a soul itself insensibly in the instituted space between self-expression and social normativity (Hunter, 1988: 137).

This is important because it highlights that, in the purpose-built milieu of the school, children were enclosed in a disciplinary space in which they were subject to a regime of normalising pedagogical practices instantiated within a machinery of hierarchical
observation and surveillance. It is in this sense that new social norms developed within an apparatus of moral supervision in which a particular teacher-student relation, organised around moral emulation and correction, emerged (Hunter, 1988a: 64).

According to Hunter, therefore, social norms and techniques of moral individualisation are not reducible to a general logic of cultural completion, which is blocked by the effects of ideology realised at the level of consciousness. Rather, the development of such practices of ethical self-shaping and specific cultural attributes are tied to particular social and historical circumstances in which new forms of social organisation and administration emerge:

[T]he deployment of public education which, in company with the other 'social' apparatuses, brought the formation of cultural attributes within the sphere of systematic administration for the first time, has been marginalised. In its place is projected the image of a general 'cultural process' whereby either in the dialectic between 'man's' thoughts and feelings, or in one reconciling his consciousness and his 'social being' - human attributes are formed according to the goal of total development. In this manner, the actual forms of social administration responsible for making the cultural attributes of the population into an object of knowledge and government are reduced to the status of a more or less inadequate (utilitarian) 'machinery' for 'man's' cultural totalisation (Hunter, 1988: 71).

Such an account of the emergence of English, within the disciplinary space marked out by the apparatus of popular education as a moral technology, is important for understanding the literacy practices of boys within the context of this thesis. It points to the limits of previous studies which treat boys' responses to texts as providing access to a putative consciousness (see Davies, 1995; Martino, 1993). These approaches are grounded in a general logic of cultural completion which is built into the advocacy of a critical literacy or deconstructive reading pedagogy as a basis for enabling boys to achieve a 'fullness of being' that is blocked by the totalising forces of culture. In this thesis, however, boys'
responses to texts/questions are described in terms of the specific capacities that they have acquired for reading texts in quite specific ways which, on particular occasions, appear to be influenced by a regime of normalising practices in which gender, as a designated category of the self, is implicated. These capacities, therefore, are related, both to the effects of specific pedagogies/reading practices to which they have been subjected, and to the assemblage of specific norms around which particular models of masculinity are enacted. But it is emphasised that there is necessarily no general relation between reading and masculinity, only that on certain occasions of reading texts certain norms governing the formation of specific masculinities appear to contribute to the gender inflected nature of the readings that some boys produce of texts in the literacy classroom. Moreover, it is argued that such occasions for reading must be described from case to case in terms of the local deployment of quite specific and variable techniques of the self and reading pedagogies.

It is in this sense that cultural attributes and capacities pertaining to what constitutes appropriate behaviour and modes of relating for adolescent boys - which have been built up in adjacent departments of existence or fields of social practice (family, sport, peer group, media etc.) - intersect with regimes of reading in the literacy classroom on particular occasions. In other words, in this thesis the focus is not on identifying the specific gendered discourses in which boys are positioned and which influence their readings or writing of texts (see Rhodes, 1994a; Davies, 1995; 1997). Rather, attention is drawn to the techniques through which boys construct a particular relation to the self on the occasion of reading specific texts in the literacy classroom (see Hunter, 1988b). Moreover, the assemblage of norms around which specific reading practices and cultural regimens for the formation of specific masculinities are organised, also become the target of analysis.
Implications of Hunter's Work for Understanding Boys' Literacy Practices: A Summary

Firstly, Hunter (1988) claims that a surface is formed by the deployment of a popular literary pedagogy which cannot be reducible to the effects of ideology as grounded in discourse or to some putative state of consciousness as the site for the formation of subjectivity. Rather, by the turn of the nineteenth century, the literature lesson and its associative reading practices, had emerged within a disciplinary technology of moral training and surveillance in which the reader could be exposed to the normalising regimen of self-cultivation. Through the use of specific techniques and rules for reading, formed within a powerful ethical technology, the surface of the literary text functioned as a means by which a normalising tactics of self-expression and correction could be effected in the formation of cultural 'attributes of a citizenry that were realised at the level of individual desires' (214).

The implications of this genealogy for understanding the literacy practices of adolescent boys are that such a theorisation of English enables one to trace the effects of specific technologies of the self through analysing the readings that boys produce of texts on specific occasions in the literacy classroom. More importantly, it enables an alternative theorisation of the links between gender and reading by refusing to reduce specific gendered attributes and normalising practices to the effects of discourse or to a general relation between language and subjectivity. Rather, the extent to which readings of texts are gender inflected is attributable to the effects of a specific regime of practices which have no necessary or general relation to the formation of subjectivity in consciousness. As Hunter (1988a) argues:

[W]hat is to count as a 'representation' has no single, general form ... but must be described from case to case in terms of the contingent deployment of cultural technologies (257).
In other words, the links between gender and reading cannot be reduced to the effects of specific discourses in their representational capacities. Rather, the gender inflected nature of specific reading practices (Moon, 1993; Patterson, 1993b) is described in terms of the achievement of a local ensemble of historical techniques and practices of the self which possess no necessary continuity or relation to a general subjectivity as represented in social consciousness.

Patterson (1993b), for instance, argues that:

If we look at response not as a manifestation of a reader's experience or social consciousness but as a 'program of conduct' it is possible to address issues apart from subjectivity and consciousness: to not submit response to a psychological or a sociological interrogation but to examine it as a particular program arranged within a specific pedagogical regime (4).

In this sense, the focus is shifted to exploring how specific trainings or rules of conduct, around which particular versions of masculinity are organised, intersect with the iteration of specific techniques and rules for reading which form the pedagogical surface of English as a disciplinary space for the ethical formation of particular modes of individualisation. In other words, to what extent are boys' responses to texts, on specific occasions, imbricated in cultural regimens and normalising practices operative in adjacent departments of existence and social fields of experience in which boys learn to establish their masculinities according to an assemblage of gender specific norms for governing their conduct?

Secondly, Hunter (1988a) claims that, historically, a surface was formed through the deployment of a particular aesthetico-ethical practice of criticism which entered the pedagogical space of English, not as a means by which to effect the individual's full realisation of 'culture', but as a normalising tactic of 'moral administration' (214). Such a literary pedagogy, Hunter argues, was organised around a specific 'teacher-student
couple' which embodied relations of identification and correction formed within a
technology of ethical self-shaping. However, Hunter demonstrates that such a pedagogy,
organised around the normalising gaze of the teacher, intersected with *savoirs* of
progressive education and psychology. In this way, such knowledge enabled the ethical
practice of criticism to become tied to the disciplinary functions of the classroom.
Moreover, socio-moral norms were redeployed in a psycho-ethical register in the form of
a literary pedagogy that promised to restore the subject to a consciousness of its
unthought conditions of existence.

Thus, readers were incited to respond to texts under the ethical invigilation and shaping of
the teacher's gaze and in this way revealed their responses to a corrective and moralising
consciousness. Consequently, the subject's divided ethical being became reconciled by
the recovery of its unthought conditions of possibility. The subject's 'unthought being',
therefore, was ultimately tied to grounding culture 'in a fundamental knowledge of human
possibility' (11). In short, the human sciences, Hunter argues, provided a discourse on
the linguistic, psychological and social structures which both determined this unconscious
and revealed its unthought conditions. It is in this sense that the human sciences became
imbricated in a Romantic aesthetic practice centred around the deployment of the literary
text within an ethical technology for the shaping of a moral self.

This overlapping of the Romantic aesthetic with the human sciences, Hunter (1988a)
argues, provided the conditions under which the normalisation and government of target
populations could be effected. Moreover, such a contingency enabled specific cultural
attributes to become objects of systematic development, realisable through the deployment
of techniques of the self already put to work within an ethical technology of moral
administration in the form of popular education. For example, Hunter points out that the
*savoirs* of experimental psychology produced a division between the student's conscious
and unconscious self which then became incorporated into a normalising regime of moral
observation in which the student became subject to the teacher's corrective gaze.
In overlaying this relationship with the division between observable behaviour and unconscious functions, experimental pedagogy made it possible to align the individual as the object of a disciplinary pedagogy with the figure of 'man' in the human sciences. 'Man' in the human sciences, we have observed, is characterised precisely by a division between his empirical behaviour or consciousness and the unconscious laws which make this behaviour or consciousness possible.

So, if the 'psychologisation' of the pedagogical disciplines provided the educative imperative of the Romantic aesthetic with its object, then it simultaneously achieved the same end for the educative imperative of the human sciences. It made available for the first time in a systematic fashion an individual whose responses were governed by laws which escaped his knowledge, and an apparatus in which the clarification of these laws would be made obligatory for an important social stratum (216).

The effect of such a contingency, therefore, was to ground subjectivity in the unconscious which then necessitated the development of a self-problematising practice deployed as a pedagogical discipline whose goal was to restore to consciousness its unthought conditions of possibility. And this leads Hunter to assert that contemporary criticism is an artefact of such a governmental technology for establishing a normative profile for the development of specific cultural and civic attributes for a targeted population:

Today criticism is characterised by two overlapping tendencies: the tendency to push the aesthetic reading to a point where it doubles as its own foundations (New Criticism); and the tendency to locate the theoretical recovery of the subject's 'literary unconscious' in a fully reconciled (self-regulating) aesthetic structure (semiotic, psychological, archetypal and sociological poetics). We know that these two tendencies set the stage for a vociferous and interminable argument within modern criticism between its 'practical' and 'theoretical' wings. It should now be
clear, however, that - like the debate between the 'positivist' and 'reflexive' arms of the human sciences - this debate is constitutionally unresolvable, marking as it does the historical space which modern criticism comes into being. This is the space in which the pedagogical imperatives of the Romantic aesthetic and the human sciences were able to meet, in a being characterised by a divided ethical substance and a pre-theoretical consciousness. These attributes of the subject of modern criticism are not, of course, attributes of 'man'. Rather, they mark the exact point at which the pedagogical disciplines allow social norms to take root in the depths of 'man's' educable being, which is their artefact (218-19).

Thus, Hunter highlights the role that the emergence of English, as a pedagogical discipline, had to play at a particular historical juncture, involving the migration of the human sciences into the disciplinary space of the popular school. In short, he argues that it created the possibility for a normative profile of cultural and civic attributes to be built up within a network of specific apparatuses. In this way, within the disciplinary space of popular education, it became possible to target, in a systematic way, particular norms for governing conduct and the development of quite specific cultural attributes across target populations.

It is in this capacity that Hunter's work has significant implications for conceptualising gender reform in schools and for developing specific literacy practices for boys in the English classroom. To treat the formation of specific gender capacities as grounded in discourse and, hence, as blocked or 'deformed' by the effects of ideology, is to resort to the imperative to restore the subject's unconscious being to consciousness. And this is definitely the grounds upon which many of the current programs for enhancing boys' critical literacy are based (see Alloway et al, 1996; Davies, 1997; Lemon, 1996; Hansen, 1996; King, 1996; Millard, 1997). This, it is argued here, is to misconceive the conditions under which such capacities and cultural attributes are formed and become the object of systematic development in the government of populations. It is through the deployment of quite specific and historically contingent apparatuses, in which the
corrective force of pedagogical disciplines take shape, that the norms governing the conduct and development of specific capacities for boys across target populations can be implanted and thereby operationalised within a 'normative profile of attributes for a citizenry' (269).

It is in this sense that the focus in this thesis is on the reading practices of adolescent boys and the assemblage of norms around which particular versions of masculinity are organised. The tendency, therefore, to ground the readings that boys produce of texts in a theoretical recovery of their unthought conditions, which are masked by ideology or repressive mechanisms operative at the level of the unconscious, is refuted. Rather, it is argued that it is not possible to reduce boys' reading and gendered practices to a single, general regimen operative and realisable in 'culture' as manifested in the effects of discourse or the unconscious.

Moreover, the focus is on the development of pedagogical imperatives that can be built into a regime of literacy practices for targeting the adjustment of specific norms around which particular gendered behaviours are organised for boys. But this political project is not framed in anticipation of the complete development of human capacities realisable in 'the subject's unthought being', understood in terms of a single, general relation between language and social experience or reading and subjectivity. As Hunter (1988b) argues, historically, the basis for a normative profile of civic attributes and capacities:

...was built up inside a specific investigative and administrative network which contained apparatuses like the popular school; that is, apparatuses capable of securing the systematic formation of these attributes. The fact that such an apparatus imposes norms for capacities and conduct; the fact that it is organised around techniques of moral supervision; and the fact that these techniques are embodied in unequal relations between differentially constructed social agents (the teacher-student couple) - none of these facts is grounds per se for an ethical or political critique of education in general or literary education in particular. They
become so only if one considers that a true 'cultural politics' must be embodied in forms of social organisation in which social norms are not imposed until they have been organically realised in the breast of each individual (269).

Thus, the focus in this thesis is on an analytics which avoids treating schools or the disciplinary space of the literacy classroom as failing to achieve or realise the complete development of human capacities which can somehow be restored to consciousness in the register of culture or an ethical discipline (Hunter, 1988a: 248). Rather, attention is drawn to the gender inflected readings boys produce of particular texts, not so much in terms of deciphering the effects of masculinity as grounded in discourse or manifested in the structure of language, but in terms of an assemblage of norms and techniques which are deployed on the specific and local occasion of reading (see Hunter 1988b ).

Mellor (1992) and Patterson (1993a; 1993b; 1996) develop further such post-Foucauldian theoretical perspectives on english as a disciplinary technology. For instance, they theorise reading in terms of an ensemble of practices which is irreducible to the effects of discourse or the recovery of the subject's unthought conditions of possibility in consciousness (see also Mellor and Patterson, 1994; 1996b). Mellor, moreover, argues that all currencies of English (Cultural Heritage, Personal Growth, Cultural Studies) are underscored by a fundamental rationality which is organised around two principles:

(i) a promised reconciliation of the divided nature of the individual leading to the complete development of human capacities;

(ii) reading practices which are grounded in a restoration or recovery of consciousness.

Such work is useful because it points to the limits of current cultural studies models of english which deploy reading practices as instruments of cultural completion. Rather, Mellor (1992) and Patterson (1996) argue that it is perhaps more useful to theorise
reading practices in terms of specific competencies and trainings which are the effect of the operation of quite specifiable but variable techniques.

Patterson, for instance, claims that the language-subjectivity nexus at the basis of current approaches to the teaching of reading needs to be unhinged:

English teachers are faced on a daily basis with a 'people' who must/should/might conceivably become 'capable of the decisions and responsibilities of a full democracy'. It does not seem helpful to claim that students could achieve this capability through their 'transactions with literature' on the assumption that it is there that they can make the necessary transformative connections between 'personal consciousness' and 'events', or even to claim - in more modern parlance - that fundamental links between 'language and subjectivity' or language and experience provide the ground for the critical or linguistic transformations required for an emancipated society. It may be time for English to give up the claim for creating general, or even specific capacities subordinated to the principle of emancipation and to address, instead, the more mundane practicalities concerning the types of techniques classroom strategists need to devise if students are to acquire those capacities necessary for 'doing things' with texts in particular 'departments of existence' (10).

It is in this sense that Patterson refuses an appeal to explanatory tropes such as discourse or consciousness to account for the effects of particular regimes of reading. Neither does she resort to a conceptualisation of reading as an instrument of cultural completion which guarantees a promised reconciliation of the divided nature of the individual and society. Rather, in following Hunter (1988a), Patterson, like Mellor (1992), emphasises that no general epistemological relation exists between language and experience which can form the basis for grounding specific capacities for reading in discourse framed in terms of the 'expression of a system which is either hidden from, present, or restored to consciousness' (4). Alternatively, such theorists argue that language or discourse does
not have a totalising role in the formation of subjectivity, but rather is deployed according to 'the highly various logics [of] open-ended ensembles of behaviours, forms of calculation, social relations, norms, architectures, trainings - that give rise to the forms of human agency and capacity characteristic of different departments of existence' (Hunter, 1991a: 47).

Thus, it is argued in this thesis that the focus needs to be on developing pedagogies which are organised around an explicitly acknowledged set of norms for teaching students quite specific capacities for reading masculinity (Patterson, 1996: 10). Since no claim can be made for grounding the formation of human capacities in a putative consciousness as manifested in the structure of language, discourse or the unconscious, it is argued that it is erroneous to treat boys' readings of texts in these terms. For instance, if the way boys read texts on specific occasions is related to the effects of quite specific and variable techniques deployed within the disciplinary space of the literacy classroom, it might be more useful and practical to conceptualise reading as a regime of practices organised around the assemblage of particular norms for shaping conduct and gendered behaviours within specifiable limits. In short, what is to count as the meaning of a text is produced through boys' insertion into locally specific and variable regimes of practice which have no necessary or single determination in the nature of society or the putative consciousness of the subject (see Foucault, 1972: 101-105; Mellor, 1992: 6).

Luke and Freebody (1996) also take up the question of normativity with regard to the development of specific models of critical literacy. For instance, they claim:

The issue of normativity is this: All models of literacy are predicated upon and prescriptive of particular social logics, particular formulae for the economies of value and exchange for textuality in everyday life (4).
On this basis, they argue that it is necessary to analyse the localised set of material conditions and practices involving teachers and students in the literacy classroom as an institutional site for the deployment of quite specific norms and cultural projects:

If we begin, then, from this key proposition - that literacy education is not a technical/scientific problem but a normative social and cultural project - then the ways of constructing critical literacies likewise require a critical analysis of the material conditions facing teachers and students. The face-to-face normative decisions made by teachers and students in classrooms ... are constrained by local pedagogic conditions (5).

It is in this capacity that Luke and Freebody draw attention to the institutional use of specific literacy practices, which, they argue, are implicated in specific regulatory technologies for individualising subjects and disciplining whole communities according to the operation of specific norms for governing conduct and the distribution of resources:

Our position is that institutional context is not benign or neutral, but rather must be seen as informed by social contracts and historical projects for moulding, making and disciplining human subjects, populates and communities - and for shaping and distributing cultural and material resources (2).

Thus, attention here is drawn to the role of governmental technologies of the self in the production of subjectivities through the instantiation of literacy practices within particular apparatuses for the formation of quite specific cultural attributes across target populations (see Hunter, 1988a). It is in this sense that Freebody and Luke argue for a micropolitical approach to analysing literacy practices - one which forges links between the local set of literacy practices and the wider social and cultural terrain of the historical deployment of quite specific governmental technologies and administrative apparatuses:
This is precisely where many current approaches to literacy fall short, providing a micro-analytic focus on fixing methods, texts and learners rather than beginning by addressing the material consequences of selective traditions of curriculum - by taking up questions of what kinds of local textual practices can and should be forged in relation to larger social forces and dynamics, and how community, technological and global change can form the very bases and objects of study of a critical literacy curriculum (2) (my emphasis).

A microanalytic focus informs the approach adopted in this thesis with regards to examining the literacy practices of a group of adolescent boys. Such practices are tied to specific technologies and apparatuses for deploying texts according to the assemblage of quite specific norms and a tactics for reading. Within such a post-Foucauldian frame, certain questions are taken up with regard to addressing what kinds of literacy practices might be developed, at the local level, for assisting boys to develop critical capacities for reading masculinity. In this way, a strategic attempt is made to avoid linking the development of specific literacy practices involving adolescent boys to a necessary or single determination in society, culture or the discursive consciousness of the human subject.

Gender and Reading

Moon (1993), in drawing on Foucauldian theories of language, social practice and subjectivity, elaborates an account of the link between gender and reading. He claims that since reading is an effect of specific social and cultural practices, formed within particular apparatuses, the effectivity of texts cannot be tied to a general relation between language and subjectivity/consciousness. On this basis, he argues that no general relation exists between gender and reading. Rather, as it is argued in this thesis, he claims that attention must be drawn to specific reading practices and gender knowledges that are deployed within particular regulatory technologies (Hunter, 1988a; 1988b; 1982; 1983; 1984a; 1991a; Mellor & Patterson, 1991; Patterson, 1993a; 1993b). This is particularly relevant
to developing an understanding of boys' engagement with and involvement in specific literacy practices within the limits of this thesis.

Moon also claims that the prevailing theorisations of reading and gender informed by feminist criticism propose that there is a necessary and general relation between these phenomena (see Cixous & Clement, 1986; Flynn & Schweickart, 1986; Fetterly, 1978; Davies, 1989; 1992; Gilbert & Taylor, 1991; Christian-Smith, 1993). Such approaches are underscored by the assumption that 'there are general mechanisms by which texts participate in the engendering of readers' (Moon, 1992: iv). According to Moon, this is framed in terms of privileging subjectivity as an effect of discourse which takes centre stage in the accounts that are provided of the role gender plays both in the production and reception of texts. The assumption at the basis of such accounts, he claims, is that the link between gender and reading is attributable to a general relation between social organisation, language and subjectivity.

In fact, it is argued in this thesis that what remains intact in many poststructuralist theorisations of this link between gender and reading is this privileged connection between language and consciousness in the form of discourse and subjectivity (see Moon, 1993: 81; Hunter, 1991a). In this thesis, therefore, it is suggested that texts can and do become implicated in the production of masculinity, but that it is inadequate theoretically to use explanatory tropes such as ideology or discourse, which are grounded in appeals to a putative discursive consciousness, to account for such practices. Furthermore, it is argued that to do so is to invoke a general language-subject relation as the basis for theorising gendered reading practices and the mechanisms by which texts are used in the engendering of readers. Rather, an alternative theorisation of gender and reading is proposed in this thesis which accounts for boys' reading preferences and readings of particular texts in terms of the deployment of historically contingent knowledges, practices and forms of agency merging and colliding within specific departments of existence. As Moon (1993: 3) argues:
There is no general relation between linguistic and social phenomena, and
subjectivity ... human capacities are formed within specific social departments and
neither 'society' nor the subject should be conceived as totalities or as
complementary aspects of a totality ... It is proposed that reading has no general
form, and that far from being an instance in which the general relation of
consciousness to experience is secured via 'knowledge' (or distorted via ideology),
'reading' is a historically variable practice involving shifting competencies, the
nature and extent of which are determined within specific social regimes or
'departments of existence' (Weber qtd in Hunter, "From Discourse" 41).

In this sense, it is argued that masculinity, and the way it is enacted in boys' lives across
various 'departments' of social practice, is an important coordinate in the reading and
aesthetico-ethical use of texts within the context specific site of the literacy classroom.
However, gender is not necessarily a factor for all boys on all occasions of reading texts.
Thus, the focus is on the relationship between practices of reading and constructions of
masculinity within subject english as a pedagogical and disciplinary space for the
formation of quite specific capacities. While evidence will be provided to support the
claim that specific reading practices are imbricated in gender regimes, it is argued that this
is in no way consistent for all boys on all occasions of their reading of designated texts.
Rather, the overlapping of specific regimes of practice, in which constructions of
masculinity have a role to play, must be described from case to case in terms of a cultural
regimen of ethical techniques and pedagogical imperatives whose deployment is
occasional (see Hunter, 1988b ). The threshold of interpretation, therefore, is delimited
by the local use of quite specific techniques and practices in a particular system of person
formation. It is not that the unconscious structural conditions of masculinity will be
recovered through analysing boys' readings of texts.

Moreover, the links between masculinity and reading are not underscored by a general
logic or psychological structure applicable across most occasions of reading for boys.
Rather, their capacity to read for masculinity, or to read masculinity on the surface of the
text, is dependent on the practical mastery of a specific 'intellectual action' (Hunter, 1988b: 170). Furthermore, it is argued that this may well account for the fact that some boys may read for masculinity on a specific occasion while others do not. Some boys may have been subject to a pedagogical imperative to problematise masculinity on the surface of the text and gained a practical mastery of this intellectual action, while others may not have been trained in such a practice. On the other hand, in the absence of a pedagogical imperative to read for masculinity, many boys may simply not produce such readings. In other words, such ways of reading may not be as readily available to them because they have not been subjected to such pedagogical routines in which they are required to problematise masculinity on a regular basis.

This theorisation of reading for masculinity is informed by the work of Wittgenstein (1967) who distinguishes between the concepts of 'seeing' and 'interpretation' which he argues are quite different phenomena:

208. Let us consider what is said about a phenomenon like this:

Seeing the figure F now as an F, now as the mirror image of an F.

I want to ask: what constitutes seeing the figure now like this, now another way? - Do I really see something different every time? Or do I merely interpret what I see in a different way? - I am inclined to say the first. But why? Well, interpreting is a procedure. It may for example consist in somebody's saying 'That is supposed to be an F'; or not saying it, but replacing the sign with an F in copying; or again considering: 'What can that be? It'll be an F that the writer did not hit off' - Seeing is not an action but a state. (A grammatical remark.) And if I have never read the figure as anything but an F, or considered what it might be, we shall say that I see it as F: if, that is, we know that it can also be seen differently. I should call it 'interpretation' if I were to say 'That is certainly supposed to be an F: the writer does all his F's like that' (Wittgenstein, 1967: 37-38).
Seeing, therefore, involves a practical set of circumstances which do not always require texts to be interpreted. For instance, texts may just be reacted to or used without necessarily resorting to interpretative procedures. This is not to conceptualise 'seeing' as a practice which necessarily involves a lack of reflexivity. The point is that interpretation, which is a procedural activity, may not always be required to be performed on the surface of the text, but is brought into play according to specific norms and sets of circumstances in which the text is deployed (see Hunter, 1988b). It is in this sense that Wittgenstein stresses the scope and specific limits of interpretation as an occasional practice determined by the practical mastery of certain skills in particular situations:

For how do we arrive at the concept of 'seeing this or that' at all? On what occasions does it get formed, when is there a need of it? (Very frequently in Art.) Where, for example, there is a question of phrasing by eye or ear. We say 'You have to hear these bars as an introduction', 'You must hear it as in this key'. 'Once you have seen this figure ... it is difficult to see it otherwise'. 'I hear the French 'ne ... pas' as a negation in two parts, not as 'not a step' etc., etc. Now, is it a real case of seeing or hearing? Well, we call it that; we react with these words in particular situations. And we react to these words in turn by particular actions (Wittgenstein, 1967: 38).

Thus, interpretive practices or reading in particular ways, such as in the case of requiring boys to problematise masculinity on the surface of the text, is understood in terms of the insertion of a pedagogical imperative into a regime of reading 'according to the norms of particular 'forms of living' or social apparatuses' (Hunter, 1988b: 170). It is argued, therefore, that capacities for reading and interpreting texts are not determined by a general location or logic in the discursive consciousness of the subject. Such capacities are not realised in that space between empirical perceptions and critical reflection, which is premised on a restoration of their conditions of possibility. Rather, as Hunter (1988b) argues, such capacities:
... are built up piecemeal-fashion through the practical mastery of special ensembles of techniques, exercises, and perceptual routines. These ensembles are not embodied in 'the subject' and are instead maintained in definite apparatuses (for example, the school) and instituted relationships, like those of supervision and correction linking the teacher and student. As such they need to possess no common form: think of the difference between gradual mastery of the rhetorical tropes through the imitation of a master, and the practice of ethical division and reconciliation through which the Romantic Aesthetic shapes the relation to the 'self'. It is, therefore, something of a fiction to unify these dispersed ensembles under the single heading of 'interpretive routines'. They possess no necessary relation to each other, nor do they share the same range of functions or participate in the same 'forms of living'.

In other words, it is misleading to conceive of these ensembles as 'conditions of knowledge' or as chains of 'subject positions'. They do not subtend a single general surface of indeterminate...perception and hence they are not stitched together by the promise of the subject's mobility across this surface. Rather, their mode of existence appears to be that of contingent activities, exercises, and techniques whose practical mastery is responsible for the formation of specific non-aggregative capacities (178-79).

Thus, boys' acquisition of specific capacities for reading masculinity is dependent on their practical mastery of interpretive procedures which is maintained through their insertion into a regime of iterative routines, practices and pedagogical imperatives involving the deployment of texts. Such an approach to theorising the links between masculinity and reading avoids treating the development of quite specific capacities in terms of subjectivity and its conditions of possibility. However, this imperative to recover for consciousness its unthought conditions of possibility does not derive from the subject, but, as Hunter argues, from 'that contingent intellectual action in which the
positive sciences were redeployed in the space of representation' (182) (see also Foucault, 1971). In other words, it is not in the subjectivity of the student that the links between masculinity and reading are grounded. Instead, connections may be made in terms of the use of the text within a specific regime of practices and assemblage of gender norms which have no general or single formation in a putative discursive consciousness. Thus, when boys read for masculinity, they are acting in accordance with an imperative that is deployed as a pedagogical norm or 'task of behaviour'.

Within the disciplinary space of the literacy classroom, however, such pedagogies may overlap with regimes instituted in other departments of social practice in which boys enact their masculinities producing quite different responses to texts. Current critical literacy approaches to theorising the links between masculinity and boys' literacy practices in terms of boys' capacity for interpretation, derived from relations of recognition and reflection which supposedly link the subject to the text, propose such differences, therefore, in terms of misrecognition or emancipation.

Davies (1995) provides an exemplary instance of this problematic that grounds the acquisition of boys' specific capacities for reading masculinity in subjectivity and its conditions of possibility. For instance, she argues that boys position themselves within particular narrative structures and advocates the need to develop strategies to destabilise 'hegemonic' masculinities. However, she emphasises that because of the ways in which hegemonic masculinity is established within a patriarchal gender system, which defines masculinity and femininity in opposition to one another, difficulties may arise in attempting to make available alternative versions of masculinity. This is because attempts to destabilise 'hegemonic' versions of masculinity, she argues, may lead to them being reworked still within dualistic categories:

If male is the ascendant category of a binary pair, any shift that appears to disrupt the binary will lead to a re-balancing to re-establish the binary and with it the ascendancy of masculinity (Davies, 1995: 1).
Davies supports such assertions by referring to an incident in a fifth grade classroom where one boy resists the attempt by his teacher to encourage him to write an alternative story about pirates, one which deviates from constructing pirates as violent and mean. He ends up by writing a story in which Ken who was sailing with Barbie encounters a pirate ship. The pirates 'hijack' the ship and take Barbie hostage. However, the narrator informs the reader that 'it was a set up' and three weeks later, Ken, who worked for the pirates, ends up by going into Barbie's room where she is held captive and, with an axe, cuts off Barbie's head, arms and legs. He then threw her head to the sharks who ate her for dinner.

This narrative is used by Davies to argue that we need to think about "how masculinities are constructed through the discourses and storylines of culture" (9) and:

to find ways in which teachers can work with boys to make available to them a reflexive literacy, a literacy that makes visible the ways in which individuals are constituted through the very acts of reading and writing as one kind of being rather than another, caught up in one form of power relation or another, but always with political effects (10).

However, it would appear that this argument is located in a fundamental problematic in which capacities that are acquired on the basis of practical mastery - the need to teach boys to read and write critically about masculinity and to produce 'non-hegemonic' versions of masculinity - become indistinguishable from pre-given capacities - the failure to acknowledge that the boy who chooses to take up the misogynist position of Ken, the pirate, has already developed specific capacities and competencies to enable him to 'position himself' in this way. Thus, Davies' critical literacy agenda is underscored by a particular regime 'in which our subjectivity is always already in place' (Hunter, 1988b: 177). As Hunter argues:
We have seen that authority in modern criticism is not a function of the relation between the subject and the text. It does not have a 'bad' form, deriving from the subject's failure[or refusal] to think its unthought formation and hence claim the radical equality of enlightenment. But neither does it have a 'good' form, deriving from the fact that the subject is always already 'at home' in the norms and categories which relate it to the world. Hence authority cannot be abolished through a reflexive action in which subjectivity theorises its own possibility and thereby subordinates authority to knowledge. But neither can it be domesticated through a gesture of belief or commitment in which the subject finds itself 'always already in place', thereby purifying authority in the comforting ontology of 'being' and 'becoming'. Instead authority in modern criticism is the escapable product of the pedagogical imperatives and techniques and the purpose-built relations of supervision and correction deployed in the teacher-student couple (183) (my emphasis).

The effects of such a critical literacy practice as the one outlined by Davies (1995; 1997), therefore, is to 'reinstate the subject as the general site of epistemological clarification' (Hunter, 1988b:174). It is essentially through the processes of recognition and reflection that the subject is linked to the text. This is effected through a single general logic in which consciousness is grounded in discourse. In this sense, Davies advocates a self-problematising ethico-political literacy practice for boys, which in itself is not considered to be at odds with the reading practices promoted in this thesis for targeting masculinity. However, what is argued here to be problematic is Davies' linking of the individual to a problematised self through a reflexive action grounded in a discursive consciousness. Moreover, such critical literacy practices emerge in an extra-governmental space which fail to take into consideration the ensemble of techniques and perceptual routines that are built up and maintained within apparatuses in which specific relationships of supervision and correction, involving the teacher-student couple, are instituted (see Hunter, 1988a).
Moon (1993) rejects such critical literacy models of reading as those espoused by Davies (1995), and other poststructuralists, that privilege subjectivity as a means by which language, human capacities and social practice are unified under a general totalising principle of cultural development:

[Post-structuralist theories preserve the privileged connection between language and consciousness in the forms of discourse and subjectivity (Hunter, 'From Discourse' 37). They combine a totalising model of language with a linguistic model of subjectivity through mechanisms such as Benveniste's account of the operation of personal pronouns, Foucault's archaeological model of discursive practice, or even Fish's concept of the interpretive community. In this way post-structural models continue to pursue the goal of a complete, unified description of social practices, and the inversion of system over practice is re-invoked by a process of transposition (81).

Thus, in following Foucault, (1982b) and Hunter (1984a; 1988a; 1991a), Moon conceptualises reading 'as a patchwork of social apparatuses or dispositifs [which] are localised structures characterised by specific regimes of practice and forms of agency' (20). In this way, he elaborates a theorisation of the links between gender and reading which deploys a Foucauldian analytics of power that is organised around the notion of a 'strategy without a subject' (Foucault, 1980c: 202):

The text is not given as an object to the reader, but is produced as a certain kind of object by a practice that also produces a 'subject' - in this case, a certain kind of reader. (65)

This notion of reading as a practice forms the basis for developing an understanding of the mechanisms by which gender norms become imbricated in the readings that students produce of texts. What needs to be emphasised here, though, is that readers follow certain rules on occasions which require them to produce particular responses (see
Wittgenstein, 1958: 67-68; Hunter, 1988b). It is in this sense that power is activated through social apparatuses in which human capacities are produced (Hunter, 1988b: 183).

Moon thus argues that the links between gender and reading cannot be reduced to the 'unitary or dispersed positionalities made available to individuals by a social-semiotic system through which a general relationship between consciousness and reality is secured' (23). This is in line with Hunter's (1988b) point that:

... power does not operate on individuals indirectly, through their unconscious, by blocking knowledge. Instead, it takes hold of individuals directly (by requiring the exercise of certain skills and techniques; by instituting certain relations of emulation and correction between them) where it in fact produces knowledge (of the state of sensibility; of the level of theoretical awareness). And this means that strategies to modify the institution of criticism cannot assume the global form from a reduction of authority to reason: one that would reconstruct the supervisory relations of criticism on the basis of a single fundamental knowledge of its object and subject (183).

This singular object-subject relation is, of course, characteristic of many critical literacy and cultural studies pedagogies (see Fish, 1980; Gilbert & Taylor, 1991; Christian-Smith, 1993; Davies, 1989; 1992). It is argued here, however, that it is not possible to theorise reading and the imbrication of gender norms in such a practice in terms of the staging of representations in consciousness, conceptualised as the privileged site for the formation of quite specific capacities and techniques of subjectification. As Hunter (1983) claims:

There is an insistence that representations arise from material practices, and do not originate in a homogeneous faculty of recognition ('mind') in the form of a
general relation between consciousness and things. Rather representations result from diverse practices and techniques ... (227).

This thesis argues, therefore, that there is no general relation between the subject and society which informs gendered reading practices and which is mediated via language or discourse (see Martino, 1993). Rather, it proposes a model of language which disengages the interdependent relationship between language and thought (see Wittgenstein, 1953; Mauss, 1973; Foucault, 1984d: 334-35). In this way, an attempt is made to break the consciousness-social practice nexus which relies on a totalising model of language as a social-semiotic system for mediating subjectivity and 'reality'.

This position is in line with Wittgenstein (1953: 23) who argues that language is a game which can take many forms such as giving an order, making a request, formulating a hypothesis etc. Language use, therefore, is conceptualised in terms of its practical mastery and, like other behaviours such as driving a car or playing the piano, is a specific capacity which is 'the product of local and specific trainings' (Moon, 1993: 86). In this sense, it has no single mechanism governing its use:

Instead of producing something common to all that we call language, I am saying that these phenomena have no one thing in common which makes us use the same word for all - but that they are related to one another in many different ways. And it is because of this relationship, or these relationships, that we call them all "language" (Wittgenstein, 1953: 65).

Thus, there can be no underlying commonality grounding language in a fundamental and single relation to the processes of thought. Rather, its use is structured according to the rules and norms associated with a particular 'form of life' or department of existence. This is not to say that there can be no overlapping of language games or of the ways that language is used according to specifiable norms across various departments of social
practice. In fact, Wittgenstein refers to such a systematisation of the operation of such practices as 'family resemblances' (67).

Such a theorisation of language is pertinent to the argument developed in this chapter regarding the links between reading and gender for boys. In refusing to ground reading in a fundamental linguistic practice in which subjectivity emerges in a discursive consciousness, it is argued that reading in particular ways is an occasional practice involving 'doing things with texts' that are limited to the deployment of specific apparatuses and norms around which particular versions of masculinity and regimes of reading are organised. What is important to emphasise is that the links between text, reading practices and the formation of masculinity cannot be allowed to collapse into a single domain of practice which is reliant on a general relation between language and consciousness. This is because the insertion and implantation of norms governing the knowledges and practices which produce particular models of masculinity are established outside of the domain of specific literacy practices.

This is not to say, however, that the assemblage of norms governing the ways in which boys learn to establish particular models of masculinity do not impact on their reading practices and deployment of texts. In fact, there are 'family resemblances' in terms of the crisscrossing and overlapping of particular practices and techniques of the self whose operation is systematised across various departments of existence for boys according to the assemblage of gender specific norms formed within particular apparatuses and regulatory technologies of surveillance.

Thus, while it is argued that there may be links between boys' reading practices and the production of gender, it is emphasised that there is no general or necessary relation between the former and the latter. Moreover, the links that do exist cannot be understood or theorised in terms of a fundamental subject-language relation organised around representations of masculinity in critical consciousness. Rather, the imbrication of masculinity in the readings that adolescent boys produce of designated texts is understood.
as an occasional practice limited to the development of quite specific capacities and attitudes which are implanted through the trainings of the body and the mind operationalised in adjacent departments of existence (see Mauss, 1985). In other words, these kinds of capacities have already been built up in a piecemeal fashion in fields of social practice such as the family, media and wider context of the school, conceived of as sites for the formation and maintenance of specific models of masculinity. Such capacities may be operationalised in adolescent boys' use of texts on specific occasions in the literacy classroom.
CHAPTER TWELVE
Boys' Reading Preferences

Introduction

In this chapter boys' engagement with and involvement in specific literacy practices are placed under investigation. Through using particular confessional techniques of knowledge production in the form of surveys and semi-structured interviews with adolescent boys (Mottier, 1995), an attempt is made to trace the imbrication of particular models of masculinity in specific regimes of practice governing boys' involvement in literacy (see Moon, 1993; Mellor, 1992; Martino, 1993; Davies, 1995; 1997; Alloway et al, 1996; Rhodes, 1994; Kenworthy; 1994; Patterson, 1989). Hence, the focus is on analysing particular techniques and regulatory technologies of the self implicated in adolescent boys' reading practices (see Mellor & Patterson, 1991; Foucault, 1980c; 1993; 1985a; 1986; 1988a; 1988b; Patterson, 1993a; 1993b; 1996).

The boys' responses to questions, therefore, are not presented as enabling the researcher to gain some kind of privileged access to boys' consciousness. Moreover, they are not treated as surfaces for reading off the effects of particular forms of masculinity. Rather, the ways in which boys respond to the questions posed to them on specific occasions, are conceptualised as the effects of a particular assemblage of norms and gender knowledges. These norms, it is argued, are operationalised through the use of specific regulatory and disciplinary technologies in which a regimen of iterative self-fashioning practices are formed. In this sense, attention is drawn to the various ways in which adolescent boys use texts, reading practices and particular gender knowledges on specific occasions in the literacy classroom and in adjacent domains of social practice (see Moon, 1993).

The focus here is on exploring a group of boys' reading preferences in terms of the theoretical frames of reference established in the previous chapter which link reading practices to the deployment of particular technologies of the self and the assemblage of
gender specific norms and behaviours. There has been extensive research conducted into
differential patterns of reading on the basis of gender, but such studies are grounded in
either discourse analysis or forms of cultural critique which link reading practices and the
formation of gendered subjectivity to a fundamental relation between language and
consciousness (see Martino, 1993; Gilbert & Row 1989, Gilbert, 1989; Gilbert and
Hayes, 1994; Millard, 1997). For example, in a recent study conducted by Hall and
Coles (1997) into boys' reading preferences the following observation is made:

It comes as no surprise to find that 10 year-old boys enjoy adventure, humour and
football books ... An interest in war and science fiction stories which starts at 10
becomes more noticeable, as does an increase in interest in fantasy and horror
stories (64).

They also point to boys' preference for reading comics, newspapers and football
magazines. While not denying that many boys do indeed engage in such reading
practices, the point of contention is Coles and Hall's invocation of a critical literacy
practice which is grounded in a logic of cultural completion:

It is to suggest that all pupils can be taken forward in their reading habits and
understanding if they are encouraged to take a critical perspective on their own
reading diet, and if they are helped to see how as readers they are constructed by
their culture. This might happen, for instance, if pupils were asked to reflect on
their own reading histories and how they had come to have the tastes they have, or
if there were more discussion in classrooms about how children might negotiate
their own paths through the rampant consumerism or the moral and ethical issues
which are raised in and by their magazines; or if there was no more recognition
within the reading curriculum that reading magazines might not be a light and
trivial pursuit, but might assist a reader in becoming more skilled and discerning
(67).
While not disputing the possibility of drawing on students' reading of popular cultural texts as the basis for developing a literacy pedagogy whose target is the formation of quite specific capacities and skills, attention here is drawn to the deployment of a general model of subjectivity as a basis for understanding boys' reading preferences. In this way, a fundamental link between reading and subjectivity is established as the basis for formulating a self-reflexive critical practice which invokes a logic of restoring the subject to some form of consciousness which will enable him/her to break free of the effects of ideology. In this thesis, however, boys' reading preferences and practices are not tied to a general mechanism of subject formation which privileges and preserves a fundamental relation between language and consciousness.

Moreover, the tendency to deploy a logic, which is built on the imperative to reconcile the opposing poles of the totalising forces of culture on the one hand and the self-determining subject on the other in the space of discursive consciousness, is also refuted. Rather, boys' reading practices and preferences are understood, not in terms of their positionality in various discourses, but in terms of the contingent effects of specific institutional technologies and regimes of practice.

**Researching Boys' Reading Preferences**

In order to gain a greater understanding of boys' reading preferences, a survey was administered in 1996 to a group of 42 Year 10 boys studying English at the same Catholic co-educational high school referred to in previous chapters. The sample was comprised mostly of middle-class Anglo-Australian boys aged 14-15 years of age, though some students had ethnic backgrounds, with either one or both of their parents being born in Eastern Europe (Poland) or Asia (Malaysia, India, Singapore). The objective in using such a research tool was to incite boys to disclose knowledge about their reading preferences so that specific techniques and ensembles of practices governing their reading habits and routines could be described. In this way, it was thought that it would be
possible to analyse the extent to which particular categories of 'masculinity' were imbricated in the reading practices of these boys.

The students were asked the following questions (see Appendix E):

1. Do you enjoy reading? If you do not like reading can you explain why in detail? Similarly, if you like reading can you try to explain why?

2. What kinds of texts do you like reading?

3. Do you enjoy reading fiction (novels/short stories)? What kinds of novels/short stories would you read? Can you tell me about those stories/novels that you have really enjoyed?

Through the inclusion of question three it was thought that knowledge about boys' reading of fiction could be provided. The aim, therefore, was to obtain data on the extent to which boys' reading preferences gravitated to the stereotypical gender marked sub-genres of science fiction, fantasy and adventure.

Analysing the Data

What follows is an attempt to provide an overview of the patterns which emerged in the boys' responses to the above questions. Many of them tended to reject reading on the basis that they found it boring and a waste of time (see also Millard, 1977; Martino, 1993). One boy, for instance, made this comment in response to question three:

No, I do not like reading fiction - heaps and heaps of pages of shit, that is what it's made up of. (Brett)
The following response was also fairly representative of the views many boys expressed about reading fiction:

I don't like reading fiction stories, they have no point and reading is a very boring way to spend free time. (Shaun)

Many boys even indicated that they preferred engaging in other practices which they found more desirable:

I don't like reading. I think it's because I'm an active person and can't sit down doing nothing. I like playing sports or being outside. (Jeremy)

Reading is not for me because I always have something on outside. I play a lot of sport and spend a lot of time with mates. So I don't have the time. (Ben)

I do not like reading. I am not someone who is able to sit still and read for a while, I would rather be outside with friends, or working on my bike or watching a video, or listening to music and playing on my 'gameboy'. I find these activities more amusing and more worthwhile. (Craig)

I do not like reading. There are lots of better things to waste my time on like Superintendo, TV, playing sports like football and basketball. (Greg)

I don't enjoy reading that much because I have not found that many books that take my fancy. I find reading boring because I like more energetic things eg. sports, surfing. Anyway, there are not enough good books in the world. (Robert)

I do not like reading novels because they are boring. Why read when you can go to the beach or do something physically entertaining? (Damian)
These students appear to be using dualistic frames of reference to make sense of their 'experience' of reading. Their responses, in fact, highlight the extent to which reading must be understood as a social practice which is imbricated in gender regimes operationalised across departments of existence outside of, but adjacent to, the literacy classroom (See Moon, 1993). These boys reject reading and define it in opposition to practices that they find more enjoyable and worthwhile (see Martino, 1993). Jeremy, Ben and Craig associate reading with 'sitting down' and/or indicate that they would rather be 'outside' playing sport and spending time with their friends. Jeremy, for instance, identifies himself as an 'active person' and in this way frames reading in oppositional terms. Craig also mentions that he can't 'sit still' and read for any length of time, but reiterates his desire to be involved in other practices such as watching a video, listening to music or playing on his computer, which all entail sitting down, but which are clearly not framed as passive. Here, the researcher is applying a rule for reading 'masculinity' which involves designating specific social practices as connected to a particular form of male behaviour (Coleman, 1990). This enables an analysis to be produced which draws attention to the operation of specific gender regimes in accounting for boys' engagement in reading.

All of the above boys, except Craig, mention their preference for sport as opposed to reading. Robert, like Jeremy, also sets reading in opposition to sport in claiming that his preference is for more 'energetic' practices, while Damian indicates that he would rather go to the beach and do something 'physically entertaining'. In focusing on 'how' these boys are making sense of reading, it would appear that it is necessary to consider the extent to which their framing and rejection of reading in oppositional terms is imbricated in a wider set of social practices operative in adjacent domains or departments of existence. It is possible to argue, on the basis of this data, that these boys' rejection of reading, in terms of their lack of interest, is organised around a set of norms in which a particular system of gender is at play (see Connell, 1994). Moreover, it would appear that
such a system of gender is operative and deployed across other departments of social practice for these boys.

It is argued, therefore, that gender designates regimes of practice which are tied to the differential attribution and distribution of specific capacities among men and women, but that this is not necessarily consistent or stable across all departments of existence and on all social occasions for boys. In other words, it would appear that the inscription of specific capacities according to a set of gendered norms or rules of conduct cannot be generalised beyond the limits of given departments of social practice and specific occasions which overlap and crisscross. That is, for some boys, literacy training becomes imbricated in a regime of gendered practices in which particular categories of masculinity and femininity are instantiated according to the investing of certain capacities, such as active involvement in sport in whole classes of people (boys).

This is not to claim that such oppositional frames are deployed consistently by all boys on all occasions. It is possible to argue, however, that the terms in which the above boys are able to understand their involvement in reading is limited by a gender regime in which masculinity and femininity are codified as a set of oppositional attributes and capacities according to the following binary frames of reference: active/passive, public/private, outside/inside etc. It is in this sense that it is possible to understand these boys' engagement with literacy as imbricated in the production of particular forms of masculinity. They use such frames to cast reading as a passive activity according to an assemblage of norms around which a particular desirable model of masculinity is organised. In this way, a localised logics of gender is built into the ways in which these boys understand their engagement in literacy. It would appear that practices such as reading are not consistent with a particular model of masculinity with which these boys have learnt to identify and which they find desirable. In short, they construct reading as a passive activity which is set in opposition to other practices such as sport which they consider to be more appropriate or enjoyable and it is in this sense that the production of gender is imbricated in the literacy training and practices of these adolescent boys.
Rejection of reading in these oppositional terms is also indicated by the following boys' responses:

I don't enjoy reading novels or short stories. I don't really have the time. I prefer playing on my computer or watching TV. This is more worthwhile. I read things such as newspapers but I don't read many of the articles. I read the sports section, though, because it interests me. (Carl)

I don't like reading in general because it's boring and it doesn't really interest me. I'd rather be doing things that involve movement. The only thing I don't mind is the newspaper, mainly the sports section, because I follow a few sports. (Shaun). (my emphasis)

I don't really like reading novels. I like reading mags (Play Boy) but in today's society there are so many other things of leisure to do. I still read about two or three books a year, but I mean when a book comes up against TV or computer or kicking the footy with friends, mate! it has no chance. I read computer, surf, porn, footy and fishing mags because they're quick and interesting to me. (Damian) (my emphasis)

However, these boys do not appear to be rejecting reading outright. Perhaps, as Alloway and Gilbert (1997: 55) indicate, in their reference to the 'canons of literature', they are rejecting those literary texts which are officially sanctioned within schools and which are deployed within an aesthetico-ethical regime of moral surveillance and inculcation (see also Hunter, 1988a). Thus, the occasions for reading and the conditions under which particular texts are deployed appear to be the issues here. The reference that the above boys make to sport which guides their reading of newspapers, and non-fiction in general, is significant in terms of how a particular form of masculinity is imbricated in their literacy practices. Boys' reading preferences are dictated in terms of their interests which,
in turn, relate to the ways in which they learn to enact a particular version of masculinity within the domain of sporting practices (see Millard, 1997; Hall & Coles, 1997; Nichols, 1994; Martino, 1993). Carl, Shaun and Damian, for example, like many of the boys, indicated that they preferred reading non-fiction texts such as magazines because such texts accommodated their interests. The following boys, like Damian, make reference to reading pornography. This signals how the deployment of heterosexuality (McLean, 1996; Epstein, 1994) also has a part to play in their involvement in literacy practices which lie outside of the officially sanctioned curriculum. Consider the following boys’ responses:

I don’t read novels much but when I was in Year 6 or seven I found Paul Jennings books interesting. It’s because they’re short and you don’t get bored with a long story. They are also rather humorous and weird. I don’t read much now, mainly magazines. You know the ones only males look at. Also I read nearly all the fishing magazines and fishing books because it’s my favourite hobby. I like to read the stories of the fish people caught and get the important information on certain fish. (Jeremy)

I like reading magazines like sport and surfing and of course like any male would, except if you’re gay - girlie mags aren’t that bad either. I enjoy these texts because they’re interesting and some are enjoyable to find out about sport and that kind of stuff including girl of the month. (Neil)

I like reading music books, Playboy, sports mags, Penthouse, TV Week and the newspaper. These texts are more interesting to me because this is what I am interested in. I play sports so I read about sports. I like tits so I read and look at them. I like listening to music so I read about the bands I like. (Brett)

These responses are quite significant because they draw attention to how particular forms of heterosexual masculinity are imbricated in the reading practices of adolescent boys.
Brett, for instance, claims that he reads *Playboy* and *Penthouse* because he likes 'tits'. The boys have learned such behaviours and developed specific capacities and reading preferences through their insertion into a regime of heteronormative and heterosexist practices and ensembles of knowledges around which relations of power crystallise to produce particular currencies of masculinity. These responses seem to highlight the extent to which the use of sexuality intersects with gender as a regime in which boys' literacy practices are imbricated. It is in this sense that masculinity is produced within a regime of practices as particular and variable effects in bodies, behaviours and social relations according to the allocation and distribution of differential social capacities and competencies (see Moon, 1993: 26-27). Such a gender regime involving the deployment of sexuality appears to be operating in relation to the way that these boys are framing their involvement and engagement in specific literacy practices. Note, for example, Neil's comment about reading 'girlie' magazines and his reference to homosexuality. Reading such texts become a marker of heterosexuality for these boys. It confers a particular status masculinity that becomes distinguishable from other subordinated forms of masculinity (see Martino, 1994; Frank, 1987; 1990; 1993; Kessler et al, 1985; Connell, 1989; 1987; Ward, 1995; Mac an Ghail, 1994).

This is also particularly evident in terms of the dividing practices the boys use to designate reading in opposition to sport etc. as a more desirable practice. Moreover, it would appear that they have developed these capacities for applying such frames as a result of their subjection to gendered regimes of routinised and iterative trainings carried out in various departments of social practice such as the family, media and the school, where they also learn to define gender in oppositional terms (see Nichols, 1994; Millard, 1997). It is in this sense that their literacy practices and reading preferences are regulated within regimes of practice and configurations of social relations that give rise to particular forms of domination in which gender and compulsory heterosexuality intersect (Epstein, 1994).
This is not to argue that boys always define their masculinity in oppositional terms and that this forms the basis of a general relation between subjectivity and reading. Rather, in this instance, it would appear that these boys are using such frames to make sense of their literacy practices. The pattern of distribution of attributes that define normative masculinity in opposition to a normative femininity on the basis of reproductive differences between men and women, for example, does not have a general form, nor is it consistent across all social situations and occasions. On other occasions, boys may not use such dividing frames of reference for making sense of their experiences in these terms. For instance, on some occasions, a boy may demonstrate the capacity to express emotion and be quite articulate about what he is feeling as indicated in previous chapters. But this is not to say that boys are endowed with such a capacity in all social situations. According to the logics of a particular regime of practice, similar behaviours or capacities demonstrated by girls and boys may be treated differently depending upon variables such as class, sexual orientation and geographical location (Moon, 1993: 36). What can be argued strongly, however, is that on the occasion of being asked particular questions about their involvement in literacy, these boys relied on such frames and techniques deployed within a specific system of social formations which obey a particular logics by which masculinity and femininity are understood in oppositional terms.

In this sense, no attempt is made to treat the boys' responses to the questions posed as the effect of particular gender discourses or as surfaces from which it is possible to read off the effects of masculinity. In fact, it is only the shared understanding of researchers about what constitutes masculinity in the first place that enables one to identify involvement in practices such as sport as an indicator of a desirable masculinity (see Coleman, 1990). And it is this shared understanding which enables the researcher to read the practices that the boys mention in their responses as particular indicators of masculinity. On this basis, it is possible to argue that gender regimes are in fact implicated in boys' literacy practices, but that this link is not accounted for by appealing to a general model of subjectivity as the basis for the staging of representations in consciousness (see Hunter, 1984a). In short,
the development and formation of quite specific capacities are not grounded in a putative consciousness of either the boys or the researcher. Rather, attention is drawn to:

(i) a particular logics and mode of rationality which inform the way these boys respond to a set of questions that incite them to produce knowledge about their involvement in literacy;

(ii) the shared understandings of the researcher, as a member of a particular academic community, about what constitutes masculinity which provides a basis for reading the practices boys refer to as markers of a particular form of masculinity.

What needs to be emphasised is that the researcher has built up a knowledge and understanding of specific practices, behaviours and ways of thinking which are considered to be connected to a particular form of male behaviour. It is in this sense that he is using a set of criteria for identifying the practices referred to by the boys as designating a particular form masculinity. In this sense, attention is drawn to the grammar of the term masculinity, which enables the researcher to render visible specific activities and behavioural tasks of the boys who completed the survey according to the shared criteria for attributing masculinity to particular social practices enacted by the latter.

Fiction versus Non-fiction

Current research into the literacy practices of boys has emphasised their preference for reading non-fiction texts within the above binary frames of reference (see Martino, 1993; Nichols, 1994; Hall & Coles, 1997; Millard, 1997). Nichols (1994), for example, draws attention to the gendered construction of literacy in these terms within the traditional family. She highlights the link between particular forms of masculinity and the acquisition of specific literacies within this department of social existence. For instance, she claims that there appeared to be two positions taken up by fathers in relation to their attitudes to literacy. Firstly, sport was set in opposition to reading which was considered to be a sex-
inappropriate activity for boys. Secondly, those men who were involved in reading preferred to read non-fiction texts and were interested in fact finding. The women, on the other hand, enjoyed reading fiction. Social class issues may also be a significant factor in accounting for these differentiated practices with boys being required to read certain texts in preparation for active participation in the workforce.

Nichols argues, on the basis of her interviews with parents, that there is a gendered private/public binarism embedded in parents' reading practices. This is indicated in her study by men valuing technical, rationalist knowledge and women preferring the subjective feminised world of literature. In one particular instance, she comments on how a father's valuing of his son's academic achievement was related to the belief that the latter would not make it as a sportsman:

The two versions of masculinity ... can both be understood as versions of an underlying active (masculine)/passive (feminine) dualism where scientific rationalism represents activity of the mind and sporting pursuits activity of the body (308).

Thus, when the father in Nichols' study realises that his son will not be able to engage successfully in sport he shifts ground from valuing sport to valuing academic performance. However, Nichols argues that both positions are still caught up in validating a particular dominant form of masculinity. In this way, she uses the data to draw attention to shifting binary frames of reference and categories to raise questions about the links between the production of masculinity and the acquisition of literacy. What is significant about such a study is that as a researcher, Nichols has already learned a set of capacities for identifying what constitutes masculinity in the first place and is deploying such shared criteria for signalling the very significant ways in which the production of various forms of masculinity is imbricated in the literacy practices of boys/men.
Many boys in response to the questions posed as part of this research reiterated their preference for reading non-fiction texts:

If ever I read I tend to read magazines such as Waves, Surfing Life and Tracks. I like reading these texts because they can relate to how I think and what I do. (Robert)

I like to read more on the side of information. I'll only read if I have to. I like reading stuff to help me learn about something I'm interested in, for example surfing magazines, something to do with woodwork or construction. I don't read as much of fiction material because it doesn't really appeal to me in the way that non-fiction does. I learn different things, skills, information from those sorts of books. (Darren)

Every morning I read the newspaper front to back as I like to understand real life issues. As far as reading narratives go, well I don't really have the time. Most of the time I don't try to find the time. It's not because I hate reading but there are other things I would much rather do...I love reading any book that involves sports. I find both fiction and non-fiction sports enjoyable to read. As I stated earlier I like reading about real life issues. I don't like reading narratives and things like that as I have a one tracked mind and that's sport. (Matthew)

I don't like reading at all. The only things I read are surf magazines and class novels which I don't finish most of the time. The reason I hate reading is because I find it very boring and when I start a book I usually read half of it and give it away. (Mark)

I don't like reading fiction. I only read stuff that will benefit my future and stuff that will help me do a certain task. Like reading weather maps so I can tell when the surf will be good or what day we can go out on a holiday. (David)
I like reading some things. Stuff I'm interested in. I like facts and general knowledge a fair bit eg. Guinness Book of Records. I find them more interesting than novels because it is interesting. When I read a book, like a novel, I read one page and then I give up with boredom. I only read if I need to. (Joel)

For Darren and Joel, reading fiction appears to serve no instrumental purpose in life. Darren, for instance, reads for information and does not consider fiction as providing him with the kind of learning that he values and which apparently serves practical ends. David also mentions that he only reads 'stuff' that will benefit his future or help him to perform a 'certain task'. Matthew's reference to having a 'one tracked mind' in his tendency to read anything that involves sport draws attention to the role of sporting practices in the formation of a particular currency of masculinity which sets the limits of his active engagement in literacy. Mark's comment about class novels is also pertinent because it highlights his rejection of school sanctioned literacy practices which privilege fiction texts.

All these boys' responses perhaps draw attention to the need to make available a greater variety of literate practices and to integrate a range of popular culture texts into the officially sanctioned curriculum in schools (Millard, 1997). The purpose of this would not be merely to accommodate boys' interests, but to establish a threshold for engaging students in a greater variety of literate practices as the basis for helping them to develop critical capacities for understanding the impact of various models of masculinity and gender regimes.

This devaluing of fiction is also evident in the following responses:

I only read if I have to. The last novel I read was Lockie Leonard two months ago and the only reason I read that was because I had to for English. I hadn't read a novel before that for a year. I don't have time to read nowadays, I have
too much on. In the mornings when I have breakfast I read the newspaper but only the sports, weather and comic sections. (Julian)

The reason why I don’t really like to read is because I like to do other stuff like the computer or reading stuff on electronics and machines. Most of the books I get I read get boring half way through so I ditch them and do something else. (Terry)

All of the above responses would seem to indicate that reading fiction fares pretty poorly for boys in relation to the range of other texts which are available to them in their culture for stimulating and accommodating their interests. What is significant is that their reading is organised around practices and interests such as sport, TV, and computer related activities which are imbricated in the production of particular currencies of masculinity. It is in this sense that many boys’ engagement or refusal to engage in specific literacy practices is tied to the production of masculinity within regimes of practice that intersect various domains of social practice according to the assemblage of quite specific norms for governing their conduct. This is particularly evident in the following boys’ responses:

I do not enjoy reading because it is boring and TV. is better. TV. shows us more and it is easier to get into. Books take too long to read. Car magazines are good because they have pictures and they are not as boring. (Gary)

I do not like reading books which have lots of pages such as long novels but I enjoy reading picture books or magazines with short articles such as TV. weeks. I don’t like reading long books because after a while it gets boring and I can not get the picture of the story in my head. I also hate reading them because I don’t have the time to read them and if I do it will take me a very long time. I would rather watch a movie than read a book. (Luke)
Boys Reading Fiction

Not all boys, however, rejected or refused to read fiction texts. So what kinds of fiction texts did some of boys claim to enjoy reading? Those boys who indicated that they enjoyed reading fiction mentioned repeatedly the sub-genres of science fiction, action/adventure stories, fantasy, crime fiction, thrillers. Many also indicated that they enjoyed humorous or weird stories such as Glynn Parry's *Radical Take Off*. Consider some of the following comments about their reading preferences:

I like reading suspenseful and shocking texts that can shock and keep you interested in finding out what happened next. I like reading fiction texts and creative short stories that offer a big climax throughout the story and are not boring and pointless. (Gerard)

I like reading short stories a lot as they don’t have a too complicated plot and are easy to get into. One of the best books of short stories would be Glynn Parry’s *Radical Take Offs*. It was really funny. (Rowan)

I enjoy reading humorous texts eg *Red Dwarf* and Tim Winton novels. I also enjoy dramatic novels and science fiction eg *Durassic Park*, *Rising Sun*, *Binary*. (Grant)

I like alot of Isaac Asimov books. I-Robot is a set of short stories about Robots and The Best of the Robots continues it. I like the foundation series. They keep you guessing until the end ... and there’s always something happening. (John)

I only like science fiction novels. I like SF because it is so fantastic. I usually only like the ones with well developed settings and stories. The best book I’ve read yet is *Tales From Jaba’s Palace* which is a Star Wars book. It is a collection of short stories about the notorious gangster Jaba the Hut. I like it because the
setting of the Star Wars Galaxy is so well thought up. The short stories are mostly telling the same chain of events but from different characters’ point of view. This lets you in on more information than you can pick up from the Return of the Jedi. (Chris)

It would appear, as Moon (1993; 1997) points out, that students receive specific training in reading gender from their engagement with the polarised genres of adolescent fiction, as well as film and television. This data would seem to indicate that through their engagement in specific literacy practices outside of school, boys acquire particular competencies for reading and understanding masculinity according to the rules of action/adventure/science fiction genres. For instance, Gerard mentions short stories that 'offer a big climax' and John mentions those stories where 'there's always something happening' which would appear to highlight their preference for action oriented/adventure genres of fiction.

Other boys indicated their enjoyment of reading fiction in terms of it providing an escape from the pressures of the real world:

Yes I do enjoy reading fiction. I think reading provides a certain escape from the real world and stress relief. (Graham) (my emphasis)

I have always enjoyed reading since Year 1. It was my favourite subject all through primary school. I enjoy reading because it allows me to leave my body and problems and just zone out into another world where anything can happen. This is why I find fantasy and adventure so enjoyable. (Noel) (my emphasis)

I enjoy reading murder mysteries and suspense thrillers ... I enjoy reading them because they take me to another world where I can just read and be alone. (Jason) (my emphasis)
I enjoy reading quite a lot. I don't know why. I guess it's like escaping to another world where your imagination tells you what things are like. (Luke) (my emphasis).

These boys' engagement is situated within a particular moral technology for reading that is grounded in an aesthetic literacy practice in which the reader is incited to enter the imaginary world of the text. This mode of identification based on 'suspending disbelief' and using imagination 'to enter another world where anything can happen' is an effect of applying particular rules for reading and engaging with texts. Such ways of reading and relating to texts (Mellor, 1992; Dixon, 1967) are the effect of the operation of quite specific sets of practices organised around creating a threshold for enabling the reader to 'enter' the world of the text and to experience it on a deeply personal level. In this way, the text functions as a surface or object of reflexive introspection within a regime of reading in which the reader appears as an object of a practice of self-shaping. The point is that these boys have learnt to engage with texts in this way as a result of being subjected to particular pedagogical imperatives for reading and deploying texts in quite specific ways (see Hunter, 1982; 1983; Mellor & Patterson, 1992; Mellor, 1992; Patterson, 1993a; 1993b).

There were some boys, however, who stated their interest in reading fiction which dealt with relationships and issues which were relevant to their own lives:

I like the kind of stories which involve things like love themes/relationships, suicide, drugs, alcohol, adolescence, peer pressure, abortion, depression, pregnancy and other issues that relate to us and that we are interested in at this time in our lives. (Dion)

The kinds of texts I enjoy reading are normally texts which concern issues that affect me. For example issues such as adolescence and relationships (not soppy
style relationships though), sex, death, rape, murder, green jelly, underpants and sports. (Steve)

I like reading books that are written by S.E. Hinton - books like the Outsiders and Rumble Fish. I like books like that because they explore teenage relationships and the problems that teenagers face. (Matthew)

The kind of stories I like are the ones which are not unbelievable like sci-fi style stories but the ones that are totally believable and which you can see happening as part of everyday life. (Raymond)

I believe that many stories are insignificant and are of no importance to society. More books should explore the realities of life instead of displaying unrealistic ideals. (Peter)

These boys claim that they enjoy those fiction texts which are relevant to them and which tap into their own cultural experiences as adolescents. What is interesting is that the above boys indicate that they enjoy reading fiction texts which deal with relationships and 'explore the realities of life'. It would appear that they respond to those stories which correspond to their everyday life and cultural experiences of relating to others. This is important in helping to explain reasons for boys' rejection of fiction texts within the disciplinary space of the literacy classroom. While other studies have emphasised boys' rejection of fiction in favour of reading non-fiction, this research would seem to indicate that this is not the case for all boys (see Millard, 1997; Nichols, 1994). In fact, as Alloway and Gilbert (1997) suggest, it might be that the use of particular literary texts within a regime of reading practices, organised around appreciating the canons of literature, may well be what many boys are rejecting. For example, in Martino's (1993) earlier study, one boy makes reference to his rejection of reading Great Expectations:
... it's easier for a girl to say she's read this and that than for a boy ... a boy can get hassled if he reads a book like Great Expectations. I didn't finish it because I hated it. The girls can sit down and read the books and finish them. I'm not sure if it's the girls in my class, human nature or what, but we [boys] can never finish them. (Student 11) (199).

Thus, it may be that boys are not rejecting fiction texts as such, but a particular use of these texts within a regime for reading instituted within a particular literary apparatus (see Hunter, 1988a). In short, it may be that boys are refusing to engage with certain types of literary texts which are studied within a particular regime for reading and officially sanctioned in the literacy classroom.

Based on these boys' responses it would seem imperative to try to select books which present characters and situations that both girls and boys can relate to in their everyday lives. These boys also appear to be indicating that they want to read books which deal with issues that are relevant to their everyday cultural experiences. Steve, for example, seems to be advocating such a reading practice when he claims that he prefers texts which deal with issues that concern him such as adolescence and relationships, but he adds 'not soppy style relationships though'. This is important because he is signalling a rejection of the traditional feminised genre of romance fiction, which is pitted against fiction that deals with relationships as they are in 'real life'. Such literacy practices, in which the surface of the text emerges as a correlate of the students' own experiences of the world, are also an effect of the deployment of a particular apparatus for reading. Within this regime the text is deployed as a reflection of real life and functions within an aesthetico-moral practice for the reader's own ethical formation (see Hunter, 1988a).

On the basis of this data it would appear that, subject to some modification, such a reading practice could have some benefits in terms of enhancing boys' involvement in literacy and in helping them to develop specific capacities for reading masculinity. This is not merely to reinvoke a personal growth model of reading pedagogy which 'has a built-
in literature-language-experience centre' (Sawyer, 1984: 57). Rather, it is argued that
certain fiction texts could be used within a regime of reading for targeting the specific
effects of masculinity and its impact on the lives of both boys and girls. In short, it is
argued here that a reading practice, which is not so much organised around appreciating
great literary works, could form the basis of encouraging boys' engagement and
involvement in literacy (see Alloway et al, 1996). Perhaps, in the first instance, texts
could be deployed within a regime of reading in which they function as a correlate of the
students' cultural experiences as adolescents. This could then form a threshold for
engaging 'resistant' readers in a literacy practice built around the development of quite
specific capacities for reading masculinity and gender.

In this section an effort has been made to contribute further to the limited amount of
research that has been conducted into the literacy practices of adolescent boys. The use of
the survey, as a means of knowledge production and for describing some of the strategies
and techniques that boys use to make sense of their literacy practices, proved to be useful.
The data provided here do support Martino's (1993) earlier claims about boys' rejection
of reading as a feminised learning practice which appeared to conflict with a desirable
macho masculinity defined primarily in terms of their active engagement in sport. It also
supports the claim made by Millard (1997: 43) that 'reading and the associated behaviour
of sitting quietly absorbed in a book may be understood as gender marked behaviour'
(see also Curtis, 1992; Kenway, 1987; Alloway & Gilbert, 1997; Martino, 1994).
However, the problem with these accounts of boys' engagement with literacy is that they
are based on the assumption that there is a general and necessary relation between
masculinity and reading and that such a link must be theorised in terms of grounding
subjectivity in discourse as an effect of ideology. Such accounts, moreover, ground
boys' avoidance of reading in the space of consciousness in which subjectivity emerges
simultaneously as blocked by and also able to be freed from the ideological mechanisms
of repression.
Millard, for example, provides an exemplary instance of such a mode of theorising the links between masculinity and literacy by reducing the gender regimes, in which boys' rejection of reading as a feminised practice is imbricated, to motivational forces that are operative at the level of the unconscious. She draws on Giddens (1991) view of 'cyclical practices' in which routinised social tasks are enacted to argue that gender regimes are grounded in the unconscious:

Giddens emphasises that gender is a 'matter of learning and continuous work', work, which is underpinned by regimes that:

centre on gratification/deprivation and hence are a focus of motivational energies - beginning, as Freud made clear with the earliest unconscious development of the reality principle. The types of regimes individuals build up as habits of behaviour, therefore, remain as unconscious conditioning elements of conduct, and are tied into enduring motivational patterns. (p.62)

It is the linking of behaviour, motivation and the unconscious that is particularly helpful in explaining why gendered differences are so resistant to rationalisation and change (Millard, 1997: 43).

In this way, Millard locates the gender regimes governing boys' engagement with literacy in the space of the unconscious as a basis for accounting for the legitimation of gender marked social practices and interests. Thus, Millard's theorisation of gendered learning practices and behaviours is conducted within a frame which treats boys as subjects of a failed consciousness. It is in this sense that she is able to account for their rejection of reading as a feminised practice by presenting their motivations as driven by unconscious forces that block their 'full' awareness of the effects of such power (see Hunter, 1993: 126). That is, she treats the formation of specific gender capacities as grounded in the unconscious and, hence, as blocked or 'deformed' by the repressive effects of ideology. On this basis, she argues for the restoration of the subject's unconscious being to
consciousness. Furthermore, she situates boys' literacy practices in terms of their 'emerging gender identity', invoking a general model of subjectivity as the basis for establishing a fundamental relationship between masculinity and reading (31).

This thesis argues that the 'unconscious' cannot account for boys' rejection or avoidance of reading. Rather, it is argued that gender regimes, while implicated in boys' literacy practices, are tied to the effects of quite specific techniques and technologies of the gendered self which cannot be reduced to motivations grounded, either in discourse (Martino, 1993), or in the discursive space of the unconscious.

**Interviewing Adolescent Boys about their Literacy Practices**

Data from the group of Year 10 boys interviewed in the previous chapters are also included here. In fact, the data analysed here and in the following chapter involve students from this year group responding to particular texts throughout 1996. As part of the interview, this group of boys was asked to talk about their experiences of English and reading (see Appendix C). Some of their comments highlight points made by the above students about boys' involvement in specific kinds of literacy practices.

The following interview with John (aged 15) draws attention to many of the issues raised by the boys in the previous section with regards to their involvement in specific kinds of literacy practices. John indicates that, like many boys, he has no problem engaging in an analysis of non-print texts or in reading certain kinds of novels or short stories:

**Interview with John**

85 Wayne: ....I want to ask you a bit about English and the texts we've studied this year and what you've thought of them. Was there one that you liked more than the others?
86 John: When we analysed Mad Max and that, like more films and that stuff. That's more enjoyable. I did just as much work on Mad Max as I did on anything that we read. More of the film things - what was that one Guns?

87 Wayne: The documentary?

88 John: Yeah, stuff like that's good and analysing movies and that I enjoyed that.

89 Wayne: So you preferred non-print?

90 John: Yeah, I prefer not reading and stuff like that.

91 Wayne: So you don't like reading?

92 John: No!

93 Wayne: Why is that do you think? What is it about it that you don't like?

94 John: I'm too slow at reading. I can't really visualise what's going on which helps you more. Like I just read a page and go "What's going on? What the hell was I reading?" but I've read a couple of books and they were right.

95 Wayne: What books have you read?

96 John: More stuff like Paul Jennings. He's written stuff like Round the Twist and stuff like Uncanny, Unreal and all stuff with short stories in it and they're all right. But yeah I don't like thick novels and stuff like that.

97 Wayne: Do they really put you off?
98 John: Yeah!

99 Wayne: What puts you off about them?

100 John: Oh just small print and the heaps of pages - I couldn't get through it - it would probably take me two years or something.

101 Wayne: Is there anything else you enjoy reading apart from the books you've mentioned?

102 John: No, I just like reading magazines and that.

103 Wayne: What sort of magazines do you read?

104 John: Oh surf magazines, Playboy - nah (laughs)! Well, I look at Playboy - nah! Just surfing magazines and that, music magazines I suppose, but mainly look at the pictures in those (laughs).

105 Wayne: Um, anything else?

106 John: No, otherwise I just watch telly.

John is willing to engage in a literacy practice only if he sees the text as relevant to him in some way. This is related to his inability to 'visualise what is going on' in print media (line 94). Later on, he makes the point that he enjoys reading surf magazines, but only in the sense of looking at the pictures (line 104). If he is not reading his magazines, he prefers to watch TV (line 106). What emerges here is this boy's subjection to reading a range of non-fiction texts which are tied to his interests. He has not developed similar sets of capacities and skills for reading print texts because he has not been subjected to them to
the same extent and chooses not to engage with such texts. This perhaps could be related to the fact that many boys prefer to play sport or watch TV and such practices, as has already been illustrated, are imbricated in gender regimes involving the assemblage of norms around which particular models of desirable masculinity are organised (see Martino, 1993).

This is also indicated in John's reference to his capacity to analyse a film like Mad Max which he enjoys. It is because of his level of interest that he is able to engage in such a literacy practice and to develop quite sophisticated capacities for reading these kinds of texts which are also very much a part of his everyday life outside of school. He identifies himself as a 'slow reader' and is put off by the amount and size of the print. This would appear to indicate that he has not had adequate practice at reading print texts. While he can decode print, he seems to lack the practical facility for doing so. For instance, in section 94 he mentions that he's 'too slow at reading' and that he 'can't really visualise what's going on'. But then he proceeds to mention that he has read books by Paul Jennings which are perhaps easier for him to decode because they are written more simply. But, he finds engaging with print to be an onerous, boring task which would seems to account for his resistance to reading.

John's interview would appear to support the need for strategic intervention into the literacy practices of boys from a very early age to encourage them to become involved in reading and to sustain such levels of interest as they are growing up. This is also supported by the following interview with Robert, whose preference and capacity for analysing film rather than print in the literacy classroom appears to be related to regular engagement with such texts which is sustained by high levels of interest:

232 Wayne: ... I want to know what you think about English ... I just want to know what your overall opinion is.

233 Robert: What I think of English?
234 Wayne: Yeah. What do you think about English?

235 Robert: I think of reading, like, and I don't really enjoy it unless it's a really good book that interests me like when I pick it up and it interests me I'll read a book but otherwise I just think no I'm not gonna read. It just doesn't really ... (pauses)

236 Wayne: ... interest you?

237 Robert: No.

238 Wayne Why, do you think that is?

239 Robert: I don't know, I've never really enjoyed it 'cause like when I was younger from the books I got I never really enjoyed any of them and it just turned me off books completely.

240 Wayne: What kind of books when you were younger turned you off?

241 Robert: Um ...(pauses)

242 Wayne: Can you remember?

243 Robert: I don't know. My mum used to buy like thick novels and I thought I'm not gonna waste my time reading that thick book. It's gonna take me ages to read it so I never really ... um ...(pauses)

244 Wayne: ... got into it.
245 Robert: No.

246 Wayne: Yep. All right, so when you think of English you said you think of reading ... Is there anything else about English that you can talk to me about?

247 Robert: Oh, I enjoy it ... it's good. It's a good subject. I like analysing. I don't like writing that much but when I sort of have to I will, you know...I *don't mind analysing movies* - that's good. I prefer analysing movies to say print. I'd rather analyse a film.

248 Wayne: Why do you think that is?

249 Robert: Sort of visual, sort of thing, like the movie has the camera angle and all that and that sort of makes me interested sort of in a way.

Like John, viewing or analysing film for Robert is set in opposition to reading print texts. Once again, therefore, this student uses oppositional frames to make sense of his engagement and involvement in literacy practices within subject English. Robert has clearly developed a set of capacities for reading film because he willingly and actively engages with these texts. He explicitly makes the comment that he was 'turned off books completely' when he was younger (line 239). The reasons he gives for this are related to the thickness of the books his mother bought for him to read and the length of time that he felt it would take for him to read them. The reference to his mother as encouraging him to engage in reading particular kinds of texts may also be significant in perhaps contributing to the notion of reading as a gender marked practice within this domain of social practice (see Nichols, 1994; Millard, 1997).

Josh’s comments about his involvement in literacy are also quite interesting in terms of the ways in which his reading preferences are worked into fundamental oppositions. His preference for reading horror stories and non-fiction texts such as the newspaper is
imbricated in the production of particular models of masculinity outside the literacy classroom, as indicated by the boys surveyed in the previous section:

237 Wayne: ... I want to ask you - do you read very much?

238 Josh: Me? Not a hell of a lot. Not really. I read the newspaper and stuff like that, and I read magazines.

239 Wayne: What kind of magazines do you read?

240 Josh: Um ... skating magazines ... skateboarding and that. And I read around the place - I don't really read books. I read a book when you know it comes my way, that's good.

241 Wayne: What kind of book would you read?

242 Josh: Um ... I don't mind horror stories. I like short stories as well, not you know, getting into great depth and stuff like that you know. I find short stories are more interesting sort of.

243 Wayne: So, you don't read a lot then. You said you read the newspaper. What - do you read back to front the newspaper?

244 Josh: Oh, I go to the back page first.

245 Wayne: Why?

246 Josh: Read the sport. I just go through all the sport and then I just basically flick through it. If anything interests me I'll read it but ...
247 Wayne: Can you give me an example of what might interest you?

248 Josh: I don't know. Maybe just the world news is all right 'cause usually there's all bad things and disasters and stuff like that has happened. And like you get the full story of what's happened in the world. I think disasters is a good one (smiles). And just I don't know, yeah ... um ... just think sport thing that happens as well.

Thus, the topics of interest for Josh, such as horror, sport and world disasters, form the basis of his engagement in particular kinds of literacy practices. And, moreover, the oppositions that are worked into his reading preferences tie in with the imbrication of a particular model of masculinity in such literacy practices. The point of this research is that even though some boys might treat reading and sport as mutually exclusive practices, the category of sport as an indicator of desirable masculinity comes into play in this and other boys' reading preferences and practices.

**Reading ****Lockie Leonard** and **Mad Max**

Many of the boys made reference to the novel, **Lockie Leonard** by Tim Winton and the film, **Mad Max**, as two texts which they really enjoyed studying. The boys made these comments about the novel:

**Lockie Leonard** was good because it was like, to do with what teenagers do and stuff and so it's all valid things they were talking about (Craig)

We were all interested in **Lockie Leonard** and stuff 'cause it was all stuff that we were going through. We related to it and stuff like that, yeah that was good, **Lockie Leonard**, (Miles)
Well Lockie Leonard was pretty good for our age group because it sort of deals with issues that are sort of presented like relevant to the things that are done in our age group. That was good. (Scott)

Lockie Leonard was good. It kind of dealt with real life sort of, so I liked it. (Aaron)

Once again, this group of boys is engaging with fiction within a regime of reading in which the text is deployed as mirroring 'real life' and/or their immediate cultural experiences. In this sense, these responses highlight the extent to which students' reading of texts is the effect of the operation of specific rules for reading instituted within particular apparatuses and technologies of self-fashioning practices. It appears that literacy practices are still predominantly caught up in pedagogical regimes that use texts as surfaces upon which readers can trace the immediacy of their own cultural experiences and social world. Such a reading regime, it would appear, is firmly entrenched in the students' reading practices. This would seem to suggest that students from a very early age at home and in school have been subjected to such practices in which the rule for reading the text as a correlate of the self functions as an imperative. For this reason, it is argued that these models of reading, in the first instance, may be difficult to shift, but may be modified according to the dictates of an ethico-moral reading practice organised around training students to develop specific competencies and capacities for reading masculinity.

With regards to Mad Max, when asked what appealed to them about the film, some of the boys made the following comments:

Violence, fast sort of movie, interesting story to it and, um, it was pretty easy to write about cause in English we watch videos and since we've all watched a lot of TV we can understand it better. (Matthew)
It was more, um, like it wasn't like a lot of videos we get which are really boring and like have nothing to do with anything but Mad Max was like, appealed to people more in class. It was more of an adult movie than we get to watch in the other classes ... it was just like a better movie. Everyone enjoyed it. (Miles)

It's just like Mad Max was adventure and stuff and , I don't know, I just liked it. (Aaron)

These responses are consistent with those provided by the group of boys in the previous section with regards to the role that specific texts have to play in engaging boys in particular kinds of literacy practices in which gender is implicated. On the basis of these data, it is possible to draw the following conclusions:

(i) These boys' engagement with the genre of action-based science fiction is tied to the production of a desirable form of masculinity with which boys have learned to identify in adjacent domains of social practice;

(ii) These boys have already developed quite specific competencies for reading and engaging with specific genres and texts outside of the literacy classroom. As a result of their familiarity with such genres, they acquire quite specific gender knowledges (see Moon, 1997). Moreover, they are provided routinely with visual models of behaviour through their viewing habits which may be operative at the level of what Mauss (1973: 73) terms 'prestigious imitation'. In other words, through their regular viewing, boys are presented with models of behaviour, thinking, acting, posturing and talking which are attributable to or performed by male subjects featured in film, TV and electronic computer games. The site of media viewing as a domain of social practice appears to play a significant role in developing specific capacities for understanding and attributing masculinity based on practices of imitation.
The implications of such practices in terms of boys' insertion into particular regimes of viewing and reading are indicated by the following students who speak about their preference for films such as Mad Max in more explicit terms.

**Interview with Josh**

196 Josh: Mad Max was good I liked that. I didn't like Taronga.

197 Wayne: You like Mad Max. What was it about Mad Max that you liked?

198 Josh: Ah ... probably the violence I guess. I don't know, it just related to me more sort of.

199 Wayne: In what way?

200 Josh: Cause it's sort of the same movie that I'd probably watch most of the time.

201 Wayne: That kind of movie? How would you classify that kind of movie?

202 Josh: Just a lot of action, a lot of things happening.

**Interview with John**

113 Wayne: Did you like Mad Max?

114 John: Yeah, I enjoyed it.

115 Wayne: What was it about Mad Max you liked?
116 John: Action and more um sort of, I like the action sort of adventure movies. That was good, a bit of blood and guts and all that stuff (laughs).

117 Wayne: So that got you interested?

118 John: Yeah.

These comments can be used to support the assertion that boys' literacy practices are tied to acquiring a practical facility for reading particular genres which are targeted at sex-specific audiences. Josh, for example, indicates (line 198) that Mad Max 'related' and appealed to him because of the violence and action (line 202). Also, he mentions that it was the kind of film he would watch outside of school. John (line 116), too, mentions that he liked the 'blood and guts'. What is important about these boys' 'identification' with the text in these terms is that they have developed quite specific tastes and reading preferences through their insertion into particular regimes of practice which are also implicated in the production of dominant forms of masculinity.

Within such reading regimes, which require a particular kind of 'identification' with the text, particular attributions of masculinity are reinforced for these boys. That is, their engagement with the text, which draws on action/adventure as well as science fiction genres, is predicated on shared understandings about what constitutes desirable masculinity. In this sense, these boys' engagement with the text is organised around a set of norms for governing their conduct and behaviours as particular kinds of masculine subjects. It is possible to argue, therefore, that boys' viewing and reading habits outside of school constitute another set of social practices through which they acquire a knowledge and develop a practical facility for identifying what is to count as desirable masculinity. In other words, through their viewing or reading of such genres which are targeted at sex-specific audiences, these boys acquire specific capacities for connecting particular behaviours, desires, and practices to a particular model of desirable masculinity.
On this basis, they both engage in a literacy practice organised around a threshold for deploying the text as a surface for identifying desirable masculine attributes. It is the role of such norms - according to a grammar of specific and shared competencies - that have been built up across various domains of social practice, which influence these boys' capacities to read the text and to 'enter into it' in such a way that it reinforces and confirms their masculinity. Moreover, the fact that they actively identify with the text and enter its world of violence is in itself the effect of a particular technology of reading grounded in the pedagogical imperative which requires the reader to treat the surface of the text as a reflection of his/her own world and inner life (see Britton, 1983; Dixon, 1967).

The effects of such regimes of practice become even more evident in the following interview with Chris:

**Interview with Chris**

69 Wayne: What was it about *Mad Max* that you liked? Can you explain to me why you enjoyed it?

70 Chris: It fits my kind of, my category of, um things I enjoy. I like all this stuff. I enjoy the action 'cause I like thrills and stuff. I like violence. I don't know why but I do. Why I liked it? I'm not sure why. It just really ... I'm really into that sort of stuff, you know, I'm not into the other stuff that people read.

71 Wayne: Like?

72 Chris: Like, um, oh ... most people aren't into all that death and gore and all blood things. They like, how can you say, um, soppy books. They like people,
like, who do use smart thinking. I like that as well but they find other ways besides violence to solve things and I don't like that kind of stuff. (Pause) I'm just trying to think of a book ... I'm not sure ... I can't recall a book at the moment but there are books I don't like.

Chris (line 70) states quite explicitly that Mad Max fits into his particular kind of category of the things he enjoys and he mentions the violence, action and thrills which form an integral part of his engagement and identification with this text. Desire for this type of violence, blood and gore is distinguished from other texts which Chris identifies as soppy. He rejects those texts which he perceives to be dealing with emotion and from which any form of violence, blood or gore is absent. Once again, what is indicated here, through the deployment of such dividing practices, is that his literacy practices are grounded in the polarised genres of adolescent fiction, film and television from which he receives his training according to gender specific norms.

Chris proceeds to elaborate on a feature article that he studied in class about a young boy in Omaha in the United States, entitled, 'A Boy and his Gun' (Hull, 1993). This article gave an account of the life of a boy, Doug, aged 16 and his involvement in shoot outs. Detail is provided about how easy it is for young people to get access to a gun. Doug mentions how guns are used at school to deal with bullying and other problems that students might encounter. He talks about how they have become a symbol of power for young people in Omaha. Chris uses this feature article as a vehicle for talking about his own experiences of bullying and his associated anger. Once again the text is used as a correlate of his own experiences.

73 Wayne: Anything else that we looked at in class that you enjoyed?

74 Chris: Um, a text?

75 Wayne: Mmm. It could be a book or a film or an article.
76 Chris: I like the recent ones we did on 'A Boy and his Gun' and stuff. That had the same sort of thing I like. I liked it because I could bring the feeling of exactly what the boy was trying to get across.

77 Wayne: So you could relate to the guy in this article?

78 Chris: Yeah. I know what he's talking about.

79 Wayne: Can you explain what it was about the guy that you could relate to? In what way, in what sense could you relate to him?

80 Chris: I don't know why - I can see why he had a gun, I mean, if there was an easy way, if I could get a gun like that I would definitely 'cause like um, the way he was feeling about ... the reasons why he got the gun, you know, thought he would be cool, better, no one would mess with him after that. You know I'm sick of people doing that to me. I really like the way - um, I don't know ...

81 Wayne: So you've been in a situation where you've been picked on - is that what you're trying to say?

82 Chris: Oh yeah, I can relate to it. If there was a figure of power I could get it would probably be a gun. I would do exactly the same thing he would do. I wouldn't go as far as him ...(pause)

83 Wayne: Has this happened outside of school, like have you been picked on - is that what you're trying to say?

84 Chris: Yeah.
85 Wayne: In what way?

86 Chris: In every way.

87 Wayne: So who picks on you or how are you picked on?

88 Chris: Name calling, getting beaten up, um ...

89 Wayne: What names are you called? Do you mind telling me or if you don't feel comfortable you don't have to tell me?

90 Chris: I got teased because I was fat.

91 Wayne: Is this - not recently?

92 Chris: Beginning of last year, Year 8,7,6,5,4,3 ...

93 Wayne: So in primary school?

94 Chris: Yeah, mainly in primary school and the beginning of high school.

95 Wayne: Have you been picked on this year?

96 Chris: No, not recently.

97 Wayne: You seem pretty angry about that.

98 Chris: I am 'cause like what it's done, it's taken away half my confidence to do stuff. I'm always worried about what people think of me now. It's really
stuffed me around and I find it hard to do things now because I'm worried I can't do it. The main thing is I'm worried I can't do it.

99 Wayne: Who were the main perpetrators? Was there a specific group that picked on you?

100 Chris: Yeah, there was one. It was always the people who were the most popular at school. There was one guy who used to beat me up. If he saw me he came around and hit me.

101 Wayne: So why do you think he did it?

102 Chris: To make himself feel better - I don't know why - because I was different.

This interview with Chris is important because it illustrates the ways in which boys' deployment of texts is imbricated in a wider set of cultural practices in which the formation of masculinities is established. For example, Chris's experiences of powerlessness are related to the effects of a particular form of masculinity which are inscribed on the surface of the text as a 'task of behaviour'. His ability to use the text to reflect upon his own situation is important because it signals that he is engaging in a specific kind of reading practice associated, not only with personal growth and English, but with every model of reading pedagogy, including cultural critique (see Mellor, 1992). His 'identification' in section 80 with Doug, the boy who uses the gun to deal with his problems at school, is significant because Chris feels powerless in the situation that he is in at school and desires some form of control over his life. Thus, his response to the text is implicated in sets of practices outside of the literacy classroom involving his experiences of bullying and, hence, his encounter with an abusive form of masculine power which has been enacted to the detriment of his emotional, psychological and physical well-being. In short, Chris's involvement in this text demonstrates the effectivity
of such a regime of reading which requires students to use the text as a vehicle for
drawing on their own experiences of the effects of masculine power.

Within the limits of such a regime of reading, it may be possible to assist boys to develop
quite specific capacities for analysing the effects of dominant forms of masculinity in their
own lives. Thus, the unacceptable bullying practices which Chris was subjected to, may
be targeted for specific analysis through the use of particular texts within a regime of
reading that makes the construction of masculinities the object of critical scrutiny.
Moreover, by teaching boys capacities for analysing the workings of such power in their
own lives within the limits of such a regime of reading, a threshold may be established
for encouraging them to reject particular forms of behaviour understood as instances of
enacting masculinity.

As McLean (1995) argues:

Getting boys - or indeed men to recognise the injustice they have experienced
themselves can be the first step in enabling them to empathise with other
people's experiences of injustice, and to recognise the ways in which they have
themselves participated in perpetrating injustice (23).

What McLean does not make specific is that this would require teaching boys quite
specific capacities for reading the effects of masculinity in their own lives. Moreover, the
framing of a political agenda in these terms is to avoid grounding the formation of such
capacities in the putative consciousness of the hermeneutic subject.

However, this is the position that Davies (1995) takes up in her call for shifting 'the
strategies of surveillance' to a focus on assisting boys to reflect on how they are
discursively constituted as masculine subjects and how such a discursively constituted
masculinity impacts both on them 'personally' and on others:
It is time to move the strategies of surveillance, both as teachers of students and as feminist activists, to strategies in which all participants in the culture can reflexively examine the ways in which they are discursively constructed through one discourse or another, in one context or another, and not only learn the effects on themselves and others of that construction, but to know how to evaluate the political and moral grounds for consenting to one discursive construction rather than another. This will not be possible unless boys are granted some respect and some agency in this process and unless they can find ways to see the political and situated nature of all knowledges and of their own patterns of desire. (16)

Thus, Davies' theorisation of a politicised agenda for enhancing boys' literacy practices is bound up with notions of critical consciousness as the basis for grounding the emergence of a reflexive subjectivity in discourse. What informs the framing of such a critical literacy agenda is a tension between the normativity of the practices Davies advocates and the freedom she grants boys to choose or to find 'ways of seeing' (see Mellor & Patterson, 1994; 1996b; Patterson, 1996). In this sense, a problematic circularity is built into the self-reflexive literacy practice that Davies advocates. On the one hand, she appears to be advocating the need to provide students with critical tools - with ways of looking at texts - to critique and deconstruct particular versions of masculinity. Yet, on another level, it appears that she is apparently granting students the freedom to choose a particular reading position, once they have been provided with the critical tools to do so. Furthermore, in advocating that readers 'reflexively examine the ways in which they are discursively constructed through one discourse or another', Davies elides power in the sense that the practice of 'examining' is made neutral and 'conscious' by terming it 'reflexive'.

While not rejecting the political goal of developing specific literacy practices designed to target the construction of masculinities, attention here is drawn to the various ways in which freedom and normativity re-emerge on the surface of English as a specific site for
the formation of particular aesthetic, moral and ethical capacities which, for Davies, appear to be grounded in the consciousness of the hermeneutic subject. Hunter (1988a; 1988b), however, claims that such capacities have a historical basis in the deployment of quite specific administrative apparatuses and regulatory technologies of the self which are deployed within the disciplinary space of the literacy classroom. And it is precisely on this basis that attempts to ground the development of specific capacities for reading in the effects of discourse or as emerging in the critical consciousness of the hermeneutic subject are rejected. Rather, it is argued, by drawing on the data provided in this chapter, that boys need to be taught specific capacities for reading masculinity and that this might best be achieved, not by appealing to the putative consciousness of readers, but by using specific kinds of texts and teaching particular kinds of reading practices.

Conclusion

In this chapter an attempt has been made to contribute to the limited corpus of research conducted into the literacy practices of adolescent boys. Within a post-Foucauldian analytic framework, research into boys' reading preferences is conducted through using confessional techniques such as semi-structured interviews and extended response surveys. In following Mottier (1995), it is argued that such techniques of knowledge production can indeed constitute useful research tools for mapping a typology of patterns of boys' responses as a basis for undertaking a descriptive analysis of the techniques and strategies that they use in order to produce particular readings. Thus, boys' responses to surveys and interview questions are not treated as providing some privileged epistemological access to their consciousness. Rather, they are analysed in terms of the particular strategies that boys use to make sense of their literacy practices and how this converges with what they understand counts as desirable masculinity. Coleman's focus on the researcher and his shared understandings about what counts as masculinity, according to a specific grammar of 'family resemblances' (Wittgenstein, 1958), is also drawn on to highlight how the criteria that the latter uses enables him to interpret certain practices, to which the boys refer, as instances of masculinity.
The use of both the surveys and semi-structured interviews, thus, provided knowledge about boys' specific literacy practices which has not been documented in the current literature. For instance, knowledge about boys' reading of fiction was produced which challenges studies that treat boys' reading preferences in terms of discrete binary categories involving non-fiction versus fiction, action/science fiction/adventure versus romance (see Nichols, 1994; Millard, 1997; Hall & Coles, 1997). While such oppositional categories emerged as playing a role in framing boys' engagement in literacy, some boys' reading preferences for fiction could not be categorised in these terms. Furthermore, it would appear that the training the boys have received from their viewing and reading of texts, derived from the polarised genres of adolescent fiction, film and television, targeted at sex-specific audiences, has had a significant role to play in influencing their engagement with literacy in the English classroom (see Moon, 1993; 1997). In light of the research provided in this chapter, boys' engagement in specific literacy practices designed to teach them to read for masculinity is examined in the following chapter.
CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Pedagogical Imperatives and Reading Practices: Addressing Masculinities in the Literacy Classroom

In this chapter two texts are used, within already existing regimes of practice, to determine the limits and possibilities for teaching boys to read for masculinity in the literacy classroom according to quite specific norms. This, it is argued here, must involve setting targets which address issues of power and the role that homophobia plays in the production of certain forms of heterosexual masculinity.

Targeting Masculinity in the Literacy Classroom: Reading 'The Gun'

This section describes how a group of 32 Year 10 boys (aged 14-15 years), including some of those interviewed in previous chapters, were asked to write an extended written response to a short story by Rubin Fernandez (1994) entitled 'The Gun' (see Appendix F). Particular questions were framed according to reading pedagogies that the boys were familiar with at this particular school as a guide for encouraging them to produce readings of this text (see Appendix G). In this way, by posing questions which required students to read through character (Hunter, 1983; Mellor and Patterson, 1991) and to express their opinion, it was considered that the possibilities of using such a text within a regime for teaching them to read for masculinity could be explored.

The reason for using this particular story was that it dealt with an adolescent boy and the problems he was experiencing at home with his father. Based on what some of the boys had stated in their interviews about reading fiction and the need for it to address issues that they saw as relevant to them, it was thought that this text might provide a threshold for many of the boys to engage with issues of masculinity within a regime of reading in which they were required to read empathically (see Mellor & Patterson, 1991; Hunter,
1983). More explicitly, it was felt that the story could be used to raise questions about the link between masculinity and a whole range of behaviours and attitudes such as:

(i) the relationship between power, violence and masculinity;
(ii) the role of fathers in establishing a model of dominant masculinity for their sons;
(iii) the kinds of struggles, pressures and expectations that some boys experience as a result of the imposition of a dominant model of masculinity;
(iv) the need for boys to develop capacities to understand, express and deal with emotions.

About the Story

'The Gun' is a first person narrative about an adolescent boy, 13 years of age, who is talking to a psychiatrist about his problems. He narrates a story about his experiences with the gun his father gave him for his birthday. At first, the boy treats the gun with great care and even tucks it under his pillow, but then his father encourages him to use the gun and questions his masculinity for not doing so:

My father came into my room a couple of days after he'd given me the gun. I thought he was going to beat me up for flunking maths or something but he just asked me how come I never used the gun. 'That's what guns are for, you know?' he said. 'You're supposed to fire them, not talk to them and pamper them like a doll! Why don't you just go and shoot some cans or something, boy?' (p133).

So, he ends up by going down to the river and shooting a thrush feeding its chicks in a nest. This is the beginning of a shooting spree:

But I wanted more, so I aimed at the chicks. I loaded the gun again and shot, and again, and again, and again. I think I only missed once. There they were,
twisted and pulling weird faces on the ground. And then it sorta struck me I didn't know what the hell to do with them, so I chucked them in the river. I shot about twenty of them birds before I realised it was almost eight thirty and I was late for school, so I ran my butt off back home (p135).

He proceeds to discuss how he became obsessed with the gun after this incident and started spending more time by himself rather than with his friends. He mentions how he would hang live frogs upside down, burn and then shoot them. Detail is also provided about how his father beat him when he flunked all of his subjects at school. He ends up by shooting his brother from his bedroom window who had 'egghead glasses' and achieved the best grades at school. He even had a girlfriend! But the boy is adamant that he didn't really want to hurt his brother:

But I never wanted to hurt him. I swear. I just wanted to make him feel the way I felt sometimes, threatened and screwed up. I just wanted to hit the sign. But I'll never do it again. He's alright now anyways, and I think I'm better now too (p138).

Boys' Readings

As the students were reading this story there was dead silence in the classroom which was unusual for this group of students consisting predominantly of boys. They were often agitated and openly expressed their disapproval and avoidance of reading. On this occasion, however, they were very quiet and appeared to be really involved and engrossed. This was confirmed by the comments some of the boys made in their interviews when asked about this text.

Overall, certain patterns emerged in the way that particular groups of boys responded. The majority of the students did not produce readings of character in terms of targeting
masculinity and its effects. In other words, they did not read for gender, and, not, on this occasion, specifically for masculinity. The reasons for this perhaps are related to the fact:

(i) that they had not been trained in a literacy practice organised around a pedagogical imperative to read explicitly for masculinity;

(ii) that readings of masculinity were not as readily available to them on this occasion.

However, if provided with the pedagogical imperative to read for masculinity, it would appear that many of the boys might have produced different readings. Instead, they tended to read the protagonist as having psychological problems and rejected him outright as 'a sick human being' because they had been trained to read in these ways:

I respond to this boy in a negative way as soon as he receives the gun for his birthday. When he goes out shooting and kills the brother and then the baby birds, I respond to him as a thoughtless person who doesn't care about life. This is illustrated again with the burning of the frogs and then shoot it and then he says 'I get a real kick out of it'. I see him as a sick human being who needs help, and this is what he is receiving when he is telling this story. (Brad)

The story 'The Gun' by Rubin Fernandez is about a boy and his experiences with a gun his dad gives him. The boy is ruthless and we reject the things he does ... He is brutal and this is shown by his experience with the gun and animals. He shoots the animals just for fun and details like him burning the frogs emphasises the brutality of the boy ... I think the boy is psycho and violent. (Aaron)

Both students frame the boy's problem in psychological and moral terms. Aaron, for example, constructs the boy as violent and brutal in his killing of the animals and reads him as engaging in such practices for pleasure. On this basis, he rejects him as a psycho.
Masculinity does not appear to be an issue for these students in their reading of the boy's behaviour. In the absence of the pedagogical imperative to do so, these boys do not consider the protagonist's behaviour in these terms, but rather produce readings of the protagonist as psychologically disturbed. This it is argued, may be a result of being subjected to trainings which enable them to read the text in this way. For example, note following two responses:

I think the boy in this story is a kid with a problem. He is obsessed with his gun and doesn't value the lives of some animals and doesn't value life itself ... I think he's a dickhead for thinking its fun. The boy is clearly a bloody weirdo. (Matt)

I think that the boy in the story was screwed in the head because he was doing all these sadistic things like torchering frogs and other animals. He seemed to get a big high when he shot the gun and other stuff like that. I definitely wouldn't be his friend because he could shoot you because he shot his brother. I think that the only thing he did right in the story was go and see a doctor because he definitely needed some serious help. In other words, what he did just screwed his whole life up, totally. (Joel)

Both of these students also read the protagonist as a psychologically disturbed individual and Joel emphasises that he quite clearly needs psychiatric help. But, once again, they make no comment about the relationship of masculinity to these kinds of behaviours. They do not even mention the father's treatment of his son. The point is that these students are not merely choosing to read the character's behaviour as deviant or abnormal. Perhaps, they are constructing readings in light of their training outside of the literacy classroom in relation to their viewing of particular genres such as psycho thrillers and crime drama. Further research is required to help explain what might be the quite mundane origins of such capacities for producing these readings of the character.
It would appear that alternative ways of constructing the boy's actions are not as readily available to these boys because they have not been taught explicitly to use the text in this way. That is, in a way that would enable them to interpret the character's struggles in terms of grappling with the imposition and effects of a dominant model of masculinity. More importantly, it may be that they have not been encouraged to develop specific capacities for reading masculinity and for applying this knowledge to their own lives and social situations. Opportunities need to be provided for boys to deploy texts in this way by means of inserting a pedagogical imperative for them to do so within a regime of reading for masculinity. In this way, particular skills and competencies can be built up in the literacy classroom for reading masculinity within the limits of an aesthetico-ethical reading practice which does not, however, base such capacities in the hermeneutic subject or 'consciousness'.

The following boys' response is more elaborate than the previous ones in that it does target the father as partly responsible for the protagonist's problems:

The boy in the story is constructed as obsessed with his air gun his father gave him for his birthday. He's portrayed as some what destructive and totally disregards the value of life. The relationship between him and his gun is out of control and very disturbing. The heartless and senseless acts towards the animals and his brother incriminate him even further and only someone who has no respect for others could do something like that. I think he's a fucking weirdo, what person would go around shooting animals and put them through torture just for personal satisfaction. However, the boy's father is responsible for some of his actions. Not teaching the boy to think logically with a gun and encouraging him to shoot something totally goes against my beliefs. I think the best thing he did in that story was seek professional help and deal with his obsession. (Chris)
Chris's response is the effect of a set of rules for reading through character. For this boy, the character is read primarily as the moral object of his condemnation within a regime which requires readers to treat character as a moral correlate of themselves (Hunter, 1983: 230). The deployment of character in these terms is indicated by the reader's disapproval of the boy's actions which he refers to as 'heartless and senseless'. However, at the point where he mentions the father, a possibility is opened up for discussing the effects of the dominant model of masculinity that the latter imposes on the former, but Chris does not respond in this way. It is not that he refuses to do so. It is more likely, it is argued, that in the absence of a pedagogical imperative or requirement to read in this way, he simply does not produce such a reading. Moreover, if such a reading practice which targeted masculinity was one which he had been subjected to as part of the routinised literacy practices in his English classes, he might have produced a reading along these gendered lines. Thus, he returns to his former reading position of framing the protagonist as a psychologically disturbed individual who needs professional help. However, what remains at the basis of this student's response is the assumption that the boy's behaviour is deviant and unrelated to the effects of masculinity.

Other boys, however, some of them tending to concentrate on the father's treatment of the boy, were able to take up a very sympathetic reading position and demonstrated quite a sophisticated capacity for understanding the motivations of the latter:

The boy in the story sounds lonely and depressed. We tend to think this because he was not treated the way his brother was, he was belted, and treated unfairly. This makes me feel sorry for him and he used to take his anger out on the birds and frogs. (Nick)

The boy in the story seems quite lonely and outcast. His family seems to favour his brother and maybe because of this he turned to his gun. At first he starts shooting birds and frogs and builds himself up to shooting at people. Even his own brother. He shot at his brother because he was jealous and angry at him for
being smarter and his relationship with his dad was bad and could have influenced his actions. (Josh)

I think this young boy is mentally disturbed and acts the way he does because of a violent life pointed against him by his father which causes him much frustration. He seems to use the gun to let out that frustration on creatures which have feelings just like him. This gives me a light sense of sympathy for him but however he also seems just like another statistic. A violent adolescent who uses his hate and feelings as an excuse to lash out at everything and ultimately his brother. Once he has explained this I somehow understand what ultimately drives him to be the little juvenile delinquent he is. Living his life in the shadow of his brother, an achiever loved by his parents and the writer hated by his parents. He seems to hate everything and everyone. Overall, I think he is mentally tortured but still a juvenile who makes himself feel better by torturing everything around him. (Ashley)

The boy has many problems that need to be discussed ... He comes across as not being loved enough or not being what his parents would like him to be. (Robert)

I think the kid is all screwed up in the head and has no sense of reality. I think he was trying to express his anger by torchering animals. (James)

However, while these students tend to produce sympathetic readings of the protagonist, their responses are still explainable in terms of the effects and operations of a particular regime of reading in which readers are required to empathise with characters as 'real' people. For instance, all the above boys construct a reading of the character which attempt to explain his motivations for acting in the way that he did. While Nick attributes his violent behaviour to abuse at the hands of his father, Josh claims that he was lonely and treated as an outcast by his family who favoured his younger brother. Ashley is more
explicit in the psychological profile he provides of the protagonist. He refers to the character's pent up emotions and frustration to explain why the latter resorts to violence as means of dealing with his anger. James also constructs a reading of the protagonist in these terms, while Robert constructs the latter as unloved and neglected. Thus, these boys' empathic readings of character as 'mentally tortured' are pitted against other boys' critical readings which frame the protagonist as 'a sick human being' or a 'fucking psycho'. These readings, it would appear, are produced within a literary apparatus for reading character as a moral correlate and projection of the self (Hunter, 1983: 230).

The second group of boys, however, appear to be applying the rule which requires them to explain the character's motivations in moral terms by appealing to the latter's psychological interiority. It is in this sense that the character forms part of a different surface or moral terrain in which motivations are attributed to unconscious processes or drives as the basis for accounting for the character's overt behaviours. This is significant because it highlights the role that the human sciences have had to play in the development of specific reading practices within the field of literary education as a disciplinary apparatus. In this way, relations of identification and ethical self-shaping associated with a moral reading practice in which character functions as a projection and correlate of the self intersect with saviors of psychology and progressive education in the literacy classroom. This can be traced in the readings that the boys produce of 'The Gun'. For the second group of boys, the text is used within such a regime of practice in which socio-moral norms are redeployed in a psycho-ethical register in which the protagonist is restored to a consciousness of its unthought conditions and motivations (see Hunter, 1988a).

Within such a literary pedagogy, which is developed within a technology of ethical self-shaping, it is possible to understand the set of operations and rules for reading which govern these boys' literacy practices on this specific occasion. Such reading practices are effects of quite specific literary pedagogies deployed by teachers within the boys' own context and experience of literacy training at school (see Cullen, 1992). Both Andrews
(1993) and Goodwyn (1992), for instance, claim that personal growth approaches to reading are still by far the dominant pedagogies deployed in literacy classrooms. However, it is important to stress that these practices are also part of cultural studies.

Through analysing this data, it is possible to develop a better understanding of how the surface of the literary text may function as a means by which a normalising tactics of self-expression and correction can be effected through the use of specific techniques and rules for reading. It is in this sense that such techniques may be used in a different register which does not appeal to the psychological interiority of literary character as a correlate of the self, but can still function within an ethical regime for teaching students to develop quite specific capacities for reading masculinity. Within such a regime for reading character, specific capacities could be taught for reading masculinity without necessarily resorting to the hermeneutic principle of grounding meaning in consciousness as the site for the formation of subjectivity.

There were some boys who did read for masculinity, however, or at least signalled a reading which targeted masculinity as an issue related to the boy's behaviour:

The character in this story is male and he is trying to prove that he is a man by using his gun, he thinks he has power and authority when he has that gun. (Glenn)

The main character is trying to prove he's a man. By using the gun, he thinks he has power and is an adult. (Terrence)

He thinks that because he has a gun he has power ... Because he has the gun he thinks he is a man and tries to be like one. The text says, 'I could break it and shoot it with my right hand, just like a man'. (Peter)
I think the boy in the storey 'The Gun' is a young confused boy who is discovering life ... I believe that the boy is lost between two worlds, one of being a young innocent child, the other a violent man. (Michael)

Glenn identifies the character as male as a basis to account for his behaviour in terms of using the gun 'to prove that he is a man', while Terrence also accounts for the character's behaviour in these terms. Peter equates the gun with power which he relates to the protagonist trying to establish his masculinity and Michael reads the text in terms of 'a rite of passage' narrative involving the character's initiation into manhood. Michael had recently studied the film, The Year My Voice Broke, in another English class in which he had been introduced to the concept of 'rites of passage' in terms of gender. It would appear that he is applying this knowledge in producing a reading of 'The Gun'. In fact, it would appear that all the above boys are applying rules for reading which instruct them to focus on the gender of the character as an explanatory category. This is related to the fact that some of these boys had been taught to read in this way as a result of being subjected to such literacy practices on other occasions.

What is particularly noteworthy about all of these responses is the level of engagement and involvement of the boys in reading this text. In fact, based on these boys' responses to 'The Gun', it would seem that using such a text within such an ethico-moral reading practice, designed to target masculinity and its effects, could have beneficial results. In this way, the text could be used to encourage boys to consider 'the negative consequences of masculine power at the hands of adult men and older boys' (McLean, 1995: 23). Moreover, such a reading practice could be deployed as means by which to encourage boys to develop capacities for empathising with experiences of injustice and to apply this knowledge about the effects of masculinity to their own lives/social contexts. The limits and possibilities of the use of such a reading practice are also demonstrated in the next section where the focus is on deploying a text to explore the effects of heteronormative currencies of masculinity in relation to the homophonic harassment and bullying of an adolescent boy on his first day at a new school.
Addressing Homophobia: 'The Language of Violence'

Many studies have highlighted the role of homophobia within a regime of social practices in which sexuality is used in the policing and maintenance of heteronormative models of masculinity (see Connell, 1987; 1995; 1989; Martino, 1994; McLean, 1995; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Ward, 1995; Frank, 1987; 1993; Walker, 1988; Ward, 1995; Butler, 1996; Denborough, 1996; Messner & Sabo, 1990; Pallotta-Chiarolli, 1995; 1997; Flood, 1997; Epstein, 1997; Nayak & Kehily, 1996; Steinberg et al, 1997). Based on this research, it was considered important to try to find ways of encouraging boys to examine the impact and effects of homophobia within a regime of reading for masculinity. The text, 'The Language of Violence', was chosen with such an objective in mind (see Appendix H). Students were required to respond to this text as basis for determining its potential deployment within such a regime of reading for addressing the role of homophobia in the construction of homophobic masculinities according to the following explicitly stated objectives:

(i) to help boys to develop capacities for analysing the links between masculine power and the practice of bullying;
(ii) to help boys to develop capacities for empathising with experiences of injustice which are perpetrated through homophobic harassment;
(iii) to determine the effectivity of deploying 'The Language of Violence' for exploring the role that homophobia plays in the construction of dominant models of masculinity;
(iv) to determine the effectivity of deploying 'The Language of Violence' for teaching boys to apply knowledge about homophobia to their own social contexts at school in terms of how they construct their own masculinity.

About the Song

'The Language of Violence' is a rap song by the Disposable Heroes which deals with a boy aged 15 who, on his first day at a new school, is called names like 'faggot, sissy,
punk, queen, queer' and is harassed for no apparent reason by a group of boys. We learn that these boys themselves were abused by their fathers at home and their behaviour is explained in terms of 'proving to each that they were not 'homos'. The victim of this homophobic name calling is bashed to death by this group of boys and one of them ends up by going to prison to receive the same homophobic treatment that he meted out to the boy he killed.

The song was played to two classes, the researcher's own Year 10 english class of '95 (Class A: 31 students) and another class of students (Class B: 30 students) whom the researcher had never taught. The song was played to both classes and then the students were asked to write extended responses to questions which required them to indicate what they thought about the people and the situation referred to in the text. One question also required them to discuss whether they thought the text related to the way students were treated at their own school (see Appendix I). Only two of the boys in class B refused to engage with the song. No boy in the researcher's class displayed any overt form of resistance. Before referring to these students' responses in greater detail, a typology of the boys' readings is mapped below as a means of drawing attention to the effectivity of deploying this text within a regime of reading for targeting masculinity in the literacy classroom.

**Boys' Readings**

Most of the boys rejected the bullies and produced empathic readings of the victim of homophobic harassment. Once again, these boys readily took up the invitation to read empathically through character. This would seem to indicate that they had been subjected to such routinised reading practices in the course of their literacy training in schools and had, therefore, developed a proficiency and practical facility with using texts in this way. In fact, many of the boys demonstrated a capacity to identify with this experience of injustice and to draw links between the text and their own experiences of homophobic harassment at school:
The situation presented by this song is that people try to prove that they're not 'wooses' and 'hmos' and show it by bashing up helpless young teenagers to death. They're showing that they are strong and powerful but I think they are just idiots and foolish.

At this school there are not people getting bashed but people getting bullied because of the way they might look like, the way they talk, or the way they walk. People do things like this to show off in front of their friends or to feel tough (the best).

In the end the bullie deserved what he got and I have no sympathy for him. (Justin)

The bullies are presented as cowards by the way they fight 10 against 1 or 5 against 1. The bullies pick on someone younger than them by starting out calling them names. The lyrics said, 'And when they provoked him, it became open season for the fox and hunter, the sparks and the thunder that pushed the boy under'. This means that the name calling hurts people and they lose their confidence.

It says, 'Brutality and dominance, they didn't hear him screaming, they didn't hear him pleading, they ran like cowards and left the boy bleeding in a pool of red'. This depicts the bullies as wimps because they hunt in packs instead of just facing them 1 on 1, like real men ... I think that this thing happens in this school but just on a smaller scale. Although there is not as much fighting as what goes on in the song but there is still name calling and it still hurts people. (Sean)

Both these boys are able to consider the effects of masculine power and to consider instances of it in their immediate context. Justin, for instance, demonstrates a capacity to reflect on the effects of such power in the form of machismo practices and displays of bravado within peer group relations, while Sean draws attention to its debilitating effects.
on an individual's self-esteem. These responses, perhaps point to the effectiveness of using such a text, within a regime of reading through character, as a threshold for encouraging students to interrogate the effects of particular currencies of masculinity. Such capacities for using the text in this way are also demonstrated by the following boys:

I think that the bullies in the song believe that they in a group can do anything and that the guy that they picked on was just one of the names that they called him like a faggot or a punk and that it didn't matter if they beat him and killed him. I don't think that these people are good people they are basically just animals in packs hunting the weak. And when the head of the group is imprisoned for the crime and what he said and did to the first boy is done to him it is basically good revenge. In our school of course this doesn't happen but the name calling is there since most of the guys in Year 10 are Homophobes and this story probably relates to them greatly. (Gary)

The main idea in 'The Language of Violence' is probably to give the reader an idea of violence in schools (and later on jail). While the setting is distinctively american - conveyed through the language used and reference to things like baseball bats - the story behind the song is easily applied to any school, including this one. Violence tends to be a strange word to describe bullying, because it implies a physical bashing. Violent language and violent intent are probably better words to describe bullying, especially with gangs. The character who is the victim arrives at school, and violent language is used against him in the form of questioning his sexual preferences. This sort of bullying is a favourite in most schools (including this one) because it provides both something to mock someone with and a screen to hide behind for whoever is doing the bullying. In this school, it wouldn't surprise me if the real 'queers' were the bullies who use this as a focal point in their harassment of others. One point the song brings up is the 'dehumanising of others'. I think this happens on a large scale at school, because it's hard to bully someone who has feelings
that need to be taken into consideration. The song also refers to bullying as not being a game. This is something I'm sure most people forget when they bully others at school - they forget that their 'fun' can effect others. One other point the text questions is 'Who is really the victim? Or are we all the cause, and victim of it all [?]'. This is something to make you think - when you are bullied, does what you say in defence of yourself have a negative effect on the bully's feelings, leading to more bullying? - I think this might be the case. At this school, I can't see a way to end bullying either than to ignore bullying or stick up for yourself. Having tried both, I would say that the former is more effective in getting rid of a bully. (Scott)

Both boys readily deploy the text within a moral regime of reading through character. Gary, for instance, makes the point that the dominant group of boys are 'not good people' and then proceeds to take up the pedagogical imperative to use the text as a correlate of his own experiences at school. This is also the case with Scott who, within such regime in which socio-moral norms are redployed in a psycho-ethical register, produces a reading of those boys who engage in bullying in terms which allude to their repressed homosexuality. In other words, he tends to produce a reading of the character which relies on the psychoanalytic category of the 'unconscious'. This is used to explain the gang's behaviour as a screen behind which they can deny what is repressed and blocked from their consciousness. It is in this sense that he demonstrates quite a sophisticated capacity for understanding the effects of masculine power which is framed in terms of homophobic harassment that he himself has experienced. However, it is important to stress that such readings are the effect of specific regimes of practice which invoke concepts of consciousness grounded in the hermeneutic subject.

The following student's response also documents the impact of homophobic practices and abuse on the life of a boy who is desperately calling out for help:
To me the story is about a teen who goes to his first day of high school, he is tormented called a faggot, sissy, punk, queen and queer. He is verbally and mentally abused...and has to put up with the mental torture until one night a group of bullies bash the teen to death ... The teen had to go through alot until he was finally put out of his misery.

I know what its like to be tormented and bullied, I have to put up with it every day of my high school life, until I leave or have to put up with it I complete school.

Some days are easier than others, some days only one comment others thousands. I hate most of all the stares and looks I get from people who don't know ME, not the true me. Some days I want to curl up in a ball and die, but I can't. (Ryan)

Once again, this boy uses the text as a projection and correlate of the self according to the dictates of the pedagogical imperative to do so. He moves from the text to a consideration of his own personal experiences of victimisation through his insertion into a reading practice which requires him to perform this task. Ryan's identification with the protagonist as victim in the song, and which is signalled by his use of language such as 'tormented' and 'mental torture', provides a threshold for him to use the text to reflect on his own experiences of homophobic harassment. Most of the boys were willing to engage in this kind of reading practice involving the use of the text to consider the effects of homophobic practices in their immediate schooling context:

The story tells an emotionally graphic story of a bully who murdered a young boy that was starting a new school. For his crime he was sent to jail and the tables were then turned and he was now the victim starting a new life in jail. The giant reduced to Jack Horner tells us how the bully was confronted by a group of inmates and was raped and became the victim. It focuses mainly on violence getting out of hand. I think the act towards the victim at school was cruel and unfair and it occurred because the bully needed to make him feel good or
because he's a new kid at school. However I thought the kid got his just deserts, because of his heartless act I feel no sympathy towards the bully turned victim.

This sort of thing happens in schools today, I should know it's happened to me (except the killing of course). People do this to make them feel big or because the victim is different. (Chris)

This response also demonstrates that Chris has developed a capacity for engaging in a literacy practice which is grounded in an imperative to read through character and to use the text as a projection and moral correlate of his own experiences at school. What is important to stress, however, is that many of the boys had already learnt to read texts in this way as a result of their previous literacy training, and that the data would appear to point to the effectivity of redeploying such a regime of reading to teach boys to read for masculinity.

**Boys' Assumptions**

The following two boys from Class B refused to engage with this song because they read it as endorsing homosexuality:

All I know is that the song was about a bunch of gay faggots and people getting the shit bashed out of them.

I think this is a point less exercise and I'm not doing any more.

I hate TECHNOS and RAPERS.

No I don't think so [that the song relates to way people are treated at school] because we don't welcome gays in this school. (Warren)

I think this song is about people getting the shit smashed out of them because they are gay home boys. If I was getting hit I would kill them all. This proves society has its own laws and takes the law into its own hands. I'm not a
'hommie' so I think you should burn this crappy song and never pollute my ears with it again. Got it You better.

P.S. I think this is the biggest load of crap I've ever had to do in English it just shows how crap this school is.

HOMMIES SUCK
CRAP.

No it doesn't relate to people in this school except to people who are gays like Ryan or to home boys we all hate. (Adrian)

These responses point to the extent to which the production of a particular form of heterosexual masculinity (Mason & Tomsen, 1997; Flood, 1997; Denborough, 1996; McLean, 1996; Ward, 1995; Frank, 1987, 1990; Epstein, 1997; Nayak & Kehily, 1996) is imbricated in these boys' literacy practices in their refusal to engage with the text. Both boys immediately work with the assumption that the boy who is victimised was gay. Warren's identification of the song as fitting into the genre of rap music, for instance, is also used as a further basis for reject the text in terms of its endorsement of a form of deviance which he associates with homosexuality. Adrian's assertion that he is not a 'hommie' is significant because it signals his refusal to deploy the text in any empathic capacity, particularly one which he reads as endorsing homosexuality. And yet, he does use the text, according to a specific set of norms, to read it morally and as an extension of his identity. He rejects attempts which require him to produce the anti-homophobic reading that is required. For instance, he explicitly targets Ryan, one of his peers, as gay and also appears to implicate the researcher in this category when he threatens him and instructs him to 'burn this crappy song' (Got it You better).

Such readings support the previous claims made in this chapter with regards to the role that certain currencies of masculinity play in shaping boys' literacy practices. The extent of these boys' homophobia points to the use of sexuality in departments of existence
adjacent to the literacy classroom. It is in this sense that such practices crisscross and overlap on the occasion of these two boys deploying 'The Language of Violence' in the literacy classroom within a regime of reading which emphasises the extent to which homophobia, as a learned practice, is a technique or strategy for policing a particular form of heterosexual masculinity.

Another important point is that the researcher was not acquainted with these two boys. Moreover, no boy in class A, which the researcher had taught for a whole semester, responded to the text in this way. The researcher had developed a particular rapport or 'sympathetic relation' with this group of students and had spent considerable time with them outside of class. Moreover, through interviewing these students this relationship had been developed further within the context of a supervisory technology of pastoral care (Hunter, 1988a: 18). This perhaps signals that the effectivity of such a reading practice designed to target issues like homophobia in the literacy classroom, which some boys may find threatening, may be dependent on a particular teacher-student relationship produced as an effect of a particular pedagogical regime. Perhaps, before such a reading practice can be deployed effectively to achieve the aforementioned objectives, it is necessary for the teacher to establish a sympathetic relation with students based on mutual respect and an expression of genuine concern for their well-being. In this way, they may be incited, in an unobtrusive way, to deploy texts such as 'The Language of Violence' according to an explicitly acknowledged set of norms for the formation of quite specific capacities for reading masculinity (see Patterson, 1996). Furthermore, it is argued that to use texts within such normative frames and regimes of practice should not be considered a problematic mode of surveillance for monitoring and adjusting the reading behaviours of students. This is because no reading practice used within the disciplinary space of the literacy classroom can be operationalised outside of the limits of any pedagogical frame which itself is imbricated in regulatory technologies of surveillance.
Even though the other boys did not respond to the text in this way, some of them still read the text as dealing with discrimination against gay people. In other words, they assumed that the boy who was bullied was gay:

The kid was a faggot at a new school and bullies pick on him. The main bully eventually kills him because he is homophobic ... It is good how the bully got some of his own medicine ... I think gays get beaten up because nobody likes gays. It happens at most schools but at a much lower level. (Mark)

The song is telling a story in two parts. The first, about a gay boy on his first day at school. (Ben)

The boy on his first day of school was killed by the bully only because he was different or queer.

In this school it doesn’t happen in such a manner of killing a person but people still crap to other people for doing stuff or having a poofy voice or something like that.

This song presents how gays are treated differently 'not killed' but bashed because people are scared of the thought. (Frank)

Even though these boys do not produce homophobic readings of the text, their responses are still based on certain normalising assumptions about the production of a subordinated homosexual masculinity. Frank’s response, for instance, highlights the extent to which he has learnt to identify certain indicators of homosexuality such as 'having a poofy voice'. This would appear to support the need to devise a reading practice designed to teach boys to question their assumptions about what counts as desirable masculinity and to consider the basis on which they define particular models of masculinity within a regime in which sexuality is deployed as a mechanism for policing the limits of certain practices.
Conclusion

In this chapter boys' readings of two texts are analysed as a basis for developing an argument about the role of quite specific self-shaping practices in accounting for the ways in which boys read on this specific occasion. By drawing on this data, it is argued that using texts within a regime of reading for character as a moral correlate and projection of the self may prove useful for teaching boys to read for masculinity. In other words, it is argued that such texts as 'The Gun' and 'The Language of Violence' may be redeployed within such a regime of reading which does not necessarily appeal to the putative consciousness of the reader. Rather, the data would seem to indicate the effectiveness of using texts such as 'The Gun' and 'The Language of Violence' for exploring the effects of homophobic currencies of masculinity on the one hand, and for teaching boys to apply this knowledge to their own social contexts/lives in terms of how they construct their own masculinity on the other.

Overall, an approach to teaching boys to read for masculinity according to an explicitly acknowledged set of norms and objectives is advocated. However, it needs to be emphasised that such a practice is not presented as a panacea. The problem of boys refusing to produce required readings still, of course, remains. What is emphasised in pointing to the effectiveness of such reading practices in which character is treated as a moral object is that such a regime of reading can be modified, along the above lines, for teaching boys to deploy character according to a set of explicitly stated norms (see Patterson, 1996). Moreover, it is suggested that reading practices and the specific set of operations or rules for reading on designated occasions in the literacy classroom should be made explicit for students (see Mellor, 1992; Freebody, 1998; Rex et al, 1998). In other words, the pedagogical imperatives to deploy texts on occasions and in particular ways need to be outlined specifically for students so that they can develop a greater understanding of the readings they produce in terms of the limits imposed by a designated regime of practices.
This was particularly highlighted in relation to the occasions on which boys did not
deploy the texts used in this research project to read specifically for masculinity in the
required way. It is argued that this was not related so much to the fact that they did not
have the capacities to read for masculinity, though for some this might well have been the
case. Rather, the point is made that in the absence of a pedagogical imperative for the
boys to deploy the text in these terms, many simply do not produce such readings. It
would seem that those few boys who do read for masculinity according to the norms
advocated by the researcher, however, have been subjected to such a reading practice on
an iterative basis through their former experiences of literacy training and, on this
occasion, apply such rules for reading the text in the absence of the imperative for them to
do so.

In short, in this chapter it has been demonstrated that the way a group of students
responded to certain texts was tied to a particular regime of practices or a moral
technology of the self (Hunter, 1988a; 1983; 1982). In other words, students' responses
to texts are conceptualised as effects of particular pedagogical routines in the reading
classroom which have a long history and can be traced to the confessional practices of
moral self-problematisation developed within the Christian church. These techniques of
the self have been appropriated within the literacy classroom and are embedded in current
practices of english teaching (see Hunter, 1988; Mellor & Patterson, 1996; Patterson,
1997a; 1977b). Moreover, it has been demonstrated that forms of masculinity are
implicated in the way that some boys deploy these techniques for reading texts. This was
indicated by the homophobic responses that several boys produced and which highlight
the role that compulsory heterosexuality plays in policing particular forms of masculinity
(Epstein, 1994; 1997; Steinberg et al, 1997; Ward, 1995; Flood, 1997; Frank, 1987;
1990; Denborough, 1996).

Thus, attention is drawn in this thesis to the adjustment of norms in requiring students to
perform designated 'moves' in deploying texts in the literacy classroom to read for
masculinity. This is understood in terms of reconstructing the ways in which students
read and write towards a non-homophobic position. However, this does not mean that students will cease to display or engage in homophobic practices outside of the literacy classroom. The issue is one which involves adjusting behaviour, while not necessarily claiming to effect changes or shifts in consciousness. It is argued, therefore, that this kind of practice or approach is not dissimilar to the way anti-vilification legislation operates (see Mason & Tomsen, 1997). While such laws are developed with strategic targets in mind in relation to adjusting certain norms of behaviour, they do not necessarily lay claims to a shift in consciousness. The hope, of course, is that such a shift will occur - but unlike english, the State does not assume it has failed if such a conversion at the level of consciousness is not achieved. Moreover, it does not even claim to know whether such a transformation has been effected in the human subject in the first place.

In light of these observations, it is argued that reading practices, which are already available within subject english, may be re-deployed in attempting to achieve quite limited but specifiable outcomes according to designated norms. These outcomes are understood in terms of enhancing boys' engagement and involvement in a literacy practice as a basis for encouraging them to interrogate masculinities and homophobia and to apply this knowledge to their own lives. In this sense, already available techniques of moral self-problematisation may be quite usefully redeployed within a regime of reading which targets the effects of certain forms of masculinity and homophobia. This is in line with Foucault's (1978) conceptualisation of power as exercised through a strategic deployment of the dispositif or apparatus according to a set of aims and objectives (see also Hunter, 1991a):

there is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives. But this does not mean that it results from the choice or decision of an individual subject;...the rationality of power is characterised by tactics that are often quite explicit at the restricted level where they are inscribed...tactics which, becoming connected to one another, attracting and propagating one another, but finding their base of support and their condition elsewhere, end by forming comprehensive
systems: the logic is perfectly clear, the aims decipherable, and yet it is often the case that no one is there to have invented them, and few who could be said to have formulated them ... (95).

It is in this sense, at the level of the apparatus, that a strategic intervention into the literacy practices of adolescent boys is advocated according to the formulation of specific objectives for teaching them to interrogate masculinities which are organised around an explicitly acknowledged set of norms and rules for reading. A part of this project would also involve assisting boys to develop capacities for producing anti-homophobic readings of texts. Such a position is informed by the work of Luke and Freebody (1996) who raise questions about the issue of normativity and critical literacy practices (see also Mellor, 1992; Mellor & Patterson, 1994; 1996b; Patterson, 1996):

The key question...is the question of normativity, of what should be: What prescriptive model of the literate person and the 'social' should any approach to critical literacy aspire to? And, relatedly, on the basis of what theoretical and empirical, analytic and narrative grounds can such a model be constructed. (1)

Thus, the approach taken in this thesis, with regards to addressing the literacy practices of adolescent boys, is one which attempts to address such questions of normativity (Mellor & Patterson, 1994) and, in so doing, maps the theoretical, political and pedagogical grounds on which a particular model of critical literacy can be formulated for targeting the social construction of masculinities and the effects of homophobia.
CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Conclusion

This thesis concludes with a review of some of its major arguments which are informed by a post-Foucauldian approach to theorising and researching masculinities that deviates from and questions particular modes of rationality deployed within the fields of gender and masculinity studies (Brod, 1987b; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Walker, 1988; Connell, 1987; 1995; Brod & Kaufman, 1994; Berger et al, 1995; Segal, 1990; Messner & Sabo, 1990). A gesture toward outlining what some of the implications of the research might be in terms of addressing the politics of masculinities in schools for adolescent boys is also indicated.

Reviewing the Model and Mode of Critique for Interrogating Masculinities

In this thesis a particular theorisation of masculinities has been elaborated by drawing on the work of Foucault (1978; 1982b; 1984b; 1985; 1986; 1988a; 1988b), Hunter (1984b; 1994a; 1991b; 1993b), Mauss (1973; 1985) and Wittgenstein (1958) to critique the emphasis that is placed on ideology and thus a particular conceptualisation of repressive/sovereign power which dominates cultural studies' paradigms (Greenfield, 1995). Through undertaking such a critique, the category of 'masculinity' and relations between it and other social practices (Coleman, 1990; Hearn, 1996) have been placed under investigation, one which refuses to ground the formation of subjectivity in the symbolic space of 'consciousness'. One of the central arguments elaborated in this thesis has been that no foundational basis - understood in terms of an appeal to the putative consciousness of the meaning-giving subject - exists for understanding the manner in which adolescent boys establish their masculinities (see Weedon, 1987; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Frank, 1990; Kaufman, 1987; Cohen, 1990; Walker, 1988; Kimmel & Messner, 1989). However, it has been demonstrated that such a mode of rationality is implicated in
dominant cultural studies and sociological paradigms for theorising the links between
gendered subjectivity, culture and politics.

In earlier chapters particular attention was drawn to the limits of poststructuralist
paradigms (Weedon, 1987; Davies, 1992; 1994) in terms of their capacity to account for
the disciplinary formation and historically contingent modes of subjectification that are
imbricated in the constitution of masculinities (Foucault, 1982b; 1984b; 1988a; 1988b;
Weeks, 1985). It was argued that such accounts of subjectivity subordinate normalising
regimes of practice to the formation of the subject in language as staged representations in
consciousness (Hunter, 1984a). Theoretical perspectives which draw on a Foucauldian
interpretive analytics were also applied to mapping the limits of treating subjectivity in
these poststructuralist terms. Such a critique formed the basis, in these chapters, for
unhinging the fundamental link that is established, within such paradigms, between the
structure of language and the development of human capacities (Hunter, 1991a;

Hunter (1984a; 1991a; 1993a; 1993b) was also deployed to map the theoretical limits of
such positions which, it is argued, are grounded in appeals to a fundamental subject-
language relation to account for the formation of gendered subjectivities in the symbolic
space of consciousness. It was demonstrated that within such frames the elaboration of
an emancipatory politics becomes crystallised around the imperative to free the subject
from oppressive social forces which bind him/her to a state of 'false' or 'blocked'
consciousness (Cousins & Hussain, 1986). Moreover, it was highlighted how such a
conceptualisation of politics and subjectivity led to establishing a dialectical frame for
theorising masculinities, one which effects a reconciliation between state-determining
subject and self-determining subject as realised in the space of consciousness or the
representational capacities of language (Easthope, 1986; Seidler, 1989; 1991; Cohen,

It is in this sense that an alternative theorisation of gendered subjectivities has been proposed in this thesis in terms which conceive of masculinities as 'a dispersed array of practical capacities' that are tied to the historical deployment of individualising regimes of practice and regulatory technologies of the self (Foucault; 1982b; 1984b; 1988a; 1988b). What is emphasised through deploying such a Foucauldian model of subjectification is the specific repertoire of already available techniques of the self that boys draw on to establish their masculinities within historically contingent regimes of practice. In this way, the specific capacities that boys acquire for enacting particular currencies of masculinity have been framed within the context of this thesis in terms which attempt to unhinge or dislodge subjectivity from its foundation in the putative consciousness of the meaning-giving subject and, hence, from the dialectical bind in which agency is identified with consciousness (Mauss, 1985).

The later work of Foucault, therefore, has been mobilised as an analytic tool for elaborating a critique of such dialectical approaches to interrogating masculinities. In describing the domains of knowledge/power and ethical relations in which human subjects are constituted, Foucault has been used to reconceptualise the theoretical basis for researching adolescent boys' experiences of 'masculinity'. This involved drawing attention to the formation of a normalising relation to the self within a set of historically contingent practices in which sexuality functions as an index of subjectivity (Foucault, 1984g; 1988g; 19988k). In these terms, it is argued that masculinities are best conceptualised as ensembles of self-fashioning practices which are linked to the deployment of various apparatuses and regulatory technologies of normalisation.
This thesis has also attempted to reconceptualise *agency* within the post-Foucauldian frames outlined above. By drawing on Hunter (1993b), Rose (1989) and Hindess (1989), a particular form of cultural critique, which presupposes that human agency can be freed from the chains of governmental power, is rejected. It is in this sense that the hermeneutic subject (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982) is refuted as a site for political resistance. Moreover, this thesis has avoided attempts to deploy a form of cultural critique centred around notions of agency, which rely heavily on identifying a set of beliefs or ideologies that determine specifiable modes of conduct and politicised action. Thus, while acknowledging the individual's capacity for making choices, this thesis has refused to treat such capacities as reducible to a dialectical interplay of oppressive social structures and a portfolio of beliefs and desires attributable to the social formation of the self-determining subject (Hindess, 1989: 164-184). In other words, it is argued that the links between the techniques and strategies employed by social actors and their social location cannot be reduced to a general explanatory principle involving the dialectical interplay of state-determining subject and self-determining subject (see Willis, 1977; Walker, 1988; Mac an Ghaill, 1994). It is in this sense that every attempt has been made in this thesis to avoid treating the strategies, techniques and forms of thought, which adolescent boys deploy to enact various masculinities, as reducible to a general theory of power grounded in ideology critique.

In light of this theoretical base, attention has been drawn in the earlier part of this thesis to the limits of a particular conceptualisation of 'masculinity' which gives recourse to a psychic interiority embedded in the consciousness of adolescent boys as a site for politicised resistance. It is argued that such deconstructive analytic approaches rely on explanatory tropes such as ideology and repression as a basis for elaborating an emancipatory politics of the self. Furthermore, it is emphasised that such cultural models of analysis have built into them a repressive hypothesis which drives the political imperative to restore the subject to 'full' consciousness. In delineating such modes of
rationality and their theoretical limits, a basis has been established in this thesis, both in terms of applying a particular cultural critique to reviewing studies of 'masculinity', and in terms of elaborating a methodological focus for conducting research into the formation of adolescent masculinities (chapters five and six). In fact, attention has been drawn to the extent to which explanatory tropes such as ideology and repression, deployed within dialectical theoretical frames, underscore cultural studies approaches to theorising and researching masculinities. On this basis, it is argued that this study represents a deviation from such a circular problematics in which the subject as agent is pitted against oppressive social forces, only to be reconciled or restored to 'full' consciousness through his capacities for self-realisation (see Hunter, 1993b). This is further highlighted in chapter six where it is demonstrated that such models of cultural analysis, which have recourse to the putative consciousness of the subject, are endemic in studies conducted into the formation of masculinities in schools (see Walker, 1988; Willis, 1977; Mac an Ghaill, 1994).

In chapter seven a particular survey was deployed as a research tool to place under investigation both the researcher's grammar of the term 'masculinity' and that of a particular group of male students. In this way, it was possible to interrogate the basis for both the researcher's attributions of masculinity and the norms that govern particular modes of acting, thinking and behaving which constitute what is to count as an instance of masculinity. The work of Coleman (1990) and Mottier (1995) also proved to be quite useful in this capacity and in terms of the establishing a further theoretical basis for adopting a particular methodological focus in using semi-structured interviews, surveys and observational analysis to describe the formation of adolescent masculinities in one catholic co-educational school. Such confessional techniques of knowledge production were used to incite boys to textual production as a basis for tracing the effects of certain knowledge/power and ethical relations imbricated in the formation of particular currencies of masculinity.
In chapters eight, nine and ten, the data derived from semi-structured interviews and observational methods were used to analyse the situationally specific dynamics involved in boys enacting particular masculinities. Specific occasions for policing sex/gender boundaries were specifically targeted without resorting to an appeal to the putative consciousness of individual boys. Rather, attention was drawn to the assemblage of quite specific norms for governing the conduct of the boys on certain occasions. One of the major findings of this research related to the boys' willingness to discuss their problems and to share openly their opinions and thoughts about their relationships with their peers. Many of the boys were also willing to discuss issues of masculinity. The data were used as a basis for arguing that this is the result of deploying already existing pastoral pedagogies and techniques of the self of which the 'sympathetic friend', embodied in the unobtrusive persona of the researcher, is a particular effect. In short, in light of this research, the desirability of adjusting certain norms around the formation of particular forms of masculinity, considered to be abusive, is advocated in the context of establishing a particular sympathetic teacher-student relation, understood as produced within supervisory technologies of pastoral surveillance (Hunter, 1988a).

In the final chapters, both surveys and semi-structured interviews were used to examine the imbrication of particular gender regimes in adolescent boys' reading practices. It is argued that no general relation exists between reading and the formation of a gendered subjectivity. Rather, in drawing on Moon (1993) and Hunter (1988a), data were deployed to demonstrate that boys' reading practices need to be understood in terms of an assemblage of specific norms and pedagogical regimes which have no general relation of consistency in terms of the production of a gendered subjectivity that impacts on particular ways of reading. However, attention was drawn to the gender inflected nature of the boys' reading preferences and to their readings of certain texts on particular occasions. While it is argued that no general relation exists between masculinity and
reading, which could be grounded in the consciousness of the hermeneutic subject, the occasions on which particular gender regimes impact on boys' literacy practices were placed under investigation.

Implications for Educational Practice and Policy Formulation

On the basis of the data analysed in this thesis, certain recommendations are proposed which relate explicitly to the development of specific pedagogical and educational practices, designed to address the politics of masculinities in schools. It would appear that educators need to work at developing particular kinds of relationships with adolescent boys in schools as a basis for creating a threshold for encouraging the latter to interrogate masculinities in their own lives. For instance, many of the boys interviewed were willing to discuss the social dynamics involved in the ways in which they had learnt to relate to one another on certain occasions. In fact, many of them had already developed quite sophisticated capacities for doing so. While the data were used to highlight specific instances of boys enacting a particular stylised heterosexual masculinity within regimes of practice in which sex/gender boundaries were policed, the level of engagement in the interviews and the boys' willingness to disclose information about their 'personal' lives need to be investigated.

Contrary to claims made about the boys' lack of emotional literacy (Middleton, 1992; Seidler, 1989; 1991; Cohen, 1990), it would appear that the boys interviewed in this study had developed quite sophisticated capacities for analysing their social world and for 'expressing' their emotions. The implications of their involvement in the interviews, therefore, require further elaboration in terms of outlining the possible reasons for their engagement and willingness to disclose 'personal' information which might not have necessarily been the case if other contingencies had been operative. It is in this sense that attention needs to be paid to the role and function of the researcher as a 'special kind of
person' understood in terms of the sympathetic embodiment of unobtrusive norms which are themselves produced within a supervisory technology of techniques of pastoral surveillance (Hunter, 1988a: 19).

The disciplinary space of the interview functioned as a site for applying pastoral techniques for 'harnessing the sympathy' of students. This is proposed as a necessary requirement for inciting them to disclose information about their experiences at school. By adopting the role of 'sympathetic friend', produced as an effect of deploying these techniques of pastoral surveillance, the researcher was able to develop a particular kind of relationship with many of the students interviewed, which was conducive to inciting self-disclosure. It was a 'friendly' relationship based on mutual respect and a genuine concern for their well-being. Time had been spent talking to students outside of class to build this 'sympathetic' teacher relation. In the space of the interview, therefore, many boys did not feel intimidated discussing their problems/opinions with a person they trusted. Thus, it would appear that such practices and pastoral techniques are effective in producing particular modes of relating and communicating which, on the basis of the data included in this study, might prove useful in encouraging boys to discuss issues around the formation and impact of masculinities in their own lives. This is not to say, however, that all boys will necessarily respond in ways which require them to reject certain norms in favour of others considered to be more suitable. However, attempts can be made to create a non-coercive space for encouraging students to adopt certain norms with regards to promoting anti-homophobic versions of masculinity.

The point that needs to be emphasised, however, is that the researcher is able to 'incite confession' through developing a sympathetic student-teacher relationship, which is produced within an already available apparatus of pastoral care and supervisory technologies of cultural regulation. It is proposed that these confessional techniques and practices may be used to exercise disciplinary authority more effectively in the specific
area of assisting students in schools to interrogate masculinities. That is, this would involve using an already existing technology - that of the confessional/the 'seminar of conscience' - in the service of a 'new' concern, masculinity. Thus, while the target has changed, it is argued here, that already existing regimes of practice and technologies of pastoral surveillance, combined with techniques of moral self-problematisation, might be useful in attempting to adjust norms around homophobic versions of masculinity in schools. In this way, students may be taught to develop capacities - in an unobtrusive way - for interrogating gender regimes in relation to the effects of enacting specific forms of masculinity (see Epstein, 1997; Kehily & Nayak, 1997; Frank, 1993; Dixon, 1997; Parker, 1996; Jordan, 1995a; 1995b; Haywood, 1993; Skelton, 1997; Redman, 1996; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Walker, 1988; Connell, 1989; 1992; Kessler et al, 1985; Hearn & Morgan, 1990).

The effectiveness of such pastoral regimes of ethical invigilation (Hunter, 1982; 1983; 1988a) has been supported through the research conducted in this thesis, with many of the boys demonstrating a willingness to engage in discussions about 'masculinity' and its effects. However, several boys did indicate that no opportunity had been provided for them to interrogate masculinities at school and considered this project to be important in terms of educational institutions addressing issues relevant to their own lives (see interviews with Shaun and Eric, chapters eight, nine and ten). This was supported further by several students who talked at length about the kinds of problems that they were experiencing with both parents and teachers at school (see Chris, chapter ten). In fact, several boys discussed in detail the kinds of problems they were experiencing with both parents, teachers and their peers. Generally, these problems stemmed from the fact that they did not feel that they were understood or listened to. Some felt judged or pressured to behave in certain ways and indicated that no opportunities had been provided at school for them to discuss their thoughts and opinions. Several boys were subjected to sex-based harassment and verbal taunting and did not feel supported by the school. They felt
afraid, frustrated and claimed that they could not really talk to significant people in their lives.

Through being subjected to a governmental pedagogy organised by the technology of ethical and moral supervision, in the form of being interviewed and reading particular texts in the literacy classroom, however, many boys demonstrated quite sophisticated capacities for analysing 'masculinity' and its effects on their lives. In light of this research, it would appear that deploying these technologies, in the service of targeting particular norms, could have productive consequences for helping students to develop specific capacities for interrogating masculinities and homophobia.

While such norms for adjusting masculinities have been spelt out in recent policy documents in Australia (Gender Equity Taskforce, 1997; House of Representative Standing Committee, 1994), the explicit machinations of pedagogical practices, and their deployment within technologies of subjectification and individualisation (1993; 1988a; 1988b; 1982b), have not been made explicit in terms of how they might be used to help students to interrogate masculinities. It would appear imperative, therefore, that such pedagogies be outlined in formulating policy for developing gender equity initiatives designed to address the politics of masculinities in schools. This would entail stipulating the role of 'sympathetic' teacher-student relation within a disciplinary regime in which attempts to adjust norms around masculinity are undertaken in an unobtrusive manner. Moreover, educators and administrators would be required to fashion a particular self in terms of how they relate to students at school. In more specific terms, it would involve listening to young people and providing them with opportunities to discuss their concerns and fears as a means of enabling the authority of the teacher (or administrator) to work more effectively in the interests of addressing issues of masculinity (see McLean, 1996). This is imperative because regimes of practice in which the authority of the teacher is imposed will not be conducive to achieving such an objective. McLean (1997), for
example, argues that gender reform in schools must involve 'questioning the power relationships between teachers and students':

Adults need to realise that they have a lot to learn about how young people see their lives and why they make the choices that they do. It is crucial that we stop seeing young people as passive in the face of 'gender socialisation' and recognise that they are active participants in the process of self construction. Boys and girls act in ways they do for reasons which make perfect sense to them, even if they may not be able to articulate them clearly. If we believe that change is necessary, it is up to us to involve young people in this process in ways that are relevant to their very real concerns. There needs to be a collaborative approach to exploring alternative possibilities, which allow young people to feel good about themselves and to see that it is possible to be strong, competent and successful, at the same time as caring, empathic, co-operative, and connected to the community around them. Above all, we need to recognise that we, as adults, have at least as much to learn from young people in this process as they have from us (4).

While such a position is proscribed by a dialectical mode of argumentation, the limits of which have already been spelt out in this thesis, in terms of the oppositional poles of determination and freedom being reconciled in the self-realising subject, McLean is used here to emphasise the role and function of a particular pastoral technology in attempting to adjust norms around the formation of heterosexist and homophobic forms of masculinity in schools. Thus, it is argued that the implementation of such a strategic objective or tactics might best be operationalised, in the first instance, through practices of government in the form of policy formulation which articulate the specific nature of pastoral pedagogies and their role in addressing the politics of masculinities in schools.
The Literacy Classroom as a Site For Intervention

On the basis of data analysed in chapter thirteen, it would appear that the literacy classroom is an ideal site for deploying certain texts within pedagogical regimes designed to strategically target the effects and the politics of masculinities. In fact, it is argued in this thesis that certain texts can be used successfully within a particular regime of reading to help boys to develop specific capacities for interrogating repertoires of conduct associated with enacting particular forms of masculinity considered to be abusive (Ward, 1995; Butler, 1996; Flood, 1997; McLean, 1996; Hinson, 1996; Mason & Tomsen, 1997; Miedzian, 1992; Brittan, 1989). Since english teaching historically has always been in the business of shaping students as particular kinds of people with capacities for self-realisation, self-reflection and moral introspection (see Goodson & Medway, 1990; Patterson, 1993; 1997a; 1997b), it is argued here that already existing technologies for reading texts can be used to help boys to develop capacities for analysing the injustices and effects of masculine power in their own lives (see McLean, 1995). For instance, Green (1990) claims that english teaching has always worked 'in the service of a \textit{techne} of the self', producing in students particular ways of being in the world and particular forms of conduct' (146). It has been demonstrated in this thesis that this is consistent with the theoretical perspective on subjectivity outlined by Foucault (1985; 1986; 1988a; 1988b) in his later work who asserts that the way we learn to relate to our selves and to others is linked to the deployment of quite specific norms or 'technologies of the self'.

In focusing on these 'technologies of the self' in relation to boys' responses to particular texts, attention in this thesis has been drawn to a set of techniques of self-formation for shaping particular forms of individuality or 'being in the world'. Moreover, it has been demonstrated that these techniques of subjectification have been married to pedagogical routines which are organised by a technology of moral supervision deployed within english. In other words, it has been demonstrated that boys in this study have learned to
read through being subjected to confessional practices of self-disclosure and surveillance in which texts are deployed as surfaces for monitoring themselves according to a set of norms for governing their conduct. Thus, the literacy classroom has been conceptualised in this thesis as a site where such confessional practices of self-disclosure and moral self-problematisation and regulation have a very important role to play in the way that students are taught to read (see Mellor & Patterson, 1994; 1996; 1997a; 1997b).

Moreover the work of Hunter (1982; 1983; 1984a; 1984b; 1988a; 1988b; 1991a) has been employed to argue that reading is an effect of a set of practices of moral self-problematisation which are linked to particular technologies of surveillance. That is, texts are used in the English classroom as a means by which to morally regulate students and to incite them to produce particular responses according to specific norms (Hunter, 1988a). Within such a Foucauldian analytic framework, Hunter has demonstrated that English emerged historically as a disciplinary space of 'supervised freedom' and correction in which the surface of the text and readers' responses functioned as a site for moral training and the formation of cultural attributes of a citizenry. In this sense, students are incited to express themselves and to produce readings of texts which are then deciphered by the teacher-critic according to the latter's normalising judgement. The data provided in chapter thirteen was used to illuminate the role that such technologies of moral surveillance and ethical self-problematisation have to play in influencing the way the boys responded to particular texts. Hence, this research did indicate the extent to which English teaching has assimilated the techniques of moral supervision to mark out a domain where self-expression and social norms are brought into a particular kind of relation (see Hunter, 1988a; 1984a).

Thus, in this thesis the effects of an apparatus of moral supervision, established around a particular teacher-student relation in which texts were used as surfaces of a particular kind of surveillance and self-cultivation, have been outlined. It has been demonstrated that
readers are exposed to the normalising judgement of the teacher/researcher who then is able to subject the former to a non-coercive moral form of training and correction. It is in this sense that certain confessional practices and techniques of the self become the means by which students are taught to read texts in the literacy classroom. Within this regime texts function as surfaces for undertaking a particular work on the self involving forms of moral self-problematisation and correction. In other words, it involves what Hunter terms 'a seminar of conscience' in which students learn to morally regulate and monitor themselves.

In light of the research conducted into boys' literacy practices in this thesis, this analysis of specific techniques and technologies of moral surveillance, it is argued here, has particular implications for addressing masculinities and homophobia in the literacy classroom. This is because (i) it enables one to understand that how students respond to texts is indeed an effect of the operation of quite specific practices and rules; (ii) it highlights that reading practices are tied to wider technologies and techniques for morally regulating individuals and that these regimes appear to be inescapable; (iii) it raises questions related to how these already existing practices and technologies might best be deployed in the interests of targeting masculinity and homophobia; (iv) it draws attention to how teaching students to read or to respond to texts has always been tied to promoting particular forms of subjectivity or ways of being in the world (see Green, 1990).

Since it has been demonstrated that particular ways of reading are deeply entrenched and tied to the business of producing particular forms of subjectivity, it is argued in this thesis that already existing technologies of moral self-regulation and correction may be used within the literacy classroom to assist students to develop critical capacities for reading and understanding the effects of masculinities. This is in line with Patterson's (1997a) argument that English, in its modern form, has inherited particular techniques and strategies which have been put to use in helping students to develop quite specific
capacities. Thus, it has been proposed in this thesis that teachers might well be able to redeploy these techniques to target masculinities and the effects of homophobia.

While what teachers do in the literacy classroom may have little effect in terms of being able to transform students' lives outside of this particular context, what can be achieved is the development of specific capacities for helping students to interrogate masculinities. Subjecting students to these trainings, however, might only have limited effects (Patterson, 1997a), but would be organised around a specific target for adjusting particular norms governing the formation of particular masculinities. This would involve, deploying texts to teach students to read for masculinity and would include targeting the effects of homophobia within a regime in which already available techniques of moral self-problematisation are mobilised. In summary, these involve (i) the institutionalisation of the sympathetic teacher; (ii) the practice of using texts to incite students to reveal themselves to the normalising gaze of the teacher-critic; (iii) techniques of moral-self problematisation whereby the text becomes a correlate of the self.

The data analysed in this thesis indicated that boys have already developed specific capacities for moral introspection and self-reflection within the limits marked out by the appropriation of these technologies within the literacy classroom. The data also highlighted the extent to which many of the boys have developed capacities for critically evaluating the effects of what have become identifiable instances of enacting a 'cool' masculinity.

In light of this research, it is argued that such techniques may be operationalised effectively within a regime for reading to establish a threshold for targeting the social construction of masculinities and homophobia (see Martino & Mellor, 1995; Martino, 1997b). However, it would appear that further questions need to be elaborated in setting masculinity and homophobia as particular targets for critical evaluation in the literacy
classroom. A particular text and a set of activities have been formulated as a gesturing toward developing such a critical practice (see Appendix J). The text consists of six short paragraphs each presenting a profile, written in third person omniscient narration, of a particular boy at school. Each profile attempts to draw as realistically as possible on the attitudes, practices and cultural experiences of different boys aged 12/13 in Australian schools. The categories of masculinity, or rather the criteria used to construct what is considered to be particular instances of masculinity (Coleman, 1990), are drawn from the research conducted with adolescent boys in chapters eight, nine and ten. The activities which have been devised to accompany this text, it is argued, fit within existing technologies of reading which involve using techniques of moral self-problematisation to help students to develop capacities for interrogating masculinities. The student profiles could prove useful in engaging students with text in the first instance or as a kind of threshold for introducing the accompanying activities (see Appendix J) for interrogating masculinities and homophobia in more specific terms. However, further research is required to determine the effectivity of the instrument in terms of achieving these strategic objectives.

The development of these literacy practices are presented here as an example of a pedagogical regime which has built into it an imperative to interrupt the association between being labelled a 'poor' and specific practices and behaviours which are linked to what have become identifiable instances of 'being feminine' (see Martino & Mellor, 1995). This literacy practice is informed by an analysis of the data included in this thesis, which highlights the need to explicitly address the question of how boys might be encouraged to develop further their capacities for reading and understanding the nexus between masculinity and sexuality.

It is argued here that through deploying particular kinds of texts (see also Martino & Mellor, 1995; Martino, 1997b), sociological and political knowledges about the social
construction of masculinities can be made available to students in an unobtrusive way, as indicated by Eric in chapter ten. For example, boys can be asked to consider the cultural construction of heterosexual masculinities which are based on a denigration of the feminised 'other' through reading texts such as 'Boys at School' (see Appendix J) and 'The Altar of the Family', a story about a boy who is called a 'poofster' by his father because he plays with dolls and which Eric refers to in his interview (see Martino, 1995b; Martino & Mellor, 1995). Deploying these texts to target homophobic and heterosexist masculinities constitutes the first stage in establishing a pedagogical practice designed to access a particular knowledge about the effects of particular forms of masculinity, as a basis for developing an understanding of the role that homophobia plays in policing specific sex-appropriate practices for boys. This is in line with already published work designed to target the construction of masculinities for students in schools through the elaboration of classroom based activities (see Martino & Mellor, 1995; Martino, 1997b).

The analysis of data provided in chapter thirteen of the thesis also supports such claims. For example, it was argued that using texts like 'The Gun' and 'The Language of Violence', within a regime of reading for character as a moral correlate of the self, might prove useful for teaching boys to read for 'masculinity' and to address issues of homophobia. Furthermore, it was demonstrated that such reading practices, involving techniques of moral self-problematisation, do not necessarily have to rely on appealing to the putative consciousness of the reader, but rather need to be framed in terms which help boys to develop specific capacities according to an explicitly acknowledged set of norms.

While these practices rely on using texts as an instrument for inciting students to engage in an act of ethical self-problematisation that is open to the normalising gaze of the teacher (Hunter, 1988a), it is argued here that such regimes of reading may be useful in addressing the politics of masculinities in the literacy classroom. Moreover, since no pedagogical regime is free of practices of surveillance and normative frames of reference,
the anxiety related to the tension between normativity and freedom, which is endemic in cultural studies paradigms of reading, is considered to be problematic (see Mellor & Patterson, 1994; Hunter, 1994b).

This thesis concludes, therefore, with a gesturing towards a critical practice organised by a pastoral technology of surveillance for adjusting norms around homophobic and heterosexist versions of masculinity in schools. In acknowledging that there may be dangers and ethical dilemmas associated with deploying such practices of moral self-problematisation, it is argued that already existing practices may be re-deployed in the interests of setting 'new' targets for helping students to interrogate masculinities and homophobia. While the literacy classroom is proposed as an ideal site for such a project, it is not presented as inherently political or moral, but as a disciplinary space where already existing strategies and techniques for teaching reading might be put to use in strategically attempting to adjust norms around interrogating masculinities. Possibilities for developing such a politicised practice are signalled here, while acknowledging the limits within which particular pedagogies may be operationalised. In this respect, the research conducted as part of this thesis is presented as contributing to producing 'new' knowledge about the formation and regulation of particular currencies of masculinity. This is achieved through a post-Foucauldian analytic focus on boys enacting heterosexist and homophobic practices at one particular school. The thesis also draws attention to the limits and uses of specific pedagogical practices and technologies for addressing and interrogating the politics of such gender regimes in schools.
Bibliography


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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Men's Emotions

Appendix B: Situations Survey

Appendix C: Interview Questions

Appendix D: Letters of Consent

Appendix E: Reading Preferences Survey

Appendix F: 'The Gun' (Short Story)

Appendix G: 'The Gun' (Survey)

Appendix H: 'The Language of Violence' (Text)

Appendix I: 'The Language of Violence' (Survey)

Appendix J: 'Boy at School' (Text and Activities)
MEN'S EMOTIONS

Ask students to find pictures of men which show various facial expressions. Ask them to speculate about each man's personality and what he may be feeling at the time the photograph or drawing was made. What emotions seem to be most often expressed by men?

(If students are having difficulty naming the emotions they see, then you might ask them to make a list of feeling words such as angry, sad, happy, or fearful. Generate this list by asking them to complete the short sentence “I feel” with as many words as possible.)

In general, what are the emotions which men frequently express and which emotions are those infrequently expressed? What might be the male stereotype in terms of emotions?

Why is it that men sometimes feel restricted from expressing all of their emotions? How do males encourage or discourage each other from expressing emotions? Are there motivations for not expressing these as well as good reasons to be more fully expressive? Are “costs” involved in either case? (See appendix on “The Male Role Stereotype” and “Some Damaging Effects of Sex Role Stereotyping on Men and Boys”).

Ask the students how they might respond to men in each of the following situations. Would they approve or disapprove of his actions? What assumptions would they make about the rest of his personality? If they were his close friend, how would they respond to him at that moment?

A man is crying during a sad movie
A man is kicking his car because it won’t start
A man is reluctant to climb a ladder to fix his room because he is afraid of heights
A man is crying because he just got fired from his job
A man has just put his fist through a window because he is angry with his lover
A man is weeping from the happiness he feels watching his son graduate from high school
A man asks you to go get drunk with him because he is depressed about his mother's death
A man tells you that he beat up his son because his son stole a few dollars from his wallet

After the students have responded to these situations involving other people, ask them to explore their own use of emotional expression. Use the exercise on the next page to help them do this. Depending on levels of trust, students might be willing to share their responses in small groups.

(Thompson, 1980: 50)
SITUATIONS SURVEY

Male/Female

Year 10/11

Age: ____________

Parents Occupation: ______________________________________

Nationality: _____________________________________________

Include place of birth if born overseas and the numbers of years spent living in Australia:

________________________________________________________________________

Could you please write a response to each of the following situations? In other words, explain what you think about the character and his actions and give reasons for your answers.

EXAMPLE ONE: A boy who plays with dolls.

________________________________________________________________________

EXAMPLE TWO: A boy who would rather read than play football.

________________________________________________________________________

EXAMPLE THREE: A boy who is very muscular and enjoys working out at the gym.

________________________________________________________________________

EXAMPLE FOUR: A boy who cringes at the sight of blood.

________________________________________________________________________

EXAMPLE FIVE: A quiet boy who is not an active sports person.

________________________________________________________________________
EXAMPLE SIX: A guy who hugs his friend, another man, when they meet unexpectedly in the street.

EXAMPLE SEVEN: Two men who are sitting down crying together.
Appendix C

Interview Questions

Personal

• Tell me a bit about yourself. What are some of your interests or things that you like doing?

• What are some of the things that are important to you at this time in your life? What are some of the things that you value? What is a priority in your life? What couldn’t you do without?

School/ Curriculum

• Can you tell me what life for you at school is like? What do you think about school?

• What are some of the subjects that you like studying? What is it about these subjects that you like? Is there any subject that you dislike?

• What do you do during recess and lunch at school?

Friends

• Tell me about your group of friends at school. What are they like? What do you do together? What do you talk about? Do you see each other outside of school?

• Can you try to explain how boys act and relate to one another? How would you describe the way they behave? Give specific examples, if you can, which relate to specific situations in the lives of boys.

• What makes someone popular at school? Think about someone who is popular and explain or define what makes them popular.

• Are there students at school who are considered to be unpopular?

Masculinity/Being a Male

• Can you try to explain what life is like for you as a male? Can you explain for me what you think it means to be masculine? Do you think that boys feel they have to prove themselves or their masculinity? How do they do this? Can you talk about some of your experiences and explain what it is like for you as a male growing up in today's society? What was it like for you as a child or young boy?

• Do you think that it is easy for boys to express what they think and feel?

• What do you think are some of the problems that boys your age and/or men in general experience?
Wayne Martino
School of Education
Murdoch University
Murdoch WA 6150

Date

Dear Parent/Guardian

I am writing to you to request permission to interview your son/daughter. I am currently studying for my doctorate in the School of Education at Murdoch University where I am conducting research into boys at school. My field of study is Gender and Learning in schools with a particular focus on masculinity. The title of my thesis is *Interrogating Masculinities: Regimes of Practice*.

The interviews will be carried out after school and will take approximately 45 minutes. I would like to interview students over a two year period. Several follow-up interviews may also be required. I will tape the interviews at school and the information that I gain from your son/daughter will be used for research purposes only. Any material that is quoted will be done so in a way that individual students cannot be identified.

Please feel free to contact me at home (9385 34 39) or at the school (9332 48 44) if you have any questions. Can you please sign the following slip and return it to me as soon as possible?

Yours sincerely

Wayne Martino

________________________________________

I, ____________________________________ am willing to have my son/daughter, __________________________

participate in W. Martino's research.
Information and Consent Form for Students

I am conducting research at Murdoch University and would like to interview students. My field of study is gender and learning in schools with a focus on masculinity. I am interested in finding out more about your ideas and to understand your own learning and social activities at school. I would like to interview you regularly and with your permission tape the interviews. You may choose not to answer any question or ask me to turn off the tape at any time. The information that you give me will be used for research purposes only. You will not be identified and if I quote any of the material from your interview I will do so in a way that you cannot be identified. All taped interviews will remain confidential and will not be handed to any other person or agency.

I, __________________________ am willing to participate in W. Martino's study. I understand that Mr Martino may want to quote parts of what I say to him during the interviews but that he will do so in a way that I cannot be identified.

(Signed)____________________________

(Date)________________________
READING PREFERENCES SURVEY

Could you please complete the following survey for me? All information provided will be kept confidential and will help me with my research. I would like to know your name only because I might like to follow you up with an interview at a later date. If you feel uncomfortable about providing your name you may choose to leave that space blank.

Wayne Martino

Name: ___________________ Male/Female: ______________

Age: ___________________ Class/Year Group: ______________

Nationality (Where were you born? Where were your parents born? If you and/or your parents were born overseas how long have you/they been living in Australia?):

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Parents’ Occupations:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Extended Responses
Can you please answer the following questions honestly. I am interested in learning more about what you really think about reading. The more information you provide the better. Try to explain in detail why you think and feel the way you do in response to each of the following questions:

Question One: I am interested in finding out more about what you think about reading and how you perceive it. Do you enjoy reading? If you do not like reading can you try to explain why in detail? If you like reading can you try to explain why in detail?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Question Two: What kinds of texts do you like reading? Can you give me examples of the kinds of texts that you enjoy reading? Why do you enjoy reading these texts?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

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Question Three: Do you enjoy reading fiction (novels/short stories)? What kinds of novels/short stories would you read? Can you tell me about stories/novels that you have really enjoyed? Give title, author and explain what happens in the story and why you liked it.
The Gun by Ruben Fernandez

Wow! You should’ve seen that gun, Doc. It was one of those air guns, so slick and shiny. And so damned light too, I could break it and shoot it with my right hand, just like a man. Not that I ain’t a man. Well, I ain’t one yet, but I’m close. I guess thirteen is just as close as you get to being a man without really being a man, if you know what I mean. When you are thirteen you feel you’re a man, but everyone else treats you like some snotty brat.

That’s what I think anyways. It used to bug me big time, but everything changed when my old man gave me that gun for my birthday. Boy, was I happy. For three days I didn’t every try and shoot it. It looked so beautiful I was afraid it might get scratched or something. I just held it in my arms all stretched out and looked at it, and cleaned it, and polished it, and even talked to it. Can you believe it, Doc? I even spoke to the goddamned thing. During the day I locked it in my closet, so nobody could touch it. At night I tucked it under my pillow so I could feel it, nice and cold under my cheeks.

My father came into my room a couple of days after he’d given me the gun. I thought he was going to beat me up for flunking maths or something but he just asked me how com I never used the gun. ‘That’s what guns are for, you know?’ he said. ‘You’re supposed to fire them, not talk to them and pamper them like doll! Why don’t you just go and shoot some cans or something, boy?’ So the next day I jumped outta bed just before sunrise and sneaked outta the house down to the riverbank. The river ran only a few blocks away from where we lived and it was the best place I knew to go shooting. There was lots of birds, and trees and stuff on the banks, and I used to go there a lot with my buddies to smoke and talk dirty about girls and stuff, you know. But even when we did that I always around and watched the birds, and the frogs makin’ all those funny noises in the water, their heads sticking out of it a bit. I used to dig watching the leaves fall off the trees in the fall, like they were sorta floating in the air, swinging right and left, right and left, til they hit the damp ground without a frigging noise. Yeah, I liked to watch that. So, any ways, the point is when I went to the riverbank that morning with my gun I knew all the best spots to shoot birds. Why I chose to shoot birds, I ain’t got a clue. I guess I could’ve chosen cans and bottles like my old man had told me. Most of my friends had guns anyways, shot cans too. But I didn’t. I didn’t even think about cans and shit like that when I held the gun in my hand. I wanted to kill, you know what I mean? After all, that’s what guns are for, ain’t it? All right, so I walked up river with my gun and saw this thrush feeding its chicks in a nest, high up in a tree. Cool, I though, ‘cause, you know, sometimes it took a while to spot the birds, but I guess this was a good time to do it, it being so early in the morning. The sky was getting sort of orange down there, and it made everything look funny, like I wasn’t there in reality, you know, like I was just dreaming the whole damned thing and I didn’t really have a gun. But I snapped out of it and knew it wasn’t no dream. So I tip-toed closer to the tree, real careful, till I could take good aim at the bird. Then I remembered I was supposed to load the gun first. How could I forget such a think, Doc? I thought the birds would fly off before I had time to load. I got so mad at myself I could’ve have banged my head against the tree, but then I thought that might scare the birds away and I wanted to kill that thrush, so I didn’t, you see. I’d never loaded the gun before. I’d cleaned it, and greased it, and patted it, and spoken to the goddamned thing but I’d never loaded it. It was a piece of cake, though, to put the pellets in the little holes. They fitted like gloves. These guys who make guns are smart, eh? Anyway, I finished loading the gun and the birds were still up there. So far so good, I thought. And there I was, the gun loaded, standing fifteen feet away from those birds. I steadied myself, took aim, held my
breath for a couple seconds and, Bang! And God know I hit the sonofabitch. It shrieked and shrieked, and flapped its wings, and there were feathers flying all over the place. Then it jerked sorts funny and fell off the branch. Thump! I heard it fall in front of me and the sound of that bugger hitting the ground was music to my ears. But I wanted more, so I aimed at the chicks. I loaded the gun again and shot, and again, and again, and again, and again. I think I only missed once. There they were, twisted and pulling weird faces on the ground. And then it sorts struck me I didn’t know what the hell to do with them, so I chucked them in the river. I shot about twenty of them birds before I realised it was almost eight thirty and I was gonna be late for school, so I ran my butt off back home. The fish are gonna have some feast today, I remember thinking as I ran home, the barrel of the gun banging against my thigh.

So that was the first time I shot the gun, and then we became inseparable. My old man got sort of worried, I guess, ‘specially during the summer, what with me being by myself all the time with my gun and not hanging out with my friends no more. But I guess he thought it’d be much worse if he took it away from me. That wouldn’t killed me, shit yeah. So we became sorta inseparable and went to the riverbank almost everyday. But I soon got tired of shooting birds. It was always the same, you know all those feathers and shrieks and that was it. It was a bit disappointing, you know. So I got tired of it and stared looking for something better, and I decided to shoot frogs. Now, I soon realised shooting at them frogs as they bobbed in the water was no fun. You hit them and they sunk, end of story. So what I did is I whacked them with a stick as they stuck their stupid necks outa the water, not too hard, ‘cause I didn’t wanna kill them just yet, and not too soft, you know, enough to conk them out. Then I got them out of the water and the fun began. I never told nobody I was doing this, it was too much fun to let anyone in on it.

So you’re the first one I’ve ever told and have to promise not to tell nobody. All right? What I did is I build this gallows with three straight branches, you know, sorts like a football goal, with two sticks upright and one across, and hung the frogs upside down from the cross stick. Then I burned a couple of twigs underneath their heads and waited till the frogs got all scorched and crisp. When they started to get black I blew the little fire out, stepped back a couple of feet and got ready to shoot. Man, that was clean outa this world! When the pellets hit the frogs they made this hiss’n’ wound, real weird, like snakes when they get mad and wiggle their tongues out, you know like hiss. And then a bit of blood or flesh puffed out of the hole and spilled on the burnt twigs, and it went hiss’t again. I really got a kick out of the whole thing, I tell ya.

But this was all before my father got mad one day, when I was back at school, about me sneaking outa the house every morning with the gun and being late for school, and flunking almost all the subjects, and not being normal no more. He stopped me suing my gun on week days and socked me one in the left cheek real hard. My face swelled and stung like crazy for a couple days. Boy, I was so upset I didn’t eat for two days straight. Not that I wanted to get back at my father or anything. I knew that fathers were there to bug you, all my friends’ fathers bugged them all the time too, so I knew that was what my old man was supposed to do anyways. Although I sometimes wondered how come it was only me he bugged.

Anyways, I just didn’t feel like eating, I wasn’t hungry at all, you know, I just thought of the gun all the time, specially at school, when I couldn’t see it. And that’s how I started to shoot from my window. One day I cam home from school and I just couldn’t resist, man, I just couldn’t stand knowing the gun was there and I couldn’t use it. It was like torture. So I closed the door, turned up the radio like I always did, real loud, blasting some metal station, and walked up to the window. We lived on a third floor. Just opposite was a two-storey apartment building, so I could see the roof of it down there, full of pigeons and thrushes and sometimes even ravens. And I began to shoot at them. The best part was how, after I’d winged them, then slid down the roof, over the drainpipes, and fell smack-dab in the middle of the street. People stopped and watched them squirm without knowing what to do. They didn’t even know where the damned birds had come from in the first place. I don’t know what I enjoyed most, shooting them birds or watching them people down in the street looking confused and saying, ‘Oh, poor thing,’ as I leaned outa my window looking all innocent and harmless.
That's exactly what I was doing one afternoon when I saw him down the street, leaning against the 'Stop' sign across the street waiting for his girlfriend. He was wearing those egghead glasses I hated so much. He looked like such a nerd. Always the best grades at school, never got into trouble. You know, one of these kids who always do what they're supposed to do. And he even had a girlfriend, a pretty one too. Damn. Boy, I hated his guts. How come I kept being grounded, punished, told off and all that shit and he didn't? Sometimes when my father got really mad he pulled out his leather belt, one of these thick ones with a huge metal buckle, and licked the shit outa me. How come that never happened to him? So I just thought I'd scare the crap out of him so he knew what being screwed up felt like, if only for a couple of seconds.

He was standing down there, the sign face right above his head, so I aimed at the sign and shot. Cling! It was great. He looked up and didn't have a clue where the sound had come from. Cling! Then he looked up at the sign and saw two little dents. He turned and looked up at my window just as I shot the third pellet. Man, I saw him run across the street and heard him stoping up the stairs two steps at a time. By the time I came outa my room he was already in the kitchen, blood gushing out of his right eye and messing up his shirt and dripping all over the floor. Goddammit! And he was crying and stuttering and stuff and he told our parents what'd happened and then he passed out, plunked down on the floor like a sack full of potatoes. Plunk! Out cold. And mum burst out crying and knelt over my brother on the floor crying, 'He's dead, he killed him!' And then I got scared, 'specially when I saw my old man walking towards me with his face all red and screwed up after he'd called the ambulance. The way the veins throbbed in his face like they were gonna bust scared the shit outa me. But I really never wanted to hurt him. I swear. I just wanted to make him feel the way I felt sometimes, threatened and screwed up. I just wanted to hit the sign. But I'll never do it again. He's alright now, anyways, and I think I'm better now too.

Well, I'm telling you what happened. Doesn't that mean I'm getting better, Doc? What? Yeah, yea, time's up. We'll talk more tomorrow, all right But can't you just tell me if I'm getting better? Yep, right, tomorrow. See ya.
THE GUN

Name: ___________________________ Age: ________________
Class/Year: ______________________

* Read the story entitled *The Gun* by Rubin Fernandez.

* I am interested in your response to this story and what you think about it. You might like to use the following questions to help you to write down your thoughts and feelings about this story:

What do you think about the boy who is telling this story? What is he like? What is your response to some of the things that he does?
What do you think about some of the things that happen in this story?
What do you think about the boy's father and the kind of relationship the boy has with his father?

* You may choose not to use these questions. Try to write down what you think about this story in any way you see fit.
THE LANGUAGE OF VIOLENCE

The first day of school was always the hardest
the first day of school the hallways the darkest

Like a gauntlet
the voices haunted
walking in with his thin skin
lowered chin
he knew the names that they would taunt him with
faggot, sissy, punk, queen, queer
although he’d never had sex in his fifteen years

And when they harassed him
it was for a reason
And when they provoked him
it became open season
for the fox and hunter
the sparks and the thunder
that pushed the boy under
then pillage and plunder
it kind of makes me wonder
how one can hurt another

But dehumanising the victim makes things simpler
its like breathing with a respirator
it eases the conscience of even the most conscious
and calculating violator
words can reduce a person to an object
something more easy to hate
an inanimate entity
completely disposable
no problem to obliterate

But death is the silence
in this language of violence
Death is the silence
But death is the silence
in this cycle of violence
dearth is the silence.

It’s tough to be young
the young long to be tougher
when we pick on someone else
it might make us feel rougher
abused by their fathers
but that was at home though

So to prove to each other
that they were not “homos”
the exclamation of the phobic fury
executioner, judge and jury
the mob mentality
individuality was nowhere
dignity forgotten
at the bottom of a dumb old dare
and a numb cold stare
On the way home it was back to name calling
ten against one
they had his back up against the wall and they
revelled in their laughter
as they surrounded him
But it wasn’t a game
when they up jumped and grounded
they picked up their bats
with their muscles strainin'
and they decided they were gonna
beat this fellas’ brain in
with an awful powerful
showerful an hour full of violence
inflict the strictest
brutality and dominance
they didn’t hear him screaming
they didn’t hear him pleading
they ran like cowards
and left the boy bleeding
in a pool of red
‘til all tears were shed
and his eyes quietly slid
into the back of his head
DEAD

But death is the silence
in this language of violence
Death is the silence
But death is the silence
in this cycle of violence
dearth is the silence.

You won’t see the fact ‘til the eyelids drop
You won’t hear the screaming until it stops

The boy’s parents were gone
and his grandmother had raised him
she was mad she had no form
of retaliation
the pack didn’t have to worry about
being on a hitlist
but the thing they never thought about was that
there was a witness
to this senseless crime
right place wrong time
tries as an adult
one of them was gonna do hard time.
The first day of prison was always the hardest
d the first day of prison the hallways the darkest
 like a gauntlet
t he voices haunted
faggot, sissy, punk, queen, queer
 words he used before had a new meaning in here
 as a group of men in front of him laughing came
 near for the first time in his life
 t he young bully felt fear
H e’d never been on this side of the name calling
F ive against one
 t hey had his back up against the wall and he had never
 q uestioned his own sexuality
 b ut his group of men didn’t hesitate their reality
 w ith an awful powerful
 s howerful an hour full of violence inflict the strictest
 b rutality and dominance
 t hey didn’t hear him screaming
 t hey didn’t hear him pleading
 t hey took what they wanted
 a nd then just left him bleeding in the corner
 t he giant reduced to jack horner

B ut dehumanising the victim makes things simpler
 i t’s like breathing with a respirator
 i t eases the conscience of even the most conscious
 a nd calculating violator
 t he power of words
 d on’t take it for granted
 w hen you hear a man ranting
 d on’t just read the lips
 b e more sublime than this put everything in context
 i s this a tale of rough justice
 i n a land where there’s not justice at all
 W ho is really the victim?
O r are well all the cause, and victim of it all

B ut death is the silence
 i n this language of violence
D eath is the silence
B ut death is the silence
 i n this cycle of violence
d eath is the silence
THE LANGUAGE OF VIOLENCE

Name: _______________________________ Age: _______________
Class/Year: ___________________________

Listen to and read the lyrics of the song 'The Language of Violence'.

Write a response in which you outline what you think about the people and the situation referred to in this song.

Please include any other comments to explain the way you think and feel about what happens in this text.

Do you think that the situation in this text relates to the way some people are treated at this school? Explain how.

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____________________________________________________________________________________
Boys At School

Miles

1. Miles was a very intelligent boy but he didn't like school and he definitely didn't like doing homework. It was all so boring. He would often just sit in class and daydream about football training and the game on the weekend that he always enjoyed playing. He could hardly ever be bothered listening to teachers because the work just didn't interest him. Sure he liked reading but not all of the stuff that he had to read at school - it was just so boring. He liked reading sports and surf magazines, though, because he really enjoyed playing football and surfing with his friends. Because of this he had gained the reputation somewhat of a rebel. He also loved writing but this was something that he kept very private. Some times he wrote about very personal things that he was afraid to share with anyone else. It also helped him to sort through what he was feeling. He didn’t feel comfortable sharing these feelings with his friends though he sometimes talked to his mum when he was feeling down or angry about something. Besides she always seemed to know what he was feeling.

Michael

2. Michael was very popular at school. He was really popular with girls. They seemed to notice him or maybe he just stood out or maybe he made them notice him. He had long blonde hair which he was supposed to keep tied back at school, but he always seemed to be in trouble because he refused to follow the rules. So Michael gained a reputation pretty quickly amongst all the other students. He was a great football player and always cracked jokes that would make everyone laugh. In fact, all of his friends joked around like this. They were always laughing and making fun of someone, but it was always just a joke. Michael was the leader, though, because he was always able to retaliate with a quick come-back. At times individual boys and even Michael himself were often hurt by some of the comments that were meant to be jokes, but they never let on that they were hurt. They could never risk being honest with one another.

Joel

3. Joel was very quiet and he knew that people talked about him behind his back. Some of them even called him names. He somehow knew that he didn't quite fit and felt down about it - he didn’t like playing sport, he didn't like the kinds of jokes that other boys would tell, the way they'd talk about girls, the way they'd boast about things at times to impress one another. In fact, when he thought about it that's what they always did, they'd just 'give everybody crap' to get a laugh from their mates. He would some times go to the library at lunch time to escape the names that they would call him. He felt lonely at times and wished that he could be like everybody else because then life would be so much easier for him, at school anyway. At the end of the day he didn't know whether he was really that different from everybody else or whether they had just made him feel that he was different. Afterall, he had feelings like all other boys, didn't he?... He liked listening to heavy metal music like many other boys, he liked going to the movies. But somehow he knew that he was different. Maybe it was because he loved painting and reading? He would spend hours reading and painting. Drawing pictures was something that he also enjoyed. In this way he was able to express what he felt. He would sometimes draw pictures which represented what he was feeling, but few people would really understand the significance of these drawings. He loved to draw pictures of flying dragons. They were so graceful and yet somehow so free. The sky was their limit. He loved to draw pictures of other lands which existed only in his imagination because in these worlds he could be free and he could choose to be who he wanted to be.

Marco

4. Marco was scared and often felt depressed. No one seemed to understand him and he had to pretend, cover up so many things almost all of the time. But it was the shame that was the worst thing. The way he had been made to feel so worthless for simply being who he was. At first there was this group of boys who would just follow him around and chant awful names at him. He was even too scared to go to the toilet for fear of what they might do to him. No one had the right to persecute him or to make fun of him - to call him the kinds of names that they called him, to threaten him with violence. They made him feel like some kind of freak. Was he? They made him feel so ashamed and yet he was just who he was - a teenage boy growing up, learning about life and discovering things, about himself. Without his friends, Alicia and Jessica, he didn’t know how he would have survived at school. They stood up for him and supported him. There were just so many things that he couldn't understand or accept, so many feelings and thoughts churning around inside of him, so many questions but no answers, so many fears. Would he be able to accept what he might discover about himself? What might he discover about others? Would he have a place in the world? Would he be able to survive?
Robert

5. Robert lived with his mother and young sister in a small house which they rented not far from school. He would come to school feeling very tired. He just couldn’t be bothered. It all seemed so pointless, the homework, that is. He often didn’t complete his homework because when he came home from school he would have to take care of his younger sister. His mother had two jobs and had to work hard to make ends meet. She often didn’t arrive home till late. Robert even had to cook dinner sometimes as well as help his sister with her homework. She was only 6 years old. When he eventually found the time to sit down at his desk, he was so tired that he would just fall asleep. He had some good friends at school, though, and they helped him out, but they didn’t really understand what it was like for him living from day to day. But how could they possibly understand?

Andrew

6. Andrew had a Chinese face but he was born in Australia. He had spent all of his life in this country. His parents were born in Malaysia and had worked hard to begin a new life in Australia. When Michael was in Year 7, he remembered one teacher asking him in class whether he had any problems with the English language. She needed to know so that she could help him to develop his writing skills. She also asked him how long he had been in Australia. He told her that he was born in Australia, spoke English very well and really didn’t need any extra help. Michael also felt that he couldn’t win in a culture where he didn’t seem to fit. When he went out with his Australian friends he felt that he was judged by other Asian people for betraying his own culture. And when he was with his Asian friends he often felt afraid and unsafe, a target for racial abuse. Somehow he had to find his place between two worlds or two cultures.

After Reading:

Below a list of words has been included. Choose particular words from this list which you think best sum up the way you interpret each of the above characters. Write these words in the chart provided below. You may add any other words that you can think of.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>weak</th>
<th>innocent</th>
<th>lonely</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a victim</td>
<td>'stuck-up'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dishonest</td>
<td>limited</td>
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<tr>
<td>powerful</td>
<td>rude</td>
<td>creative</td>
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<tr>
<td>'cool'</td>
<td>a bully</td>
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<tr>
<td>terrorised</td>
<td>secretive</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ashamed</td>
<td>isolated</td>
<td>strange</td>
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<tr>
<td>a 'reject'</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>snobbish</td>
<td>insensitive</td>
<td>afraid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>insecure</td>
<td>strong</td>
<td>abusive</td>
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<tr>
<td>abnormal</td>
<td>imaginative</td>
<td>unhappy</td>
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<tr>
<td>a leader</td>
<td>a 'try hard'</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>a 'show off'</td>
<td>mean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a 'meat head'</td>
<td>a 'loner'</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>vulnerable</td>
<td>alienated</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
In small groups discuss your readings or interpretations of each of the characters. Be prepared to refer to the text to support your readings. Did you describe certain characters in similar ways?

Filling in the gaps or Reading Between the Lines

When we read a text not all the information is provided for us. There are always gaps in the text - things that are left unsaid. Another way of explaining this is that we read between the lines. As we read, we draw on the knowledge we already have to fill in the gaps so that the text makes sense to us. The clues or information already provided in the text help us to do this. For example, our experiences in a particular culture or society and our values and attitudes may influence the way we fill in these gaps when we read. For example, from what we already know about boys at school and the way they behave and act, we are able to read between the lines and to interpret the characters in particular ways.

The following exercise is designed to help you to fill in the gaps in the Boys and Schools text. Complete the following sentences by indicating why you think the character reacted or behaved in the way that he did:

(i) Miles keeps his love of writing a secret because

(ii) Miles is afraid to share his feelings with his friends because

(iii) Michael refuses to follow the rules because

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(iv) Michael and his friends would always crack jokes and make everyone laugh because

(v) Michael and his friends are too scared to be honest with one another because

(vi) The boys at Joel's school feel the need to impress one another because

(vii) Joel draws pictures of flying dragons because

(viii) Marco is made to feel like he is a freak and threatened with violence because

(ix) What are some of the questions and fears that Marco might have?

(x) Robert lived with his mother and sister because

(xi) The teacher felt that Andrew might need some help with his writing skills because
Defining Masculinity

- One student made the following comment about Joel:
  
  'Joel is a loser because he doesn't do boys' things!'

  Do you consider this to be a fair comment? Discuss what you would consider to be "boys' things"? What are some of the things that boys are expected to do? If boys do not meet these expectations do you think it is fair that they should be labelled?

- 'Marco is a real faggot because he hangs around with girls'.

  Do you consider this to be a fair comment? Sometimes people can be discriminated against, teased and even bashed because they are considered to be or are gay. How do you think this might best be addressed in schools so that all students can be treated fairly and with respect?

- In small groups write your own definition of the word 'masculinity'. Can you explain what you think 'being masculine' means? Read through the character profiles again and underline those behaviours, actions or details about the boys which you would consider to be 'masculine'.

- Complete the following chart by ticking one of the columns. A = Agree, D = Disagree, U = Unsure. After you have done this share your responses in small groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Being masculine means:</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>U</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being able to stand up for yourself, especially when people call you names.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acting tough in front of your friends and showing that you can 'take crap' as well give it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Treating other people with respect.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caring for and supporting others, as well as looking out for your friends.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Having to prove yourself.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being strong.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being involved in sport.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competing with your friends and striving to be a winner.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caring for others.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Not being afraid to face your fears.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Being honest.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impressing your friends and acting 'cool'</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Having a girlfriend</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Giving everyone a fair go</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Expressing what you feel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Breaking the rules</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Achieving at school</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

For discussion:

Just being born a male does not make you masculine. Certain ways of behaving thinking and acting are considered to be more masculine than others. Try to list those things which would be considered unmasculine. Who decides what is masculine and what is not?