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The tyranny of surveillance: male teachers and the policing of masculinities in a single sex school

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This paper draws on research into male teachers in one single sex high school in the Australian context to highlight how issues of masculinity impact on their pedagogical practices and relationships with boys. The study is situated within the broader international field of research on male teachers, masculinities and schooling in Australia, the UK and the US and provides further knowledge about the gendered dimensions of male teachers' pedagogical practices in secondary schools. The authors argue for the urgent need to interrogate the impact of masculinities in male teachers' lives at school, given the call for more male role models to ameliorate the supposed feminizing and emasculating influences of schools on boys' lives. A particular Foucauldian perspective, which draws on surveillance and its key role in practices of gender subjectification, is used to provide insight into how two male teachers learn to police their masculinities and to fashion pedagogical practices under the normalizing gaze of their male students.

Introduction

In this paper we focus on research conducted with male teachers in one single sex school in the Australian context. Our aim is to address issues pertaining to the impact of gender regimes (Butler, 1993; Connell, 1995) on two male teachers' pedagogical practices and responses to their students. We believe this is important, given that relatively little research in the field of teacher education has addressed the specific impact of gendered subjectivities on male teachers' pedagogical practices, particularly at the secondary school level (see Acker, 1995/96). However, significant research has been undertaken by both King (1997, 2000) in the US and Skelton (2001, 2002, 2003) in the UK that focuses on issues of masculinity in male elementary school teachers' lives (see also Sargent, 2001). Roulsten and Mills (2000) in

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Australia do address such issues within the context of a critique of the call for more male role models to ameliorate the apparent feminizing influences of schooling on boys' educational and social development (see also House of Representatives Standing Committee, 2002; Ashley, 2003; Titus, 2004; Johannesson, 2004). This paper builds on that research by providing further insights into the policing of masculinities in male teachers' lives in one school through deploying a particular theoretical framework that draws on the application of a Foucauldian analytic perspective on subjectification and surveillance (see Foucault, 1977, 1978, 1987).

While the study reported in this paper is limited to a focus on just two male teachers, it speaks specifically to the broader literature on male teachers, masculinity and schooling which illustrates that constructions of masculinities are specific to particular school sites (Roulsten & Mills, 2000; Skelton, 2001; Martino & Beckett, 2004). In this sense, the paper provides insight into how an elite boys' single sex high school, modeled along the lines of a British public school, legitimates and authorizes particular versions of hegemonic heterosexualized masculinity (Frank, 1987). However, it emphasizes that there appear to be certain 'manifestations' of hegemonic masculinity which appear to emerge across specific localized school contexts. This is consistent with previous research on male teachers undertaken by King (2000), Skelton (2001) and Sargent (2001), which illustrates that male teachers are incited to emphasize a heterosexualized masculinity within a regulatory regime or apparatus of surveillance dictated and supported by the school and broader community (Epstein & Johnson, 1998). What this study distinctively provides, however, is a particular knowledge about the extent to which male teachers adopt certain practices of masculinity in the way that they relate to boys as particular sorts of gendered subjects, which in turn mediates their pedagogical approach in terms of tailoring the curriculum to boys' interests. The particular contribution and significance of this study, therefore, needs to be understood and framed in terms of the Foucauldian insights it provides into the operation of certain forms of gendered power and surveillance (Foucault, 1977, 1980) mobilized by hegemonic boys in terms of their capacity to determine the male teacher's pedagogical practices in the classroom.

The role of the male teacher in public debates about boys' education

Within the context of moral panic about failing boys (Epstein *et al.*, 1998; Mills, 2000; Titus, 2004) the call for more male role models has surfaced and even intensified in recent times in media reports in Australia with the Prime Minister announcing that the government is committed to amending the Sex Discrimination Act to enable male only teaching scholarships to be offered to prospective student teachers (see Maiden, 2004; Goward, 2004; Mills *et al.*, 2004). This feeds into an existing climate of recuperative masculinity politics (Kenway, 1995; Weiner *et al.*, 1997; Lingard & Douglas, 1999; Arnot *et al.*, 1999; Foster *et al.*, 2001) committed to addressing boys' educational needs through the implementation of a 'boy friendly' curriculum and pedagogical practices that are deemed to be the domain of men and which validate boys' supposed natural orientations to learning (see Lesko, 2000; Martino &

Meyenn, 2002; Lingard *et al.*, 2003; Martino *et al.*, 2004; Mills *et al.*, 2004). Thus, the male teacher as role model is invested with a particular masculinizing capacity considered necessary to counteract the feminization and emasculating effects of schooling on boys' failing masculinities (Skelton, 2002; Martino, 2004). In short, within such a context of a moral panic and public anxiety about the problem of failing boys (Weaver-Hightower, 2003; Titus, 2004), male teachers, as role models, are advocated to defeminize schooling and to recuperate failing masculinities (see Mitchell, 2004; West, 2004). In this paper we challenge such rhetorical framing of the boys' education agenda (Titus, 2004) through undertaking an analysis of the limits imposed on male teachers' pedagogical practices as a result of feeling compelled to subscribe to normalizing regimes of hegemonic heterosexual masculinity (Frank, 1987).

Theoretical framework: normalization and the self-fashioning practices of masculinity in male teachers' lives

In this paper we elaborate a particular perspective informed by a Foucauldian analysis that draws attention to the self-regulatory and self-fashioning practices of masculinity in male teachers' lives in one elite private boys' school. We are interested in the implications of such forms of surveillance, with regards to: (i) how boys get constructed as particular kinds of gendered subjects; and (ii) the capacity of hegemonic boys to dictate the pedagogical practices of male teachers in schools. Foucault elaborates a theoretical perspective which helps to understand the self-fashioning practices of masculinity (Martino, 2000) and how these impact on male teachers' approaches to teaching boys at one particular single sex school.

The Foucauldian analysis of *modes of subjectification*, and the focus on the formation of gendered attributes and capacities within specific normalizing regimes of practice, enable an interpretative focus on the performative and normative dimensions of enacting masculinities in male teachers' lives at school (Butler, 1990):

> What I wanted to know was how the subject constituted himself, in such and such a determined form, as a mad subject or as a normal subject, through a certain number of practices which were games of truth, applications of power, etc. (Foucault, 1987, p. 121).

It is Foucault's analysis of this relationship that exists 'between the constitution of the subject or different forms of the subject and games of truth, practices of power' (ibid) that informs this study's focus on male teacher subjectivities.

The male teacher subject constitutes himself within a field or system of truth/power relations. In this sense, working on and fashioning the gendered self is understood within the limits of available and existing regimes of practice through which male teachers in this study negotiate desirable forms of masculinity that are compatible with their perceptions of the masculinity validated by their male students. This, therefore, necessitates an investigation into what Foucault (1978) terms 'polymorphous techniques of power' in relation to examining the formation of masculinities in male teachers' lives and pedagogical practices at school:

> … my main concern will be to locate the forms of power, the channels, and the discourses it permeates in order to reach the most tenuous and individual modes of behaviour, the paths that give it access to the rare or scarcely perceivable forms of desire, how it penetrates and controls everyday pleasure. (Foucault, 1978, p. 11)

It is this intensification and incitement of particular forms of desire within specific regimes of masculinizing and defeminizing practices which shape how male teachers learn to relate, not only to themselves as gendered subjects, but to one another and to their male students. In this sense, sexuality is accorded a pivotal role in terms of investigating the ways in which both male teachers and adolescent boys learn to police their masculinities within panopticonic regimes of self-surveillance (Foucault, 1977) and how this impacts on the negotiation and execution of pedagogical practices considered to be conducive to addressing the educational needs of boys (see Laskey & Beavis 1996; Epstein & Johnson 1998; Beckett, 2001; Martino & Berrill, 2003; Martino & Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2003; Titus, 2004).

About the study and the school

This study is based on research conducted as part of a project entitled 'Postcolonial Masculinities and Schooling in the Millennium', funded by the Social Science and Humanities' Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). It involves undertaking case study research in schools in Australia, Canada and South Africa. The focus is on interviews[1] with two male teachers in an elite private boys' school in the Australian context. These teachers have been selected because of the particular insights they provide into the fashioning and policing of masculinity in terms of its capacity to impact significantly on their pedagogical practices and social relations with male students (Bailey, 1996; Roulsten & Mills, 2000; Skelton, 2001).

Grammar School[2] is an elite private Anglican boys' school in the outer suburbs of a major Australia city. It has a population of 552 boys in the senior school and 320 in the preparatory school. It is modeled on the public school system in the UK and caters for a particular upper middle class clientele. The school is described in official marketing documents in classed terms which highlight impressive grounds that are suggestive of a pastoral English setting.

Historically the school has catered for boys from rural areas but in the last decade there has been a change in the population with many boarders, mainly from south-east Asia, enrolling at the school. While the rhetoric of the school, as it is manifested in official documentation, places equal emphasis on sporting and academic standards, there is a definite prioritizing of sporting achievements and activities. The school markets itself on its sporting achievements and has a 'Football Academy' which boasts of producing footballers of a high standard. From talking with teachers at the school it was clear that sport played a central and pivotal role in the development of a particular masculinist, *masculinizing* and heterosexualized macho culture at the school (Jackson, 1998; Crotty, 2001; Reichert & Kluriloff, 2004). The deputy principal, in fact, expressed concern that only a very narrow version of masculinity was offered at the school and that this was reflected primarily

in the prioritizing of sport over other cultural pursuits and life skills such as those taught in home economics which was not offered as part of the school curriculum.

Interviews with male teachers: general themes

The interviews with two of the male teachers at Grammar School provided significant insights into the impact of hegemonic heterosexual masculinity on their pedagogical practices and relationships with boys. The following themes emerged as significant:

1. *The imperative to establish a 'normal' masculinity* to enable the development of positive relationships with boys that were considered to be essential in executing effective pedagogical practices (Berrill & Martino, 2002).
2. *The impact of teacher knowledges* (Shulman, 1987; Darling-Hammond, 1997; McMeniman *et al.*, 2000) about boys that involved the perpetuation or rather negotiation of certain essentializing discourses about boys' interests, behaviour and how they learn (see also Martino *et al.*, 2004).
3. *The significance of the male teachers' construction of schoolboy masculinities* in terms of the insights it provides into their own gendered subjectivity.

Each of these themes will be explored in greater depth in the rest of this paper.

Establishing a 'normal' masculinity

Brad, Head of Art, aged 40, raised some crucial issues around the self-fashioning practices of masculinity necessary in his view for effectively teaching boys at Grammar School. Prior to the interview he talked about how difficult it had been for him in his previous school, also a single sex boys school. He said that being male and also being involved in a curriculum area considered to be feminized, such as art, raised certain issues for him which relate to his fashioning and negotiation of masculinity as a male teacher in a boys' school. He talked about how he felt boys' questioned his masculinity and sexuality at first, but how this was ameliorated through his active involvement in coaching the football team. He also talked about how he was able to use sport and his active involvement in sport to assuage boys' doubts about his questionable masculinity as a male art teacher who embraces, what he perceived to be in the boys' eyes, a feminized cultural and pedagogical activity (King, 1998; Roulsten & Mills, 2000).

Through this male teacher's interview what is revealed are the significant ways in which panopticonic regimes of self-regulation (Foucault, 1977) are activated in response to a wider regulatory surveillance of hegemonic heterosexual masculinity (Frank, 1987). This is enforced through the articulation of his students' homophobic responses to his questionable role as a teacher in a perceived feminized curriculum site (see Roulsten & Mills, 2000). This raises issues about the policing of masculinities in male teachers' lives which are incited by the anxieties produced as a consequence of the school boys' perceptions and questioning of the male teachers'

masculinities (see Epstein, 1997; Martino, 2001). For example, Brad makes the comment that he has struggled with people's perception of him as an art teacher: 'You're either an arty art person therefore you're not good at sport, or, if you're good at sport, you wouldn't be good at art'.

Brad draws parallels to his earlier experiences at a Catholic boys' school. Initially he had to do a lot of work at fashioning an acceptable masculinity for the students to ward off the homophobic association that was made as a result of his engagement with what was perceived to be a feminized cultural practice. Under the normalizing gaze of the boys at the school, football functioned as a legitimating and 'masculinity confirming' practice (Renold, 2003, p. 179) for this male teacher:

> My football helped me become accepted at X school. … I actually volunteered to coach a football team and the boys could see me out there and I knew what I was talking about and they knew that I knew what I was talking about, and I trained with them tackling or kicking the ball. It was through that that I found that generally I was a lot more easily accepted into the school environment as far as the boys were concerned. Because before that it was an art teacher, he must be a bit queer, look at the clothes he's wearing, he's got those funny shoes, must be something wrong with him, or gay. Even amongst the boys there was this tendency to say, 'Well it is a "poofy" subject' and I wouldn't necessarily have had bigger numbers when I first started, but I found then that numbers increased.

He confirms the need to establish a normalized heterosexualized masculinity and reiterates that this was and is made possible through participating in sports such as football as a masculinizing practice (Skelton, 2000). This, he believes, leads his male students to reassess their perceptions of his questionable masculinity, which is attributed to his teaching of art, with all of its emasculating associations for the boys:

> It was a question of masculinity, but also acceptance that me being an art teacher wasn't a masculine character, or they didn't associate art with males. It was more so art [was associated] with females. So therefore a person that would be teaching art would have to be questionable in terms of his masculinity.

This threshold knowledge about what constitutes acceptable or appropriate masculinities in the boys' lives (Martino & Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2003; Martino *et al.*, 2004) also extends to Brad's view about what works best for boys in teaching them about art. He reiterates that once 'you get accepted, you then have an influence over your students', but this acceptance, as illustrated, is about demonstrating or rather convincing the boys that one is acceptably masculine. He talks about art being perceived to be a 'soft option' and how he works to motivate and engage boys. There are two intertwined issues that converge in his discussion about his pedagogical practices in the classroom. Firstly, he aims to break down what he claims are 'a lot of barriers and misconceptions that the students have themselves' in relation to how they perceive their abilities or capacities as artists. He tries to shift the students' perception of art as requiring some form of innate or special ability. His aim is to just get the boys to engage in art as an aesthetic practice and in a way that is not too self-critical or self-conscious. He encourages the boys, through a series of drawing exercises, to just freely make marks on the paper, 'irrelevant of whether it is an accurate drawing or

not'. This is because he sees 'primary school kids' losing their passion for art once they become adolescents.

However, intertwined with this pedagogical endeavour to break down the barriers for boys to motivate them to engage in art, Brad also believes that specific content for boys also needs to be taken into consideration (see also Martino & Meyenn, 2002). This is understood in terms of catering for stereotypical male interests or 'boy themes' by drawing on horror film 'imagery of "ghouls and Draculas"' and doing 'more physical things' such as 'working with clay':

> Girls don't necessarily enjoy the same manipulative aspects of art because clay gets under their fingernails and they get dirty and stuff, where the boys don't necessary mind that as much … getting their hands dirty or wet.

Thus, informing this pedagogy about how to best engage boys in art, as a denigrated, 'soft' and feminized subject, is an essentializing gender discourse and knowledge about the differences between boys' and girls' approaches to learning (see Martino & Beckett, 2004; Martino *et al.*, in press).

The need to *masculinize* art suffuses this teacher's discourse about the nature of his pedagogical practices, which appear to be driven by a goal to involve students in a subject perceived by them in gendered terms as questionable and potentially emasculating. This is perhaps related to the idea of art as a cultural practice for enabling what the teacher himself considers to be 'a deep expression of self' which is extremely threatening for boys. It relates to the culture of masculinity and the nature of how homophobia, misogyny and femiphobia are operationalized as mechanisms for policing tenuous, but *acceptable* hegemonic heterosexual masculinities (Frank, 1993; Epstein, 1997; Plummer, 1999; Davison, 2000; Bergling, 2001; Martino & Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2003; Mills, 2004).

Russell, Head of Science at Grammar School, aged 52, also draws on particular gender discourses in talking about his pedagogical practices. He reiterates the significance of sport in his role as a teacher at the school in terms of the significant cultural capital that it carries for teaching boys. Like Brad, he too identifies differences between boys and girls that relate to their perception of and participation in subjects like biology and human biology which are considered to be more 'feminine' (see Armstong, 1988). He begins by talking about the differences between teaching boys and girls. Having taught preciously in a coeducational school, he claims that 'girls are very easy to teach [because] they have all the skills and manners … and tend to be more malleable and automatically do all the right things that the teacher expects them to do'. He also adds that they tend to be 'less raucous and less fidgety'. Boys, on the other hand, he claims are 'a bit more laid back and tend to sort of be easy going'.

The way that Russell constructs girls indicates that their behaviour, attitude and approach to schooling conform more to the conception of the ideal student—they are less raucous, less fidgety and are just easier to teach perhaps because they are constructed as being more compliant and less resistant than the boys who tend to be more overtly disruptive in class (see Francis, 2000; Lingard *et al.*, 2002). These basic

differences feed into his comments about needing to sell biology/human biology to boys, given its perception as a girls' subject. What is interesting is this teacher's reiteration of the gendered binaries within the discipline of science with the 'masculine' subjects of physics/chemistry being perceived by the boys in oppositional terms in relation to the 'feminine' subjects of biology/human biology:

> Because in upper school, biology and human biology for some reason or other has an emphasis, it's seen as being feminine, more girls do biology, human biology than say physics and chem. And physics and chem are seen as being rah, rah, male domains and human biol female domains. … So one of my aims has always been to try and sell those subjects to boys to try and encourage boys into those subjects because I believe too many boys do physics and chem just because they feel they have to because they're boys, and they do very poorly in them. So when I came to Grammar one of the duties I was asked to try and address here was to improve the status of the biol and human biol, to sell it to the boys, get more boys to do it because the numbers were dropping dramatically and to improve the performance of boys in biol and human biol. … One of the ways I do that is to take them out wherever I can and do field work, because boys love hands on stuff.

However, as seen previously with Brad, the feminine courses have to be sold to boys and once again this teacher is able to do this through both his involvement in sport as a 'masculinity confirming' practice (Renold, 2003) and in terms of masculinizing these courses. In short, there is a particular amount of gender work that needs to be done, both in terms of how this teacher fashions his own masculinity through sport, but also in terms of what he feels he has to do in the classroom to get boys 'on side'. This also involves an element of convincing the boys that biology is a masculine pursuit:

> The boys see me as a masculine role model. … They see me as down to earth and I coach sport. I coach the first five basketball team, and I have coached the first 18 football team. So I think having those interests outside of the classroom sort of helps in the classroom as well. So they see me as not just purely an academic, they see that I've got a sporting side to me as well.

Disciplining boys: interrogating teacher knowledges about boys

A particular threshold knowledge about boys and masculinity also extends to what the two male teachers believe is the best way to discipline boys at Grammar School (see also Bailey, 1996; Francis, 2000). Russell, for example, talked about the need to focus on individual students, while, however, also stressing the need to be aware of the whole group. This leads him to elaborate on the concerted or deliberate attempt he makes to target the dominant boys in his classroom. This, he argues, is necessary because failure to do so will create serious discipline problems for the teacher. He asserts that boys prefer 'firm discipline' and 'like fairness', but appears to treat this response as a particular gendered phenomenon: '… if boys don't get firm discipline from the teacher they see it as a sign of weakness'. The implication is that such a lack of discipline is expected of female teachers which highlights the particular power that men are expected to wield in displaying hegemonic masculinity in the classroom through managing student behaviour. He claims that it is only after the male teacher

has demonstrated that he is well-organized, fair and can control the class, that male students will take an interest in the subject.

While such teacher capacities are not specifically gendered, Russell appears to be suggesting that, in the eyes of the boys, male teachers are expected to demonstrate a particular form of male power, not considered to be the domain of women. This involves making the subject fun for boys, breaking it down and allowing for some practical hands-on activities since this is what sells the subject. According to Russell, managing boys requires a multiskilling and understanding of their supposed inherent behaviour and psychology, which constitutes a particular form of threshold knowledge about boys as particular sorts of gendered subjects. The teacher is required to demonstrate that he/she is in control and this is paramount, but they must also be able to vary the lesson, break it down for boys and provide hands-on activities:

> If they can see that it's fun as well, and that you can break it down and do some practical work and vary it up, then it really sells the subject. Now it's very hard to do all of that, it takes a lot of experience to do that and maintain good discipline as well because as soon as you try and do group work and practical work of course that's an opportunity for boys to muck around. So to some extent you've got to be tolerant, you've got to turn a blind eye to some things … but I find the boys respond very positively to a strong hand, but it's a delicate thing, you can't be too heavy-handed. So if you come in like a sledgehammer you turn them off and they see you as a power monger and I find that doesn't work either.

Thus, while the male teacher cannot be too 'heavy-handed' and risk being constructed as a 'power monger', he must be able to demonstrate that he is fair. The implication, as is illustrated later in his interview, is that boys will react positively to such heavy-handed uses of power in ways that, supposedly, girls will not.

In further discussing his approach to disciplining boys, Russell proceeds to comment on his strategic attempt to target the dominant boys in his classes. This raises some significant questions about the power of the dominant boys in relation to how they factor into this teacher's decisions about how to manage the classroom and engage boys in learning (see Roulsten & Mills, 2000). The potential power of these boys to delegitimate the teacher's pedagogy, through their capacity to disrupt the class (Francis, 2000) appears to rest on the capability of the male teacher to strategically deploy hegemonic masculinity to ensure that there is not an imbalance of power. The implication is that this is necessary in order to avoid chaos:

> I find with boys you need to be very conscious of the critical mass in the class and how they are reacting to you. Certainly with the boys if there are a couple of influential boys in there who are dominant, the dominant males we call them, if you don't have them on side it's very difficult. So you've got to get those kids heading down the right path and so I target those kids. 'Where are the dominant boys in this group?' and I make it a strategy of getting them under my wing and, in a sense, subservient to me because I dominate them cognitively as well as with masculinity. And they respond to it, they respond to both.

What is highlighted here is the tyranny of surveillance operationalized by the dominant boys in their capacity to dictate the pedagogical practices of the teacher.

Brad also raises the crucial gendered significance of disciplining boys when he reflects on the noticeable difference between teaching in a single sex and co-ed school:

> The discipline problems with girls weren't as up front and blatant as it would be with disciplining a boy. The way that boys react in a classroom is just completely different to a girl behaving … girls were a little bit more sneaky about things, a little bit more emotional. … You were drawn into their issues whereas with boys, you wouldn't hear if they were having problems at home or having trouble with their girlfriend or if their friends aren't talking to them.

Informing Brad's approach to disciplining boys and girls are particular binary oppositional categories that are organized around gendered notions of girls' emotionality and 'sneaky' behaviour versus boys' suppressed emotionality in the classroom, but blatant and 'up front' behaviour. He highlights how a certain knowledge or understanding about how boys relate is important in 'build[ing] up a rapport' with them, which again is tied in to his involvement in sport:

> So it's actually how I build up a rapport with the boys and I think because of my sporting background. … I think once you've got that rapport the discipline problems are even less. I would probably tend to be more loud, abrupter with the boys than I would do with the girls. … With a boy you tend to show that you're angry with them for doing silly things … more authoritative in the way that you come across with a boy, more so than with a girl.

He goes on to talk about the significance of the relational dimensions of his relationship with the boys outside of class that involved a degree of physicality. This specific mode of relating is taken for granted as a *natural* consequence of biology for boys/men, but there is a sense that a deep anxiety underscores this teacher's social relations with boys. It is important to highlight that such anxiety is produced within a normalizing regime of self-policing and surveillance in which students' questioning of a male teacher's masculinity is understood in terms which signify gay sexuality and, hence, deviance (see Sears, 1998; Berrill & Martino, 2002):

> There have been times where I would go up and say, 'G'day mate, how are you going?', and maybe give a boy a little tap on the shoulder. I'm quite happy, and I know that possibly that I'd be bordering on the fact that that would be not appropriate for me to show some physical affection [but] it's actually just the way guys respond to each other and especially sporting guys. … I found it helped with my rapport with boys, that bonding of almost being a mate, but still recognizing that I'm still the teacher and still have my role and students have their role.

Thus once *acceptable* masculinity of the teacher is established in the boys' eyes, this male teacher feels that a certain level of comfort and physicality, in terms of how male teachers relate to their male students is permissible. This is because such behaviour constitutes a mode of relating which confirms rather than disconfirms 'normal' masculinity in the boys' eyes (see also Skelton, 2001).

Constructing schoolboy masculinities

What emerges as significant in this research is the manner in which the boys get constructed by male teachers because this appears to influence the crucial ways in which these teachers choose or feel compelled to engage in certain self-fashioning practices of masculinity in order to deal effectively with the dominant boys. For

example, the very ways in which Russell constructs the dominant boys in his classes links to his own self-fashioning practices of masculinity and how these are brought to bear on his pedagogical and social relationships with them:

> It's not hard to identify the dominant boys as a teacher but very difficult to identify what makes them what they are. It's a combination of things—sometimes it's sense of humour and popularity; sometimes it's intelligence, but often not … it's being good at sport, being reasonably good at school, having a good sense of humour, being able to get along with a wide range of different kids, and not being too introverted.

Interestingly, the elements that Russell identifies as integral to performing a dominant way of being a boy at school, all factor into his own social practices of masculinity which he deploys strategically to manage the balance of power in his own classroom.

Brad, however, referred to the dominant boys at Grammar School as 'a pack of wolves', which clearly relates to his own understanding of having been placed under their surveillance. He has been subjected to boys questioning his masculinity, but he has addressed this through actively engaging in football which functions as a status and masculinity confirming practice in the eyes of the dominant boys (Martino, 1999; Skelton, 2001). Sport, along with humour and having the requisite social skills to relate to other males, constitute an important form of cultural capital for equipping male teachers to manage their relationships with boys in school and helps to explain why and how dominant masculinity gets inscribed rather than interrogated through male teachers' pedagogical practices.

For Brad, an incident involving the homophobic harassment of one of his Year 12 students (aged 17) by other boys at the school led him to talk at length about his own perception of how boys learn to police other boys' masculinities. It appears that these reflections and concerns are related to his own experiences of male students questioning his own masculinity as a result of their perception of his own involvement in art as subject for 'queers'. The boy who was targeted and who ended up resorting to violence to deal with his pent up anger emerges as a significant incident for this teacher and leads him in the interview to reflect on the broader culture of masculinity and its validation at the school (Crotty, 2001). Apparently the boys had learned about an incident at a party involving this boy that had led to him being targeted in homophobic ways. Apart from this, Brad constructs him as 'a purely academic student in a boys' school':

> He's also a student that has been probably picked on a lot of the time since Year 8. He is now a Year 12 student so he's had a fairly tough life. He's not sporting by any means, he's a purely academic student and again in a boys' school, if you're not sporting you have problems just becoming accepted by the larger community.

Brad, in fact, alludes to a hierarchy of sports and suggests that the institutionalization of compulsory sport is implicated in the legitimation of a pecking order of masculinities at single sex boys' schools (see Martino, 1999). For instance, he talks about X student as being associated with a group of apparently marginalized boys in the school culture. This appears to be related to the fact they are mainly interested in computers and to their lesser physical build. Despite the fact that these boys are required to

participate in sport and to compete with other boys' schools, as part of the Private Schools Association for Boys' Schools (PSA), he infers that they are most likely to be involved in the 'physically softer sports'. Brad constructs a hierarchy of sporting practices with football and rugby being prioritized and valorized in the culture of single sex boys' schools, while tennis and volleyball appear to be less valued:

> X he's part of that group … they're interested in the computers, they're not necessarily sporting, they're not as physically built, they're probably a little bit skinnier. They're not the sport type image physically, they're not necessarily good at a sport, or especially the physical sports. … They would have to do a sport here, it's compulsory that they do. Being part of the PSA system we compete against all the other PSA schools and every boy in the school will be doing a sport. But of course you've got the full on rugby and football, down to tennis, volleyball and rowing which are not necessarily contact sports, they're the softer sports as you would say, physically softer.

This teacher situates the harassed and victimized student, who resorts to violence, within this broader homophobic culture of hyper-masculinity. In the interview he mentions how this student 'was stirred for this gay thing' and how, after continuous taunts from the other boys, reacted in an violent outburst which resulted in his physically assaulting the bully and smashing his own hand through a glass window when being dealt with by the Deputy Headmaster. This leads him to reflect on the normalization of masculinity and its intensification amongst boys at the school and by the school culture itself, which tends to value sport over most other academic and cultural pursuits:

> I don't think boys generally are as forgiving or tolerant of peculiarities. They don't see that if someone is slightly different to them whether it's a high pitched voice, not the masculine type figure, or the fact that they might not be physical and good at sport, they don't accept them, they're not tolerant of people's differences. … We have quite a lot of Asians here, and again they're not necessarily tolerant when our Asian groups sit round in their groups and talk their own natural language … the boys just think that they should be talking English.

This highlights the extent to which a colonizing logic suffuses the maintenance of a White hegemonic Anglo-Australian middle class masculinity in these boys' lives at Grammar School (Crotty, 2001). These social practices of masculinity which are grounded in a tendency to 'other' those boys who are different or who do not measure up to norms of hegemonic heterosexual masculinity, also have a significant part to play in how male teachers feel compelled to fashion their own masculinities so that they can manage the potential threat posed by the dominant boys. This leads to the issue about the need to understand how both teachers and the boys' social practices are implicated in the broader culture of masculinity legitimated by the school and wider community.

Implications and conclusion

This focus on documenting insights into male teachers' pedagogical practices and relationships with boys in a single sex school highlights the need to address issues of

sexuality and gender as an integral part of ongoing professional development for teachers and pre-service teacher education courses (see Pinar, 1998; Tierney & Dilley, 1998; Kissen, 2002). Practices of normalization (Britzman, 1995; Martino & Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2003) and their potential to dictate the limits of teachers' pedagogical practices in terms of their capacity to reinscribe gendered dualisms and hierarchies need to be addressed. Moreover a teacher threshold knowledge (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Lingard *et al.*, 2003) needs to be built around interrogating such gender regimes, both in terms of their capacity to produce particular pedagogical effects with regards to how male teachers learn to police their masculinities, and in terms of how students get constructed as particular kinds of gendered subjects (Luke & Gore, 1992; Bailey, 1996; Coffey & Delamont, 2000; Martino & Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2003). This is consistent with hooks (1994) conceptualization of the classroom as a 'location of possibility' where strategic, pedagogical intervention is advocated, which is conducive to 'collectively imagin[ing] ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress' (p. 207; see also Giroux, 1997).

In addition, in light of the push for more male role models and single sex classes/schooling for boys within the context of 'moral panic' and concern about failing masculinities at school (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998; Titus, 2004; Mills *et al.*, 2004; Mills, 2004; Mitchell, 2004), this study serves as a cautionary tale and a warning against adopting a simplistic 'tips for teachers' approach to addressing the educational needs of boys (see Lingard *et al.*, 2002). What is highlighted is a need for further research into and understanding about the complex ways in which hegemonic heterosexual masculinities, as a set of power relations (Foucault, 1977, 1978), dictate, limit and constrain both men and boys in schools in terms of their pedagogical practices and willingness to embrace a broader repertoire of skills and capacities. In short, within the context of 'moral panic' and media hype about failing boys, which is often linked in public debates to the feminizing influences of schooling (see Martino & Kehler, under review), this research highlights the need for attention to be directed to the more complex dynamics of surveillance and the policing of masculinities in boys and male teachers' lives at school (Martino, 2000).

Furthermore, the broader issue of the construction of teaching as a caring and feminized profession (Williams, 1993), which is tied to women's capacity to nurture and, hence, at odds with hegemonic heterosexualized versions of masculinity, also needs to be addressed. Such discourses appear to be at the heart of a recuperative masculinity politics informing the rhetoric about the feminizing influence of schooling and its impact on boys' failing masculinities (Martino & Kehler, under review). Rather than calling for more male role models as a solution to addressing the problem of failing boys in schools, this research suggests that a more productive line of inquiry for governments and policy makers, concerned about declining numbers of males enrolling in teacher education programs, might be to investigate the impact of normative constructions of masculinity/sexuality, in terms of how they impact both on men's self-perceptions as male teachers and on their construction of the profession and/or curriculum in gender specific terms. This warrants a deeper investigation that pays heed to the themes explored in this paper which pertain to the imperative

governing male teachers' need to establish a 'normal' masculinity and the impact of teacher threshold knowledges about school boys' interests, behaviour and how they learn on the execution of specific gendered pedagogical practices.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. The interviews were semi-structured and involved asking general questions about the school and the subjects' approaches to teaching boys.
2. This is a pseudonym.

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