

Coláiste Mhuire Gan Smál

Mary Immaculate College

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Male Primary Teachers' Understandings of Masculinities and their Impact on their Lives

*Thesis Presented to Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy*

By

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Society is deeming it a female institution and so the whole thing of males in teaching doesn't really count as an issue.

– Eoin

Your experiences seem more divided than mine.

– Patrick

If you accept that there is some sort of element of maleness about men, then you either value it or you don't value it. At the moment we don't value it.

– Michael

Issues and fears that men have are actually shared by everyone if we sat down and talked about it.

– Neil

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Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. Where the use has been made of other people, it has been fully acknowledged and referenced.

Signature:

Suzanne O' Keeffe

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Abstract

Ireland has a long history of heroic male teacher ranging from the 1916 revolutionist, Pádraig Pearse, to literary giants such as *The Master*, Bryan MacMahon and *Teacher Man*, Frank McCourt. The charismatic male teacher trend is globally replicated across culture and religion. Yet, we know little about the everyday realities of male teachers in contemporary Irish schools. As the number of female entrants to teacher education colleges continues to rise against a static number of male entrants, there is a cause for concern regarding the under-representation of men in primary schools. Furthermore, this gender trend comes at a time when the needs and interests of pupils have never been more diverse and challenging. Mindful of the changes that have taken place in Irish society in recent years, especially with regard to a more diverse pupil population, the lack of diversity within the teaching population must be considered in relation to male primary teachers.

This research focuses on the lives of 11 male primary teachers. The aim of this study is to explore how issues of masculinities are navigated and negotiated on a daily basis. Inspired by feminism and poststructuralism, the research design consists of three interconnected yet distinct phases of interviews. J. Spradley's (1979) ethnographic interview is used to guide informal interviews during Phase One. The Long Interview, as described by McCracken (1989), is used as a framework for formal interviews during Phase Two and Phase Three. A voice-centred relational method of data analysis is employed in this study. This research places strong emphasis on reciprocity and is designed to maximise collaboration, interaction and reflexivity. Most importantly, participants form an integral part of the editorial board of this study.

This study is significant as it connects the voices of Irish male teachers to individual daily experiences. It provides for the first time a platform for male teachers' voices to be heard. The study is unique as it identifies a niche in international research consumption for an Irish perspective on masculinities, as the majority of research undertaken in this area 'is Anglo-centred' (Haywood & Mac an Ghail, 2013: 6). Ironically, this study is further enhanced as it is carried out by a female researcher. This study establishes male teachers' understandings of masculinities and how they impact on their daily lives. It encourages new ways of thinking about men who teach young children and intends to serve as a catalyst to further explore masculinities in contemporary Irish primary schools.

Publications

Peer reviewed publications

O'Keeffe, S. (2017) *The Interview as Method: Doing Feminist Research*, *SAGE Research Methods Cases – Education* (Case collection release scheduled for January 2017)

O'Keeffe, S. (2016) What are male teachers' understandings of masculinities?—an exploration of sex, gender and bodies in Irish primary schools. *Palgrave Communications*. 2:16007 doi: 10.1057/palcomms.2016.7.

O'Keeffe, S. (2014) Why the decline in male primary school teachers? *Irish National Teachers Organisation Magazine*, Issue No. 148, p.43, November 2014

Poster presentations

Posters

O'Keeffe, S. (2016) “From Hero to Zero: Male Teachers Navigate the Modern Irish Educational Landscape”, at the 2016 ESAI (Educational Studies Association of Ireland) Annual Meeting, *Education as a Public Good*, in the Raddison Blu Hotel, Galway, 31st March- 2nd April 2016

O'Keeffe, S. (2015) “Why the decline of male teachers in Irish primary schools?”, at the 4th Annual Limerick Postgraduate Research Conference, *Bridging the Disciplines from Sciences to Humanities*, in Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, 28th May 2015

O'Keeffe, S. (2014) “Masculinities in Irish Primary Schools”, at the Annual Mary Immaculate College Research Conference, in Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, 1st September 2014

O'Keeffe, S. (2014) “Masculinities in Education”, at the 3rd annual Limerick Postgraduate Research Conference, *Developing a Culture of Research*, in Limerick Institute of Technology and the Belltable Arts Centre, 29th May 2014

Glossary

CSO: Central Statistics Office. This is a government body responsible for compiling Irish official statistics

DEIS: Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools. This is the Action Plan for Educational Inclusion, which was launched in May 2005 and remains the Department of Education and Skills policy instrument to address educational disadvantage.

EEC: European Economic Community. Ireland became a member of the EEC in 1973.

HSCL: Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) is a major, mainstream, preventative strategy targeted at pupils at risk of not reaching their potential in the educational system because of background characteristics which tend to affect adversely pupil attainment and school retention. Under DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools), Home School Community Liaison is available to all DEIS Urban Band 1, Band 2 and Post Primary schools.

LS/R: Learning Support / Resource. Learning support and resource teachers focus on the provision of supplementary teaching to pupils who require additional help.

INTO: Irish Teachers' Organisation. This is the largest teachers' trade union in Ireland. It represents teachers at primary level in the Republic of Ireland, and at primary and post-primary level in Northern Ireland.

NQT: Newly Qualified Teacher. The National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT) supports the induction of newly qualified teachers (NQTs), both primary and post-primary, into the teaching profession in Ireland. For the past two years, the NQT Programme has offered a suite of workshops for NQTs teaching abroad (2014 – 15 and 2015 -16).

UAE: United Arab Emirates. International recruitment agencies successfully recruit Irish teachers every year for employment with the Abu Dhabi Educational Council.

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation. UNESCO, established in 1945, encourages international peace and universal respect for human rights by promoting collaboration among nations. Education is one of its principal activities to achieve this aim. Ireland became a member of UNESCO in 1961.

Conceptual Clarifications

Agency: Agency has different meanings depending on how one views the world. Traditionally, agency is considered ‘the ability to act on or act in the world’ (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 113). In this sense, people are agents who can make free choices rather than predetermined ones. However, in this study agency is considered to be an on-going enactment between human and nonhuman worlds. For instance, male teacher identity is constituted through culture (teaching as a feminine profession), discursive practices (how care and male teachers are viewed by society) and the school environment (enclosed and open spaces) as well as work colleagues (jobs male teachers are asked to do). Agency, in this sense, ‘never ends; it can never run out’ (Barad, 2007: 177). It is constantly evolving and producing new truths.

Agential Realism: This is the inter-section between people and things. It takes account of material constraints and conditions without ‘falling into the analytical stalemate that simply calls for a recognition of the mediation of the world and then rests its case’ (Barad, 2007: 244). Barad’s (2007) reading of the world encompasses agency, as described above, and is interested in the pattern of cause and effects among other ideas.

Bodies: This term has many varied meanings. Bodies can be material entities (the human body) and metaphors (‘anybody’ or ‘somebody’). Bodies may also signify a collection of bodies, for example government bodies. In this thesis, bodies signify processes of materialisation. They are not inert substances but are produced over time through intra-action (See intra-action below). Bodies encompass human; male teachers and environmental; the school, the community and the education system.

Hegemony: Hegemony is used to describe relationships in society’s gender order. In gender studies, hegemony is understood as the organisation of masculinities into hierarchical order. It is a pattern of practice that allows for men’s dominance over other men and women.

Humanism: A grand theory or philosophy that has described the ‘truth’ of reality for centuries, ‘... it has produced a diverse range of knowledge projects since man (a specific Western, Enlightened male)’ first began to believe ‘that he, as well as God, could, through the right use of reason, produce truth and knowledge’ (St. Pierre and Pillow, 2005: 5). This study attempts to work within the ruins of humanism by critically engaging theory with practice as described in the methodology chapter, Chapter 5 - Methodology.

Intra-action: Intra-action is non-separability. In contrast to the usual term of ‘interaction’, which assumes the existence of separate individual entities that exist independent of each other, the notion of ‘intra-action’ considers events emerging through and from engagement with one another. These entities do not exist independently but only through constant engagement with their surroundings. Events emerge through intra-actions. Intra-actions are enactments that ‘become’ through further materialisations. In this study, realities exist through male teachers’ engagement or intra-action with colleagues, the community, pupils and the school environment.

Performativity: Performativity has many various meanings. In this study, performativity is considered to be more than an act performed for an audience. It extends beyond discursive practices and is both speech and bodily acts. For Butler, gender is a performance that one grows into through repetition. This performance is carried out within a framework that has both inclusionary and exclusionary practices. For Barad, matter and meaning are entangled. Barad’s performative theories include language and materials – human and non-human.

Phenomena: Phenomena suggest reality. Phenomena are both material and discursive. No priority is given to either the discursive or the material. ‘Neither one stands outside the other’ (Barad, 2007: 177).

Poststructuralism: These are theories that are put to work as tools in feminist research. These tools illustrate how feminist researchers do head work, field work and text work. In this thesis, poststructural tools take the form of anecdotes, boxes with quotations or factual information and differing genres of writing as evident in the various Inter-texts. Poststructural tools also include journal entries as presented in Chapter 8 and Chapter 9, male teacher conversations and varying text style arrangements presented in Chapter 8 and Chapter 9 as two-column formats and as question and answer sessions in each Inter-text.

Subjectivity: Subjectivity or the ‘self’ is understood in this thesis as always in process, produced within power relations and never stable. As cited in Jackson and Mazzei (2012: 11), subjectivity or ways of existing in the world ‘can shift depending on social relations, historical experiences, and material conditions’.

Thesis overview

This thesis explores male teachers' understandings of masculinities and their impact on their daily lives. This thesis is situated within a feminist poststructural perspective, which challenges the researcher's confidence in 'knowing'. Feminist poststructural inquiry is concerned with the problems of representation, truth and 'accountability to stories that belong to others' (Lather, 2000: 285). In response to these concerns, this thesis presents a text that 'reaches toward a generally accessible public horizon' while simultaneously denying the 'comfort text' that maps easily onto common sense understandings (p. 285). It is an effort to weave varied speaking voices together as opposed to presenting a singular authoritative voice. The text offers many pathways through the thesis for the reader to choose from: four inter-texts, participants' stories, theoretical memos and journal entries. The presentation of data in this manner provides a non-traditional route through this thesis, creating a text that performs and is considered 'an event' (Morgan, 2000: 131). In this manner, this thesis blurs the boundaries between author and reader, encouraging dynamism and urging active reader participation in the construction of meaning.

The thesis is set out in 11 chapters with 4 inter-texts dispersed throughout. The thesis chapters are outlined as follows:

Chapter 1 - Introduction: Presents the participants of this study to the reader. This chapter illustrates the messiness of qualitative research, which is further explored in Chapter 5 – Methodology and Chapter 7 – Unpacking the Interview Process and highlights various dilemmas encountered in researching and presenting the data. These dilemmas include the female researcher – male participant dynamic, exploring private and public spaces and feminist ethical perspectives. This chapter provides the reader with an introduction to the nature of feminist qualitative research from a poststructural perspective, which will be further elaborated in Chapter 5 – Methodology through to Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns. Contradictions and limitations of the study are presented in this chapter along with an introduction to Ireland as a research site. This chapter concludes with my personal motivations for engaging in research about men in teaching and an outline of the theoretical background and framework of this study.

Chapter 2 – Research Design: Presents the conceptual design of the research that will be further elaborated in the data collection chapters; Chapter 8 - Data Collection and Chapter 9 – Narrative Strategies. The research design of this study consists of three interconnected yet

distinct rounds of interviews that are underpinned by feminist ethical perspectives as examined in Chapter 1 - Introduction. This chapter outlines the research design, sample considerations and data collection methods to the reader. A feminist research design such as the design of this study advocates the value of the interview when theory is used to think with data. This is clearly illustrated in Chapter 8 - Data Collection and Chapter 9 - Narrative Strategies. This chapter concludes with a discussion of patterns of gender in teaching in Ireland as well as the paradox of gender in teaching.

Inter-text 1 – The Body: Explores mind and body as something other than an oppositional dichotomy. This inter-text is particularly useful to readers in providing a context for understanding the strong correlation between men and work (Further illustrated in Chapter 3 – An Exploration of Masculinities, Chapter 8 - Data Collection, Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns and Chapter 10 - Discussion), the relationship between the body and masculinities (Further elaborated in Inter-text 2, Chapter 8 - Data Collection, Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns and Chapter 10 - Discussion) and for considering the body as something other than human (Further expounded in Chapter 6 – Performance and Performativity and Chapter 10 - Discussion). The body has gained attention and importance in feminist, postmodern and social theories as a place to reconsider the construction and reproduction of knowledge and power. This inter-text draws upon philosophical and historical contexts to consider how we perceive the body. This inter-text is also highly useful in disrupting common sense understandings of men and masculinities.

Chapter 3 – An Exploration of Masculinities: Lays the foundation and the tone for understanding different perspectives of masculinities. The aim of this chapter is to demystify and provide a clear understanding of masculinities. It investigates common-sense and scientific accounts of masculinities and illustrates various gender dynamics at play in schools, which are further outlined in Chapter 8 - Data Collection and Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns. The examples given are each supported by stories from the participants of the study. Specific attention will be given to male initiation and modern analysis of masculinities and connects Inter-text 1 – The Body with Inter-text 3- Emotions and Chapter 8 - Data Collection. In totality, Chapter 3 – An Exploration of Masculinities facilitates a deeper understanding of the theories underpinning the concept of masculinities and encourages a broader interpretation of participants' actions and intra-actions.

Inter-text 2 – Voice: Explores the relationship of voice to mind, memory and meaning. The privileging of voice in traditional qualitative research assumes that voice reflects meaning that can be recorded and categorised as data. However, we know that is not true. This inter-text calls for a new approach to listening to voice, one that questions method, analysis and interpretation and the false division between the three. This inter-text is particularly relevant to the voice-centred relational method of data analysis utilised in this study, as described in detail in Chapter 2 – Research Design. Additionally, this inter-text offers a shift of register from conventional academic writing to short engagements with history, philosophy and representation around contemporary voice issues and further strengthens the issues discussed around male initiation, such as male consciousness-raising groups, as outlined in Chapter 3 – An Exploration of Masculinities.

Chapter 4 – Literature Review: Presents current literature and debate surrounding the concept of masculinities and the education system. The review presented in this chapter adheres to the format of a traditional literature review. However, the topics under investigation take their cue from the concerns raised by the participants in this study. The aim of this literature is to support and to reflect the realities presented by the male teachers in this study. The chapter is developed around the concepts of equality, teaching as a gendered occupation, modern masculinities and the gendered nature of neoliberalism.

Inter-text 3 - Emotions: Considers emotions in relation to masculinities and broader themes such as authority, power and emotional commitment. There is a gap between what we understand about feelings and the nurturing we expect a school to offer children. Furthermore, teaching involves the management of feelings, requires making others feel a certain way and necessitates an emotional effort to carry out one’s daily work. These factors indicate the need to look at emotions more closely. This inter-text further supports the concept of care and its relationship to masculinities as discussed in Chapter 8 - Data Collection and Chapter 10 - Discussion. It also highlights the impact of neoliberalism, as explored in Chapter 4 – Literature Review and Chapter 10 - Discussion, in reshaping the importance given to emotions in school.

Chapter 5 - Methodology: Presents the methodological overview of this research study. This chapter draws on feminist poststructural inquiry to outline the purposes and practices of feminist research. This chapter is framed around three structures; 1) Philosophy (Qualitative paradigm, feminist ontology and feminist epistemology), 2) Praxis (Methodology as an

epistemological act), and 3) Ethics of representation (The politics of representation and interpretation). Additionally, this chapter gives a historical account of the science of society and supports the issues raised in inter-text 1- The Body and Chapter 3 – An Exploration of Masculinities. This chapter presents modern considerations for a study of masculinities in Irish primary schools, which connects with the performative understanding of discursive practices as outlined in Chapter 6 – Performance and Performativity. In totality, the three structures framing this study are supported by feminist, poststructuralist and qualitative theorists. This chapter provides a comprehensive background to the crisis of representation in contemporary research.

Chapter 6 - Performance and Performativity: Examines a major concern of deconstructivist inquiry: description and interpretation. As examined in Chapter 5 - Methodology, feminist theorists have begun to consider the relationship among science, knowledge and power. This chapter explores what we take to be true about gender and challenges the power of language as something other than words. This chapter highlights Barad's (2007) and Butler's (1999) theories of representations in relation to the performance of masculinities in schools. A theatrical metaphor is used throughout this chapter and is an important preceding chapter to Chapter 8 - Data Collection and Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns.

Inter-text 4 – Feminist Research: Outlines troublesome considerations of feminist research about masculinities. This inter-text discusses the interview's long and troubled history in qualitative inquiry, linking the unquestioned authority of scientific reason (Previously discussed in Inter-text 1 – The Body and Chapter 5 - Methodology) with feminisms' challenge to masculine approaches to interviewing (Further elaborated in Chapter 7 – Unpacking the Interview Process). This inter-text reviews the debate on feminism and its relevance to a study of men. It further supports Chapter 8 - Data Collection and Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns by providing readers with a concise account of what makes feminist research *feminist*? The goal of this inter-text is to dispel many commonly held beliefs about feminism and what it means to employ a feminist approach to research.

Chapter 7 – Unpacking the Interview Process: Unpacks the interview process from my personal perspective, offering an insight into my inescapable involvement in the practice of meaning-making. It provides first-hand accounts of interview engagements and detailed descriptions of interview questioning. This chapter focuses on what is traditionally unsaid by

illustrating my personal efforts to understand various interview situations. This chapter intends to raise questions about the working of power and how we construct knowledge. It is intended to be an honest disclosure of the interview process and is ideally situated directly preceding Chapter 8 and Chapter 9, which present the participants' stories for discussion.

Chapter 8 – Data Collection: Describes Phase One of data collection. The fieldwork gathered during this study will be presented in three stages in this chapter; 1) work and male identity, 2) staffroom interactions, and 3) perceptions of men working with young children. Each major theme is preceded by an introductory quote from a participant. This is intended to prevent the reader from 'consuming' what is said 'in gulp and throwing' it away (Bannett, 1989: 9, as cited in Lather, 1991: 11). The conversations of the male teachers are vertically split and are offered along with personal insights, journal entries and word-boxes of quotations. This is an effort to de-centre the author and demonstrates how the author is 'inevitably inscribed in discourses created by others' (Lather, 1991: 9). The researcher is no longer placed in the position of full authority. Instead, the researcher's voice is placed beside that of the participants, adding another layer to what has been documented, enriching possible interpretations.

Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns: Presents data from only four participants, focusing on specific chunks of data that illustrate how discursive constructions intra-act with material conditions. Each participant is selected for their expressions of ambiguity, contradictions and multiplicity. The data from these four teachers are ones that I returned to over and over again as they surprised me in the ways they described their experiences. This chapter presents the patterns of how each male teacher tells his stories allowing the reader to understand how social life gets made along with the dynamics of theory and philosophy, not how it is understood. This chapter is presented in experimental form in the same approach as Chapter 8 - Data Collection. Drawing on Chapter 3 – An Exploration of Masculinities and Inter-texts 1- The Body and 2 - Voice, this chapter focuses on themes such as gendered experiences such as jobs male teachers are asked to do and positive and negative experiences in the school. Themes of gendered bodies such as teaching as a vocation, society's view of the school and the labour market are also discussed, which further strengthens the connection of this chapter to Chapter 4 – Literature Review, Chapter 8 – Data Collection and Chapter 10 - Discussion.

Chapter 10 - Discussion: Presents a discussion on the three main themes emerging from this study that impact on masculinities in Irish primary schools; bodies, care and hegemonic

masculinities. Throughout the interviews, these three themes constantly emerged in conversations. In previous chapters, particularly Chapter 8 – Data Collection and Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns, the discussion of these topics were segmented. For the purpose of this discussion chapter, these categories will be presented as a number of themes, which illustrate that an understanding of masculinities in Irish primary schools goes beyond the simpler framework of male and female employment participation rates.

Chapter 11 - Recommendations: Presents five recommendations for future research on masculinities in Irish primary schools. The recommendations presented in this thesis chapter encourage new ways of thinking about masculinities in Irish primary schools through concrete, practical and tangible initiatives. The recommendations encompass pupils, teachers and teacher education institutions and serve as a medium to further explore masculinities in Irish primary schools.

Concluding remarks

Learning to construct a narrative, Butler (2004: 52) claims, is a crucial practice. This thesis was a journey into the unknown. Working together and separately, the participants and I paved the way through the terrain of masculinities in Irish primary schools; exploring established ways of thinking that have an effect on male teachers' everyday realities. It tracks and traces male teachers' experiences with colleagues and pupils, coupled with wider economic and societal patterns within an Irish context. The range of topics the participants addressed was broad: attention to conversations in the staffroom, caring for pupils, discipline, engaging with the school environment, family desires, peer perceptions, public perceptions, interactions with colleagues and the role of trade unions. My place in this thesis was to design a study that presents participants' voices as central to this inquiry.

I caution that this thesis should not be read as a definitive statement on masculinities. The title of this thesis refers to the fact that this study does not represent a finished argument nor produce a clear, consensual, and whole solution. Rather, this thesis is an invigorating and fruitful investigation into male teachers' understandings of masculinities and their impact on their daily lives. This thesis is a critique of male teachers' daily experiences that interrupts and re-inscribes masculinities in Irish primary schools. The intent is to produce a thesis that allows the reader, through detours and delays, to shift through varying layers of information

in order to come to their own understandings of masculinities in Irish primary schools. This thesis is designed to counter the silence that has surrounded men in Irish primary schools as it explores what can be learned from the perspectives of 11 male primary teachers about caring, gender, relationships and masculinities in relation to primary teaching in Ireland.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Considerable international research on gender engages with masculinities (Connell, 1995; Kimmel; 2013), masculinities in schools (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2013; King, 1998) and men in non-traditional occupations (Allan, 1993). However, what is missing from a study of masculinities and education is an account that connects the voices of Irish male teachers with their individual daily experiences. This thesis sets out to provide a platform for male teachers' voices to be heard, offering fresh insights into the complexities and challenges that they face both inside and outside contemporary Irish schools. The belief that gender consists of social meanings that are enacted through human and non-human intra-actions is a central consideration of this thesis. In other words, discourse does not consist of words alone but of social – material practices that create conditions for meaning making. This thesis aims to advance new dialogues between masculinities, femininities and materialism by bringing together historical and recent perspectives of masculinities and critically engaging with issues central to poststructuralism such as researcher-participant relationships and the co-construction of knowledge.

1.1 Multiple beginnings

It is difficult to pinpoint exactly where to begin a study on masculinities in Irish primary schools, particularly as the question of masculinities encompasses biology, culture, history, society and philosophy. As there is no particular beginning to go back to, there are, in fact, multiple beginnings and multiple truths. The elusiveness, fluidity and complex interconnectedness of masculinities in modern societies create many patterns that can function as the beginning of this thesis, adding to the complexity of researching and writing in this area (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2003: 4). Positively, presenting multiple beginnings, as is the case in this chapter, encourages a non-dualistic approach to emerging themes and patterns.

The main focus of this chapter, and indeed this thesis, is on the representation of others through qualitative research. In an attempt to trouble the master narratives of traditional qualitative inquiry, the three sections framing this chapter are, in direct and implicit ways, concerned with spaces and gaps in 'the foundations of qualitative research' (MacLure, 2003: 3). The first section of this chapter will introduce the participants who opened up their lives in order to create this research study. It engages with researcher identities and considers the

reasons why these 11 male teachers were willing to open up to a stranger, particularly a female stranger. The second section of this chapter illustrates the chaos of qualitative research. Its purpose is, in Lather's words (2010: 29), to take into account 'the complexity and the messiness of practice-in-context' and to highlight 'the messy complexity of lived experience' (Lather, 1991: 62). Furthermore, this section discusses various dilemmas encountered in researching and presenting the data and presents a key problem in deconstructivist inquiry: the textual staging of knowledge (Lather, 1991: 17). The final section of this chapter discusses the contradictions and limitations of this study. It introduces Ireland as a site of entry, outlines my personal motivations for engaging in research about men in teaching and presents the theoretical background and framework of this study. In its totality, the spaces and gaps presented in this chapter include disparities between self and other, which are explored in relation to my dual position as researcher. Spaces and gaps are also explored through male teachers' 'private' and 'personal' social worlds as described in Chapter 8 – Data Collection and Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns. Spaces and gaps are further examined in terms of theory and practice in Chapter 5 - Methodology and with regard to the rhetoric and reality dichotomy in Chapter 6 – Performance and Performativity, where performance is considered as something more than words.

I begin by introducing the male teachers whose stories are the heart of this study. Through their words, we the readers are taken into the world of a male primary teacher. They are what Goldberger (1996: 2) considers the 'contributors' to the construction of the knowledge presented throughout this research study. The stories of each teacher are unique to him, in what Silverman (2014: 178) terms 'authentic accounts of subjective experience'. Each story is, however, united by a common desire to reconsider teaching as a female-dominated occupation. The task of how to tell stories in a way that attends to an assumed innocence is explored in more detail later in this chapter and can be clearly seen by the presentation of participants' stories in two-column format in Chapter 8 – Data Collection and Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns. This presentation style places additional demands on the reader to navigate each story, determine whether additional information is required in terms of word-boxes and to decide whether to avail of the four inter-texts dispersed throughout the thesis.

1.2 The Participants

The participants are introduced in the order that I became acquainted with them. This order is retained, where possible, in all presentations of participant stories throughout the thesis.

Many of the teachers wrote their own introduction; when this was not possible, I wrote it. Each teacher also chose either to use a pseudonym or to keep his own name. Each introduction serves as ‘an entrée’ that illustrates ‘how their past is ‘insistent’ in the tellings of their present’, as outlined by Jackson and Mazzei (2013: xii). This is a nod to poststructural thinking, which considers shifting contexts such as texts and the way they are read, as leading to shifting meanings. Identities are never stable (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 11) but are continuously being unmade and remade depending on particular situations. This is revealed in the participants’ stories in Chapter 8 – Data Collection, which focuses on spoken discourse and Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns, which focuses on discourse as more than spoken words. Discourse produces, ‘rather than merely describe’ (Barad, 2007: 147). In fact, it constrains and enables what can be said.

1.2.1 People and Places

Teachers were invited to participate through an open call in the form of an article titled ‘*Why the Decline in Male Primary School Teachers?*’ that was placed in Ireland’s largest teachers’ union monthly magazine, *InTouch*, in 2014. This facilitated an organic process of data collection that allowed participants to have their voices heard on a topic rarely considered in Irish educational discourse. Each participant was selected for ‘maximum variation’ Flyvbjerg (2006: 230). Flyvbjerg (2006) classifies ‘maximum variation’ cases as ‘information-oriented selection’ (p. 230) where the cases selected vary in terms of particular chose dimensions so as to provide specific contrasts and comparisons. The process of recruiting participants will be outlined in detail in Chapter 2 – Research Design.

Patrick: As I write this I am 24 years old. This is currently my fourth year of teaching; the majority of this being outside of Ireland. I studied primary teaching directly after my Leaving Cert. in Wales. It was then that I thought returning to Ireland was what I should do; I didn't realise the state of the current teaching conditions, especially for those young teachers, such as myself, that have qualified post 2012. Unfortunately, I was unable to secure full-time work. Although I noticed many positive elements of the Irish education system, I could not financially continue to work under those constraints. I am now teaching in the UAE, within a local Emirati school. It is exciting as the curriculum and whole education system is still being developed, it only started four years ago. There are pros and cons about teaching here, but thus far I am enjoying the lifestyle and immersing myself in a new culture. There is a huge community of Irish teachers here whom obviously feel the same way. The

reasons I chose to participate in the research are because I want to know why there are not more males in primary teaching in Ireland, and more so, how does this affect children's learning and indeed their views of males in Irish society?

John: John has been teaching for 26 years. He describes teaching as 'one of the fields where you must work on internal validation because you are not going to get very much external validation ... it would be easy to burn out'. John has taught in 7 schools, both denominational and multi-denominational, as a mainstream class teacher and as a learning support teacher.

Michael: I have been teaching for twenty-nine years. My teaching experience includes having taught every class from junior infants to sixth, in a variety of schools and three years as a Home/School/Community Liaison Coordinator before becoming a principal in a small rural school. My current position is principal of a medium sized rural school. I have a specific interest in gender issues arising from a report issued by the Dept. of Education in 1994 called "Gender Equity - Action Research Report". This challenged many stereotyping practices of the time and much of it is still relevant today. I feel that further studies such as this PhD are needed and should be encouraged. Given this context, I was very happy to participate in this thesis.

Vincent: Vincent has been teaching for 3 years following a career as an engineer in the private sector. His reasons for changing career were largely due to lifestyle and family reasons. The main difference between engineering and teaching, Vincent revealed, was career motivation and progression. In engineering, 'You have somebody giving advice ... you are being appraised and given encouragement ... you are moving yourself up the chain all the time. Your boss is keeping an eye out on how you are progressing.' In his experience of teaching 'It's nothing to do with did you go and did you roll up your sleeves and get the job done?' Vincent has spent his teaching career in two different rural schools teaching Junior Infants and Senior Infants.

David: I'm 24 years of age and I have been teaching for the past three and a half years. I have taught predominantly in rural areas but this year I'm in an urban setting. Despite being relatively newly qualified I would estimate that I've been in approximately twenty different staffrooms as a teacher. On each occasion, as a male, I was in the minority. Taking part in the research appealed to me because it gave me the opportunity to reflect on the issue of

gender imbalance in teaching. Previously, the skewed gender distribution of teachers was a matter that I accepted rather than questioned.

Timothy: I am a 26-year-old teacher. I am teaching in a DEIS Band 2 primary school. I have been teaching in an urban school since completing my initial teacher education. I have taught junior infants for 3 out of my 6 years as a teacher. The reason I took part in Suzanne's research was because I wanted to express my opinion on the level of masculinity in infant classes and its importance to children at such a young age

Eoin: I have 34 years of teaching experience, all of which have been spent in DEIS Band 1 urban schools. In that time, I have worked as a class teacher and in recent years, in the area of learning support. Working in the DEIS sector, I have always had a keen awareness of the interplay between school and society and in particular, the way in which schools reflect the wider society in which they exist. I have watched with interest how this dynamic has changed and evolved in my work as a teacher. Over the last 30 years, schools have witnessed fundamental and far-reaching change much of which remains undocumented. I was interested in taking part in this research because I felt that some of the most far-reaching of these changes hardly featured in discussions of the modern Irish educational landscape. For me, the fact that the gender imbalance in the teaching profession remains largely a non-issue is something that reflects on the social, political and cultural mores of the society in which Irish schools now exist.

Neil: I have been teaching for fifteen years in both rural and urban schools. Currently I am shared between three schools: one is an all-boys school, it's from Second Class up to Sixth Class. Another is a mixed school. It goes from Junior to Senior Infants. The third one is just outside the city. It's probably suburban in some ways and that goes from Junior Infants up to Sixth Class. In all cases it's overwhelmingly female, a predominantly female environment.

Matthew: I am a 31-year-old, assistant principal and have been teaching for almost ten years. I work in a large urban school. Most of my career has been spent teaching in the younger classes. I have always been more interested in working with the junior end of the school, even during my initial training. This research interested me because even though my school staff is almost 50% male, very few male teachers opt to teach the younger classes and equally few are assigned there. This has always puzzled me as I believe that male teachers have a lot to offer to infant classes.

Darren: I have been teaching for less than five years. I've taught Seniors, First, Sixth and Resource / Learning support. I've taught in rural and urban school settings. As a male, I am always in the minority in schools. I worked with 13 women last year and 8 this year. This research interested me because somebody finally wanted to research the topic of men in teaching.

Paul: I have been working in primary education for almost 14 years. 8 years in a DEIS inner city urban school teaching mainstream, LS/R and in a special class for children with Autism. I have now been working almost 6 years as a principal in a rural school. I am male. The topics of philosophy of education, teacher identity, values, communication and professional relationships interest me. I was interested in participating in the interview being a man in a female dominated profession. This female domination puzzles me as it's a great sector to work in and I was interested in reflecting on that topic myself so the interview gave me an opportunity to do this.

1.2.2 Why were these male teachers willing to open up to a female?

The concept of gender 'goes far beyond numbers' (UNESCO, 2015: 18). Mindful of Creswell's (2014: 202) acknowledgment of real life as 'composed of different perspectives that do not always coalesce' and McCracken's (1988: 9) claim that 'every social science study is improved' by a 'clearer understanding of the beliefs and experience of the actors in question' the following excerpts present some of what these male teachers intend by their participation in this research study. It is assembled across various e-mails and meetings at various times and places.

Teaching has become 'a mostly female occupation' due to patterns in 'the economic policy of education administration, beliefs about the nature of women and patriarchal control'

(Drudy, 2009: 155).

'Few people want to do much about the economy, but everyone – politicians, the media and the public alike – wants to do something about education'

(Hargreaves, 1994: 5).

Patrick: I moved to Abu Dhabi in August. I just could not take subbing, and the disparity in pay. The vote that passed to amend the pay and conditions to post-2012 teachers was just the straw that broke the camel's back. Please feel free to send on questions, or we could arrange a Skype interview. Or alternatively, if Mary I would like to fund a research trip for you to come here, there are hoards of Irish candidates for you here.

Michael: I'd be interested in making a contribution to your study. I only have my own views and possibly some anecdotes around the issue of men (and boys) in education. I'm interested in this area and I think you're doing a very valuable job

Eoin: I am of the view that there is a link between the feminization of the teaching profession and the way in which schools and teachers are being repositioned on the cultural and economic spectrum ... The view appears to be that the standard average male teacher is part of some patriarchal ruling elite and as such, falls outside the remit of the lobbying efforts of the 'equality' movement.

Matthew: I'd be very interested in taking part in your research about males in teaching. I've been teaching for eight years in a large school where there is pretty much 50:50 male: female ratio (which is fairly unusual). Just thought it might add another dimension to the research!

Darren: I would be very happy to participate in the interview. It is applicable to me as I have taught Senior Infants for the past two years, in two different schools, being the only male teacher on staff on both occasions.

Suzanne: Each interview lasted between 1 hour and 1 hour 30 minutes. Informal and formal styles of interview were employed, which Hesse-Biber (2007: 117) describes as a move from 'an *exploratory data gathering and in-depth understanding* goal' to a more

'...a lot of kids in DEIS schools, probably fellas you can say with a fair degree of certainty ... they are going to be in trouble with the law ... The first time they are going to encounter males officially will be in prison, which is a point too late at that stage.'

(Eoin)

'The reduction in the number of men...is causing concern.'

(Coolahan, 1981: 231)

'theory testing set of goals' in feminist research (Italics in original). Formal conversations took place at the beginning of each interview during Phase One, as will be discussed in my research journals presented in Chapter 8 – Data Collection. As the interviews progressed to Phase Two and Phase Three of the research journey, conversations before each interview became more informal and lengthier, often continuing after the voice recorder had been turned off. The development of collaborative and interactive relationships with participants in this study is explored in greater detail in Chapter 2 – Research Design and Chapter 7 – Unpacking the Interview Process.

An important, yet frequently overlooked, issue in qualitative research is how gender differences affect the interview process. The literature assumes that the interview is a natural event, 'a particular kind of *speech event*' (Spradley, 1979: 461), that needs little explaining. Kvale (1996: 1) simply asks that 'if you want to know how people understand their world ... why not talk to them?' Indeed, Spradley (p. 461) encourages the researcher to consider the interview as a 'brief example of a friendly conversation between two business men. Then we can identify some of the features of this speech event' (p. 461). Ann Oakley (1981: 31) was one of the first feminist theorists to acknowledge that very few researchers 'actually bother to describe in detail the process of interviewing itself'. Yet, Oakley's (1981) and Kvale's (1996) description of the interview process are gendered and outdated. For instance, Oakley (1981: 31) compares interviewing to marriage: 'everybody knows what it is, an awful lot of people do it, and yet behind each closed front door is a world of secrets'. Kvale (1996) attempts to explain the role of the interviewer by using two contrasting metaphors, the interviewer as miner and as traveler (p. 3), which assumes a predominantly masculine model of society. In fact, the literature I reviewed failed to raise gender differences, participant feelings or researcher – participant relationships as a concern in research projects (Kvale, 1996; McCracken, 1988; Oakley, 1981; Spradley, 1979). Yet, Mauthner and Doucet (1998: 119) believe that recognising the researcher's role 'in shaping the research process and product' is central, and often 'overlooked'. A frequent suggestion that I encountered in the literature was the 'use of the interview as a research method is nothing mysterious' (Kvale, 1996: 6). However, this did not provide me with a realistic guide to follow upon meeting male participants for the first time. While, gender alone does not determine the success of interviews, the mere perception of the opposite gender may act as a barrier for female researchers interviewing male participants. Indeed, I felt I had to work extra hard at balancing a friendly, non-threatening presence with an air of competence and

professionalism. This, I believe, is because women invariably take a passive role in initiating relationships (Noe, 1988). Chapter 7 - Unpacking the Interview Process offers an honest disclosure of my personal experiences of data collection as well as the notes presented from

Theoretical memo: There are 91,534 teachers registered with the Teaching Council of Ireland, as correct of the 17th February 2016. This number comprises of 70,179 (76. 7%) female teachers and 21,355 (23. 3%) male teachers. The 2014 Registrar figures had 87, 357 teachers registered with the Teaching Council of Ireland. The status of the register (2014) comprised of 67,118 (76. 8%) female teachers and 20,239 (23. 2%) male teachers. Together, these numbers illustrate a 4.5 % increase in the number of teachers registered in Ireland. Furthermore, these figures illustrate a slight increase in the number of male teachers. However, statistics without understanding can lead to problems in the interpretation of quantitative research (McCracken, 1988). Education may be having ‘a gender effect without producing gender difference’ (Connell, 2000: 152, italics in original). The school is having a gender effect, for instance, as the numbers of male teachers rise. As a significant gender division in labour remains, it is not producing a gender difference.

my research journal in Chapter 8 – Data Collection. I believe that participants were extra cautious in responding to my questions because of the strong association between men, bodies and masculinities. This is further examined in Inter-text 1 – The Body, where masculinities is explored in relation to the body. Additionally, Inter-text 2 – Voice presents voice and meaning in relation to bodies, inner life and truth. Inter-text 3 - Emotions explores emotions and masculinities in relation to teaching and caring. Prevailing notions of hegemonic masculinities, as examined in Chapter 8 – Data Collection and Chapter 10 - Discussion, have tended to sustain rationalist traditions of masculinities. Yet, masculinities is not a topic that is openly discussed in educational research, particularly in Ireland. The dynamics of the interview were the primary reason for feminist researchers to engage in interview research outside of identical gender identities (DeVault and Gross, 2007: 179). Yet, the lack of guiding literature on how gender differences affect the interview process requires further exploration.

1.2.3 Re-presenting others

A ‘pervasive concern’ of contemporary research is the representation of others who are unlike us without ‘Othering’ them (MacLure, 2003: 4). As will be further outlined in Chapter 6 – Performance and Performativity, current waves of research and debate on representation are concerned with presenting the stories of others ‘... without reinforcing their marginal status and their difference from ‘Us’ (p. 4). The question becomes, Acker et al. (1983: 429) suggest, how to produce a research study ‘that goes beyond the experience of the researched ... How do we explain the lives of others without violating their reality?’ This concern is intimately connected with concerns about the space between self and other, researcher and researched. To work towards addressing representational concerns, the presentation of data in this thesis is used to display rather than to analyse (Lather, 1991: 150). This creates conflicting representations, juxtaposes textual styles and places the tension between representations centre stage, ‘... in order to understand what is at stake in creating meaning out of “data” (Lather, 1991: 150). An example of this textual style is evident in Chapter 8 - Data Collection and Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns, where participants’ stories are presented in an experimental two-column format. The pages present vertically split text offering participant tales and conversations, journal entries, boxes with quotations or factual information and side bars of anecdotes. Meditations on the context of the tale telling, the processes of researching and the construction of the text are visible to see (Morgan, 2000: 130). These textual devices ‘rupture the narrative and forces reading in two directions; dialogic openness and variability of meaning’ that undercut strategies that position the author as the one who knows (Lather, 2009: 22).

1.2.4 When ‘private’ becomes ‘public’: exploring researcher identities

Academic research, Edwards and Ribbens (1998: 1) believe, is a ‘difficult and perplexing task’. This is primarily due to its commitment to theory and practicality, which is somewhat heightened as ‘theory

Educational research must acknowledge men as a gendered and political category and in doing so recognise the processes involved ‘in the way dominant knowledge serves to reify the contingent category of men’

(Mac an Ghail and Haywood, 2007: 232).

and nitty-gritty decisions ... are constantly intertwined' (p. 1). Following the common feminist refrain of 'the personal is political', the very ways feminist research is carried out alter the character of private spaces. 'Our presence makes private spaces public' or, as a minimum, 'highlights the political and public character of seemingly private spaces' (Pillow and Mayo, 2007: 161). Similarly, Edwards and Ribbens (1998: 2) allude to this 'betwixt and between' researcher position, whereby one finds oneself on 'the margins between social worlds'. Jackson and Mazzei (2012: 137) consider this to be 'researchers in the mangle'. Approaching research from this perspective, which is to acknowledge the interwoven tensions between researcher and researched and theory and practice, is to be conscious of the unequal distribution of power and resources in society. It is considered a feminist approach to interviewing (Hesse-Biber, 2014: 184).

I am situated within this thesis as a 'witness giving testimony to the lives of others' (Lather, 2000: 301), all the while trying to be 'accountable to complexity' (p. 306). In order to explore the textual possibilities for telling stories that do not belong to me, participant voices are scattered throughout all chapters along with intertextual practices that displace direct commentary on such testimony (p. 301). The various voices in this thesis, author/ reader conversations, participants' voices, personal musings and theoretical memos, are 'folded and refolded into some non-fixity' (Lather, 2009: 21). As a feminist researcher, I am aware of the nature of my relationship to those whom I interview (Hesse-Biber, 2014: 184). I am cognisant that two separate social boundaries are marked out. My identity as researcher, Harding (1991: 275) notes, appears 'to defy logic' as I am located both 'outside and within, margin and centre'. I am aware that 'I am both an "insider" and an "outsider"' (Hesse-Biber, 2004: 115). I am 'within' as I am part of the same academic world as the male teachers in this study. Yet we inhabit distinct roles in that world: Administrative Principals, Assistant Principal, substitute teacher, a retired teacher, and teacher on career-break. We also differ from one another in terms of age, gender, '... and a range of other differences' that make me an outsider of that world (Hesse-Biber, 2014: 184). This interplay, as described by Edwards and Ribbens (1998: 1-2), Harding (1991), Hesse-Biber (2014), Lather and Smithies (1997: xiv) and Jackson and Mazzei (2012: 137), is further teased out by a female researcher – male participant dynamic as discussed previously in this chapter.

With this in mind, social theorist Linda Martín Alcoff (2009: 119) questions if it is ‘ever valid to speak for others who are unlike I.?’ The solution, Alcoff (2009: 119) suggests, will not ‘be found by simply restricting the practice to speaking for groups of which one is a member’. This study is unusual as it can be described as a ‘study across’ rather than a ‘study down’: across age, experience, gender and time that has important epistemic implications for the researcher and participants. Lather describes this as ‘research with people, instead of the more typical research on people’ (Lather and Smithies, 1999: xxv; Lynch, 1999: 47). Adhering to the feminist principle of research *with* people, this research is intended to be beneficial for the male teachers in this study.

In an era characterized by methodological and epistemological disquiet, Lather (1991: 51) believes this approach also shelters the desire ‘to change that maldistribution in ways that help create a more equal world’. This is what feminist researchers and all those interested in critiquing received knowledge term ‘research as praxis’

(Lather, 1991: 51).

1.2.5 Feminist ethical perspectives

This section discusses one of ‘three problems in deconstructivist inquiry’: the social relations of the research act (Lather, 1991: 17). The two remaining complications for postmodern qualitative research, as outlined by Lather (p. 17) are description and interpretation. Chapter 6 explores the themes of description and interpretation in an attempt to reconcile the complicated relationship between speech acts and bodily acts. Chapter 6 also explores discourse as culturally specific social conditions rather than universal conditions. Developing a feminist ethical perspective means providing insights into the research design, sampling procedures and responsibility towards participants (Hesse-Biber, 2007). The attention given to relationships with participants illustrates the goals of feminist research to be ‘for’ rather than ‘on’ people. This suggests that research ‘on’ a particular group is not necessarily beneficial for them (Kirsch, 2007). However, research ‘for’ people fosters empowerment, gives back reports to participants to check descriptive and interpretive validity and is highly interactive. For example, Michael alludes to a new-found empowered feeling at the beginning of Phase Three.

Michael: *'...because I have engaged with you around this I have been more open about it in my own school ... there are still a couple of teachers who will always have the boys doing certain things and the girls doing something else but at least I am more comfortable now to let it be known that I am not convinced that that's good. In fact I think it's bad. And I am happy to kind of say that now and mainly really only since I started engaging with this. I just take a chance and say it.'*

Similarly, David alludes to the consciousness-raising goals of feminist research.

David: *'Now more than ever, I have begun to question how my gender has both influenced my teaching career and impacted on others' perception of me as a person.'*

This is what Lather (1991: 60) terms the goal of emancipatory research, '...to encourage self-reflection and deeper understanding on the part of the researched at least as it is to generate empirically grounded theoretical knowledge'. To do this, research designs must be reciprocal and must resonate with '...people's lived concerns, fears and aspirations' serving 'an energizing, catalytic role' (p. 61). The following section outlines the reciprocity of this study's research design.

1.2.5.1 Relationship-building

One of the greatest challenges in conducting interviews is building a relationship between researcher and researched (Spradley, 1979). Relationship-building was fostered in this thesis by:

- Regular and open communication before, during and after each interview phase;
- Allowing the participants to select the most convenient time and place to meet;
- Sequential interviews: meeting more than once;
- Negotiating meaning: informing the participant of emerging themes;
- Recycling description, emerging analysis and conclusions to participants;
- Offering transcripts to participants for review;
- Offering draft chapters to participants for feedback.

The design of this study begins 'to flesh out the nature of maximal reciprocity' as participants form an integral part of the construction and validation of knowledge (Lather, 1991: 60). The everyday concerns of the participants are placed alongside theory. A reciprocal relationship

between data and theory emerges (p. 62), resulting in theory taking on the expression of progressive popular feelings rather than an abstract framework.

1.2.5.2 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a holistic process that permeates every aspect of the research process. The purpose of reflexive writing is to make your thinking visible (Luttrell, 2010). A reflexive methodology offers the opportunity to raise new questions, engage in new kinds of dialogues and develop different kinds of social relations (Hesse-Biber and Piatelli, 2007: 496). ‘Reflexivity is ... a communal process that requires attentiveness to how the structural, political, and cultural environments of the researcher, the participants, and the nature of the study affect the research process and product’ (p. 496). Reflexive writing can take many names. In this thesis it includes interview transcripts, journal entries, memos, notes-on-notes and personal insights. Feminist researchers pay great attention to reflexivity, a process whereby researchers recognize, examine, and understand how their assumptions, location and social background affect their research practice (Hesse-Biber, 2007). While I enjoyed learning about male teachers’ experiences and hearing how they navigate daily school life, there were times when my interpretations of those same experiences were different to those I listened to. Examples include details of conversation topics that female staff members engage with in the staffroom, whether male members of staff are more or less suited than female teachers to teach infant classes and the differences in male and female school leadership. In such cases, I discovered that I did not share their values (Kirsch, 1999). For instance, I did not agree with Neil’s perception of female teachers in the staffroom.

Neil: ‘...if it’s a more female dominated environment you would be kind of more careful of what you would say ... you wouldn’t want to have anyone consider anything you say offensive and you would be more cautious of anything that might give rise to any slight offence. Whereas in a male-to-male encounter, you tend to go with the flow and give as good as you get and not worry so much...’

Sometimes I disclosed my differing opinions, for example when David suggested that female teachers

This is a tale of getting ‘in the way’ and getting ‘out of the way’.

(Lather and Smithies, 1997:

xiv)

are more suited to teach infant classes.

David: *'... there are certain things that female teachers can do that male teachers can't really do ...'*

Other times I remained as a 'voyeur', examining the details of other people's lives without having to reveal any of my own (Kirsch, 1999). For example, I listened but did not debate the topic with Michael when he disagreed with my question relating to the declining number of male teachers and neoliberalism.

Michael: *'I don't think there's links between it and the gender imbalance in schools ...'*

Suzanne: *'So you think Europe has ...'*

Michael: *'Has no influence.'*

Van Maanen's (2011: xvii-xviii) description of ethnographies suggest 'portraits of diversity in an increasingly homogenous world'. Similarly, Lather states (2009: 19) that empathy and shared experiences have reduced otherness to sameness, whereby 'empathetic understanding gets constructed in relation to sameness'. Although many ethnographers do not consider interviewing to be ethnography, the portraits outlined by Van Maanen (2011: xviii) present the 'intricate ways' that a researcher understands 'a presumably shared order'. Harding (1991: 275) notes that 'learning to think from this "outsider within" social location' generates 'startling and valuable understandings' or as Van Maanen (2011: xviii) considers 'intimate contrasts' that illustrate the 'deep and divisive cultural misunderstanding and frighteningly real conflict of interest among people within our own society'.

1.2.5.3 In our action is our knowing

This study seeks to generate new knowledge using a research design that is both collaborative and interactive. The importance of methodology and methods in creating a more equal relationship between researcher and researched is premised on 'varying degrees of reciprocity' (Lather, 1991: 57). The collaborative interviewing strategy of this study is largely in the repetition of interviews. Repeating interviews up to three times is 'essential to deal with the feelings roused, often covertly, in order to 'unlock' deeper levels of data content' (Laslett and Rapoport, 1975: 973, as cited in Lather, 1991: 57). Additionally,

transcripts of each interview were transcribed verbatim and returned to participants for review and amendment if desired. In order to further enhance the collaborative and reciprocal nature of this research design first draft reports of data findings were forwarded to participants for review. Considering Lather's (1991: 58) view that researchers are not so much 'owners of data as they are "majority shareholders" who must justify decisions', the goal of this approach is to involve participants in the latter stages of the research process. This will be further discussed in Chapter 11 - Recommendations, the concluding chapter.

1.2.6 Gender policy context

Policies that address gender imbalance in Irish education have been of concern to educational stakeholders at regular intervals over the past two decades. This will be addressed in more detail in a review of the literature in Chapter 4 – Literature Review. A number of high profile reports have been initiated to examine the issues surrounding the decline of male teachers and to recommend strategies and initiatives to increase the number of men in the teaching profession. These reports include, among others, Gender Imbalance in Primary Teaching – A Discussion Document (INTO, 2004), Males into Primary Teaching (Primary Education Committee, 2006), Sé – Sí Gender in Irish Education (Department of Education and Science, 2007), and an extensive promotion campaign in 2006 to attract more men into teaching called MATE (Motivation, Ability, Teamwork, Excellence).

Although these reports do not fall within the scope of this research study, the questions raised by these reports are central to my research study. I wish to address a number of noticeable lateral trends. On the one hand, these reports have had varying degrees of success. They have encouraged conversations about gender in teaching, curricula and schooling experience. The fact that these conversations are often

'If you want to understand what a science is you should look in the first instance not at its theories or findings ...; you should look at what the practitioners of it do'

(Clifford Geertz, as cited in Van Maanen, 2011: 73)

'Education policy makers ... often display an ambivalent commitment to reality'

(MacLure, 2003: 7).

heated is also to be welcomed as it signals the importance of such a topic. On the other hand, in their discussions about the declining number of male teachers in primary education ‘only the most powerful are heard’ (Apple, 2001: 2). No report has placed the voices of male teachers at the centre of their inquiry. These reports offer an uncertain, indefinite and unclear approach to the decline of male teachers in Ireland. This thesis seeks to address both these weaknesses.

‘It is not necessary ... to argue at length whether the gender imbalance presents a problem for the profession or for primary education ... there may be little reason to view the imbalance as a problem, but instead to view it as a phenomenon which has no marked impact on primary education or on the profession.’ (INTO, 2004: 14)

‘Given the considerable amount of research that has been done on the issue of gender in education, most of the individual findings and results are already widely known. A summary of the findings is not attempted in this introduction...’ (Department of Education and Science, 2007: 3)

These reports consider the possible effects of gender imbalance on pupils only and not on their teachers, *‘The lack of male teachers ... could have a limiting effect on children’s understanding of gender roles...’* (Primary Education Committee, 2006: 6). Similarly, the need for male role models is highlighted as important, *‘in the early years of a child’s education and development has regularly been articulated as a reason to address the male/female imbalance in primary teaching’* (INTO, 2004: 15). Internationally, global data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS, 2010) reveal that globally there are more female teachers (62 per cent) than male teachers at primary level education. Moreover, female teachers are over-represented in the teaching profession in Central Asia (90 per cent), Central and Eastern Europe (82 per cent), Latin America and the Caribbean (78 per cent), and North America and Western Europe (83 per cent) (Cited in UNESCO, 2015: 3). However, these national and international reports fail to address the impact declining numbers of male teachers have on the teaching body itself, particularly on male teachers working within the profession. Yet, these reports seek to stimulate reflection, discussion and further research on educational and gender issues.

One key recommendation is that further research should be conducted on the impact of male teachers in Irish primary schools, *‘... further research is required and should be conducted on ... the impact of the presence / absence of males in primary education’* (Primary

Education Committee, 2006: 35). This thesis is an attempt to address this recommendation by researching the impact of the presence / absence of males on the profession itself. Reinforcing continuity with these reports, my research study places the voices of male teachers at the heart of this inquiry.

The recurring themes of these reports: ambivalence towards identifying gender imbalance as a problem within the teaching profession, failure to address the impact on the presence / absence of male teachers on the profession itself and reports that lack male teachers' voices make a compelling case for male teachers' voices to be heard on this phenomenon. This thesis is a contribution to future policy by placing the concerns and lived experiences of male teachers central to further inquiry. Chapter 4 – Literature Review provides a clear definition of gender using the voices of the participants to guide the reader and to clarify meanings. Chapter 8 – Data Collection and Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns present the daily experiences of male teachers ranging from staffroom interactions to increasing workloads through the male teachers voices. Chapter 10 – Discussion provides a discussion on the foremost themes emerging from this study and Chapter 11- Recommendations suggests clear and tangible recommendations that will contribute towards developing knowledge, policy and practice in relation to masculinities in Irish primary schools.

1.2.7 Backstage dilemmas

Just as the 'telling of a life is an artful and selective endeavor' (Van Maanen et al., 1989: 5), this thesis is not, perhaps, the thesis that any of the participants in this study would write. It is, however, an effort to 'include many voices and to offer various levels of knowing and thinking which a reader can make their own sense' (Lather and Smithies, 1997: xv). That is not to say that patterns, themes and conclusions were not actively sought. They were and still are a central concern of mine. Nevertheless, my primary interest is 'a more interactive way of doing research than is usually the case' (p. xv). Furthermore, this study is not an attempt to find *a* truth or truths. It does not tell you what to see but encourages new ways of seeing. It is an attempt to indicate how we know through an examination of taken-for-granted relationships between men and work, men and hegemonic masculinities and the perceptions of men who work with young children. These themes are discussed and further examined in Chapter 8 – Data Collection. Encouraging the reader to consider the realities of male teachers in a non-dualistic way is further suggested through an examination of the dichotomy between language and reality, words and things, '...the prospect of knowing which 'came

first’, or even of wholly disentangling one from the other, is endlessly frustrated’ (MacLure, 2003: 3). The opposition between rhetoric and reality is evident throughout this thesis and particularly central to Chapter 6 – Performance and Performativity, and Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns.

1.2.7.1 Committing a social science: personal incentive for research

The incentive for undertaking research on men in teaching initiated from reflections on Kimmel’s (2008) book, *Guyland. The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men*. Considering the buddy culture experiences of young American men today, identical to ‘Laddism’ in Britain and Australia (p. 13), Kimmel (2008) unmask a landscape devoid of the traditional signpost, signals and clues that had once marked out young men’s journey to manhood. In its place, Kimmel identifies a new stage of development, a phase in which young men ‘shirk the responsibilities of adulthood’ (p. 4), an arena that ‘constantly’ challenges young men’s sexuality (p. 279), a code that pressurises ‘young guys to conform’ in an intense and unforgiving’ manner (p. 75). Paradoxically, these same young men struggle ‘heroically’ to prove that ‘they are real men despite all the evidence to the contrary’ (p. 4). Kimmel’s compelling account surprised me. After all, masculinity appears to be an obvious, taken-for-granted and visible phenomena. My thoughts directly led to the mystery of male schoolteachers. The duality of their existence perplexed me. They appear as the most obvious staff members of a school and yet are the most invisible. Two distinct but interconnected questions informally guided my reflections. What barriers do male teachers experience inside and outside the school? What is keeping men out of the teaching profession? The answer to both questions rest in Butler’s (1999: xix) critique of gender as a construct that is ‘so taken for granted’, while at the same time as being ‘so violently policed’. Butler (2005: 7) later clarifies, presumably addressing her critics that this ‘does not mean that universality is by definition violent. It is not. But there are conditions under which it can exercise violence’.

1.2.7.2 ‘Doors have hinges’: collage / montage representations

Culture is ‘not strictly speaking a scientific object’, Van Maanen (2011: 7) claims, but it is ‘created, as is the reader’s view of it, by the active construction of a text’. With this in mind, feminist research in the

‘Whatever “the real” is, it is discursive’

(Lather, 1991: 25)

social sciences have taken up poststructural theories as tools that interrupt and challenge traditional research practices. In practice, this has led to questions surrounding ‘the doing’ of feminist research and ‘the effects’ of such work. More specifically, it has led to questions of how feminist researchers do ‘head work’, ‘field work’, and ‘text work’ (Morgan, 2000: 130). ‘Head work’ and ‘field work’ are clearly illustrated in Chapter 8 – Data Collection and Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns of this thesis in the form of interview conversations, research journal entries, theoretical memos and personal insights. However, my interest lies in the form of work called ‘text work’. Taking Lather and Smithies (1997) *Troubling the Angels* as my blueprint, hypertext is used as an organisational and representational tool for the research data in this thesis. It is, in Lather and Smithies (1997: xvi) words, a book that ‘puts things in motion rather than captures them in some still-life’. Hypertext, as described by Landow (1992: 3), is ‘text composed in blocks of words’ that are linked ‘by multiple paths, chains, or trails in an open-ended perpetually unfinished textuality...’. It embodies poststructuralist conceptions of the open text (p. 2) by facilitating plural texts and multiple meanings. Usually, hypertext systems electronically link passages of verbal text and images. Lather and Smithies (1997) book both ‘aspires to the condition of the hypertext’ and illustrates what can be achieved ‘without the benefit of hypertext’ (Morgan, 2000: 133- 4). Field work, presented in this manner, ‘sets up an escape’, which ‘haunts the house of Reason, self-reflexive subjectivity and historical continuity’ (Lather, 2009: 21). The stories of the male teachers in this study are both productive and disabling. They are productive as they create a space in which meaning is sought. However, the very presentation of other people’s stories is also disabling. The separation between the researcher and the researched creates absence and distance and the only account for responsibility and validity is in uncertainty. This is a further example of the spaces and gaps theme running throughout this chapter.

Hypertexts, according to Landow (1992: 25), present ‘multiple reading paths, which shift the balance between reader and writer’. This thesis is presented in a hypertextual mode across numerous inter-texts and through the presentation of data in Chapter 8 – Data Collection and Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns. The inter-texts, like Lather and Smithies (1997: xvi), are organised as ‘layers of various kinds of information, shifts in register, turns of different faces towards the reader’. They are positioned between chapters to offer a break from the momentum of the thesis narrative. They are written in a different register using question and answer sessions between reader and author and illustrate how our understandings come from multiple sources. The topics for inter-texts were chosen to support the conceptual thread

running through this thesis. The themes chosen were bodies, mind, emotions and feminist research considerations. These concepts were chosen because of my personal assumptions of what is most beneficial to the reader, as if ‘attempting to observe your thoughts’ (Barad, 2007: 21). It is intended that the four themes will enhance the overall understandings put forward in this study without becoming required reading to interpret my perceptions and beliefs. It is hoped that the reader will be just as fulfilled without reading the inter-texts as they are engaging with them. It must be acknowledged that presenting the text in this manner does not escape the mainstream format of a traditional thesis. Both language (authorial authority, genre) and academic guidelines (academic register, fixed textual hierarchies: conclusions, findings, headings, subheadings and summaries) bring their own constraints. This thesis does, however, show potential to trouble smooth-flowing mainstream disclosure of other people’s worlds.

A reading of the data in this manner blurs the boundaries between author and readers, giving more power to readers ‘to construct the text in the reading by choosing pathways through the material...’ (Morgan, 2000: 131). It breaks boundaries between genres as readers move from one form of text to another. For instance, in this thesis readers move between chapters written in academic register to more informal question and answer sessions to vertically split researcher-participant conversations. The participants’ voices are positioned above mine in Chapter 8 – Data Collection and Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns in order to trouble the authority in the telling of other people’s stories (Lather, 2009: 23) it is ‘... a breaking of the hegemonies of meaning and presence that recuperate and appropriate’ the stories of others ‘into consumption...’ (p. 23). They are forms of orientation that the reader can choose to leave at different points and can easily retrace his or her steps. Although it may encourage the reader to follow the author’s frame of thinking, it does grant more power to him or her to accept or reject the author’s signposts.

1.2.7.3 Pointing towards contradictions

The stories presented in this thesis are grounded in the worlds and words of those who teach at primary level. This world is ‘fundamentally consensual and conservative in its approach to politics and problems in education’; challenged by ‘psychological reductionism’ and a normative code of ‘absolutism and certainty’ (Lynch, 1999: 3). Similarly, Apple (1996: 27) points out that conservatism ‘by its very name’ proclaims one interpretation of its agenda, ‘It conserves’. Conservatism adheres to the principle that nothing should be done for the first

time (p. 27). Consequently, little research has been carried out in the area of masculinities in Irish schools. Masculinities is a topic that is not openly discussed. As Darren notes, ‘It hasn’t been spoken about before, that’s very evident.’ Similarly, Matthew noted that it is ‘eye-opening’ to see what is happening in other schools. The stories presented in this thesis are, as a result, conservative in nature. Indeed, my own telling is partial and governed by the discourse of my time and place (St. Pierre and Pillow, 2000). The manner in which I present the data must also be acknowledged as conservative. My sense of gratitude toward the participants in this study has also impacted on the conservative presentation of this study. I am grateful because they shared information with me, an outsider, to whom they had no obligations. I am convinced that they are all kind and generous people and it is difficult to know whether the attitudes and opinions conveyed in this study are new social attitudes towards masculinities or my delusions. In Van Maanen’s (2011: xix) words ‘... my own argument is also a product of conventions and ideology and is thus caught up in the same problems of which I write’. Similarly, Apple (1996: ix) notes that ‘authors are very much in the history of their societies’. Working within these boundaries, this thesis challenges the desire to present a single, complete truth in a logical account; one of the ‘emancipatory impulses of humanism that presume we ‘get it right’ once and for all’ (St. Pierre and Pillow, 2000: 4).

1.2.7.4 The fullness of the empty sign

This phrase is borrowed from Van Maanen (2011: 26) and suggests that what is not presented in this thesis is as significant as what is discussed in each chapter. Graphs and/ or statistical representations will not be found in this thesis. Quantitative reports documenting men in teaching already exist without significant impact. Such is the *Men into Teaching Report* (Primary Education Committee, 1994), which gives a brief overview of male and female entry levels to primary teaching, predicts future trends but offers little discussion of the cultural context of the report. The voices of male teachers are not present in this document and the report does not provide clarity on why men are not entering teaching. Indeed, statistics without ‘an understanding of fuller social and cultural contexts’ renders data ‘monocular when it could be binocular’ (McCracken, 1989: 9). Only one diagram can be found in this thesis. This diagram, located in Chapter 2, was included because it formed part of the initial data analysis system employed during Phase One of interviews. Accordingly, the text becomes a crowded place where there are potentially as many authors as there are

readers. Readers are also shaping and constructing meanings resulting in a transmission of text that has multiple meanings.

1.2.7.5 What is a body?

The body, both human and non-human as discussed in Conceptual Clarifications, has been absent from the research agendas of traditional social science. The reason for this is largely attributed to René Descartes (1596 – 1650) ‘who radicalised the mind over the body ... and who privileged the former over the latter’ (Fraser and Greco, 2005: 6). This form of thinking has permeated philosophy, religion and common-sense understanding, resulting in the privileging of science over all other forms of understanding. This will be further explored in Inter-text 1, during explorations of the body and its relation to men and in Chapter 3 when various understandings of masculinities are offered.

The taken-for-granted relationship between male bodies and masculinities will be further discussed in participant stories in Chapter 8. However, assumptions about the role of the body in cultural, political and social life should be treated with caution. Baker and Morris (1996: 3, as cited in Fraser and Greco, 2005: 6) suggest that historical and textual accuracy has attributed too much emphasis on the falsity of the Cartesian legend. Many feminists moved emphasis to the body and to biological factors in explaining the social condition of women. De Beauvoir’s famous phrase ‘women are not born, they are made’, ensured that ‘woman’ and her social inequality has hovered over all the feminisms that have developed in the past 60 years (Hekman, 2014). Yet, Fraser and Greco (2005: 9) cautions against ‘characterising (biology) reductively in the haste to critique reductionism’. The potential answers the body can hold will be explored through the narratives of just four participants in Chapter 9.

‘... bodies are in history, not outside. Human life does not occur on any other terms. The embodiment of gender is from the start a social embodiment’

(Connell, 2000: 59).

In his introduction to the first edition of *The Body Society* (1984) Bryan Turner wrote ‘...I have become increasingly less sure of what the body is. The paradoxes illustrate the confusion.’ The various different meanings given to the body have been outlined at the beginning of this thesis, in Conceptual Clarifications, and suggest that instead of adding to

the list of various bodies we should ‘assess and engage with the full weight of its implications’ (Fraser and Greco, 2005: 33). To reference Butler (2005: 62), whose theories on gender performativity form an integral part of the meaning-making in this thesis, the category of sex is, from the start, ‘normative ... it is part of a regulatory practice that produces the bodies it governs’. Gender consists of the social meanings that sex assumes. This reading does not connect gender with materiality and suggests the body is a passive recipient of certain gender ‘roles’ or ‘messages’. Examples of gender roles are illustrated in the participants’ stories located in Chapter 3 – An Exploration of Masculinities, which explore different perspectives of masculinities and in Chapter 8 – Data Collection and Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns, which offer a context for understanding the challenges male teachers face on a regular basis. Locating social practices and behaviours as embedded in the subject rather than ‘in the body’, Collier (1998: 25) notes, has important repercussions for male bodies. The subject that emerges, in this case the male primary teacher, is always a sexed subject. ‘This approach valorises sexual difference’ (p. 25). However, the body is always an active process. This is evident throughout the stories of the male teachers who illustrate how their bodies intra-act with cultural and historical ideologies, for example the perceptions of men who care for young children and the historically associations of men with work.

1.2.8 Further parameters of the research

A study on gender is difficult for a number of reasons. Everybody has experience and intimate knowledge of the subject. It is a subject that ‘many people consider themselves experts on’ (Alvesso and Due Billing, 1997: vii). Personal experience may be an invaluable support in knowledge development, but also a source of taken-for-granted assumptions and bias (p. vii). As a result, an agreed upon definition of masculinities is difficult to find. Connell (1995: 3) describes masculinities as a term that can ‘waver like the Danube mist’. This is because the term points beyond categorical sex difference to the ways men differ among themselves, in matters of gender (Connell, 1995: 69).

In order to set the parameters of the research, the term masculinities is defined as:

‘a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture’.

(Connell, 1995: 71)

This study does not seek to provide hard facts and absolute truths about men working in primary schools in Ireland. It does not attempt to make overall generalisations about all men who work with young children. Instead, it is an attempt to understand how this group of men experience masculinities in a female-dominated environment. It seeks to provide an interpretative and open account of the experiences of 11 male primary teachers. It is accepted that studies conceived within an interpretive framework, such as this study, possess in-built limitations with respect to the transferability of claims.

Very limited research has been conducted in Ireland regarding the working lives of male teachers. As noted by Lynch (1999: 134) there has been ‘no substantive analysis of mainstream compulsory education in terms of its pedagogical, organisational or curriculum practices from a critical feminist standpoint’. Small scale studies carried out by O’ Sullivan (1980) in the south of Ireland and Kelly (1980) in Dublin, showed that teachers were from middle-class sectors with the over-representation of teachers coming from farming backgrounds (As cited in Drudy and Lynch, 1993). As these studies were on a limited scale, there is clearly further need for research in this area (Drudy, 2009; Drudy and Lynch, 1993). As a result, the questions used in this research were subject to on-going review and modification as my understanding came to be informed by emerging research findings.

1.3 Setting the scene: Ireland as the site of entry

A ‘site’, according to Connell (2000: 151), can be understood in two ways. First, it can be understood as an institutional agent of the process. This understanding explores the structures and practices by which the school forms masculinities among its pupils (p. 152). Second, a site can be examined as the setting in which other agencies ‘are in play’ (p. 152). This study takes the latter understanding of the site, which explores the societal landscape of Ireland and the recent gender political-awakening as major agencies in the play of masculinities in schools. A paradigm shift has taken place in Ireland surrounding identity, meaning and politics. The historic Irish Marriage Equality Referendum (2015) is such an exemplar. The Referendum campaign, which sought to extend civil marriage rights to same-sex couples, initiated a series of passionate public discussions and high-profile debates. Gender emerged, to borrow Woodward and Woodward’s (2015) words, as a field that was ‘hotly contested’. Such intense debate has resulted in an increased public awareness of gender and gender politics. As the gender equality lens has traditionally focused on women (Mac an Ghail, 1996: 1; Kimmel, 2010), it comes as no surprise that measurable and progressive

advancement has predominantly benefitted Irish women. Yet, to focus on equality and inequality as something that only happens to women gives merely a partial view. This study focuses on one major interest group in education, the male teacher. For some, this study will seem a surprising act (Goodwin, 1999), particularly as it is carried out by a female schoolteacher. The fact that so many researchers are men, Lynch and O' Neill write (1999: 41), and so many teachers are female 'further compounds the power relations of research production in education'.

Traditionally, women rarely worked alongside men performing the same task and functions in the same industries. Most jobs were clearly divided into 'women's work' and 'men's work' (Williams, 1993: 1). According to figures released by the Irish Central Statistics Office for 2013, over nine out of every ten workers (91.2%) in skilled trades were male. Just over five out of every six workers (83.6%) in caring, leisure and other services were female. Although women are significantly over-represented in professions such as teaching and nursing, these are neither the most prestigious nor the most highly paid jobs (Apple, 2013; Lynch, 1999). Bringing men into an analysis of a female dominated workforce will both trouble existing beliefs about teaching and about society (Goodwin, 1999: 1). On a micro level, it will challenge attitudes, experiences and relationships that men encounter in the workplace. On a macro level, it will question how society identifies men and what men do. To understand what keeps men out of female jobs is just as important as it is to understand what keeps women out of male jobs (Williams, 1993: 2).

1.4 Aim of the research

The aim of the research is to explore the everyday realities of masculinities for 11 male teachers. The aim of this research is to step into the minds of the participants, to explore and experience the world as they do themselves and to explore how each personal decision impacts on their personal and professional lives. The stories in this study may or may not be representative of the larger male teaching population. The stories presented are considered individual knowledge. In other words, Jackson and Mazzei (2012: 3) considers data as 'partial, incomplete, and always being re-told and re-remembered'. Butler (2005: 63) notes that 'something is being done with language' when an account of a story is being told and being listened to. To consider each account in this manner is to be cognizant that stories are 'invariably interlocutory, ghosted, laden, persuasive, and tactical' (Butler, 2005: 63). Similarly, Gilligan et al. (1990: 95) highlighted the fact that '...people have more than one

way to tell a story and see a situation through different lenses and in different lights'. Furthermore, Goldberg (1996: 2) considers stories as shifting and changing over time 'in the telling and re-telling'. This study is concerned with the lives of 11 male primary school teachers during a time of significant decline in male teacher numbers, both nationally and internationally (Central Statistics Office, 2011; Drudy 2008; Skelton 2009; UNESCO, 2012).

Thinking with theory, as advocated by Jackson and Mazzei (2012: 9 - 10), disrupts the theory / practice binary 'by decentering each' and illustrating 'the suppleness of both'. This 'purposeful methodological repetition' (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 10) prompts practices that are 'multiple, simultaneous, and in flux' (Lather, 2007: 4). This process of 'intra-action' is put to work in this study as a means of providing 'a new way of understanding what feminist philosophy has been doing' (Buchanan and Colebrook, 2000: 9). This study, drawing on Lather's (2008: 10) avocation of qualitative research 'with a critical edge', addresses how Irish male teachers' understand and experience masculinities in a modern school setting.

1.5 The goal of the research

The goal of this research is to theoretically and conceptually link and integrate elaborate notions of masculinities in existing literature and discourse with the everyday realities of teachers across school, home and community. Butler's (1999) theory of gender performativity is interweaved into the theoretical framework, informing the embedded question, what are the performative acts that (re)produce male teachers' subjectivities as primary school teachers? Barad's (2007) theory of 'intra-action' informs the embedded question, how do male teachers intra-act with the materiality of their world, such as the school, the community and the education system, in ways that produce different becomings?

1.6 Theoretical background

Mindful of Lather's (1987: 30) suggestion that if the working lives of teachers are to be understood and changed 'issues of gender are central...', it is with a sense of urgency that this study places a spotlight on 11 male primary teachers. The significant volume of reports documenting gender imbalance in teaching coupled with extensive coverage given in popular media to the possible consequences of a shortage of male teachers have legitimated persistent 'folk theories' or common sense public understandings of men in teaching (Allan, 1995: 114). Widespread acceptance of sex-role theory is reflected in the stories of those interviewed. As Vincent stated, 'You are sent to do whatever job men are supposed to do,

lifting things ... fixing things.' Expectations about masculinity and femininity in the teaching profession are also clearly illustrated in the gender specific roles assigned to teachers. Matthew notes, 'The lads would take the sports teams, the girls would do cooking on a Friday'. These two examples demonstrate how male teachers behave and negotiate masculinity while engaged in 'women's work'. The complementary alternative, Allan states (p. 115), is the folk theory of hyper- and hypo- masculinity. Tim's comment exemplifies this folk theory, stating, 'It's very girlie to become a teacher'. Furthermore, Tim believes that his sexuality comes under scrutiny by others due to his infant teacher status, 'Is he gay because he's in Infants? Is his masculinity gone out the door when he becomes an Infant teacher?' Similarly, Darren notes society's perception of men who teach young children, '...it can be presumed that if you are teaching at a lower level in the school or if you are teaching in primary schools that you could be gay or you could be, you know..? I suppose that is a big problem as well for teachers'. Furthermore, David recalls acquaintances outside of teaching who have 'joked' about his male teacher status. When responding to their question as to what his occupation is, they have responded by saying 'Oh, how long have you been a paedophile? (Laughs)'. This anxiety can be read in relation to Butler's (1999: xi) claim that sexuality and belief are related in a complex manner, which are 'very often at odds with one another'. Indeed, Butler (1999) contends that the first formulation of her most famous thesis, *Gender Trouble*, is the fear of losing one's place in the gender hierarchy (p. xi) due to a failure to appear in accordance with accepted gender norms (p. xiii).

Would these feeling exist if it had not emerged out of 'a society that had already created ... gendered subject positions'?

(MacLure, 2003: 2)

1.7 Theoretical framework

This research draws on feminist poststructural inquiry to address the research question, what are male teachers' understandings of masculinities and how do they impact on their daily lives? The theoretical orientations of feminism and poststructuralism, and, more specifically, the work of contemporary theorists, Karen Barad (2007) and Judith Butler (1999), influenced the methodological choice, data collection and analysis of this research. A feminist theoretical orientation disrupts traditional ways of knowing through its commitment to

studying the ‘lived experiences’ of gender (Pillow and Mayo, 2007: 161). Feminism places the personal being at the centre of one’s enquiry. This creates rich new meanings by highlighting concerns of boundaries, identities and speaking. Furthermore, poststructuralism facilitates a constant engagement with ‘the tensions and omissions’ in a text (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 5). A poststructural reading of data troubles the innocent idea of any term. It adheres to a suspicion that ‘something may be wrong with what we currently believe’ (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 23). As a result, poststructuralism holds the idea that no reading or writing of a life is ever complete. From this belief emerges accounts that ‘are playful, open-ended, and incomplete’ (Denzin, 1989: 46; Van Maanen, 2011). Together, a feminist perspective and a poststructuralist methodology critically deconstruct gendered social practice and support alternative understandings of power and subject formation. In this manner, there are multiple beginnings, multiple truths and multiple endings as will be examined in Chapter 11 - Recommendations.

1.8 Conclusion of chapter

This thesis seeks to highlight how educational research can engage with both the discursive nature and the material nature of male teachers’ daily experiences. The stories of the male teachers in this study suggest that masculinities create a distance between language and bodies, which produces a divide between male teachers, colleagues, pupils and the community. The discursive milieu of the staffroom and the dynamic interplay between discourse and feelings of isolation as described in Chapter 8 - Data Collection is an example of discourse as a material enactment. The power of discourse and the considerable influence of female Principals over the hiring possibilities of male teachers outlined in Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns is another example of discourse as a socio-material construction.

The chapters that follow are concerned with this distance, particularly the division between rhetoric and reality. We are in ‘a very different world’ from that proposed by common-sense or scientific knowledge (MacLure, 2003: 4). Confidence in certainties, totalities and universals has been eroded. ‘This new(ish) world, which is not one but many ... has spread like a virus ... unsettling old, humanistic narratives of truth, progress and emancipation’ (p. 4). Similarly, Lather (1991: 25) indicated that ‘nothing is innocent’ and points to a ‘lack of innocence’ in any discourse by ‘looking at the textual staging of knowledge’ (Lather, 1981: 13). These themes will be explored in Chapter 6 – Performance and Performativity, which

explores performativity as material-discursive practices that produce effects through on-going intra-activity. These themes have important implications for contemporary understandings of masculinities in Irish primary schools.

'In short, we replace Truth with truths and thus lose any grounding in the real. No statement, scientific or otherwise, has any priority over any other statement: all are equally vulnerable to critique because all are social constructions'

(Hekman, 2010: 66)

Chapter 2 – Research Design

Chapter 2 explores the conceptual design of this study. Research approaches inherently reflect ‘our beliefs about the world we live in and want to live in’ (Lather, 1991: 51). Consequently, this study was designed to encourage (re)thinking men in primary education, executed through a contextual, interactive and ‘humanly compelling’ (p. 52) approach to knowledge-building. The research design is qualitative in nature and incorporates many sources of data collection such as interviews, field notes and personal musings. An important feature of the research design was the participants’ response to preliminary descriptions of the data. Written responses received from the participants are included in the final chapter of this thesis, Chapter 11 - Recommendations. Employing a feminist research design facilitated a flexible research process that responded to the lived realities of the male participants. This will be further discussed in Chapter 5 - Methodology, which outlines in detail the epistemological, ontological and methodological underpinnings of this study and in Chapter 7 – Unpacking the Interview Process, which details my personal experiences of participant interviews. Reflexivity was a key component of the research design, as discussed in Chapter 1 and further illustrated in Chapter 8 – Data Collection and Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns through theoretical memos and personal journal entries. First, this chapter begins with a detailed description of the research design, which consisted of three phases of interviews. It outlines how participants were invited to partake in this study, placing specific emphasis on the sample size of this study, particularly as it consists of just 11 teachers. Second, this chapter explores the reciprocal nature of the interview process and details the two forms of data analysis implemented in this study: electronic and manual. Third, this chapter describes the advantages and disadvantages of implementing a voice-centred relational method of data analysis. In totality, this chapter presents a detailed and transparent account of the study’s research design as feminist, interactive and reciprocal in nature.

2.1 Exploring the Research Design

The design of this research consists of 3 interconnected yet distinct rounds of interviews. The categorizing of data collection into 3 phases enables methodological self-reflection and interactive relationships to develop between researcher and researched (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011; Rapley, 2011). Male teachers were invited to participate in this research by responding to an open call. McCracken (1988: 37) advises that ‘respondents should be

perfect strangers and few in number'. As a result, an open-call in the form of an article entitled *Why the decline in male primary school teachers?* was placed by the researcher in Ireland's largest teachers' union monthly magazine, *InTouch* magazine (2014), issue 148, page 43 (See Appendix 3). 10 male teachers voluntarily responded to this article via email. No female teacher contacted me regarding the article. Of the 10 male teachers, 2 wished to express their interest in the article and in receiving a copy of the findings. The remaining 8 teachers wished to contribute to the research in interview form. A specific timeframe was selected, spanning from December 2014 to January 2016, to interview the schoolteachers who responded to the call. During this frame, J. Spradley's (1979) ethnographic interview was used to guide the informal interviews, which was useful as major issues were discovered during the early months of the research. These interviews served to generate a deeper insight into their personal experiences and to identify emerging data. Each interview lasted between one to two hours and was conducted face-to-face at a time and place most convenient for the participant. The interviews were conducted either in the teacher's classroom after school or in a centrally-located hotel. In-depth descriptions of each phase of interviews are provided in Chapter 7 – Unpacking the Interview Process and Chapter 8 – Data Collection. Full interviews were transcribed verbatim by an outsourced professional vendor and offered to the participants for review.

The second round of interviews, which was driven by 'emerging analytical findings' (Rapley, 2011: 285), consisted of individual interviews with 7 teachers. The purpose of this study dictated the sample size (Staller et al., 2010: 44), which was 'to gain access to the cultural categories and assumptions according to which one culture construes the world' (McCracken, 1988: 17). McCracken (1988: 37) advises that 'no more than eight' participants should form the sample. Formal interviews were added to focus on specific topics such as care in education, gendered bodies and gender-specific roles. The long interview, as described by McCracken (1988), was used as a model for the formal interviews. The long interview, 'allows us...to achieve crucial qualitative objectives within a manageable methodological context' (McCracken, 1988:11). This process was repeated for the third and final round, with the sample size remaining at 7 teachers. Although, it is rare for several interviews to be conducted with the same person during a single research project (Gobo, 2001: 29-30), engaging in rounds of cycles of fieldwork and analysis allows each participant to share as much as they wish about their lives and their experiences. The holistic strategy ensures that each phase of the research integrates with the other two phases (Leavy, 2011), allowing the

participants to be informed about the researcher's interpretation of results concerning themselves (Lynch and O' Neill, 1999: 41).

2.1.1 Sample

The sample was, by design, a convenience sample of 11 primary teachers. All responses received were from male teachers, both retired and in-service. 8 male teachers voluntarily contacted me via e-mail having read the article placed in *InTouch* magazine as mentioned above (Appendix 3). The remaining 3 male teachers were recruited via the 'snowball' sampling method. 'Snowball' sampling refers to recommendations from initial participants to generate additional participants (Cohen et al., 2007: 116). The selection of participants, McCracken (1988: 17) advises, follows the principle that 'less is more'. The sample size consisted of 11 male primary teachers in Phase One. This number was reduced to 7 male teachers in Phase Two and Phase Three. The reduction of participants in Phase Two through to Phase Three was due to family reasons and time commitments. The 4 teachers who did not continue to Phase Two and Phase Three of this research study remained part of the research journey. Initial findings and overall themes were forwarded to them for review and clarification throughout each phase.

Feminist research is particularly mindful of 'the importance of care in defining and describing samples'. Variables used to identify appropriate participants included age, number of years teaching experience, school setting and position held within the school (p. 37). The sample met the following criteria:

Age: 6 participants are located in the 20 – 35 year age bracket, 4 participants are located in the 35 – 50 year age bracket and 1 participant is in the 50 – 65 year age bracket.

School Setting: 6 participants teach in a rural setting, while 5 participants teach in an urban setting. Of the 11 participants, 9 participants work in denominational Catholic schools and 2 participants work in multi-denominational Educate Together schools.

Socio-Economics of the school: 3 participants work in schools that implement the School Support Programme under the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) action plan for educational inclusion. This action plan focuses on addressing and prioritising the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities, as described in the Glossary. 2 participants work in primary urban DEIS Band 1 schools and 1

participant works in a primary rural DEIS Band 1 school. The 8 remaining participants work in mainstream primary schools.

Teacher Education College: The participants graduated from 3 different initial teacher education programmes hosted in 5 different colleges of education. 10 participants attended teacher education college in Ireland, while 1 participant attended teacher education college in Wales, United Kingdom.

Teaching Position: 8 participants are mainstream classroom teachers, 2 participants are Administrative Principals and 1 teacher is a learning support teacher. Of the 8 classroom teachers, 4 participants are teachers in Junior Infants and Senior Infants and 3 participants teach in 4th class and 6th class. During the course of this research journey, 1 teacher relocated to Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates and 1 teacher retired.

Overall, the participants of this study form a sample of maximum variety that supports information-rich data. Shared patterns of commonalities among participants were sought along with evidence of uniqueness. The sample size, although small, was selected on the basis of relevance to the research question, which Silverman (2014: 62) states, ‘should always be theoretically guided’. The first aim of this approach is to obtain high-quality case descriptions, ‘useful for documenting uniqueness’ (p. 73). The second aim is to identify significant shared patterns of commonalities existing across participants (p. 74). Most important, this approach is an opportunity to ‘manufacture distance ... by deliberately creating a contrast in the respondent pool’ (McCracken, 1988: 37). These trends are most evident in the stories the participants share and subsequent discussions in Chapter 8 – Data Collection and Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns.

2.1.2 The Interview

Feminist poststructural studies such as this one do not seek to uncover generalizable characteristics that draw conclusions about the larger population. Alternatively, they seek to uncover the personal world of each participant and to explore personal decisions made. Exploring the content and pattern of daily experiences was successfully achieved in the time spent in conversation with participants. Phase One consisted of 11 individual interviews and accumulated an average of 11 hours recorded interview time. Phase Two and Phase Three consisted of 7 individual interviews and amassed over 14 hours of interviews. In total, the average time spent in dialogue with participants added to approximately 25 hours. Detailed

descriptions of these conversations can be read in Chapter 7 – Unpacking the Interview Process where I present the interview process from my perspective and in Chapter 8 – Data Collection and Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns where participants’ stories are presented.

2.1.3 Data collection

Mindful that teachers are often the subjects of research but not the partners in its design (Lynch and O’Neill, 1999: 41), data sources generated for the research were as follows;

- Fieldnotes;
- In-depth interviews with male teachers;
- Texts such as governmental reports brought by participants to the interview;
- Transcripts.

Due to the size of the study and the time available, an electronic coding system, NVivo 10 software, was utilised to efficiently store, organise, manage, and reconfigure data from the first round of interviews. Although a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software was useful to discover emerging themes during the first round of interviews and enabled ‘human analytical reflection’ (Saldaña, 2013: 28), it overly constrained the options available for marking up the transcript (Rapley, 2011: 281). The subsequent two rounds of interviews were analysed using a voice-centred relational method of data analysis (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998). The analysis consisted of four readings of the data, beginning with a focus on the respondent and moving towards an emphasis on broader cultural contexts and societal structures. When the four reading process was complete, notes were made of each reading on separate sheets of paper, which were slowly organised around various categories. These category sheets provided the starting point for analysis of numerous topics. As this is quite a detailed and time-consuming process, a number of cases were selected in phase two and phase three to do all four readings. Data was used as a filter, which facilitated an ongoing process of idea reformulation and validity (Lather, 1991: 73).

2.1.4 Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis

An electronic coding system, NVivo 10 software, was utilised to efficiently store, organise, manage, reconfigure data and enable ‘human analytical reflection’ (Saldaña, 2013: 28) at the initial stages of data collection and analysis. NVivo 10 was employed after transcripts were transcribed verbatim and coded manually by the researcher. The key benefit of NVivo 10 is a transparent audit trail, which can easily trace all coding decisions to original data sources.

The audit trail assisted in critically reviewing the coding rigour applied in analysing the interview data. However, NVivo 10 gradually became less effective as it created large themes from the data that did little to facilitate a deeper engagement with participants' stories. Indeed, criticism of electronic programmes have largely been expressed as 'overemphasize coding' and promoting 'a superficial view' of qualitative methods (Charmaz, 2010: 193). Additionally, critics also note that 'mechanical operations are no substitute for nuanced interpretative analysis' (p. 193). While, NVivo 10 was used as a tool to maximize 'the chance' of discovering, retaining, reviewing and rethinking categories (Bazeley and Richards, 2000: 91), Mauthner and Doucet's (1998) voice-centred relational method of data analysis moved 'beyond a revisionary interpretation of voices or texts' (Brown and Gilligan, 1992: 39) towards 'a method that allows for (and encourages) a polyphony of voices' (p. 40). Feminism and other epistemologies have made room 'for a less dominating and more relational modes of interviewing that reflect and respect participants' ways of organising meaning in their lives' (Reissman, 2001: 696). The term relational is used within the voice-centred relational method to illustrate the dynamic and interactive manner of data analysis, which connects the text containing participants' conversations with the activity of listening to the audio-transcripts and writing notes beside the interview transcripts.

2.1.5 Coding

Coding the data took two different approaches using both computer assisted qualitative methods, NVivo 10, as outlined above and a more traditional form of note making on the margins of the transcripts. All coding, nodes and memos created with NVivo 10 contained the overarching research question along with main findings from each interview. Coding in this manner was organised, time efficient and allowed for sophisticated digital diagrams to be easily developed. However, large categories developed using this form of coding. As I did not wish to present generalised or 'whole picture' data, coding during Phase Two and Phase Three took a format that did not use computer assisted analysis. Instead, a detailed summary of what the participant said was marked by transcript page numbers for easy reference (Chase, 1995: 222). As the transcripts were read, notes were made on the margin on content, emotions, interactions, and whatever else seemed important' (p. 223). The margin notes were copied onto separate sheets of paper, which were slowly organised around various categories. Thematic categories were developed as the 'rummaging ... of data analysis' (McCracken, 1988: 33) continued. The categories came 'from the interviewees' words' and from my

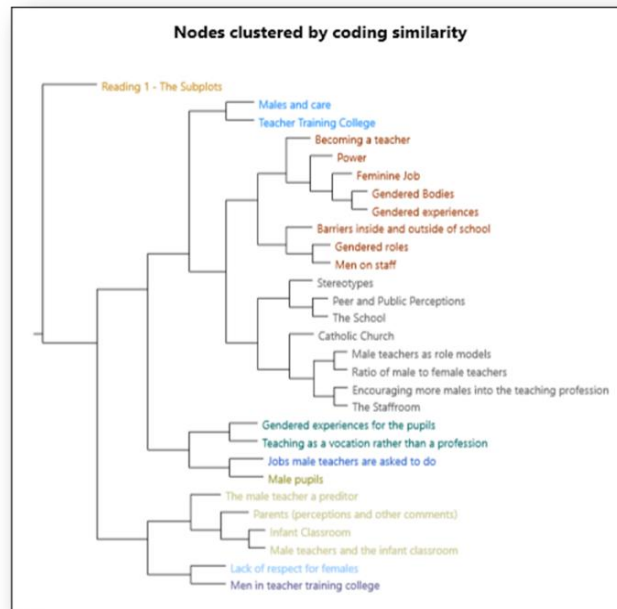
understandings of their words (Chase, 1995: 223). For each thematic entry, the participant's name was marked on top and the transcript page number was marked beside the theme. These entries provided the starting point for analysis of various topics in later interviews. For instance, a partial list of categories developed from participant interviews during Phase Two are:

- Cut-backs;
- Increasing workloads for teachers;
- Materialism and the school;
- Recruitment of teachers;
- School - past and present;
- School leadership;
- School initiatives;
- Society's view of the school;
- The labour-market.

Coding in this manner was 'messier, trickier, less comforting' (Lather, 2010: 80). However, it felt more authentic, 'more genuine' (Brown and Gilligan, 1992: 16) and more meaningful than something that looked attractive and organised in diagram format.

Coding, according to Saldaña (2013: 8), '*is analysis*' and '*is linking*'. The word 'coding', like the terms 'data', 'interview' and 'sample', were borrowed from the 'quantitative stream of social research', namely 'the tradition of qualitative content analysis' (Kelle, 2007: 445). Glaser and Strauss (1967) made understanding coding data popular in their book *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* and Mauthner and Doucet's (1998) voice-centred relational method has much in common with Grounded Theory. The first step of the voice-centred relational method, Reading for Plot, is common to many methods of qualitative data analysis (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998: 126; Riessman, 1993; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Similarly, Saldaña (2013: 84) notes that initial coding 'is the first major stage of a grounded theory approach'. However, the main difference between the two methods of data analysis lies in their objectives of analysis. A voice-centred relational method of data analysis is concerned with the processes of reflection and decision making or the 'private lives' of individuals. Grounded Theory (Corbin and Strauss, 2015: 6) is concerned with action and reaction and the 'identification of general concepts'. Just as McCracken (1988: 17) states that the sample is 'not chosen to represent some part of the larger world', the voice-centred relational method

claims that the participants are ‘not representative of all’ (Brown and Gilligan, 1992: 23). The aim of a voice-centred relational method of data analysis is to discover the daily realities of individuals and make discoveries ‘worthy of others’ attention’ (Brown and Gilligan, 1992: 23). The following is a diagram developed using NVivo 10 of the themes that emerged during Phase One of data collection.



Miles and Huberman (1984, as cited in Kelle, 2007: 445) considered ‘data overload’ as ‘the most crucial problems of the qualitative research process’. Similarly, Saldaña (2013: 24) advocates that the number of major themes ‘should be held to a minimum’. Lichtman’s (2010: 194, as cited in Saldaña, 2013: 24) projection that between 80 – 100 codes will be organised into 15 – 20 categories and subcategories, ‘which eventually synthesize into five to seven major concepts’. Similarly, Creswell’s (2013: 184) theory of ‘lean coding’ believes that 25 – 30 categories should combine to make five to six major themes. A voice-centred relational method of data analysis adheres to these concerns. The remainder of this chapter is dedicated to discovering each stage of the voice-centred relational method employed in this study.

2.1.5.1 Reconstructing the story: Reading One

A voice-centred relational method of data analysis involves four readings of data. Each reading troubles the data in different ways. Reading One consists of dual-readings; reading for the plot and reading for reader-responses to what the participant has said. Reading for the

plot seeks to establish the main story being told and who the protagonists are. It is attentive to recurrent images, words, metaphors and contradictions in the narrative as the subplots are established. Reading for my personal response to the participants' interpretations of stories facilitated the reflexive concerns of this study as I read for my own 'particular background, history and experiences' in relation to the person being interviewed (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998: 126). Reading for my personal response to the stories I heard was more difficult than I had anticipated as I became aware of personal opinions sneaking into the interviews. Reading One produces a different encounter with data 'as we interrogate our own positioning and intra-actions as researchers' (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 118). It highlights emotional and personal responses to various interpretations of readings (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998). It draws attention to places of agreement and disagreement and to places where I was clearly surprised by what I heard. The reader-response element of Reading One is unique as it emphasises how the reader is implicit in how a text is shaped and presented.

2.1.5.2 Self-knowing: Reading Two

Reading Two consists of reading for the voice of 'I'. In this reading, attention is drawn to 'I', 'You' and 'We'. This allows for a reading of difficult subject matters or topics that were challenging to address. Reading Two is one of the key features that distinguish a voice-centred relational method from Grounded Theory (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998: 130). A voice-centred relational method is concerned with relationships, while Grounded Theory (Corbin and Strauss, 2015: 6) is concerned with the 'identification of general concepts'. 'I' is an entanglement, 'agency is an enactment, not something that someone or something has' (Barad, 2007: 235). Reading Two enhances the depth of the study, disallowing a focus on macro coding. St. Pierre (2011, as cited in Jackson and Mazzei, 2012:11) termed coding the macro as 'pedestrian and uninteresting'. Similarly, Jackson and Mazzei (2012: 12) believes macro coding to be 'representational traps' that disallow 'repetition' and 'a production of different knowledge'. Spending time exploring how the participant perceives and experiences their daily lives created a space between his way of speaking and seeing and my way of representing his stories. Reading Two helped manufacture distance, as advocated by McCracken (1989) by placing emphasis on the feminist principles of research: how the participant experiences, feels and speaks about himself.

2.1.5.3 The enactment of agency: Reading Three

Reading Three reads specifically for relationships. In the analysis employed in this study, Reading Three consists of readings for relationships with colleagues and with the workplace. It focuses on increased school initiatives, increased teacher-pupil ratio and lower pay scales. This reading allows the reader to place the participants' stories within the broader cultural and societal landscape. For example, Eoin's story clearly illustrates that the cultural climate that teachers work in is having a direct physical and emotional effect on their daily lives.

Eoin: *'Every day she'd [Class teacher] actually stagger out of the room. It was like she had run a marathon and it was physically punishing, physically draining and absolutely unbelievable'*.

It facilitates further in-depth analysis of cultural and societal factors that may impact on the daily teaching lives of participants and their colleagues. This reading moves the data beyond the personal and places it in a context that has material consequences. Nature is 'agentic – it acts, and those actions have consequences for both the human and nonhuman world' (Alaimo and Hekman, 2008: 5, as cited in Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 118). This stage shakes up 'the privileging of the discursive in postmodern thought' (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 119). Reading Three, reading for relationships, facilitates a reading of trends that are otherwise invisible. For instance, Eoin alludes to a common material trend that schools endure as teachers are continuously faced with daily pressures.

Eoin: *'I suppose it was a no-brainer that she went to another school ... She was magnificent in terms of her commitment and her work rate but how do you attract and retain people of that calibre?'*

It also suggests that we need 'ways of understanding the agency, significance, and ongoing transformative power of the world' that accounts for the connection between 'phenomena that are material, discursive, human, more-than-human, corporeal, and technological' (Alaimo and Hekman, 2008: 5, as cited in Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 118).

Listening 'for how the respondents spoke about their interpersonal relationships..., and the broader social networks' within which they work is 'particularly valuable in revealing the theoretical framework which quietly and pervasively underlines' research (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998: 131) carried out about masculinities and the school. This reading allowed the data to go beyond the traditional limits of research practice and to celebrate 'uncertainty'

(Lather, 2010: 10). It opens up ‘new ways of seeing and thinking’ that produces ‘a different encounter with our data’ (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 118). It encourages thinking that does ‘not centre on our research subjects (or ourselves as researchers) as the site of agency and therefore the focus of our inquiry’ but rather, the consideration of ‘the enactment of agency and the co-production of these enactments’ (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 118).

2.1.5.4 Entering the world: Reading Four

In this reading, respondents’ accounts and experiences are placed within broader cultural, political, social and structural contexts (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998: 132). Although Reading Four was of most interest to me as it provided a reading of data that links the cultural and the natural, it is given the least detailed description of all readings in Mauthner and Doucet’s (1998: 132) description of the voice-centred relational method, ‘In the fourth reading, we placed our respondents’ accounts and experiences within broader social, political, cultural and structural contexts’ (p. 132). This observation resonates with Hekman’s (2010: 3) claim about the postmodern position, ‘...in practice most postmoderns ... have moved to the language side to the exclusion of reality’. In Reading Four I listened for how the participants described the structural and ideological forces ‘as constraining and/ or enabling’ (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998: 132). For example, David alludes to the correlation between economic structures impinging on his career as and the homogenous body of teachers working in Ireland:

David: *‘If I was from Dublin, I wouldn’t be a teacher basically because the cost of living is so high. My rent is around a third of what I’d earn in a month. Even to buy a house, you couldn’t. You actually couldn’t afford to do that ... It’s a real country thing to become a teacher’.*

In this study, Reading Three and Reading Four were often used together as relationships with colleagues and relationships with the wider world often depend on and intra-act with one another.

2.1.5.5 Advantages of a voice-centred relational method

There are many advantages to using the voice-centred relational method. First, it allows for full immersion in the data as it is adaptable, flexible and can be used with a range of theoretical perspectives. Mauthner (1994) had previously used this method of data analysis to study experiences of motherhood and postnatal depression and Doucet (1995) had formerly

employed it to study heterosexual couples attempting to share housework and childcare. Furthermore, Brown and Gilligan (1992) used this method of analysis to study female adolescence. Second, a voice-centred relational method allows participants' voices to be heard and promotes a highly reflexive stance, which addresses the feminist principles of this study as outlined in the methodology chapter, Chapter 5, and in Inter-text 4, which examines this study's research considerations. It is a method associated with feminism, which relies on listening. Indeed, it is also called the Listening Guide (Brown and Gilligan, 1992). It recognises the centrality of relationships and takes a social constructivist epistemological position. Third, a voice-centred relational method addresses the natural and the cultural as it identifies human experience as bound up in larger relational dynamics. Most importantly, the voices of the participants are heard above researcher, all the while incorporating the researcher's background and history into the analysis process.

2.1.5.6 Disadvantages of a voice-centred relational method

This method of data analysis is very detailed and time-consuming. A shortage of time was a major constraint on data analysis. First, not all transcripts could be read using all four stages of data analysis, '...we found it impossible systematically to conduct all four readings with each and every one of our respondents' (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998: 134). While all interviews were read using stage 1, only 7 out of 11 transcripts were read using the four stages of data analysis. Second, it was difficult to differentiate between the readings, particularly Reading Three, reading for relationships, and Reading Four, placing people within cultural contexts and social structures. This observation resonates with Hekman's (2010: 8) claim that 'social institutions are constituted by the interface of the discursive, the material, the natural, and the technological'. However, this method was valuable for 'understanding the depth and complexity of individuals' experiences, as well as the very significant differences between our respondents' narratives' (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998: 133). If I had an opportunity to alter the methods of data analysis employed in this study, I would not employ a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis soft-ware. Learning how to navigate this programme demanded a large amount of my time in relation to this research study. This included attending two full-day workshops hosted by the Centre for Support and Training in Analysis and Research (CSTAR) onsite in the University of Limerick, August 2015 followed by an hour long one-on-one Skype session.

2.1.6 Conclusion of chapter

The research design of this study sought to encourage self-reflection and deeper understandings of male teachers' perceptions of masculinities and their impact on their daily lives. Full reciprocity was the aim of this design, although partial reciprocity was the reality. Interviews were conducted in a collaborative, dialogic and interactive manner that required personal self-disclosure of teaching experiences. Participants regularly asked questions about my experiences as a teacher, which are detailed in the descriptions of interview conversations from my perspective in Chapter 7 – Unpacking the Interview Process and in my personal musings offered in Chapter 8 – Data Collection and Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns. Sequential interviews facilitated stronger collaboration, as detailed in Chapter 7 – Unpacking the Interview Process and Chapter 8 – Data Collection, and a deeper probing of emerging research themes. Meanings were negotiated at various junctures in the research process from informal conversations before the interviews began through to emails when data collection was complete. This created various opportunities to put this into practice an interactive research design that tested the usefulness and validity of emerging themes. Overall, this research design implemented an innovative and tailored version of the interview process using an approach that facilitates depth and multilayer treatment of data.

Inter-text 1 – The Body

‘To talk of the body is to talk of corporeality, action and flesh. Or so it is said in science, psychology and the law.

Or:

To talk of the body is to talk of discourse, of signs and signifiers, of representations of fantasy and desire. So say the poststructuralist, semiotic and psychoanalytic theorists.

Which is the truth? Which way should we turn?’

(Ussher, 1997: 1)

The aim of this inter-text is to explore the implications of men’s bodies on men’s lives. It addresses the historical circumstances that have representationally aligned men with the mind and explores the social circumstances surrounding men’s bodies and their everyday lives. This inter-text explores a range of answers to common questions, from a variety of epistemological and theoretical positions, including poststructuralism, psychoanalysis and social constructionism. The answers are united by their desire to move beyond the binary divide between mind and body towards a position which allows us to recognise the interaction and interrelationship between mind and matter. This chapter is built upon a conversation between reader and author. The term author is used *in lieu* of my name Suzanne as it signals that an understanding of bodies in this way is new to me. Additionally, an exploration of the body in conversational format is selected to illustrate the feminist mode of representing as ‘accessible, friendly, and familiar’ that ‘enacts a democratization of knowledge and a sense of communal sharing’ (Roof, 2007: 430).

The body: what does this mean?

What it means to consider mind and body as something other than an oppositional dichotomy will be explored in this inter-text. The body is considered to be feminisms’ most pressing concept ‘to resuscitate’ (Grosz, 1994: 20) in order to rethink the relationship between truth and alternative ways of knowing. The metaphorical reliance on the body seeks to establish why it is central to feminist thought

‘The intention here is not to prioritise the body over ‘gender’; it is to rework the dualism between mind/ body so that it becomes impossible to think only in terms of the ‘mind’ or the ‘body’.

(Collier, 1998: 27)

and particularly a study on masculinities. This detour into the body and feminisms' relationship with it is modelled on Lather and Smithies (1997: 47) inter-texts that develop a conversation on the topic of angels. Termed 'angelology', it is 'intended both as a breathing space' and 'as a place to bring snapshots from poetry, fiction, sociology, history, art, and philosophy together to bear on understanding'. In this inter-text, snapshots of history, philosophy, language and feminist thought will be brought together to illustrate how each have interacted and impacted on common-sense understandings. Described by feminist theorist Grosz (1994: 3) as 'a conceptual blind spot' in Western philosophical thought and contemporary feminist theory; the body in this thesis is considered as both human and non-human. The human body is easily understood as fixed, passive and unaffected by time and has been the traditional conception of the term 'body'. More recently, the non-human or 'more than human' (Grosz, 2011) has been reinstated into feminist ontological thought. The environmental body in this study is understood as the school, the community and the education system.

Refiguring bodies

Reader: Why an emphasis on bodies in a thesis about masculinities and primary schools?

Author: The body is one of the first identifiers of a male teacher's presence in a primary school. An association between the feminine environment and the male body indicates something unusual or strange in our mind's eye. This is primarily due to a taken-for-granted relationship between male bodies and masculinities. Furthermore, many philosophical assumptions regarding the role of the body in social, political and cultural life characterises 'Western reason' (Grosz, 1994: 3). A social constructionist approach considers gender as a socially constructed and constituted practice. As will be discussed in Chapter 3,

*... More than meets the eye,
the mind's eye, God's-eye
view...*

*'Traditional models of
knowledge privilege vision
over the other senses ...
Vision, perceived as the most
detached of the senses, is
employed in such a way as to
conceal the action of the
body ...The construction of
an image of reason based on
metaphors of vision has led
to a notion of a 'mind's eye'
and a conception of
knowledge in which the
world is separated from the
observer who sees it.'*

(Tuana, 2008: 262).

which explores common-sense and scientific accounts of masculinities and how both impact on gender roles, male and female bodies are coded in terms of production and reproduction. In other words, women have a 'reproductive function' (Hekman, 2010: 25) and men have a productive function. Society categorises men as active and women as passive in order to 'address and attempt to deal with the chaos which surrounds' both concepts (Grosz, 2011:78). If we consider men's bodies and destructive work are 'proof of the toughness of the work and the worker' (Connell, 1995: 36) then men who teach young children are not believed to be masculine. This happens because caring is carried out in a feminine manner, i.e. not destructive. Additionally, feminine conduct combined with a male body 'is felt to be anomalous or transgressive' (Connell, 2000: 12). Primary teaching does not support the codes of gender-appropriate behaviour.

Reader: How did man become associated with mind and woman with body?

Author: From a foundationalist perspective, the human subject is considered a being 'made up of two dichotomously opposed characteristics: mind and body, thought and extension, reason and passion, psychology and biology' (Grosz, 1994: 3). However, this is not a neutral division but a classified division. The first term is privileged and the second term is consequently lacking. The first term is everything that the second term is not. 'Dichotomous thinking necessarily hierarchizes and ranks the two polarized terms so that one becomes the privileged term and the other its suppressed, subordinated, negative counterpart' (Grosz, 1994: 3). Dichotomous thinking such as mind/ body opposition has become representationally aligned with male and female. Man is representationally aligned with mind and woman with body. Mind is privileged and body is subordinate. The body is what the mind is not and visa-versa. 'Unlike men, women have never been allowed to jettison the body and the biological ... Women *are* their bodies...' (Hekman, 2010: 25). Through these associations the mind was further coded as male and the body was further associated with the subordinate other; female. Furthermore, philosophy traditionally considered itself a discipline built on the scientific practices of reasoning, logic, and theories of rationality. Philosophy concerned itself exclusively with ideas, concepts, reason and judgement, '... terms clearly framed by the concept of mind, terms which marginalize or exclude considerations of the body' (Grosz, 1994: 4). These characteristics functioned to give man a power that women and others such as animals and children lack (Grosz, 2011: 12). They also further strengthened the correlation between mind and maleness. Indeed, Butler (1999: 17)

notes that the ‘cultural associations of mind with masculinity and body with femininity are well documented within the field of philosophy and feminism’. This long-standing belief that women are socially inferior due to their ‘allegedly inherent inferior natures’ formed the basis of feminist philosopher Simone de Beauvoir’s (1949) thesis who maintained that women are social beings, ‘constrained but not determined, by their natures’ (Barad, 2007: 45). Beauvoir’s theory (1949) was challenged due to a failure to account for structures such as power.

Reader: Does this explain why teaching young children is considered a less prestigious job, particularly for men?

Author: As will be discussed in Chapter 9, when teaching is considered a caring profession carried out in an emotional environment, recognition is given to the central role of the body. This is because we associate all that is biological and natural with the body and the feminine. The cost of such projections to women, Bordo (2003: 5) claims, is obvious. ‘...*the body* is the negative term, and if women *is* the body, then women *are* that negativity’ (Bordo, 2003: 5). As a result of lateral associations, which ‘link the mind / body opposition to a whole series of other oppositional (or binarized) terms, enabling them to function interchangeably...’ (Grosz, 1994: 3), the body is associated with women’s social subordination. Further associations of lateral thinking include outside and inside, natural and cultural, self and other, depth and surface, and so on. The body and all associated feminine characteristics are presumed the latter and the mind and all associated masculine characteristics are considered the former. The relationship between the male body, masculinities and the teaching profession does not align with traditional reasoning.

Reader: Why consider the body as something other than human?

Author: First, philosophy has attributed to man the powers of reason, of speech, of response among many others. This is what makes him human and divides him from all other non-human forms. ‘Man must be understood as fundamentally different from and thus other to’ all other living and non-living forms (Grosz, 2011: 12 – 13). Man is positioned in contrast to

Lateral associations enable oppositional pairs to be used interchangeably creating a divide between matter and meaning. This is most evident in the body and soul division in Christian tradition, ‘a God-given soul and a mortal... carnality’

(Grosz, 1994: 4)

non-human creatures ‘who are slaves to their biology’ (Barad, 2007: 45). Second, terms usually associated with the body such as ‘real’, ‘being’ and ‘nature’, are synonymous with ‘static’ and ‘fixed’, indifferent to history and change, ‘...those terms usually associated with the unchanging must themselves be opened up to their immaterial or extramaterial virtualities and becomings ... to history, biology, culture, sexuality’ (Grosz, 2005: 5). As language and representation have traditionally been granted to only humans, there was no need to engage with anything other than language (Hekman, 2010: 3). However, as recent destructive material events indicate, language alone cannot fully account for reality and agency. As terrorist attacks, tsunamis, hurricanes and earthquakes dominate the news, we must acknowledge that language alone cannot fully constitute or explain our reality (Hekman, 2010: 1). While we understand the world around us through language, reality must include both language and the material. Language did not cause these events single-handedly. The intra-action of various materials coupled with language constituted these events. New feminist analysis is adopting an anti-dualist approach that interweaves ‘the human, more-than-human, material and discursive ... in a complex mix’ (Grosz, 2011; Hekman, 2010: 5). This is a re-insertion of ontology, how we understand the world, with epistemology, how we theorize the world.

Reader: What is feminisms’ relationship to the material?

Author: Feminism has traditionally had a strong resistance to the question of the material and matter (Barad, 2007; Grosz, 2005: 13; Hekman, 2010: 2). This is due to strong correlations between philosophy with absolute truth and objectivity. Philosophy considered the real as something that is observable. However, this view was ‘forsaken, reluctantly by some, when it was recognized that theories incorporate values, because they advocate one way of describing the world over others...’ (Moulton, 2008: 15). Philosophy is a discipline concerned primarily with rationality, truth and reason.

It is interesting to note ... that when the natural world was likened to the body – as it is in Plato’s Timaeus and in many other ancient creation stories – it is gendered, and frequently female. It is only when a man-made rational form like the state is symbolized ... that the fiction of genderlessness comes into play’

(Bordo, 2003: 34)

Furthermore, science as a branch of philosophy is patriarchal. As a result, patriarchal constraints tried to keep feminism out. This is because of its ‘implicit coding of femininity with the unreason associated with the body’ (Grosz, 1994: 4). However, we are in a time of ‘dramatic shift in our understanding of scientific inquiry’ (Lather, 1991: 51). Value-free knowledge has largely been discounted (Lather, 1991: 52). As noted in Chapter 5 - Methodology, we are now in a ‘post’ period where all that was once considered true and stable has been brought into question. It is interesting to note that postmodernism, as detailed in Chapter 4, did not originate as an academic epistemological theory ‘produced by scholars in philosophy’ (Jaggar, 2008: 342). It emerged as a broad stylistic movement beginning in architecture and explicated in the social sciences in its search for logic. Indeed, Butler (1992: 3) questions ‘what does it mean for a term that has described a certain aesthetic practice’ now to apply to feminism? One possible answer to this question is that feminists, poststructuralists and ‘other critical theorists are deeply interested in the nature of nature’ (Barad, 2007: 46). Challenging accepted forms of knowledge, they wish to engage with new forms of knowledge. Similarly, Fraser and Nicholson (2008: 356) note that feminists ‘have sought to develop new paradigms of social criticism which do not rely on traditional philosophical underpinnings’.

Reader: How does this inter-text support the thesis and what can I take from it?

Author: From a feminist perspective, understanding male bodies through male lives is both progressive and potentially more in keeping with gender equality goals. This inter-text explored the way in which women have been categorised within the realm of nature ‘while men are placed on the other side of the boundary that separates nature from culture, determinism from freedom or will, emotion from reason’ (Brown, 1990: 41, as cited in Collier, 1998: 27). Similarly, women are cast as the body, ‘weighed down’, in Beauvoir’s words, ‘by everything peculiar about it’ (Cited in Bordo, 2003: 5). As outlined in Chapter 8 – Data Collection, the assumption within teaching is that men can shift from exhibiting

‘The writings of Descartes provided a foundation for modern assumptions about nature as fixed and measurable ... as acting only when acted upon and as doing so in a cause-and-effect relationship’

(Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 111)

nurturance to exercising rational authority without appearing abrupt. This suggests that representations of men and women do not have invariant and contextual meanings (Collier, 1998: 28). 'To be 'rational' or 'emotional', for example, have different meanings in different contexts' (p. 28). The fact remains that gender is constructed within a heterosexual matrix.

Difference matters: the mind / matter divide

Since the time of Plato Greek philosophy has separated mind from matter. In the 5th century, Greek Orphic priests considered man as a spiritual, non-corporeal being trapped in his body (Grosz, 1994). These travelling priests who offered teaching and initiation viewed the body as a 'betrayal of and a prison for the soul, reason, or mind' (Grosz, 1994: 5). Similarly, within the Christian tradition, the separation between mind and matter is evident in 'what is immortal and what is mortal' (p. 5). Although the soul is immortal, it is part of the world and part of nature while it is alive. French philosopher Descartes similarly believed in the mind/body divide. However, he believed only the body could function as part of the world. Descartes believed that the mind 'the thinking substance, the soul...' had 'no place in the natural world' (Grosz, 1994: 6). This placed consciousness outside of the mind resulting in the 'Cartesian distinction between freedom and the body' (Butler, 1999: 16). Consequently, the mind / body distinction has 'conventionally produced, maintained, and rationalized' the 'implicit gender hierarchy' (Butler, 1999: 17). As a result, men have been constructed as being outside the realm of nature, '...as apart from (their) bodies'

(Collier, 1998: 27)

Chapter 3 – An Exploration of Masculinities

This chapter lays the foundations and the tone for understanding different perspectives of masculinities. It explores common-sense and scientific accounts of masculinities and how both impact on gender roles in schools. The voices of the male participants are used throughout this chapter to guide the reader through different forms of knowledge that inform our understandings of masculinities. The use of participants' voices assist the reader in engaging with the text at a deeper level and becoming more familiar with differing participant personalities. Specific attention is given to emotions, male initiation and modern attempts to regain the foothold masculinities once had. The objective of this chapter is to de-mystify and provide a clear understanding of masculinities by explaining key concepts of gender, masculinities and femininities, and by tracing its historical development. This chapter connects the body as discussed in Inter-text 1 with our inner-selves as explored in Inter-text 3 - Emotions. At the end of this chapter, it is intended that the reader will have a greater knowledge of various perspectives of masculinities, recognise gender dynamics at play in schools and have an enhanced understanding of the realities of masculinities for the participants in this research study.

3.1 *Femenism*: men, masculinities and feminism

The concepts of 'masculine' and 'feminine', Freud observed, 'are among the most confused that occur in science' (Freud, 1953: 219 – 220, as cited in Connell, 1995: 3). While, in many practical situations the term 'masculine' and 'feminine' raises few doubts; upon logical examination, Connell (1995: 3) acknowledges, they prove to be 'remarkably elusive and difficult to define'. Connell (2015; 1995) suggests that this is due to the historically changing and politically fraught character of gender. Kimmel (2013: 114) offers a similar explanation, suggesting that definitions of masculinities and femininities vary 'from culture to

'What counts as knowledge, that is public knowledge, is so bound up with men, and men's public power ... It is necessary to deconstruct 'men' ... gender-blindness, and the ways in which 'men' and 'masculinity' have often been kept implicit in their accounts'

(Hearn, 1992: 5)

culture' and 'in any one culture over historical time'. In addition, Harding (1987: 7) notes that not only do gender experiences 'vary across the cultural categories; they also are often in conflict in any one individual's experience'. Although many geographical, cross-cultural and anthropological studies 'attest to the ways in which the concept of 'masculinity' itself may be inapplicable to certain cultural situations (Connell, 1995: 30-4, as cited in Collier, 1998: 19), Kimmel (2013: 114) further acknowledges that gender definitions vary 'over the course of a person's life'. This chapter will address common-sense and research-based understandings of masculinities.

3.1.1 Politics and perception

Daily life is awash with gender politics (Kimmel, 2013). Indeed, daily teaching experiences illustrate acute examples of gender politics in the workforce. This is evident in many of the stories of those interviewed. Vincent recalled his first day as a substitute teacher in a school. A stray dog wandered into the school yard. As he was the only male present in the school that day, he was asked to remove the animal from the school grounds. According to the male teachers in this study, such examples of sex-role theory are widespread in primary schools. Vincent summarises that male teachers 'are sent to do whatever job men are supposed to do, lifting things ... fixing things'. Furthermore, Darren states, 'All the time I am called in. If there's a ball that goes up on the roof, I have to get the ladder and get the ball down. Oh, the girls at the moment, they shout for me if there's a spider in the school or in their sink or ...' Gender, in these cases, appears to make two jobs out of one (Hochschild, 2012: 176). Similarly, David reminisces about the day a school-ball fell into a stream that flowed next to the school. Again, being the only male teacher present, he was asked to 'go in with wellingtons and try and fish out the ball.' Although he did not mind helping out, he did question why he was asked to perform this task. 'I don't know why they thought I would be a good person to get the

'We have no male Junior Infant teacher and no male teacher has taught Junior Infants. That would be quite common. I think a lot of that has to do with ... not the lads themselves but I think the outlook of people who might be in charge to make assumptions that it shouldn't happen. So, it's difficult to do'.

Michael

ball back?’ In addition, Neil recalls the time there ‘was a dead bird outside the school gate and I was asked to move it’. Equally, Neil did not understand why he was singled out to remove the bird, ‘...it could still be there for all I know because I didn’t move it. I said ‘No, why are you asking me to move it?’ ... I didn’t hear of it anymore.’ These traditional, common-sense ideas about gender, according to Thompson and Armato (2012: 7) find their origin in seventeenth-century Puritan and Congregationalist religious beliefs ‘that females and males are different from one another and that females are subordinate to males’.

The political ambiguities of masculinities and scientific knowledge stem from the question of what counts as knowledge? The first attempt to create a social science of masculinity centred on the idea of a male sex role (Connell, 1995: 21). According to sex role theory, society comprises males and females who provide different and complementary functions (Allan, 1994: 3). It has its origins in the work of Parsons (Parsons and Bales 1953), who claimed that all societies need to fulfil the functions of production and reproduction. Although, sex role theory informed the early men’s movement of the 1970s, it has numerous shortcomings. A number of critics have also pointed out that by focusing on one normative standard of masculinity that is white, middle class and heterosexual, sex role theory is ‘unable to account for diversity and difference in men’s lives’ (Pease, 2007: 555). Additionally, it under-

emphasises male economic and political power and their ‘resistance to change’ (Connell, 2008: 178; Pease, 2007: 555). Sex role theory has now ‘become obsolete, rejected for its ethnocentrism, lack of power perspective, an incipient positivism (Brittan, 1989; Eichler, 1980; Kimmel, 1987 as cited in Kimmel, Hearn and Connell, 2005: 5). It is clear that the sex

‘One thing that struck me was the way in which schools view male teachers in relation to non-teaching roles in schools. Over the years, I was regularly called on to assist the caretaker in moving heavier items of furniture etc! I was also called on to re-set timers on boilers, school bells etc presumably on the basis that I was a male and ‘had to know these things’!! I’m not sure if other male teachers had similar experiences but it all seemed to be part of the mix of school life!’

(Eoin)

role model does not work. However, Connell (2000: 132) states, it is not very clear ‘what way of thinking about the making of gender should take place’. Recently, the concept of hegemonic masculinity has considerably influenced current thinking about men, gender, and social hierarchy (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005: 829). Hegemonic masculinity can be defined as ‘an aggressively heterosexual masculinity’ (Connell, 1987: 120) or ‘the form of masculinity that is culturally dominant in a given setting’ (Connell, 1996: 209).

3.1.2 Offering an explanation

Conflicting forms of knowledge about gender ‘betray the presence of different practices addressing gender’ (Connell, 1995: 5). Sex role theory may indeed be widely accepted but it does not explain why men and women are given different roles to play in a primary school. Two suggestions are offered. First, perhaps it is because women and men act differently? David alludes to this belief stating, ‘...there are certain things that female teachers can do that male teachers can’t really do ... you know, males are a bit more awkward ... in general, around the younger children’. Furthermore, Darren states, ‘I suppose another thing is that if they feel there is a tricky or challenging class in the school, they would expect the male teacher to be able to handle it and maybe a little bit better than the females as well.’ Barad (2007: 5) refers to this form of knowledge as ‘common-sense notions about the nature of knowing’. Second, perhaps men and women act differently because they *are* different? Neil clarifies this belief, stating that ‘being a male is different’, based on his experience of interactions with male and female Principals. In relation to his experience with male Principals, ‘You would go to the fella and say, right, this is the problem. We could talk about something else first but then ease into the issue’. In Neil’s experience, ‘men seem to take the full account of an event into their heads’. In contrast, female Principals may ‘get quite blinded by the theory of what should be done’. Similarly, Patrick states ‘I think sometimes male teachers can be a little bit more relaxed or comfortable I think, within themselves, in the classroom ... sometimes females can be, um, more, I don’t know what the right term is ...’. Additionally, Michael refers to his decision to assign 6th class to a female teacher, stating, ‘Next time round, I have a plan in my head and it won’t be any of the male teachers that get into sixth class because ... you need a firm hand and the ability to think outside the box. It just takes a different mentality’. Both Patrick and David further illustrate this common belief of innate difference between men and women when both consider infant teaching. Patrick believes that teaching infant classes is not a man's job, 'I just don't think that's a man's job'.

Similarly, David considers infant teaching to be ‘geared more towards females than males because, like I said earlier, I think you have to be a bit more motherly ... with the infants’.

Theories of difference can be taken one step further. American author and relationship counsellor John Gray (1992) considers men and women to be so vastly different from one another that they inhabit separate cosmic spaces (Kimmel, 2013: 1; 283). Men are from Mars and women are from Venus. According to Gray (1992), in the workplace men ‘retreat to a cave’ when they have a problem to work out by themselves, whereas women ‘demonstrate sharing, cooperation, and collaboration’ (As cited in Kimmel, 2013: 283). Yet, despite these alleged interplanetary differences, ‘we’re all together in the same workplaces ... evaluated by the same criteria’ (Kimmel, 2013: 1).

3.1.3 Towards an understanding of masculinities

Daily, we hear that men and women are different (Kimmel, 2013: 1). Indeed, everyday knowledge of gender is often hotly contested (Connell, 1995; Woodward and Woodward, 2015). This, Connell (1995: 4) and Kimmel (2013) agree, is primarily due to two conflicting systems of knowledge – common sense and psychological science. Psychologists, in the practice of psychotherapy, often turn to bodies and behaviour in order to answer the question of difference between masculinities and femininities. Within the social sciences, researchers employ feminist theories and social scientific technique to conclude that masculinities and femininities are the result of social constructions and discourse. While it is a common belief that gender is a characteristic of individuals, feminist sociologists understand gender as fundamentally social (Rose, 2010: 2; Thompson and Armato, 2012: 6). Furthermore, gender construction has ‘as much to do with men as with women’ (Evans, 2003: 8). Other disciplines, such as theology, believe that ‘the gender order is ordained by God’ (Connell, 1995: 5) and ‘the province of theologians’ (Kimmel, 2013: 22). Within this realm, God created man and woman for different purposes. Reproductive differences ‘were decisive’ (Kimmel, 2013: 22) and ‘like other parts of the moral order’ were ‘perilous to tamper with’ (Connell, 1995: 5).

Importantly, these different forms of knowledge do

*‘I have my authority because
there is M. R. in front of my
name’*

(Tim)

not stand on equal footing. Science always has an edge (Connell, 1995: 6; Lather, 2010: 3). Science, Connell (1995: 6) believes, has ‘a definite hegemony in our education system and media’. Similarly, Lather (2010: 2) notes a 21st century ‘déjà vu’ return to the paradigm wars and ‘a sort of historical amnesia’ (p. 33). While, many qualitative researchers ‘assumed’ that the paradigm wars were over and one could ‘work in a less defensive space’, the return of ‘gold standard discourses ... changed all that’ (Lather, 2010: 3). Just as new horizons of intelligibility are ‘recognized and allowed’ or ‘dismissed and disavowed (Lather, 2010: 3), the sciences of masculinities may similarly be both ‘emancipatory’ and ‘controlling’ (Connell, 1995: 7). They are, perhaps, ‘both at once’ (Connell, 1995: 7). In other words, Pillow and Mayo (2007: 156) note, there are aspects of assigned identity that ‘are pushed on groups and are oppressive’. Yet, there are other aspects of those identities ‘that are useful to the groups and may even be oppositional or opposed to oppression’ (Pillow and Mayo, 2007: 156).

3.1.4 Attempting to build a scientific account of masculinity

The realization in the richness of the mental, social, psychological, and linguist worlds that individuals and social groups ‘create, constantly re-create and co-create’, offers ‘endlessly fertile fields of inquiry’ (Lincoln et al., 2007: 119). Indeed, the history of psychoanalysis is rich in systems that offer alternative readings of emotional life, including the best known,

the archetypal psychology derived primarily from Carl Gustav Jung (Connell, 1995: 12; Griffin, 1989: vii). Jung and the postmodernist movement he founded as ‘archetypal psychology’ places the psyche or soul as central to our existence (Griffin, 1989: 7). Jung considered the psyche to be distinct from the brain, and as having power of its own (Griffin, 1989: 6). He considered what we call the ‘psyche’ as ‘no means identical with our consciousness and its contents’ (Jung, 1964: 6). Jung (1964: 65), who falls outside the scope of this thesis, considered the psyche as ‘more than consciousness’, which distinguished between the ‘self’ constructed in transactions with the social environment and the ‘self’

‘...most men do not fit the image of tough, dominant and combative masculinity that the ideologists of patriarchy sell ... The celluloid heroism of a John Wayne or Sylvester Stallone is heroic only by contrasting with the mass of men who are not.’

(Connell, 1987: 110).

formed in the unconscious out of repressed elements (Connell, 1995: 12). This layering of a person's self in two as described by Jung (1964) can be read in relation to Denzin's (1989: 28) description of a life that is 'lived on two levels ... *the surface and the deep*' (Italics in original). At the surface level, Denzin (1989: 29) describes the person as existing through the outwardly actions it carries out, 'the person *is* what he or she does in everyday doings, routines, and daily tasks'. At the deep level, the person is a 'feeling, moral, sacred, inner self' that 'may only infrequently be shown to others' (Denzin, 1989: 29). The construction of the 'self' in two forms are opposites of one another, Jung (1964) believed, 'and the opposition is a gendered one' (Connell, 1995: 12).

3.1.5 Male Initiation

In these times of profound social change, global transformation and continued gender strain, many men in Western culture seem to find themselves struggling 'with questions of identity, morality, and power' (Rohr, 1998). Recent scholarship recognises young men as offering an 'important area of inquiry in understanding the crisis of masculinity' (Besen, 2007: 199). As part of the discourse on masculinities, male initiation into adulthood has become an increasingly more prevalent topic surrounding the debate on male identity, power and influence. This section will explore rites of passage and initiation through the lens of ancient mythology and spirituality. The remainder of this section will draw primarily on the works of Robert Bly (1990), an influential theorist in developing mythopoetic approaches to masculinity and Richard Rohr (1998, 2005), a Franciscan priest, whose teachings are grounded in the Christian mystical tradition. Feminist theories (Gardiner, 2002; Kimmel, 1995; Robinson, 2007) will be employed to engage with this concept considered a cultural construction of masculinities; male initiation.

Popular and academic discussions of masculinities tend to examine economic and social power as possible explanations for 'the attrition of...male power and privilege' (Robinson, 2007: 90). The 1970s saw many 'alternative gender-conscious men's groups' (Ashe, 2007:

'I think it's because there is a natural, stone-age animalistic response to an elder, more experienced male that causes a young male to back down and become a member of the pack if you like, as opposed to trying to make a break for authority or status within the classroom'

(John)

56) develop a variety of opposing discourses around themes such as men's identity, the crisis of masculinity and gender power. Susan Faludi (1991), the feminist journalist who analysed the media backlash against women reports a serious masculinity crisis such as anxiety, suicide, and criminality (as cited in Gardiner, 2002: 7). Faludi's (1992) feminist analysis provides a contextual account of the extent to which there is a dramatic reaction to feminist theories and politics. Recalling developmental psychologist Erik Erikson's retrieval of the old medical meaning of the word 'crisis', 'a turning point for better or worse' (Gilligan et al, 1990: 11) and the old Chinese ideograph that combines opportunity with danger (p. 11), critique of the modern gender order has been dominated with misogynistic undertones (Gardiner, 2002: 4; Robinson, 2007: 90). The 'masculinist' men's movement 'argued in favour of male dominance and blamed widespread psychological and social problems on feminist attacks and men's loss of status' (Gardiner, 2002: 4). 'Male anxiety' (Janssen, 2007: 215) in the latter stage of the 20th century 'notoriously bewailed male victimization' (Gardiner, 2002: 4) and called for a revival of 'boy-ology', particularly in middle class America (Janssen, 2007: 215). These alternative discourses sought to challenge profeminist theories of gender subjectivity and inequality. A mythopoetic and spiritualist discourse is one such alternative dialogue that adopts a different approach to examining masculinities. Although definitions of spirituality differ greatly, some focusing on the role of religion in shaping male identities and others on the performative and ritual aspects of spirituality (Nayak and Kehily, 2008: 37), both mythopoetic and spiritualist theories on masculinity draw heavily on the work of Hungarian psychologist Carl Jung. Jung developed the Jungian psychological perspective that is centred on the idea that psycho-spiritual health can be achieved through the analysis of certain cultural and spiritual archetypes (Hall and Norby, 1993). Mythopoetic and spiritualist

'...MGTOW - Men Going Their Own Way ... They feel every time they would be in a relationship with a woman that they have been taken advantage of ... I think it relates well to schools... I can understand where they are coming from and I can see some of the disempowerment that they talk about and I can certainly see some of the disenfranchisement that occurs'

(Michael)

writers use Jung's theory of archetypal forms to generate the notion of an authentic masculinity. Some mythopoetic writers believe that modern manhood is in a state of crisis and 'try to generate solutions to this crisis' (Ashe, 2007: 69). Written in what Kimmel (1995: 89) describes as 'abstract terms' akin to a 'daily horoscope', mythopoetic writings offer 'leaping poetic imagery, that everyone can project so much of their own experience into it'. Emotion, defined by the psychologist Joseph Hillman (2001: 286) is 'symbol, energy, psyche and transformation' and 'the central theme of every analysis and of every transformation in every analysis' (p. 3), forms the basis from which the mythopoetic and spiritualist theories are placed upon. It is through emotions that 'the individual can encounter his wholeness and thereby have access to the grace and might of spirit' (Hillman, 2001: 239).

3.1.5.1 Do opposites subtract?

Gender identity and distinct social roles 'lie at the core of initiation rituals' (Chopra, 2007: 337). Human culture and social customs have 'emphasized the differences between men and women rather than their underlying unity' (Rohr and Martos, 2005: 15), resulting in men and women defined 'in terms of what the other is not' (Shoemaker, 1998: 1). Current conceptions of masculinities emphasis gender oppositional theory and a developmental oppositional theory. Man is defined 'in opposition to being a woman or a male homosexual' but also 'in opposition to being a boy' (Gardiner, 2002: 90). Exploring young men's gender identities and performances 'can be seen as a site of fissure with the past while simultaneously holding onto many issues of continuity' (Nayak and Kehily, 2008: 37). 'Boys are "about men." Manhood, in turn, is about boyhood' (Janssen, 2007: 215). There is much discussion around the use of rituals, transformative experiences and timeless truths evident in ancient religion, literature, and folk life to guide males on their journey. Many writers in the area of male initiation describe modern culture as working 'to keep men boys' (Bly, 1990: xx) and have led to 'problems of transformation of modern man' (Hillman, 2001: 286). Modern men worship 'at their boyhood shrines' (Campbell, 1973: 11), and are addicted to 'self-serving worldviews' (Rohr and Martos, 2005: 22). While men may '*look like the oppressors*', Rohr and Martos (p. 12) warns '*have no doubt they are really the oppressed*'. Rohr (1998) and Rohr and Martos (2005) view initiation as an inherently religious task, which our increasingly secular society, driven by market values, finds difficult to address. Indeed, Apple (2013: 5 - 6) references 'the religion of the market' and 'the religious status of neoliberalism' of modern western society. It is assumed that choice, competition, markets'

will ‘supposedly ...lead us to the promised land of efficient and effective schools’ (p. 6). Neo-liberalism, which was championed in the 1980s by Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom and Ronald Reagan in the United States of America, ‘is a mobile, calculated technology for governing subjects who are constituted as self-managing, autonomous and enterprising’ (Gill and Scharff, 2007: 5, as cited in Kaklamanidou, 2013: 6). American feminist and journalist, Susan Faludi (1991: 8) put forward the theory of the crisis of masculinity as a consequence of male powerlessness against economic forces and social institutions. Similarly, Rohr and Martos outline a society where ‘everyone pretends that men are in charge and women are helpless’ (2005: 26). Men’s power is largely economic, political and physical, something Rohr questions whether to be power at all (p. 26).

3.1.5.2 Iron John

When writers began to develop a mythopoetic and spiritualist discourse on masculinity in the 1970s, it did not become popular until the 1990s. This was largely due to Robert Bly’s ‘Iron John’ (1990). Bly describes an inner masculine wildness that needs to be respected and upheld in his book Iron John (1990). Similar to Rohr (2005), the central thesis of Bly’s book is that ‘men had been deprived of a proper initiation into masculinity’ (Clatterbaugh, 2007: 396). Bly’s primary audience to which the book is directed at is middle-aged men who are aware that ‘the images of adult manhood given by the popular culture are worn out’ (Bly, 1990: ix). This has resulted in men who ‘are not happy’, have ‘lack of energy’ and have ‘little vitality to offer’ (p. 3). Bly (1990) acknowledges the plurality of the term masculinities, noting that masculinity was not a ‘constant quality that remained stable over decades, or even within a single decade’ (1990: 1). Bly (1990: x) originally viewed feminism as a positive social movement stating ‘this book does not constitute a challenge to the women’s movement’. However, Bly is also critical of the impact of feminism on modern men. Bly (1990: 3) believes today’s strong women ‘who graduated from the sixties, so to speak’ have played a

‘... a woman will tell you how she is feeling ... a fella’s not going to tell you he is feeling lousy ... No man is going to tell you that. None. So where do you go then? Like, in my situation there are twenty teachers and one fella ... it’s a sad kind of situation.’

(Neil)

crucial role in ‘producing this life-preserving, but not life-giving man’. Bly (1990) claims that feminism suppresses the masculine spirit, which he understands as the essence of manhood. The deep masculine is described elusively as something innate that needs to be resurrected, a definition that ‘is difficult to grasp in Bly’s discourse’ (Ashe, 2007: 70). Bly describes a ‘soft male’ as one who stemmed from men in the Sixties who examined the women’s movement and ‘began to notice...their feminine side and pay attention to it’ (p. 2). Bly (1990: 4) appears to be contradictory when acknowledging the development of the feminine side of men as ‘an immensely valuable journey... more travel lies ahead’.

3.1.5.3 Men are not born; they are made

Similar to Rohr and Martos (2005), Bly (1990) believes the connection between younger and older men has been broken. Bly (1990: 19) states that the modern father works away from home, therefore reducing time spent with their sons. Bly (1999) and Rohr and Martos (2005) state that because boys are not being initiated into manhood by older men women have taken over the role. A father-absence, whether due to work commitments or absolute absenteeism, denies young boys a suitable role-model as ‘Little boys don’t naturally grow up to be responsible fathers and husbands’ (Murray, 1990: 10). Similarly, Rohr and Martos (2005: 31) state that ‘Men are not born; they are made’. Bly (1990: 19) further states that the rise in single parenthood has resulted in generations of men devoid of ‘male role models’. Rohr and Martos (2005: 73) allude to the effect that absent fathers can have on sons as a ‘woundedness in a man’s psyche’. These fathers are deemed absent because of death, abandonment or a work load ‘that keeps him aloof’ (Rohr and Martos, 2005: 73). Furthermore, Rohr and Martos (2005: 74) describe the wounded sons as ‘insecure men’ who had never seen themselves ‘as sons of men who admired them’. A primal theory is put forward by both Bly (1990) and Rohr and Martos (2005). Bly (1990: 19) describes hunting parties where ‘older men spent much time with younger men and brought

‘What it means to be a man varies enormously from one culture to another, and these definitions have a great deal to do with the amount of time and energy fathers spend with their children ...the more time men spend with their children, the less gender inequality is present in that culture.’

(Kimmel, 2013: 68)

knowledge of male spirit and soul to them'. Rohr and Martos (2005: 74) described 'that primal enthusiasm' that is passed on to sons who grow up 'in immediate contact with older and secure men'. This insecurity described by Rohr and Martos (p. 74) results in men seeking assurance and affirmation from other men. 'Not having found their inner strength... they are constantly trying to prove who they are' (p. 74).

3.1.5.4 Feminism reacts

Bly's ideas are 'almost universally rejected' by feminists and 'their male allies as patriarchal or at least patriarchy friendly' (Kimmel, 1995: 44). Critics of Bly's book (1990) called it 'appallingly bad: over-generalised, under-researched, incoherent (at times self-contradictory)' (Connell, 2005: 81). Contradictions in Bly's theory are further illustrated by suggestions that deep masculinity is not biologically based 'geneticists have discovered recently that the genetic difference between men and women amounts to just over 3%. That isn't much'. However, Bly later states that the difference between men and women 'exists in every cell of the body' (Bly, 1990: 234). Connell further states that Bly 'ignores the cultural origins of the tale', 'scrambles its interpretation with notions of 'Zeus energy' and 'even wilder borrowings from oral cultures' (Connell, 2005: 13). Kimmel (1995: 320) described it as 'developmentally atavistic'. However the Kimmel/Bly controversy is based on a shared principle, one of historical mutability of ethical orientation, and of a psychological and utilitarian understanding, rather than a transcendental embedding, of ethics. For Kimmel ritual would only cash "patriarchal dividend," for Bly it would reaffirm the "journey" trope so appealing to a nation 'characterized... by inter-generational schisms and betrayals' (Janssen, 2007: 222) all the while full of hope for "healthy," "productive" maturity and of ambition to "grow." (p. 222). However, feminists 'inner journeys and outer scholarship' in their quest for a voice that is heard have made men aware that 'there must be an authentic

'... men are in power as a group and the psychological fact that they do not feel powerful as individuals ... This may explain ... those workshops and retreats designed to help men to claim their "inner" power'

(Kimmel, 2001: 38)

masculine somewhere' (Rohr and Martos, 2005: 8). This understanding of masculinities encompasses a masculine that is defined as something 'other' to patriarchy.

Yet, men's liberation, Rohr and Martos (2005: 8) argue, is all the more difficult as 'men do not recognise the system' in which they are part of. Rohr and Martos (2005: 7 – 8) believe that our culture has 'encouraged or even forced' women to 'work on their inner lives more than men'. Brown and Gilligan (1992: 13) allude to this theory in which they describe women as possessing 'an extensive psychological knowledge of relationships and feelings', developed through the lack of 'any way to speak' of experiences and problems 'in the public arena' (Brown and Gilligan, 1992: 13). Furthermore, Hochschild (2012: 165) puts forward a similar thesis, stating that 'men in general have not been trained to make their emotions a resource'. Rohr (1998) believes the crisis in masculinity can be traced to 'the spiritual immaturity of the typical male' (Rohr, 1998: 1). Rohr argues that men are 'on the loose' without any social or spiritual mandate (p. 1). Men in western cultures seek to define their identity through 'external performance...and ego-affirming tasks' (Rohr, 1998: 1) until they are offered a real inner world. Many women have learned the value of connection and support of other women through this quest to find their female voice. Brown and Gilligan (1992: 2) discovered that while women were aware of the inner game they play to have outward connectedness, 'In another sense, they seemed not to know'. In the absence of real accomplishments, men oppress others as a mechanism of securing a false sense of superiority. Men 'especially oppress racial minorities, homosexuals, the poor and women' (Rohr and Martos, 2005: 28). As a result the 'ego creates itself by comparison and competition' (p. 28). Conversely, critics considered mythopoetic discourse as covert regression, in that 'what is to be retrieved is not 'deep manhood,' but 'deep boyhood,' a playfully innocent and romanticized view of masculinity without adult responsibility of work and family' (Kimmel and Kaufman, 1993: 3, as cited in Janssen, 2007: 222).

3.1.5.5 The realities of our experiences

It is curious why spiritualism and mythopoetic discourse has once again become relevant in what has been termed 'the longest war' (Kimmel, 1995: 44). Perhaps it is because the concept of emotion, as explored in Inter-text 3 - Emotions, has 'become central to the issues of our time' (Hillman, 2001: 3). Emotion is the 'central theme of every analysis and of every transformation in every analysis' (p. 3). Emotions are invisible forces, which form the 'root' of 'psychic strength' and 'are 'the stuff of life's inner content and the basis of its richness'

(Hartmann, 1949: 436-7, as cited in Hillman, 2001: 43). Emotion can be defined as ‘the place of the spirit’ (Hillman, 2001: 231) or ‘symbol, energy, psyche and transformation’ (p. 286). Language has borrowed from images for the source of emotion such as water (a flood of emotions) and heat (fire in the belly). It is through emotions that ‘the individual can encounter his wholeness and thereby have access to the grace and might of spirit’ (Hillman, 2001: 239). Alternatively, the American psychologist Anne Wilson Schaeff’s (1987) writings likens modern society to a system of addiction. The addictive system, as described by Schaeff (1987), offers the illusion of power and freedom. Men are part of a controlling game they are forced to play. This supports Rohr’s theory that men are really the oppressed but do not know it. Modern culture ‘presents men with the illusion of making decisions’ (Rohr, 2005: 27) resulting in many passive and angry men.

Schaeff (1987) believes that the majority of men and some women are addicted to ways of thinking, feeling and acting, which has been accelerated by a neoliberal lifestyle. Schaeff’s (1987) writings about the social systems of Europe and North America and their addictions have what have been defined as ‘characteristics of both sexes’ (Schaeff, 1987: 129). However, ‘female behaviour was so strictly taboo’ that men have been blocked from recognising and developing the feminine side to their whole self (Rohr and Martos, 2005: 16). Schaeff (1987: 112) believes that our education prepares us to think in this dualistic fashion, ‘either this or that, either right or wrong... either good or evil’. Society has taught us ‘to regard the opposite sex with suspicion’ and our culture ‘has bred in us a spirit of competition for different forms of power’ (Rohr and Martos, 2005: 16). The process of dualistic thinking ‘feeds our illusion of control’, whereby if something is deemed right, then it is assumed the opposite is wrong (Schaeff, 1987: 112). The binary frame runs deep in society, existing in language with masculine and feminine words. Rohr and Martos (2005) believe that the distinction between men and women should be used only as ‘a pedagogical tool’ (Rohr and Martos, 2005: 8) as the ‘whole’ person integrates both the masculine and feminine dimensions of the human spirit (p. 17). The concept of the male-female dualism separates us from the reality of our experiences, denying that there are many degrees and stages in between the classic polarities. If we insist on being all male or all female, we ‘deny ourselves a variety of relationships and forms of intimacy’ (Schaeff, 1987: 129). Rohr and Martos (2005: 8) support this theory suggesting that ‘the myth of western civilisation’ is a man who is characterised exclusively by a masculine self, an identity that is unsettled and insecure because it is incomplete. Western civilisation encourages men to use their heads as

the 'control tower' in order to 'build, explain, use, fix, manipulate....It is the only way he can give himself a sense of security and significance' (p. 8). However, without inner-authority, men predictably 'over-rely upon outer authority' (Rohr and Martos, 2005: 12). It is, in fact, what Rohr and Martos (2005) describes as pseudo-masculinity.

3.1.6 Gender and bodies

In de Beauvoir's words (Parshley, 1972: 65) the body is 'the instrument of our grasp upon the world'. Similarly, Bordo (1993: 142) claims that our bodies, 'no less than anything else that is human, are constituted by culture'. Gender, described as 'the perceived differences between ideas about women and men' (Rose, 2010: 2), is 'a shifting and contextual phenomenon' that is a point of convergence 'among culturally and historically specific sets of relations' (Butler, 1990: 14). Many debates have centred on 'the status of construction' (Butler, 1990: xvi; 11) and the 'conceptual distinction between *sex* and *gender*' (Peoples, 2001: 10). Most recently, the term 'construction' has been used to highlight differences between men and women as owing 'less to their biological differences than to the manner in which each society organizes their lives' (Siann, 1994: 6). While the terms sex and gender have been considered synonyms of one another and are frequently used interchangeably, a split in distinction between sex and gender is introduced in feminist theory (Butler, 1990: 8). The term 'sex' is determined by biological inheritance' (Peoples, 2001: 10) and gender is 'the social meanings that are layered onto those differences' (Ryle, 2012: 6; Siann, 1994: 3). Butler (1990) calls into question the sex-gender binary of traditional feminism. Butler (1990: 10 – 11) problematizes the social constructivist model of gender that understands it as 'a cultural inscription on the naturally sexed body' (Barad, 2007: 60). Sex itself 'is constructed, therefore, it is culture that dictated how we understand sex' (Ryle, 2012: 9). Butler (1990: 10) ponders whether gender, the cultural interpretation of sex, could be constructed differently, or whether the term construction suggests that 'certain laws generate gender differences along universal axes of sexual difference?' Assuming that bodies are mute substances, that is to say 'passive recipients of an inexorable cultural law' (Butler, 1990: 11), limits the possibilities for agency (p. 10) and instates 'the sex - gender distinction...as this very distinction' (Barad, 2007: 60).

3.1.7 Conclusion of chapter

This chapter set out to guide the reader through different perspectives of masculinities. It intended to develop conceptual understanding about gender through the voices of the

participants in this study. While this is not a complete evaluation of the sociology of gender, it is useful to locate gender in its historical and cultural context. This indicates the historically and culturally specific and fluid. 'Gender', originally borrowed from grammar to mean 'to produce' or to refer to 'distinctions of sex (and absence of sex) in the objects denoted' (19th century *Oxford English Dictionary*, as cited in Connell, 2009: 9), the term has become common in the English-language to describe 'the whole field', although it has 'never been universally accepted' (Connell, 2009: 9). Grammar can indicate how 'such distinctions permeate cultures' (p. 9). At the beginning of the 20th century, 'the accepted notion of gender roles was based 'on a doctrine of separate spheres' (Hunter College, 1983, as cited in Korabik, 1999: 3), which emphasized 'a dichotomy' (Connell, 2015: 10) and 'the paradoxes of 'difference'' (p. 11). Traditionally, Western philosophy applied universal characteristics to groups such as the category of gender, as outlined in inter-text 1. Indeed, modern Western thinking assumes that there is a 'common sense or agreed upon way of thinking' that should be adhered to with 'communication and consensus' (Colebrook, 2002: 11). One such example is the universalised gender category of 'women', which is often utilized to refer to solidarity of identity. The earliest attention to gender was directed at women's lives rather than men's lives because of the 'serious neglect' of women's lives and because of the 'the political and economic inequalities from which women suffered' (Cohen, 2001: ix). Modern feminism and the development of women's studies 'have brought a deep questioning of women's social position', all the while continuing to provide 'critical analyses of men and masculinities' (Hearn and Morgan, 1990: ix). Indeed, Butler's (1990: 2) critique of language and the politics of representation illustrates 'the political problem that feminism encounters' assuming that the term '*women* denotes common identity' (p. 4). While, the terms 'female' and 'woman' as 'troubled', 'unfixed' and no longer 'a stable notion' (p. xxxi), women, in the plural, is a 'troublesome term, a site of contest, a cause for anxiety' (p. 4). Thus, Butler's (1990: 4) enquiry takes as its focus 'gender and the relational analysis it suggests'.

This chapter examined the construction of masculinities in numerous representations and discourses from common sense understandings of masculinities to male initiation and many common held beliefs about gender roles. Physiological factors coupled with social and cultural factors shape our experiences of women and men. The quest for the biological origins of the differences between women and men are not new (Kimmel, 2013: 22). Ever since the 'Garden of Eden, issues of sex and gender have affected the life of every human being on our planet' (Korabik, 1999: 3). Prior to the 19th – century, most explanations of

gender difference ‘had been the province of theologians’ (Kimmel, 2013: 22). ‘Did the medieval church not teach that women were daughters of Eve and sources of evil?’ (Mazo Karren, 2003: 2). By the late 19th – century, evolutionary biology, under the influence of Charles Darwin (1859), an English naturalist and geologist, discovered that ‘Species are always changing, always adapting’ (Kimmel, 2013: 23). In 1871, Darwin put forward the theory that ‘man has ultimately become superior to woman’ and ‘attains to a higher eminence, in whatever he takes up, than woman can attain.’ (as cited in Ericksen Baca, 2012; Kimmel, 2013: 23). The 1970s saw the revival of evolutionary debates, and the development of sociobiology and evolutionary psychology (Kimmel, 2013: 25 & 27). Connell and Pearse (2015: 11) state that ‘there are no fixed ‘biological base’ for the social process of gender.’ Scholars believe that gender construction has ‘as much to do with men as with women’ (Evans, 2003: 8) and thus differences ‘are socially constructed’ (Rose, 2010: 2). Indeed, Hearn and Morgan (1990: 9) warn of the danger of ‘importing taken-for granted understandings of masculinity’ such as male competitiveness, ambition and selfishness ‘...into our analyses or re-analysis of existing texts’. This caution is relevant to the stories the participants of this research study recount in Chapter 8 and Chapter 9. This chapter intended to assist in gaining new insights into masculinities and their dynamic in Irish primary schools.

Inter-text 2 - Voice

Cressida: Stop my mouth.....

I know not what I speak.

(Shakespeare, *The History of Troilus and Cressida*, as cited in Butler, 2005: 50)

The aim of this inter-text is to explore voice in relation to bodies, inner life and truth. Due to the significance of listening to feminist research and to this study, this study is especially attentive to discourse, language and voice. One central idea within the social sciences is ‘that narratives are fundamental to identity to the ways that people make sense of their worlds’ (DeVault and Gross, 2007: 185). However, what do we mean by voice, where does it come from and how does it represent the truth of our inner worlds? This inter-text explores a range of answers to these questions, with specific reference to psychological discourse. Voice will be explored in this inter-text in relation to mind, memory and the relationship between both. As documented in Chapter 7, the voice-centred relational method of data analysis employed in this study supports the view that connection is central to gaining entry to ‘another person’s psychic life’ (p. 28). Recently, identity development and meaning making have ‘... been recognized as both intra-psychic and sociocultural phenomena’ (Goldberger, 1996: 339). In order to ‘fully understand’ how our ‘common sense ways of looking at the world are permeated with meanings’ (Lather, 1991: 59), the inner psychic world is considered a worthy choice of topic for this inter-text. This inter-text seeks to create a context to explore take-for-granted cultural beliefs that inform common-sense understandings of masculinities, which is particularly relevant to a study of masculinities in Irish primary schools.

Bringing the inside out: mind, memory and meaning

When we are asked to remember, ‘to give an account’ (Butler, 2005: 11), we reconstruct our actions as either the cause or the effect of particular times and events.

‘Voice, because it is embodied, connects rather than separates psyche and body; because voice is in language, it also joins psyche and culture’

(Brown and Gilligan, 1992: 20)

The stories we tell cause us to assume responsibility for our actions. The narrative emerges as ‘the prerequisite condition for any account of moral agency’ (Butler, 2005: 12). As a result, morality and its many internal principles such as conscience, consciousness and soul produce a reflexivity that projects the narrator as a ‘subject of conscience ... a subject who reflects upon herself in some way’ (Butler, 2005: 15). How we come to know our inner self is through our voice. Described by Brown and Gilligan (1992: 23) as ‘a channel of psychic expression’, voice and the power it holds has been a primary focus of the academic world (Hekman, 2010: 1). The voice has frequently been privileged because of its perceived ability to account for the reality of the world. It has been assumed that voice ‘can speak the truth of consciousness and experience’ and has been considered ‘almost a mirror of the soul, the essence of the self’ (Mazzei and Jackson, 2009: 1). However, voice is ‘one of the major issues confronting the poststructural paradigm’ (Mazzei and Jackson, 2009: 3). This is due to the assumption that voice can represent a universal, single truth.

‘Before the interiority of a subject, or the inner space of consciousness and the unconscious, there is an utterance which creates an assemblage, an act of becoming, an unconscious and collective production’

(Shelley, 1987: 38)

Culture and silence maintain a privileged position through the use of morality, not by establishing right and wrong, but 'by enforcing women's silence in the name of goodness' (Gilligan, 2011: 17). In a patriarchal society power and authority have elevated 'some men over others...and all men over women' (Gilligan, 2011: 19). Thus women became the obvious research category as women's voices had overtly been 'masked or distorted by masculinist psychology' (Goldberger et al., 1996: 7; Gilligan, 2011: 16). However debate has recently been redirected to human differences and human diversity and in doing so the validity of researching women's voices alone has come in to question.

Reader: Why is it unusual for men rather than women to become primary teachers?

Author: Gender alone cannot provide an adequate lens for understanding the reasons why men and women make certain

decisions. Additional dimensions must be considered when understanding why men and women make certain decisions. First, men and women experience the world in different ways. These gendered experiences can go deep into a person's emotional life and

Male consciousness-raising groups

In the mid-1970s there was a 'small but much-discussed male liberation movement in the United States' as well as in other countries (Connell, 1995: 24). It was seen as a response to the women's liberation movement, a 'simple parallel' that suggested that 'men are equally oppressed' (Connell, 1987: 235). Sex-role interpretations, as described in Chapter 3, facilitated this project. As sex-role was viewed as oppressive for women, so too was a man's sex role. As a response, male consciousness-raising groups sought to 'repair the psychic damage' caused by this theory (Connell, 1987: 235). However, this movement was not seen in a positive light by many feminists such as Gardiner (2002: 2) who considered it an attempt 'to restore male dominance over women and reverse feminist advances'. Much of male consciousness-raising groups based their works on Jung. Jung's interpretation assumes an underlying male predisposition built up by the behaviour of males within cultures across time. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

consciousness. In other words, we must ‘carefully consider’ the interaction and interdependence of ‘history, situation, class, and culture’ as factors that influence people’s decisions (Goldberger, 1996: 339). Furthermore, the diversity of human experience calls for a ‘psycho-social’ approach to address this question. This approach focuses on the tensions between the social and psychic processes which are seen to inform men’s experience of masculinities (Collier, 2007: 85). The fourth reading of the voice-centred relation method of data analysis, as described in Chapter 7, is especially valuable to attune to ‘the ways in which institutionalized restraints and cultural norms and values become moral voices’ (Brown and Gilligan, 1992: 29). The fourth reading places the participants’ accounts and experiences within broader social, political, cultural and structural contexts.

Reader: If voice does not present truth, then what can we believe?

Author: The privileging of voice in traditional qualitative research assumes that voice reflects meaning that can be recorded and categorised as data. However, we now know that this is not true. Feminist theorists, such as Barad (2007), offer a ‘wholly new way to address questions of truth and knowledge’ (Hekman, 2014: 150). What is called for is a new approach to listening to voice, one that questions method, analysis and interpretation and the false division among the three. Just as Lather (1991: xvii)

called for ‘some “housecleaning” at the site of intellectual work’ and challenges our serious-minded quest of ‘getting smart about the conditions of our lives’, Barad (2007) refutes the characterisation of language as representing reality (Hekman, 2014: 151). Lather (2009: 18) considers research that is ‘of most use’ is that ‘which addresses how knowledge remains possible’. Lather (2010: 91) suggests ‘practice-oriented research’ that encourages ‘new possibilities can be of much use ... in bringing about substantial change’. In this study, a voice-centred relational method of data analysis moves ‘beyond a revisionary interpretation of voices’ toward a relationship that ‘creates the possibility for real rather than fraudulent relationships with those with whom we engage in our work’ (Brown and Gilligan, 1992: 39-40).

Morality ... the voice that speaks of how one should or would like to act in relationships’

(Brown and Gilligan, 1992:

21

Reader: How can a study of male teachers help to change people's opinions?

Author: The connection between memory and agency views the teachers in this study as agents, not just in their role as teacher, but also in their attempt to make sense of their place in a school setting. Through the questions that feminism poses, Lather (1991: 71) claims, and the 'absences it locates', feminism contends the 'centrality of gender in the shaping of our consciousness...' Lather (1991: 72) described this form of research design as an 'educative process' whereby the process is more important than the product.

Chapter 4 – Literature Review

This chapter presents a review of literature relating to masculinities and the education system. This literature review adheres to the format of a traditional literature review as one that ‘shares with the reader the results of other studies that are closely related’ (Creswell, 2009: 25). It connects the study with ‘larger, ongoing’ dialogues in the literature and fills in ‘gaps’ in knowledge-building (p. 25). However, the research topic headings and discussion in this chapter take its cue from the concerns raised by the participants in this study. The main aim of this literature review is to provide an overview – from a particular feminist perspective – of issues relating to the daily lives of Irish male primary teachers: from those who participated in this study. It seeks to look outward from the boundaries of current discourse to consider perspectives which reflect the realities for male teachers today. Considering Van Maanen’s (2011: 119) description of a culture as something that cannot be known ‘once and for all’ due to its ‘elusive, will-o’-the-wisp targets’ and Lynch and Lodge’s (2002: 2) claim of the ‘naïve character of ...objectivity’, the different materials to hand in this research study have been edited, evaluated and contemplated to form this literature review. The different materials assembled include relevant literature, interpretative skills I believed to have developed using a voice-centred relational method of data analysis as explored in detail in Chapter 2 – Research Design, snippets of conversation from the participants as provided in Chapter 8 – Data Collection, which explores the major themes emerging from this study and Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns, which focuses on the lives of just four participants. A strong emphasis on men’s role in equality issues is presented in this chapter.

4.1 Connecting policy with gender

As policy-makers focus on the guns-and-knives school violence (Marshall, 1997: 1), it seems very difficult to connect such concerns to a focus on gender in schools. Indeed, as feminist Gaby Weiner (1994: 1) asks, ‘How can yet another publication on gender help this?’ Weiner’s (1994) question provokes many other questions. What about others at the margin in schools? What effect could a total eradication of male teachers have on pupils in primary schools? Is the

‘I don’t think there would be any jobs now where it would be questioned if a women wants to do it ... unless it’s a male, I think it’s different ...’

(Patrick)

downward trend of male teachers connected to the incremental lowering of teachers' salaries? How could an increased male teacher workforce benefit all stakeholders in teaching, particularly pupils, parents and teachers? Can educational research continue to model itself on neo-positivist 'narrow' gold standards? (Lather, 2001) These are feminist and critical policy questions, often neglected (Marshall, 1997: 1). Additionally, Marshall (1997: 1) questions how we can cooperate with an education system that supports the persistent underrepresentation of women and minorities in administrative and policy positions in education? Prompted by Marshall's question (1997: 1) regarding the underrepresentation of women and minorities, a similar question could query the possibilities of an education system that considers male teachers to be a central aspect of equality discussions.

4.1.1 Crisis

Crisis is a word much loved by journalists due to its ability to stir moral panic among citizens. Within academia there have been many crises or 'moments' as referred to by Denzin and Lincoln (1994; 2005). The most recent crisis in academia is the 'triple crisis' as described by Willis (2007: 154) as the crisis of 'representation, legitimation, and praxis'. Within education the term crisis is usually considered in the context of boys' education. Why, as Skelton (2001: ix) notes, is educating boys 'currently seen – both globally and locally – to be in crisis'? Interestingly, Apple (2013: 1) considers 'crisis talk' to be 'over-used in books that seek to deal with issues of crucial public importance'. However, he notes that 'this is a time when such talk seems almost understated' where 'the cuts in school funding, the utter disrespect shown in policy and the media toward teachers, ... the list could be extended as far as the eye can see ...the crisis is palpable' (Apple, 2013: 1). David alludes to Apple's sentiments stating, 'It is becoming a lot harder in schools especially with like the class sizes increasing and all the cuts. I think we are making teaching a lot harder job than it was previously'.

Behind the turmoil in education, it appears that we are living through 'a crisis in legitimation and accumulation' (Apple, 2012: 5). While, Ireland slowly takes its hand out of the economic mouth of depression, it appears we still contend with what Apple (2012) terms a political and cultural/ideological crisis left in its wake (p. 2). This crisis cannot fully be explained in economic terms but 'by a social whole' (p. 2). Similarly, Apple's (2012) sentiments can be read in relation to Barad's (2007: 237) belief that it is not the case that 'economic practices are material, while the presumably separate set of social matters (such as

gender and community identity) are merely ideological'. Indeed, Apple (2012: 2) notes that as a response to the economic crisis people struggle over issues of gender, race and class that shape and reshape the social terrain. 'The struggles and the terrain on which they are carried out are recast' (Apple, 2012: 2). Equally, Barad (2007) notes that 'Effects follow their causes end to end' (p. 233), new possibilities open up and 'are reconfigured and reconfiguring' (p. 234). Interestingly, Barad (2007: 233) questions, how much of our understanding of the nature of change is concerned with the notion of continuity? Questions of space, time, and matter are 'intimately connected, indeed entangled, with questions of justice' (p. 236). However, Apple (2012: 5) believes, when the 'productive and reproductive apparatus of a society (including the school) are riven with tensions' it leaves insufficient time for thinking about 'the relationship between educational practices and discourse and the reproduction of inequality'.

Rather than find a solution to these questions, Lather (2001: 5) calls for a reconsideration of 'the relationship of qualitative research to education policy'. Lather (2001: 7) notes that many believe educational research is 'in a sorry state' controlled by qualitative and case study approaches culminating in clinical findings that do little to initiate change. In addressing the stagnation into which utilisation studies have fallen (p. 7) Lather calls for a better understanding of the research / policy nexus focusing on how "rigor" is the most direct route to better schools (p. 7). '...a scientific idea of scientific research appears to be waning' (p. 8).

*I started teaching in 1980
... not alone has the world
changed but the school has
changed simply beyond all
recognition ... but the
changes have been so small
and so gradual that I think
people don't actually realize
how great they have
become.'*

(Eoin)

4.1.2 Locating the school on a new cultural horizon

One striking feature about schools in Ireland has been the role of philanthropy and the idealism of 'patrons' to serve a local community. The churches, in particular the Catholic Church, have played a central role in the formation and development of Irish education (Tuohy, 2013). While Catholicism is a marker of identity, particularly in Ireland, the separation of religion from the 'secular' life of a country is not always clear cut (Tuohy,

2013). There are often unexamined assumptions or practices in the organization of a society that are based on a religious approach that was embedded in a historical context (Tuohy, 2013: 135). Indeed, religion and education in Ireland have traditionally been intertwined. The vast majority of Irish schools were subject to the Roman Catholic ethos. The ‘significant involvement’ of religious personnel in the teaching profession may have helped to ‘foster a favourable public perception of the career’ in earlier times (Coolahan, 2003: 8). The Church’s ‘dominant influence in the sphere of education’ (Redlich, 1978: 86) has had a powerful influence in its traditional definition of the sex roles, ‘...men and women are strongly educated and conditioned to conform to a very rigid role behaviour’ (Redlich, 1987: 86). While 94% of Irish National Schools are Roman Catholic both Primary and Secondary schools had a strong tradition of single-sex schooling ‘the immortality of the mixing of the sexes’ (Akenson, 1975, as cited in Deegan et al, 2000; Drudy and Lynch 1993).

Most recently, we are witnessing equality enacted with more frequency and intent than ever before. Academic debates and dramatic performances have initiated a series of debates surrounding the concept of equality in modern day Ireland. A small minority of debates have focused on economic inequality. The housing crisis that still exists in Ireland one hundred years on is, for some, an obvious sign that economic equality has yet to be achieved. Indeed, Lynch and O’Neill (1999: 59 - 63) have documented the failure of feminist visions of education to include a working-class perspective, ‘The absence of a poverty analysis may itself be related to the exclusion of working-class voices from the discourse of education’. Equality traditionally focuses on ‘distributing opportunities between women and men in a fair way’ (Lynch, 1999: 135). Yet, what impact is the absence of male voices in equality, particularly in education, having on the education system? It appears that equality in education has been a one-way system that has benefitted female pupils and teachers. This is what Weiner (1994: 4) terms ‘regressive modernism’ whereby girls and women ‘continue to be perceived as somehow ‘not good enough’.

4.2 Has feminism already won the war? –the relevance of feminism

Traditionally, equality has been the touch-stone of education (Lynch, 1999: 13). However, given the contrasting paradigms in which research on education and equality has worked within, ‘it is inevitable that there is great diversity in the way in which equality has been interpreted and defined’ (Lynch, 1999: 4). Furthermore, education is ‘an extremely complex and multi-layered social practice’, which can be understood at ‘multiple levels in terms of its

processes, structures and meanings' (Lynch, 1999: 12). Similarly, equality, like education and feminism, is a concept with as many definitions as it has varied use. Equality in education customarily focused on access to education and on boys' underachievement. Subsequently, girls' academic achievements were advanced as 'growing progressive understandings' pervaded society (Apple, 2013: 67). Furthermore, Irish research has operated out of 'a liberal distributive model of social justice' (Lynch, 1999: 135). Gender equality has been assessed in terms of the proportionality test; the more women in senior positions, the more equal the society is becoming for women (Kelleghan and Fontes, 1985; Lynch, 1997, as cited in Lynch, 1999: 135). Indeed, women are at the forefront of campaigns for equality and it seems the feminine subject has benefitted most from the equality campaign. What is evident from the equality campaign is the remarkable emphasis on women 'vis-à-vis men' (Lynch, 1999: 134) in promoting gender equality in Irish schools. It appears that if reducing social equality continues to be a major goal of those concerned with the future of education (Lynch and Lodge, 2002: 37), feminist practitioners, 'as organic intellectuals' (Weiner, 1994: 2), will need to continue to develop 'critical explanatory frameworks' to understand 'the persistence and pervasiveness of social and cultural inequalities' (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2012: 23).

As pointed out by Fine-Davis (2015) a period of rapid social change occurred in Ireland in 1970 (As cited by Barnes, 2015: xxii). Similarly, Eoin states, '...in society, if you take from the '70s on really, I really view that era as so, so important because people in the '70s who were say students were kind of protesting for equal rights and so on'. Noteworthy, prior to teacher education colleges becoming co-educational at the beginning of the 1970s, there were separate male and female lists of entry. It was possible for male applicants to gain places with 'lower Leaving Certificate achievements than their female counterparts' (Drudy, 2009: 159; Redmond and Harford, 2010: 651). The change in common entry in 1970 resulted in the same Leaving Certificate point

'...we are the back bone of society, we are the ones that gel, that glue, that keep society together, you know?... we may have more of a responsibility to afford everybody the opportunity to have the caringness of men attached to their time, their experiences with the service'

(Michael)

entry for both men and women. Yet, between 1970 and 1990, the numbers of male primary teachers dropped from 32% in 1970 to 22% in 1990 of the total primary teaching force (INTO, 1994: 7). Furthermore, the Report of the Commission on the Status of Women (1973) acknowledged, among a range of legislative and policy actions required to advance the position of Irish women, the role played by the Irish education system in reinforcing definite and separate roles for the sexes in both boys and girls during their formative years. National social change coincided with the United Nations Decade for Women, 1975- 1985, and International Women's Year, 1975. Together they raised the 'consciousness among UN member nations, which were required to give five-yearly reports on the progress of women's rights in their own country' (Barnes, 2015: xxii). Eoin takes us back to the efforts of the students of the 1970s.

Eoin: *'...at the time they were volunteers but now I think most of them now are probably paid lobbyists, they are not kind of like in these bed-sits in Rathmines writing posters, they are actually [p] you know, they are career lobbyists now and it's their job to [p] to lobby in a particular way'.*

Eoin's words seem to suggest a loss of organic motivation for change among the students of 1970. Additionally, the implementation of the Report of the Commission on the Status of Women (1973) appears to also reflect this belief. The 1973 Report was reviewed in the Report of the Second Commission on the Status of Women (1993) and contained 210 recommendations for further action (National Report of Ireland, 2004:2). However despite the more extensive treatment of education and gender equity in the 1993 Report, it contains no thematic additions to the 1972 Report apart from the acknowledgement of reservations about the benefits of coeducation for girls and the related topic of the hidden curriculum.' (O Sullivan, 1999: 317). It appears that this movement for women's equality remains 'stymied, stalled.' (Kimmel, 2001). Kimmel (2001) states that 'the reason that the movement for women's equality remains only a partial victory has to do with men.' The attitudes and behaviours of men must be taken into consideration if we are to advance equality for everyone. These factors have, together, made necessary the reconceptualization of what counts as feminist practice in education (Weiner, 1994: 5).

4.3 Partial victories versus full equality

While the overall picture over the past 30 years is one of dramatic change, both culturally and socially, there is still ‘a lingering residue of traditional attitudes concerning gender roles’ (Barnes, 2015: xxii). One of the most difficult aspects of thinking about gender is that ‘much of what we think and do comes from largely unconscious assumptions about ourselves, our gender, and what is appropriate for men and women, boys and girls’. (Maher and Ward, 2002: 109). As the gender equality lens has traditionally focused on women (Mac an Ghail, 1996: 1; Kimmel, 2013: 5), it comes as no surprise that measurable and progressive advancement has predominantly benefitted Irish women. The next phase in the equality movement in education must consider male perspectives as central to advancing the equality movement beyond a stagnant position. In other words, gender equality is ‘not a loss for men, but an enormously positive thing that will enable us to live the kinds of lives we say we want to live’ (Kimmel, 2002).

4.3.1 Equality – from whose perspective?

The notion of equality is central to Irish public life and one of the basic foundations of our national life. Equality is enshrined in the 1922 Irish Free State Constitution, which guaranteed *inter-alia*, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens under Article 40.1 (Hogan and Whyte, 2003: 1389). However the definition of citizenship heavily depended on gender-role expectations. The word ‘woman’ meant domesticity, nurturing and dependency. After the establishment of Irish political independence in 1922, the Republic of Ireland displayed characteristics concurrent with an emerging nationalist society. Hence citizenship for women was clearly defined in their roles as wife and mother. Professor Chubb’s research into the political sociology of Ireland, in *The Government and Politics of Ireland* (1971), assesses ‘the significance of factors such as British influence, attitudes towards nationalism ... and the dominant position of the Roman Catholic Church’ in the emerging Free State (As cited in Robinson, 1978: 59). While the analysis in this book ‘is a completely male oriented one’ (Robinson, 1978: 60), Professor Chubb emphasised three predominant characteristics of Ireland’s political culture;

‘... if you are going to have equality of representation in Dáil Éireann, you have equality in all ... other jobs where it’s important to have gender representation’

(Eoin)

authoritarianism, loyalty and anti-intellectualism. Authoritarianism was clearly seen in the ‘ban’ in economic settings, religious settings and cultural settings. One such ban was in the form of the public service marriage ban or ‘marriage bar’. Implemented in the 1930s and continuing until 1958, women were forced to resign from the civil service when they got married so they could concentrate on domestic duties such as home-making and child-rearing. As a result, it denied ‘educated, trained women the opportunity to be promoted into decision – making areas where they could influence economic and social policy’ (Barnes, 2015: xxii). Similarly, Professor Lee (1978: 41) observed an irony that ‘at a moment when educational opportunities increased for Irish women, the education system began to be more systematically used to indoctrinate them into adopting as self-images the prevailing male image of woman’.

It was not until Ireland joined the European Union in 1973 that Irish progress on gender equality in education was reflected in legislation, ‘The greatest impetus to removing the discrimination against women came through legislation – much of it brought about by our membership of the EEC’ (Barnes, 2015: xxii). A cursory survey of Irish education reveals that Ireland has been keen to reflect equality in the economy and in education (Gleeson, 2009: 200 – 203). European legislation introduced *The Amsterdam Treaty* (1999), which for the first time gave power to outlaw all discrimination based on gender. Irish legislation introduced *The Employment Equality Act* (1998) and *The Equal Status Act* (1999), which outlawed sexual harassment and discrimination respectively. However, as one of the most progressive members of the European Union, the notion of equality has proved elusive, particularly in education.

4.3.2 Equality and policy – what it means for male teachers

Educational policy making is ‘the prerogative of government’ but also includes ‘the middle and upper classes’, the Churches, employers’ representative groups, the teacher unions, educational management bodies and parent bodies (Drudy and Lynch, 1993: 113-33, as cited in Drudy, 2009: 3). Policy and institutional activity within the field of education is clearly thought about, managed and researched. However neo-liberal policies insist on measured and quantifiable results in the form of ‘indirect forms of control via the use of markets and ‘through various other new techniques of government’ (Olssen, 2003: 199). Globalised education systems are becoming increasingly socially, culturally and politically diverse. Policies, practices and ideologies of education have come to define themselves in terms of

profit, which in turn help define and determine ways in which social justice is perceived and acted out. The neo-liberal agenda has allowed governments to view society as consumers, which in turn has affected educational research and policy. Political processes are currently impacting upon how we make sense of gender in schools. Masculinities and globalisation are syncretically formed. This was most recently evident in the ‘Third Way’ politics of Tony Blair’s government, which revolutionised the way evidence was used in politics. ‘Third Way’ politics, some might call ‘the inclusive neoliberalism’ of Tony Blair (Lather, 2010: 11) introduced policy-based evidence, which believed in ‘the state as an agent of progress’ and a mechanism for ensuring ‘opportunity for all’ (Doherty, 2007: 279). This ‘Neoliberalism with a face’ reintroduced ‘a strong role for the state in adding a social concern’ in the name of global security (Lather, 2010: 11). The self was now seen as something that could be reshaped (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2013: 125).

Nationally, reports such as Gender Imbalance Into Primary Teaching on behalf of the INTO (2004) highlighted the serious decline in male participation rates in primary teaching, ‘The continuing steep decline in the number of male entrants to primary teaching has been of concern to the INTO for some time ... we should not accept the growing gender imbalance as being inevitable’ (Carr, 2004: 3). Furthermore, the Report of the Primary Education Committee (2006) stated that ‘Since the 1970s there has been a steady decline in the number of males entering the teaching profession in Ireland, particularly at primary level’ (Quinlan, 2006: 1). It further stated that in 2003 the Minister for Education & Science established the Primary Education Committee to examine the issues surrounding this decline and to recommend strategies and initiatives to increase the number of males entering the profession. Conversely, Ireland participated in OECD study, ‘Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers’. Within a decade ‘all aspects of Irish education had been analysed, re-appraised and given new policy formulation’ (Coolahan, 2003: 2). However, a plan to increase the number of male primary school teachers is not currently a policy concern

As Eoin states, *‘I suppose women in politics are kind of at the wrong side of history and say males in teaching are at the wrong side of history as well. I think, I suppose, the big difference is ... 15% of females are in Dáil Éireann, 15% of males are in Primary teaching. The world of differences is that you have got a kind of an establishment now who want to kind of tackle inequality or the gender inequality in politics but you don’t have an*

establishment who want to do something about say the male ... gender inequality in teaching.'

4.4 A homogenous body of teachers

In an educational academy which is 'fundamentally consensual and conservative in its approach to politics and problems in education' (Lynch, 1999: 3), the relatively homogeneous body of teachers in Ireland, teachers 'from rural and farming backgrounds', presents a challenge to an ever evolving heterogeneous pupil population (Drudy, 2009: 166). As remarked by David 'I mean if I was from Dublin I know for a fact that I wouldn't be a teacher ... I mean with the results you have to get to do teaching like you could do a lot of other things that would lead to better pay'. However, differences in Ireland, particularly social class differences, have traditionally been 'denied' or 'hidden', 'the language of social class is not part of the vocabulary of either politics or education' (Lynch and Lodge, 2002: 55). Although research has been carried out on the social class profile of students and schools and its strong impact on pupils' learning experiences in classrooms (Lynch and Lodge, 2002), the social class profile of teachers appears not to be a concern to many within education administration in Ireland. However, research suggests that teachers, in fact, play an important role in student learning outcomes (Lynch and Lodge, 2002). The teacher's pedagogical approach and expectations have strong correlations with successful learning environments. This appears to be a major indicator that research into the ever diverse student population and the homogenous body of teachers in Ireland merits serious consideration.

Eoin raises a similar concern in relation to the somewhat homogenous background of teachers engaged with pupils from DEIS backgrounds the possible effects this may have on these pupils.

Eoin: Nowadays ... you have got the people who work in DEIS schools who probably aren't coming from a DEIS background, you know? And there's probably very few of them males I think. That point is very true. A lot of kids in DEIS schools, probably fellas you can say with a fair degree of certainty, about 95% certainly, they are going to be in trouble with the law

'...it's a real country thing that people become teachers because people from the city don't even consider it.'

(David)

but the people that are dealing with them in schools are females and the Social Workers are females and the first time they are going to encounter males officially will be in prisons, which is a point too late at that stage.

Similarly, Apple (2012; 2013) makes reference to Eoin's remarks when he considers the 'latent social role' of the school to be 'deviance amplification' (2012: 38) and considers 'the school to prison pipeline' (2013: 1). Apple (2012: 38) suggests that the school '*naturally generates* certain kinds of deviance', which is closely linked to the 'complex' space schools occupy in the 'economic and cultural reproduction of class relations'. 'Schools allocate people and legitimate knowledge. They legitimate people and allocate knowledge' (Apple, 2012: 39). Furthermore, Michael alludes to both Apple (2012; 2013) and Eoin's remarks stating that many pupils will only come into contact with a male in an official capacity as 'A person not in a particularly caring profession or caring element so it isn't a nice caring male teacher...'

Eoin: '*...again teaching in a DEIS Band 1 school ... the whole emphasis is on keeping them in school ... but I kind of wonder is it like an all-female staff going to force that or are they actually going to say listen we are not taking this anymore? do think males would really say well this is it. We are not going on with this. I just think the future of teaching really is bound up with kind of with proper kind of representation male/female as for the future of the career of teaching*'.

Similarly, Neil states, '*...I feel myself that men would actually, funnily enough, talk to you about this more than women. For fear of being identified somehow ... they feel sure no one else will do it. It's not a thing that women will put their hand up and say how truthfully how bad a thing is ... it's a job, you know where you are very isolated a lot of the time. So, you know that suits as well, that suits the powers that be ... they don't have time to actually think about how damn awful the setup is...*'

4.5 Feminisation of Teaching

Open season on the feminisation of schooling continues. The media, politicians, the public nearly everyone it seems, has an opinion on the disadvantages of a predominantly female schooling environment. Feminisation in teaching is connected to three interrelated phenomena, namely; the increasing number of female teachers relative to male teachers; the cultural context or environment of school which is considered to be more "girl friendly" and

a backlash politics fuelled by global capitalism (Martino, 2008: 190). The male teacher as a minority group in schools is not a new phenomenon. The decline in the proportion of males in teaching and the feminisation of the profession has become 'the focus of frequent expressions of alarm by journalists and teacher union representatives alike' (Drudy et al., 2005: 2). Concerns about feminization and 'it's potential to contaminate men's and boys' masculinity' and 'to raise questions about their sexuality' (Martino, 2008: 190) have intensified at certain historical junctures since the mid-1800s. Ms. Carmel Foley, of the Employment Equality Agency, addressed the INTO Annual Congress (1993) audience about the feminisation of teaching. Ms Foley stated that the high numbers of female teachers relative to males is an 'imbalance which must be redressed in the interests of children... Any profession which has the input of the skills, experience and concerns of both sexes is obviously enriched by the combination". The so-called emasculating influences of female teachers and the feminised school has been cited as a reason why teaching is a difficult choice for young males (Drudy et al., 2005).

The concept of feminisation has a long history in British public institutional spaces (Ozga, 1988). A particular logic outlined by Bourdieu (2001: 91) appears to govern access to various professions and the various positions held within each, in what he terms permanence in and through change, 'the progress made by women must not conceal the corresponding progress made by men' (Bourdieu, 2001: 91). Thus a gender gap is maintained in that 'positions which become feminized are either already devalued... their devaluation being intensified...by the desertion of the men which it helped to induce' (p. 91). Apple (2013: 4) stated that 'Teachers and all public workers are treated as unworthy of serious respect'. Bourdieu (2001) corroborates this view stating 'the rate of actual and potential feminization is ... the best index of the relative position and value of the various occupations' (Meynaud, 1988, as cited by Bourdieu, 2001: 91). The term feminisation continues to be utilised in a rather loosely defined way. In the 1980s the term was primarily used as a means of portraying the changing structure of the labour force as the participation rates of women in paid employment increased. Feminisation has also been used to highlight the disconnection of gendered styles from sexed bodies. The caring qualities needed for teaching are deemed to be natural, intuitive, and inherently feminine. This is the opposite of masculinity. Men who do not align themselves with dominant hegemonic masculinities are believed to have adopted traditionally ascribed feminine values such as emotionality, intimacy and sentimentality. This is because 'the idea of masculinity is closely linked to physical labor' (p. 3). Douglas

(1977) first developed the notion of sentimentalisation to explain feminisation in America, which resulted in controversy over the implications for the nation. Men who do not correspond to the perceptions of dominant occupational masculinities, others ‘feminise’ them and they are described as women. The link between sexuality and power has revealed itself with great clarity in the societies of classical civilisations, whereby men asserted ‘superiority by ‘feminizing’ the other’ (Bourdieu, 2001: 21).

Labelling a workplace as masculine or feminine becomes a question of how the dominant values and attitudes are perceived and enacted. It is ‘interactional style’ rather than ‘a reflection of the sex’ (Holmes, 2006: 10) of the workers that constitutes such labelling.

Therefore, acquiring different styles within the educational workplace ‘may be understood in gender-specific ways’ and ‘assigned gender attributes’ (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2013: 84). The school is recognised as an institution in which masculinity and patriarchal relations of dominance are practiced (Connell, 1996; Lynch and Lodge, 2002). The concept of feminisation in teaching refers to the processes by which teaching has become ‘a mostly female occupation’ (Drudy, 2009: 155). A number of influences have contributed to this pattern such as ‘the economic policy of education administration, beliefs about the nature of women and patriarchal control’ (p. 155). Additionally, ‘collective expectations’ and the ‘subjective expectations they impose’ undermine ‘acts

that are not expected of women’ (Bourdieu, 2002: 61) and therefore of men. By ‘virtue of the universal law’ expectations and aspirations are ‘sexually characterized through... trends’, which ‘ensure that their particular way of being recognised’ is universal (p. 62).

The media is seen as of central significance in leading a backlash against feminism’ (p. 230). This can be seen in all public spheres including the traditionally male dominated arena of politics. The recent headline ‘Taoiseach faces revolt over gender quotas’ in the Sunday Independent, 14/12/2014, outlined how members were ‘apoplectic with rage’ within Fine Gael due to the reported ‘upskilling’ of ‘mostly female candidates in preparation for an

‘Since schools are routinely blamed for social problems of every description, from unemployment to godlessness, it is not surprising that they should also be blamed for problems about boys.’

(Connell, 2000: 150)

election' (2014: 26). It was reported that 'secret training seminars' for female election candidates were being held 'over fears it will lose out on €2m in State funding' if the party does not meet the gender quota. It was reported that 'this women's quota thing will come back to haunt them.' A similar feminist backlash can be seen in the media regarding education and gender. The decline in male teachers in primary and secondary schools has been cited as a reason for 'failing boys' and early drop-outs. An increased level of male teachers is offered as a solution to educational and societal problems. Cushman (2008) and Haase (2008) suggest that male and female teachers as well as principals want to see an increase in the number of males teaching in primary schools to compensate for a perceived lack of male presence in homes, to act as role models and to counteract the harmful effects of feminisation that apparently makes boys 'soft'. However, empirical evidence reveal that gender has little effect on the academic achievement of pupils (Martin and Marsh 2005; Carrington et al. 2007; Carrington, Tymms, and Merrell 2008; Drudy 2008). Many popular myths about gender difference have been questioned by research in psychological gender differences for numerous decades (Woolley, 1914; Hollingworth, 1918; Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974). These myths include the belief that 'girls are better at rote learning and simple tasks' (Hyde, 2005: 851). The gender similarities hypothesis holds that males and females are 'similar on most, but not all, psychological variables' (p. 851). Students continually reiterate that it is not so much the gender of the teacher but rather the quality of the pedagogy and the teacher-student relationship that matters most in their learning' (Martino and Kehler 2006, 125). There are serious costs of overinflated claims of gender differences (Barnett & Rivers, 2004; White & Kowalski, 1994). These costs occur in many areas, including work, parenting, and relationships.

4.6 Ireland and gender patterns in teaching

Ireland is an interesting site in which to study patterns of gender and entry to teaching for a number of reasons. Education in Ireland has always been shaped by the strong cultural values placed on it within Irish society. Historically schools have long been embedded in Irish communities, with high emphasis placed on teaching as a 'vocation' and on teachers hearing 'a call' (Coolahan, 2013). All teacher education institutions held denominational status and, except for the Church of Ireland College, were single sex until the 1960s. Today, the main teacher education institutions remain denominational. A monopoly exists in school patronage and the State depends on private patrons, in particular the Catholic Church, for

school provision of denominational education. Trend analysis from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s indicate high interest in becoming a primary school teacher, with many more applicants than there were places available (Coolahan, 2003; Drudy, 2006, 2009). However, this interest was primarily among women (Drudy, 2009: 154). Irish education has experienced many policy changes during the generations with research findings informing policy on gender and schooling (Mac an Ghaill et al., 2002: 9). However, Coolahan (2013) notes, many of the policy ideas have been allowed to drift. Such examples include initiatives by the DES, which sought to address gender issues in education. Indeed, ‘over a dozen gender projects’ were developed for both primary and post-primary schools during the eighties and nineties (Mac an Ghaill et al., 2002: 10). However, the main emphasis of these projects was on sex-stereotyping and ‘the main audience was girls’ (Mac an Ghaill et al., 2002: 10).

4.6.1 The paradox of gender in teaching

A strange paradox hangs over the Irish schooling system. Although, gender is a key dimension of entrance to primary school teaching throughout Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand, the paradox underlining gender in teaching is the failure to consider the lack of diversity within the teaching population to meet the changing societal landscape. The belief that Ireland is ‘fortunate in maintaining a high calibre teaching force that still attracts high quality candidates’ (Coolahan, 2013: 16) has resulted in the failure to address issues of gender imbalance within the workforce. Furthermore, the Irish governments response to the OECD study *Attracting Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers* (2002-04) notes that ‘there have not been major policy concerns regarding the recruitment, selecting and assigning of teachers’ (O’ Connor, 2003: 54) and ‘the issues of teacher recruitment, selection and assignment procedures have been largely uncontentious’ (p. 59). Proud to reflect its involvement in European affairs, Ireland has been an enthusiastic participant in all major reviews of teachers and teacher education. However, such reviews as the OECD *Review of Irish Education* (1991) and the OECD study *Attracting Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers* (2002-04), focused primarily on the continuing professional development of teachers within the teaching continuum. Issues of gender imbalance within the teaching workforce were not addressed. Furthermore, within Ireland, Lynch (1999: 134) notes, there has been ‘relatively little academic writing about the feminist challenges to education orthodoxy’.

4.7 Gender and the media

Education is ‘a dangerous thing’ (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2013: 38). Considering news reports of stabbings, wasted talent, homophobia and obesity epidemics coupled with reports of poor quality teaching and inadequate school resources daily school life is portrayed in a disturbing light (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2013: 38; Skelton, 2001: ix). The mass media, Apple (2012: 2) notes, brings us ‘no escape’ from the important issue of violence in schools. It is encouraging that this important issue is getting widespread attention. However, much of the information about violence in schools fails to address many of the core social forces at play. Violence is examined as isolated acts rather than as a form of policing and enforcing cultural norms (Meyer, 2007: 16). As Haywood and Mac an Ghail (2013: 38) note many reports on modern schooling contain many gendered descriptions or ‘contemporary gendered epithets’ such as failing boys and disruptive pupils that frame schooling as ‘risky, threatening and harmful’. These descriptors, Skelton explains (2001: ix), are ‘different approaches’ or discourses to ‘troubling questions about boys in schools’. It is clear that these descriptors act to create and support a social hierarchy that privileges mainstream identities over marginalised ones.

‘Schools are seen in a very contradictory way. They are seen to be key elements of the causes of our problems’ (Apple, 2013: 4). Ball (1987: 247) highlights that what happens in schools cannot be totally understood without accounting for the environment in which schools operate. The daily political interplay within schools ‘is simply not independent of external values, beliefs, and attempts to impose them on schools’ (Corbett, 1991: 73). It is suggested that the declining number of male teachers entering the profession emasculates the school environment, proposing it as damaging to children, especially boys. Calls for an increase in the number of male teachers is of international interest with research and media reporting proportional and absolute decline in the number of male teachers, particularly primary-school teachers, in Australia, England, Ireland, New Zealand, Finland, Canada and the USA (Martino and Kehler 2006; Cushman 2008; Drudy 2008; Skelton 2009). Media reports have juxtaposed the decreasing number of male teachers to the high levels of female teachers ‘as if this were a recent phenomenon’ (Martino & Kehler, 2006: 113). Talk of a masculinity crisis ‘frequently implicates feminism’ (Gardiner, 2002: 6, Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2013: 1) due to the common assumption that ‘the rise of one’ is determined ‘by the fall of the other’ (p. 1). This is not the first time that concerns about the education of boys have been expressed on a global scale. In the United States towards the end of the 1960s, schools were

accused of destroying 'boy culture' due to the 'prevalence of female teachers...and the feminine, frilly content of elementary education' (Connell, 1996: 206). In Australia, a parliamentary inquiry into boys' education was launched in 1994 'after media controversy about boys' academic failure relative to girls' (p. 206). While it is recognised that the role of the media is vital so that policy and its construction 'is not left to administrators, technicians, policy elites' (Lather, 2010: 6), the 'utter disrespect shown in policy and the media toward teachers...is painfully evident' (Apple, 2013: 1). Media reports of poor quality teaching, inadequate resources and under-developed policies 'contribute to the framing of schooling as risky, threatening and harmful.' (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2013: 38).

Public understanding of research and its implications is founded primarily on news coverage (Valenti, 1999 as cited in Chapman et al., 2014: 261). This was evident with the ill-fated Exploring Masculinities Programme (1999), which was developed and piloted in a number of all male secondary schools (1997 – 1999). The programme aimed, among other objectives, to investigate different perceptions and experiences of masculinity. The programme was developed with funding from the European Social Fund. The timing of the Programme was significant. It was conceived in a period of intense interest in boys and schooling. However, the programme failed due to misconceptions surrounding the concept of masculinities. While dilemmas of gender and teaching are not new, during times of social and educational crisis these dilemmas take on 'a saliency' that they seldom have (Eisner, 1971: 162). Media representations' of boys as failing and underachieving influence the public's understanding of events 'by drawing upon (and contributing to) common cultural values' (Willis – Chun, 2011: 49, as cited in Haywood and Mac and Ghaill, 2013: 39). Such reports provide a narrow and specific forum on how masculinities and education become known.

Segal (2000: 160) notes that the 'crisis of masculinity in the western world' is viewed by many people as 'a, if not *the*, burning issue of our time'. However, the perception of a crisis in masculinity 'depends on the stability of a concept of masculinity' (Robinson, 2007: 91), a concept that has become increasingly difficult to stabilise. Indeed, Freud noted that the concepts 'masculine' and 'feminine' are 'among the most confused that occur in science' (Connell, 2008: 3). The mass media and the general public are captivated by findings of gender differences (Hyde, 2005: 581). Across the popular media 'the sex wars is a constant reference point in making sense of the current events' (Mac an Ghaill and Haywood, 2007: 233). News reports of homophobia, obesity epidemics, shootings and stabbings contribute to

the list of descriptive tools used to understand masculinities in schools today. Public perceptions are ‘crystallized in and reinforced by the media’ (Farber and Gunilla, 1994: 83). Such language emphasises the fact that gender within the teaching profession is confronted by new uncertainties in education necessitating new ways of thinking. The language used by various commentators ‘makes a difference’ (Apple, 2013: 7) and the manner in which a situation is described ‘especially by powerful forces who wish to remain in power’ is ‘crucial’ (Lakov, 2004; Lakov, 2008, as cited in Apple, 2013: 7). The use of the concept of ‘moral panic’ by educational researchers enables a critical interrogation of how representations and popular discourses ‘construct social phenomena, in particular gendered common sense and the continuation of the ideology of patriarchy’ (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2013: 46). Gender differences in educational participation and achievement are a major question of public policy concern internationally. According to Delamont (1999), boys’ underachievement ‘is built on a myth’ (as cited in Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2013: 46). The media has ignored the fact that male achievement has increased because it seems ‘girls’ achievement appears to have increased more rapidly’ (p. 46). The media has positioned such statistics within ‘a moral panic regarding failing educational standards for boys relative to girls’ (Martino & Kehler, 2006: 113).

4.8 Gender and the language of equality

The term equality within education has as yet to be defined, ‘the understanding of equality or inequality remains implicit in the text’ (Lynch and Lodge, 2002: 6). Indeed ‘most of us, including teachers, carry around complex and contradictory views’ about schooling ‘and most particularly about gender issues’ (Maher and Ward, 1999: 109). Therefore ambiguity exists around the concept of equality in teaching. This cultural domain which receives scant attention is due largely to ambiguity surrounding language ‘policy intentions may contain ambiguities, contradictions and omissions that provide particular opportunities for parties to the implementation process’ (Bowe and Ball, 1989: 2, as cited in Ball and Bowe, 1991: 23). Language employed in educational policies ‘carries with it a whole raft of assumptions’ (Apple, 2014: 7). Indeed, the presumed neutrality of language, ‘gives way to the recognition that the categories of knowledge are human constructions’ (Gilligan, 1993: 6). This recognition allows us to notice ‘how accustomed we have become to seeing life through men’s eyes’ (p. 6). Archer (1996:1, as cited in O Sullivan, 1999: 310) believes culture displays ‘the weakest analytical development of any key concept in sociology’ and notes the

absence of a 'ready fund of analytical terms for designating the components of the cultural realm corresponding to those which delineate parts of the structural domain'. Language is of major significance with respect to the structures of power. While an abundance of terms exist within the gender equality paradigm such as equality, equity, sameness of treatment and fairness of experience, language has not been used satisfactorily to theorise and promote the concept. Terms such as equity, equality and disadvantage are regarded by some as outdated. It is believed that the language of equality has evolved. It 'originated in another time' when social scientists and theorists 'failed to appreciate the complexity of the most-modern world' (Lynch and Lodge, 2002: 5). Ferguson (1988: 4) advises that a language, a vocabulary needs to be established 'which allows us to reach behind the surface of events to see their deeper structure and significance'. It is an attempt 'to see old things...with new eyes' (p. 4). The need to identify and schematise the construct of policy paradigm 'arose from attempting to analyse the cultural dimension in educational policy making in such substantive areas as the link between education and the economy, religion and equality' (O Sullivan, 1999: 310). Thus, the opportunity for reformation and re-interpretation 'does not end with the legislative moment' (Bowe and Ball, 1989: 2, as cited in Ball and Bowe, 1991: 23).

4.9 Conclusion of chapter

The principal themes of the literature review derive from the opinions and beliefs expressed by the participants and from my feminist thinking. As the topic of men and gender equality 'is seen as somewhat ambiguous within the gender equality discourse' (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2013: 5) and research *among* male teachers is quite limited (Acker, 1995; Lynch, 1999; Skelton, 2001), it was important that male teachers' current opinions and beliefs would guide this literature review. The key emphasis of this literature review is on the twin focus of 'equality' and 'difference' (Weiner, 1994: 3). Developments at national and regional level have begun to link men to critical studies of masculinities (Connell, 2000: 55). As stated by Kimmel's (2001) address to the European Parliament for International Women's Day, 'Men must come to see that gender equality is in their interests - as men.' Citing a Fact Sheet entitled '*Men and Equality*' from the Swedish Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications (1999), Kimmel (2001) states that very few men have been involved in equality issues. However, 'if equality is to become a reality in all areas of society, a genuine desire for change and active participation in the part of both women and men are called for.' (Swedish Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications, 1999, as cited by Kimmel,

2001). A thorough literature review was an important prerequisite to this endeavour as it signalled ‘the existence of unfulfilled theoretical assumptions’, which are according to Kuhn (1962) ‘the very origins of intellectual innovation’ (As cited in McCracken, 1989: 31). This literature review seeks to inquire beyond current popular educational discourse to engage with the topics that were of central concern to the participants in this study. In other words, the topics discussed in this chapter continuously entered conversations with participants throughout the three phases of interviews. The concerns of the participants, whose teaching experience range from five years to those reflecting on their professional and private lives mid-career and further on, as was the case when one participant came to retirement, take place within larger debates.

Chapter 5 - Methodology

This chapter draws on feminist poststructural inquiry to address the research title, male teachers' understandings of masculinities and their impact on their daily lives. The elements of research as defined by the Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Inquiry (2014) will guide this chapter. This chapter will be framed around three structures;

- Philosophy: qualitative paradigm, feminist ontology and epistemology as theories of knowledge and theories of knowledge production
- Praxis: 'thinking with theory'. This section will refer to the various ways that feminist research proceeds, including methodology as an epistemological – ontological act. Shifts in performative alternatives
- Ethics of representation: the politics of representation and interpretation (Leavy, 2014: 5)

The first section of this chapter, namely the philosophical structure, will primarily engage with the works of Creswell (2009), Denzin and Lincoln (1998, 2011), Guba (1990), Hesse-Biber (2015) and Stake (2010). The works of these methodologists are united in their engagement with qualitative research methods within an era of postmodernity. The Taos Institute (2015), a non-profit community of scholars who advocate social constructivist research methods, describe Norman K. Denzin as 'one of the world's foremost authorities on qualitative research and cultural criticism'. Both Creswell (2009) and Denzin (1998, 2011) reference Egön Guba, whose work, according to the American Educational Research Association (2008), builds 'a bridge between the quantitative and qualitative paradigms' (Janesick, 2008). Drawing on Lather's (2014: 2) phrase that we are experiencing 'a moment in the "fieldwork in philosophy"', Creswell (2009), Denzin (1998, 2011) and Guba (1990) are joined by Sharlene Hesse-Biber (2015), Yvonna Lincoln (2011, 2013) and Robert Stake (2010). Hesse-Biber, feminist researcher, methodologist and co-author of the Oxford Handbook of Multimethod and Mixed-Methods Research Inquiry (2015), supports the creative methodological framework of this study. Furthermore, the writings of Yvonna Lincoln, methodologist and co-author with Norman K. Denzin of the SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research (2011) and the Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry (4th edition) (2013), and Robert Stake (2010), author of *Qualitative Research. Studying how things work*, provide guidance in nurturing the relationship between qualitative postmodern epistemology, feminist ontology and poststructuralist methodology.

The second section of this chapter, the praxis structure, will engage predominantly with the works of Karen Barad (2007), Judith Butler (1990), Susan E. Chase (2010), Susan Hekman (2010), Alecia Y. Jackson and Lisa A. Mazzei (2009), Patti Lather (1989; 2012; 2014) and Lisa A. Mazzei and Alecia Y. Jackson (2013). Hekman (2010: 3) considers the greatest challenge confronting postmodernism and feminism is ‘to do what the postmoderns claim but fail to do’, which is a return back to materiality. Materiality acknowledges matter as an active factor in further events. There are natural as well as social forces that contribute to all material forces. Barad (2007: 66) terms this ‘nature’s dynamism’ that examines the ‘practices through which ... boundaries are stabilized and destabilized’. This challenge places equal emphasis on the material and the discursive, in an ‘ontological gap’ that Barad (p. 47) considers as ‘taken-for-granted’. Similarly, Butler (1990: 7) calls for ‘a radical rethinking of the ontological constructions of identity’ and a ‘return to the notion of matter’. In support of a theory that addresses feminism’s dilemma, Butler (1990: 152) describes gender as a ‘cultural/corporeal action’ requiring a new vocabulary that resists ‘both the binary and substantializing grammatical restrictions on gender’. Furthermore, Lather (1992: 87) considers post-structuralist theorists such as Barad (2007), Butler (1999) and Hekman (2010), to be ‘part of a movement’ that is ‘reinscribing’ and ‘reshaping’ science ‘away from a “one best way”’. These feminist theorists are providing a base for a new theoretical position that moves ‘objects to assemblages’ and changes ‘proliferating and competing paradigms to meta-method across paradigms’ (Lather, 2014: 2). Poststructuralist approaches impel a ‘rethinking of the divide between theory and practice’ through ‘alternative understandings of power and subject formation’ (Barad, 2007: 59). They also urge a redefinition of ‘existing, but changing, social science paradigms’ (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013: 3; Goldberg et al., 1996). Feminist poststructuralist theorists were chosen to engage with this study because of their commitment to the ‘ontological turn’ in qualitative research, specifically the ‘material turn’ (Alaimo, Hekman and Hames-Garcia, 2008, as cited in Lather, 2014: 2). This material turn, or re-turn, privileges neither language nor reality (Hekman, 2010: 3), but explicitly seeks another form of understanding masculinities in primary schools.

The ethical dilemmas encountered during the process of interviewing, analysing, and interpreting each

‘...there is not one way, but many ways of knowing’

*(Hesse-Biber and Piatelli,
2007: 503)*

teacher's experience will engage with the works of Judith Butler (2005), Lyn Mikel Brown and Carol Gilligan (1992), Gesa K. Kirsch (1999) and Natasha Mauthner and Andrea Doucet (1998). Ethics, as Barad (2007: 177-178) notes, is 'not a geometrical calculation; "others" are never very far from "us"; "they" and "we" are co-constituted'. However, feminism demonstrates that 'hearing is believing' expectations 'do not hold uniformly across the epistemic terrain' (Code, 2008: 295). Credibility issues are built upon questions about who is speaking. Within a feminist perspective, research is grounded in the personal and must be accountable to readers (Letherby, 2003: 9). From a poststructural perspective, identity is understood as always in process, never finally accomplished. In order to capture the layered nature of voice, a voice-centred relational method of data analysis was used to interpret responses 'in the hope of finding in them something true or meaningful' (Brown and Gilligan, 1992: 12). Questions of truth and interpretation continuously occupied my thoughts and differing interpretations of stories to my own personal experience were encountered on numerous occasions. Decisions were made as to what extent my personal opinions should be reported and documented in the data analysis phase. The voice-centred relational method of data analysis, as described by Mauthner and Doucet (1998), troubled each stage of data analysis. Four readings of the data bridged the gap between process and product. Rather than put forward a belief that it is possible to 'tell it as it is', this method highlights 'the issue of reflexivity in terms of the researcher's social location and emotional responses to the respondent' (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998: 127). In doing so, it acknowledges the researcher's powerful position to listen, to name and to possibly distort participant words. As a response, the voice-centred relational method breaks down the usual boundaries and facilitates a more collaborative and relational method.

In its totality, the three structures of research (Leavy, 2014: 5), philosophy, praxis and ethics, framing this study are supported by feminist, poststructuralist, qualitative theorists and methodologists united in their 'invigorating and fruitful' illustration of the relationship between feminism and poststructuralism in educational research (St. Pierre and Pillow, 2000: 2). There are currently many academic journals and books related to issues of method, methodology and epistemology, or 'concerned with theory and practice in research' (Letherby, 2003: 2). Some are concerned with 'doing' research, others with 'knowing'. Research practice 'is worthy of considerable attention and is a substantive topic in itself' (Letherby, 2003: 3 – 4). This chapter attests feminism as 'theorized' (St. Pierre and Pillow, 2000: 9), which has, 'put to work' various ontologies 'to live and to describe living in a

postmodern world' and various epistemologies 'to make sense of that world' (St. Pierre and Pillow, 2000: 9). Indeed, noted feminist philosopher Harding's (1986) main counsel is 'to encourage multiple epistemologies and methodologies' (as cited in Lather, 1992: 93) as we explore the 'paradox' of 'needing a "successor regime"' and 'a keen awareness' of the limits of a 'new "one-best-way" approach' (Lather, 1992: 93). As noted by Jaggar (2008: x) the 'best feminist research comes as close as possible to meeting its socio-political, epistemic, and ethical commitments'. However, 'success is always a matter of degree' (Jaggar, 2008: x). This chapter will begin by locating qualitative research in a historical and political context, which unfolds the epistemological, ontological and methodological choice of this study.

5.1 The question of human knowledge

The exclusion of women from social science research led feminism on a journey of what it means to be human. Traditional western ideals imagined the ideal human as male, '...the ideal knower was a man of reason; the ideal citizen was a male property-owning warrior' (Jaggar, 2008: 4). The idea of 'man' was universal. Indeed, masculinity in the Middle Ages gave western Europe 'many of its conventions of heroism and chivalry' (Mazo Karras, 2003: 2). While women were not completely written out of history, Cleopatra and Joan of Arc are two examples; these women tended to complement men's diplomatic and military narratives. Additionally, they were not representative of all women. As claimed by Harding (2008: 9) and illustrated in Inter-text 1, women have been 'persistently described' as emotional and irrational from the time of Aristotle 'and everybody else all the way up'. To consider women as rational would contradict the 'male gaze' of the traditional conceptual framework of analysis. This phrase, associated with 'malestream', indicates male-biased conceptual, formal and theoretical traditions (Edwards and Ribbens, 1998: 1). In other words, art and knowledge were generated by male artists and scholars for male audiences (Jaggar, 2008: 4). As a result, women felt excluded from the dominant avenues of knowledge building (Acker, 1994: 56; Hesse-Biber, 2007: 3). '...women had been left out of the production of knowledge, and it was claimed that the result was a distortion of human experience' (Acker, 1994: 56). Feminist concerns about social reality that is fixed and unchanging coupled with positivisms' search for universal truths shed light on a need for fresh insights. 'In some ways, the origins of feminist research's epistemological and methodological focus draws on these insights and struggles' (Hesse-Biber, 2007: 30). Feminists speculated that their

opinions would not easily merge with traditional assumptions, ‘... no tweaking of the tradition will suffice; we have to move beyond the parameters of western thought ...’ (Hekman, 2014: 5). Feminist scholarship sought to rebuild the humanities from women’s perspectives moving it beyond an argument on the differences between men and women to an exploration of differences among women.

Feminism challenged the sharp divide between the subject (male) and the object (women, animals, nonhuman life); the researcher and the researched. It sought to make the invisible visible. It produced a sea change in feminist thought placing the multiplicity of women’s identities at the centre of feminism (Hekman, 2014: 114). This is a fundamental aspect of postmodern thought that is ‘particularly germane both to feminism as a whole and to the evolution of the feminine subject’ (Hekman, 2014: 115). In advancing the multiplicity of the subject, postmodernism sought to deconstruct the culture/ nature dichotomy. A new approach was needed that would not only deliver that postmodern promise but map out a way of achieving it. In developing this relationship between the discursive and the material whereby the material is reinstalled ‘as “equal” in the material ↔ discursive binary’ (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 110), feminist theorists have begun to interrogate the question of human knowledge. ‘It is concerned, not just with science, knowledge, or power, but with all of these at once, and most importantly, with the interaction among them’ (Hekman, 2010: 67-68). The implications of this approach for a study of male teachers means constructions and interactions are ‘not just about bodies, nor just about words, but about the mutual production of both...’ (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 111). More specifically, interactions among and between male teachers and their environment are understood as performative enactments emerging from a biological, cultural, historical, political and social context as discussed throughout this study and in inter-texts 1, inter-text 2 and Chapter 6, in particular. This interactive and relational field provides a context to further explorations that stretch the question of human knowledge. ‘Knowing is a distributed practice that include s the larger material arrangements’ (Barad, 2007: 379). The male teachers in this study

The ‘reliability of testimony’ is as much to do with ‘the credibility of the testifier(s) and their solidarity with or differences from their interlocutors’ than it is to do with the ‘simple strength of good evidence’

(Code, 2008: 295).

are constituted by western images of masculinity, the historical image of the rational man, the material location of the school within the public realm and the ‘complicated entanglements of these intra-actions’ (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 123).

5.1.1 From *dis*-ease to restlessness

Science historically informed the foundations of social science, which encapsulated the Age of Reason (Crotty, 2010: 18). Galileo’s famous phrase ‘Science for the people’ (Harding, 1986: 31-32) illustrated a science that was an ‘anti-authoritarian, democratic impulse’ (Lather, 1992: 88) as discussed through an examination of the body in Inter-text 1. Similarly, Deleuze (1994: xv) notes that philosophy was ‘able to provide itself with an organic representation of difference’. However, the nineteenth century question; ‘what is the history of science?’ introduced by Enlightenment thinking and ‘its material base, the Industrial Revolution’ (Lather, 1992: 88), was a rather ‘unsettling question’ for those who believed in the foundational status of science (Butler, 2005: 117). For science to admit a history was a ‘scandalous’ assertion, Butler (2005: 117) claims, because scientific knowledge is considered to hold a truth that is rational and ‘transhistorical’. Modern science was ‘rather quickly reduced to its method’, resulting in a crisis in the quest for scientific status (Lather, 1992: 88). The questioning of what science is and what role it plays, Lather (1992: 88) states, is within a larger ‘legitimation crisis in cultural authority’. Contemporary demands for clarity and meaning point science in the direction of a ‘value-free notion of science’ (Lather, 2009: 18); a science ‘after truth’ (Tominson, 1989, as cited in Lather, 2009: 18).

Medieval philosophers of scholasticism ‘distinguished qualia (the qualities of things) from quanta (the quantities) hundreds of years ago’ (Brinkmann et al, 2014: 18). In order to understand the assumptions of each, methodologists have contrasted qualitative and quantitative paradigms on three major dimensions (Creswell, 1994). Qualitative and quantitative research methods traditionally represented ‘different ends on a continuum’ (Newman and Benz, 1998, as cited in Creswell, 2009: 3), both working alongside each other to help refine theories and experiments

‘Because knowledge is a productive activity of human beings, it cannot be objective and value free because the basic categories of knowledge are shaped by human purposes and values’

(Rosser, 2007: 227)

(Stake, 2010: 11). The two major dimensions of distinction include epistemology and ontology, 'at those exalted levels is a distinction between objectivist/positivist research' (Crotty, 2010: 14). While, special reserve is set aside for methodology (Lather, 1992) as a key category of distinction between qualitative and quantitative paradigms, Guba and Lincoln (1994: 105) argue 'questions of method are secondary to questions of paradigm'. The evolution of mixed methods, a method residing 'in the middle' (Creswell, 2009: 3) of the quantitative – qualitative continuum, has been termed the 'third methodological movement' (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003: 5, as cited in Creswell, 2011: 1) and the 'third research paradigm' (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004: 15, as cited in in Creswell, 2011: 1). Although, Stake (2010: 19) describes the distinction between qualitative and quantitative research as 'a matter of emphasis more than discreet boundary' and Vogt (2007: 2) considers the 'dichotomy between the 'Quants' and 'Quals' is false', researchers argued against their compatibility. Rossman and Wilson (1985, as cited in Creswell, 2011: 25; Hesse-Biber, 2015: xxxv) termed those 'entirely sceptical of attempts to cross the divide' as '*purists*' (Hesse-Biber, 2015: xxxv). Rossman and Wilson's (1985) term can be read in relation to Geertz's (1993; 1973: 4) depiction of 'zealots', persisting 'in the old key-to-the-universe view'. Opposing Stake's (2010: 19) view that 'most of us are consistent in leaning toward the experiential or the metric' and Creswell's belief (2009: 3) that a research design '*tends* to be more qualitative than quantitative and visa-versa', purist researchers 'privilege one side of the divide' over the other with a 'strongly formulated' epistemological perspective that does not 'perceive the utility or logic of an untheorized study' (Hesse-Biber, 2015: xxxv). Indeed, Glaser and Strauss (1967: 15), founders of Grounded Theory, noted that 'the clash' between qualitative and quantitative data was 'historically linked with the change in relative emphasis from generation to verification theory'.

Guba (1990: 19) termed the '*dis-ease...in the positivist (and postpositivist) search*' as a '*Cartesian anxiety*'. Borod (1987: 4), American feminist and philosopher, outlines Cartesianism as a masculinist thought, which outlines the ideals of clarity, detachment, and objectivity, ultimately creating a perfectly 'mirrored' nature. However, the largely unquestioned requirements of scientific and philosophic investigation including the guidance of reason alone, display a 'dark underside to the bold Cartesian vision' (Bordo, 1987: 4). Descartes' greatest epistemological threat was 'subjectivity' and 'the blurring of boundaries between self and world' (Bordo, 1987: 98). This so-called 'Cartesian anxiety', Borod (1987: 98) claims, has resulted in 'epistemological insecurity and uncertainty'. Similarly, Coe

(2012: 5) claims this dread owes itself to a ‘fundamental commitment’ to the problematic notion of paradigm. Bordo (1987) and Coe’s (2012) description resonated with Geertz’ (2000: 163) depiction of an anxiety that called to arms those who viewed science ‘as the last bastion of epistemic privilege’. Richard Rorty (1979: 9), perhaps the most influential critic of Cartesian epistemology in his book *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, reminds us that the Cartesian vision is also ‘an attempt to escape from history, culture and human finitude’ (As cited in Borod, 1987: 4). As an alternative, Rorty (1979) proposes a philosophy that does not seek to correspond with reality but rather to continue ‘the conversation of mankind’ (Hekman, 2010: 27).

5.1.2 Intellectual hopscotch

This phrase is borrowed from Van Maanen (2011: 7) who describes the ‘intellectual hopscotch’ involved in theory and method debates as grounded in how ‘social reality is presented, not known’. For those seeking ‘the serious business and related responsibility involved in truth hunting’ (Barad, 2007: 43), paradigm was an unbreakable ‘systems of rules’ (Firestone, 1990: 106-107). Many constructivists, as cited by Barad (2007: 43) expressed ‘either outright disdain for, or at least suspicion toward, realism’. At one side of the ‘epistemic border crossing’ (Hesse-Biber, 2015: xxxvi) realism was dismissed by constructivists as ‘naïve, unreflexive, and politically invested’ (Barad, 2007: 43), while at the other side realists argued

For much of the twentieth century, Western philosophy of science was dominated by a philosophical view that science is the only trustworthy knowledge. Thomas Kuhn (1962) fundamentally challenged this view. (Jaggar, 2008: 231)

against ‘the ultimate in linguistic narcissism’ (Barad, 2007: 42). A ‘crisis of authority’ (Erickson, 2011: 43), a crisis also known as the ‘paradigm wars’, prevailed during the 1970s and 1980s (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998, 2003, 2010, as cited in Hesse-Biber, 2015: xxxv). During this time new findings and theories were put forward ‘so fervently’ that each paradigm came into question (Crotty, 2010: 35). ‘Normal science’ was ‘turned on its head’ (Crotty, 2010: 36) as both qualitative and quantitative methods sought to gain authority of ‘how we know- and who judges- what is real’ (Guba, 1990: 19; Spencer et al., 2014: 81). Philosophical positions sought to establish ‘the one true way’ (Coe, 2012: 5; Lather, 1992:

87) with a war of words calling for ‘allegiance’; ‘competition’; ‘fervent debate’; ‘opposing camps’ and ‘wars’ (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2005: 375 – 376). Similar to Butler’s (1990: ix) commentary that ‘the strong distinction between the two enterprises has broken down’, Lincoln (2008: 221) notes that qualitative research emerged from the heated debate gaining not only ‘a foothold’ but establishing a ‘stronghold’ in the social sciences (Lincoln, 2008: 221). Mindful of Guba’s (1990: 18) observation that inquirers tend to focus on what has become known as positivism since the time of Descartes (1596 – 1650), Denzin and Lincoln (1998: vii; 2008: vii; 2011: ix) describe the end of conflict as ‘nothing short of amazing’.

5.1.3 Methods correct guesses

Social science methodologies not only describe the worlds they observe but are involved in the ‘creation of the world’ (Law and Urry, 2004; Barad, 2007). Positioning the research project within feminism and post-structuralism places a particular focus on the methods that will answer the research question, as methodology focuses on ‘the prior question of *which* methods to use’ (Vogt, 2007: 5). All research methodologies ‘rest on some ontological and epistemological foundation’ (Strega, 2005: 201, as cited in Staller et al, 2008: 37). However, ‘disputes, disruptions, or debates often surface at the methods level’ (Staller et al, 2008: 37). As noted feminist philosopher Harding (1987: 2) explains, methods are techniques for gathering evidence.

Although, research methods help ‘illuminate something about social life’ (Hesse-Biber, 2008: 1), Harding (1987: 2) illustrates the ‘lack of clarity’ associated with research methods due to ‘intertwined’ discussions of method, methodology and epistemology. This is most evident in publishers, librarian, and researcher’s use of the term ‘grounded theory’ as a method (Bryant, 2014: 116) rather than, more correctly, as a methodology that puts research methods to work. While, Harding (1987: 3) notes the ‘important connections between epistemologies, methodologies, and research methods’, the ‘not at all clear’ (p. 2) distinction between the components has implications for feminist research. Similarly, Polkinghorne (1983: 249) states that ‘method does not give truth; it

‘Men’s outlooks and culturally defined characteristics were formally the unexamined norm of science, citizenship, and religion’

(Connell, Hearn and Kimmel, 2005: 1).

corrects guesses'. Accordingly, methods of inquiry are based on assumptions. Theoretical perspectives relate the underlying philosophical assumptions of the researcher that he or she believes to be true. Assumptions are basic principles believed to be true on the basis of logic without proof or verification (Polit and Beck, 2008, as cited in McIntosh-Scott, 2014: 26). Assumptions are reflected in methodology and the various contours of research (McIntosh-Scott, 2014: 26).

The socially, politically, economically, and technologically turbulent environments have troubled social research methods (Brinkmann et al, 2015: 37; Coleman and Ringrose, 2013: 2; Guba and Lincoln, 2008: 256; Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: vii; Staller et al, 2008: 32 – 33). Within a new and fluid context, new questions are being posed and 'some old ones with our new insights' are being re-examined (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2008: 1). Emergent research methods have sprung forth to 'shed light on other ways of knowing, relating to and creating the world' (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013: 2). Indeed, Stake (2010: 29) outlines the 'subjective' and 'personalistic' nature of qualitative inquiry as one of its flaws, which results in 'slow and tendentious' contributions toward 'an improved and disciplined science' (Stake, 2010: 29). Indeed, 'New questions emerge more frequently than new answers.' (p. 29). Assumptions are evident in what constitutes knowledge of that reality (i.e. ontology); assumptions are evident in the relationship between the researcher and the reality being researched (i.e. epistemology); assumptions are evident in what are deemed as appropriate ways of building knowledge of reality (i.e. methodology). An awareness of assumptions and their meaning can be identified through a theoretical perspective that is 'our view of the human world and the social life within the world, wherein such assumptions are grounded' (Crotty, 1998: 7).

5.1.4 Conclusion

Much ink has been spilled in what Geertz (2000: 160) calls 'culture wars' and Lather (2014: 2) terms 'science Wars', both depicting a battle to establish alternative 'options for inquiry' (Guba, 1990: 9). The result was qualitative inquiry's 'decade at the top of the reform food chain' (Lather, 2014: 2). In this period of change, 'extraordinary science' was 'ushered in' (Crotty, 2010: 36). While Kuhn's (1962) legacy may have ignited a war of words among many of his opponents, Denzin and Lincoln (2011: 2) acknowledge that 'debates over paradigm superiority' were brought to an end by Egon Guba's (1990) *The Paradigm Dialog*. Just as Kuhn (1962) famously cited members of disciplines are specialists who build a

scientific community based on shared assumptions, paradigm shift are led, Crotty (2010: 35) notes, by ‘a younger person not schooled so long or so deeply in the paradigm guiding current scientific inquiry’. Similarly, Coe’s (2012: 6) believes changing philosophical positions take place ‘as an older generation of scientists’ are ‘replaced by a new generation’ rather than the result of ‘individuals being persuaded’. Susanne Langer, in her book *Philosophy in a New Key* (1941), remarks that certain ideas ‘burst upon the intellectual landscape with a tremendous force’ and everybody ‘snaps up’ the ‘sudden vogue of such a *grande idée*’ (As cited in Geertz, 1973; 1993: 3). They appear to promise to ‘resolve all fundamental problems’ and ‘clarify all obscure issues’ because of their success at resolving ‘so many fundamental problems’ (Geertz, 1973; 1993: 3). Indeed, qualitative methods of inquiry were ‘hardly used’ until the historical take-off point of the 1970s (Brinkmann et al, 2015: 19 – 20). Butler (1990: x) acknowledges the increased interest in qualitative methods noting that ‘the face of theory has changed’, emerging from a union of ‘cultural horizons’. This union in the socio-historical quest for certainty drove the development of qualitative history forward (Brinkmann et al, 2015: 19 – 20), which is considered to be a postmodern moment, driving ‘a new sensibility that doubts all other paradigms’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998: 2). Qualitative research appears to have ‘come of age’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008: vii; Spencer et al., 2014: 81) moved through another ‘historical phase’ and has proudly taken its ‘place at the table’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; 2011: vii).

5.2 The problem with telling tales: current conflicts

More recently, qualitative research is once again challenged by a ‘turbulent research landscape’ (Hesse-Biber, 2015: xxxiii) and a ‘*methodologically contested present*’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011: ix). Against the backdrop of current complex social and global transformations, research is located in situations ‘we no longer understand’ (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: vii), or what Deleuze (1989: xi) describes as ‘situations which we no longer know how to react to’ and in spaces ‘we no longer know how to describe’ (as cited in Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: vii). Wider shifts in the social scientific landscape indicate that we ‘no longer just write culture. We perform culture’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011: x). We are moving far from the qualitative-quantitative split. The socially, politically, economically, and technologically turbulent environments insist on methodologies reflecting the cultural and social world as mobile (Büscher, Urry and Witchger, 2010), changing and open-ended (Lury and Wakeford, 2012, as cited in Coleman and Ringrose, 2013: 1) and messy (Law, 2004, as

cited in Coleman and Ringrose, 2013: 1). The relationship between philosophical positions and research practice is once again on the agenda. As a response to what Butler (1990: x) termed ‘cultural appropriations’ and Lather (2014: 2) termed ‘New times indeed’, Denzin and Lincoln (2011: x) state that ‘a new day for our generation’ has emerged within a time that is ripe ‘to move forward’, ‘to open up new spaces’ and ‘to explore new discourses’.

While ‘it probably is true’ that ‘certain views tend to go together’ (Coe, 2012: 5), Creswell (2009: 3) advises that each approach ‘should not be viewed as polar opposites or dichotomies’. The international research community has entered, according to Leavy (2011: 13), a new era ‘characterised by *transdisciplinary practices*’ and considered to be a ‘new paradigm’ (Italics in original). In light of the concurrent trends of a challenging research environment and an ever-evolving world, the theoretical orientations of feminism and poststructuralism, and, more specifically, the works of contemporary feminist poststructural theorists, Karen Barad (2007) and Judith Butler (1999), influence the methodological choice, data collection and analysis of this research. Both theorists embrace ‘possibilities for change’ (Barad, 2007: 46) and open ‘the field of possibilities without dictating which kinds of possibilities ought to be realized’ (Butler, 1990: viii).

5.2.1 Feminist perspectives of matter and meaning

Mindful of St. Pierre and Pillow’s (2000: 1) description of the present as ‘a restless “post” period’ that draws ‘continuing scepticism about regimes of truth’, and inspired by theorists engaged with the question of matter and meaning, such as Barad (2007), Haraway (1989; 1990) and Hekman (2010), this chapter places particular emphasis on ‘the methodological issues’ (Lather, 1992: 87) involved in carrying out feminist educational research in a ‘postpositivist era’ (Goldberg, 1996: 13). The central concern of this chapter is the relationship between the process and the product. In order to outline the purposes and practices of feminist research, this chapter will outline the project of feminist methodology and its relationship to feminist research. Just as Lather (1991: 1) states that ‘in our action is our knowing’, Letherby (2003: 3) states ‘*knowing* and *doing* are intimately related’ and it is ‘impossible’ to write about one without considering the other. Pillow and Mayo (2007: 157) note that definitions of feminist research ‘cannot be separated from feminist theory’s ontology and epistemology’. Although, Letherby (2003: 3) states that issues of epistemology, methodology and method ‘are not peripheral – they matter’, Hekman (2010:

17) believes ‘moving beyond’ the ‘obsession’ of epistemology to the detriment of ontology ‘is both difficult and necessary’.

A feminist perspective and a poststructuralist methodology critically deconstruct gendered social practice and support alternative understandings of power and subject formation. Thinking intra-actively in this study of masculinities in Irish primary schools helps develop ‘an approach that re-inserts the material into the process of analysis’ (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 135). Thinking with Barad (2007) and Butler (1999) facilitates ‘a reclaiming of the material absent in its modernist limitations’ (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 135). The lived experiences of each male teacher in this study moves beyond the question of discourses to the question of how materiality functions to produce lived experiences. ‘We are responsible for the world of which we are a part ... because reality is sedimented out of particular practices that we have a role in shaping and through which we are shaped’ (Barad, 2007: 390).

5.2.2 Conclusion

Favouring Jackson and Mazzei (2013: vii) view of theory as working ‘methodologically and philosophically’, the design of this research is consistent with the assumptions of a qualitative paradigm and employs the theoretical lens of feminism using a poststructural methodology. A qualitative paradigm is a ‘means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem’ (Creswell, 2009: 4). A feminist perspective or lens places ‘gender at the centre of one’s inquiry’ (McHugh, 2014: 137), a perspective Harding (1986: 193) believes must run counter to ‘the psychic motor of Western science- the longing for one true story’. Feminist and qualitative epistemologies seem to provide us with some insight and support in dealing with the transitions and marginalisation we describe (Edwards and Ribbens, 1998: 7). Indeed, poststructural theorizing, which Morgan (2000: 134) describes as ‘shifting contexts (for texts and reading) lead to shifting meanings’ and ‘discourses and genres are constitutive of objects of knowledge’ acknowledges the lack of possibility in ‘attaining a single, complete truth’.

Just as Crotty (2010: 160) acknowledges interpretivisms as ‘a range of distinct forms that are not easily reconciled and are sometimes irreconcilable’, Jackson and Mazzei (2012: 11) reject ‘an interpretivist stance’ that ‘embraces the mutually constitutive nature’ of meaning between researcher and researched; data and theory; and inside/outside. In terms of ‘textual performativity’ (Lather, 1991: 46) data analysis embraces Barad (2007) and Butler’s (1999) theory of performativity and is consistent with Mauthner and Doucet’s (1998: 128) voice-

centred relational method. Troubling the data using four different readings, this method moves from the personal to the cultural using four different perspectives. The first reading is a reading for plot is common to many methods of qualitative data analysis (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998: 126; Riessman, 1993; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The second reading draws attention to ‘the active ‘I’ which is telling the story’ and is one of the key features that distinguishes a voice-centred relational method from grounded theory (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998: 130). This careful listening to the participant ‘creates a space’ between the intra-action of ‘...how [he] speaks of [himself] before we speak of [him]’ (Brown and Gilligan, 1992: 27-28). This reading highlights the ‘quandary’ of analysing one’s words as ‘the one who receives the words is unknown...; the one who receives becomes ... an allegory for reception itself’ (Butler, 2005: 68). It is not just about the words that are said. It is also how we re-imagine what is said and how we imagine ourselves ‘as intra-actively produced in tandem’ with what is said (Jackson and Mazzei, 2010: 132). For example, when one participant describes teaching as a lonely profession, the reader is also brought back to their own need for comfort and company. Yet, perhaps this sense of loneliness is not about comfort but more about power. Reading intra-actively challenges the reader against ‘interpretation and experience’ as the marker for understanding and encourages ‘an intra-action that displaces and reinscribes power’ (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 133).

According to Silverman (2005: 209), ‘deciding to do qualitative research is not an easy option’. However, Seidman (1998: 7) claims that ‘as a method of inquiry, interviewing is most consistent with people’s ability to make meaning through language’. Interviewing is a particularly valuable research method feminist researchers can use to gain insight into the world of their respondents (Hesse-Biber, 2006: 114). Feminist interviewers raise important questions as to who can interview what (DeVault and Gross, 2007: 181). Beginning with Harding’s (2004: 7) claim that ‘knowledge is always socially situated’, the feminist concerns of boundaries, identities and speaking for others emerge. Placing the voice at the centre of thinking with theory changes ‘the voice, the body, and also the story about relationships’ (Brown and Gilligan, 1992: 22). The third reading in the voice-centred relational method reads for relationships, which is ‘particularly valuable in revealing the theoretical framework which quietly and pervasively underlines’ research (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998: 131). Attending to how participants ‘experience themselves in the relational landscape of human life’ (Brown and Gilligan, 1992: 29) creates ‘an opening between self and other that creates a channel for discovery’ (p. 28). The fourth reading places the participants’ accounts and

experiences within broader social, political, cultural and structural contexts. This reading is especially valuable to attune to ‘the ways in which institutionalized restraints and cultural norms and values become moral voices’ (Brown and Gilligan, 1992: 29).

5.3 Philosophical Stance

Research approaches ‘inherently reflect our beliefs about the world we live in and want to live in’ (Habermas, 1971; Lather, 1991: 51; Luttrell, 2010). Just as Harding (1991: 105) defines epistemology as ‘theories of knowledge’, the richness and diversity of feminist thought have epistemological questions regarding knowledge and feminist knowledge production at its core. While, philosophical ideas remain ‘largely hidden in research’ (Slife and Williams, 1995, as cited in Creswell, 2009: 5) their influence on the practice of research indicates the importance of identifying them (Creswell, 2009: 5). The philosophical underpinnings of research, of which Guba (1990: 17) and Leavy (2014: 3) agree to be the ‘basic set of beliefs that guide action’, have been given alternative labels by different researchers. None more so than the American philosopher of science, ‘most responsible for bringing the concept into our collective awareness’, Thomas Kuhn (Guba, 1990: 17). Kuhn, according to Masterman (1970, as cited in Guba, 1990: 17), ‘has himself used the term in no fewer than 21 different ways’ in what Harding (1986: 35) views as an ‘alternative account of the history of science’. Lather (1992: 89) described Kuhn’s theory (1962) as ‘a change in the beliefs, values, and techniques that guide scientific inquiry’. Similarly, Harding (1986: 43) considered Kuhn’s theory to suggest a necessity for methodological innovation because ‘paradigmatic theories in particular areas of inquiry eventually wear out as fruitful guides to research’, a belief that speaks to today’s turbulent research landscape (Hesse-Biber and Johnson, 2015). Historically, Leavy (2011: 16) points out, knowledge has been produced within disciplines with distinct borders and disciplines ‘remain the most common sites for knowledge generation’. Equally, Hekman (2010: 17) notes that ever since ‘at least Descartes’ modern thought has been preoccupied with epistemology. However, feminist critique has many reservations about the value of boundaries and clear-cut classifications of

‘...it may not be accidental that philosophy is also the humanities discipline in which feminist work remains the most marginal’

(Jaggar, 2008: 6).

empirical science, as ‘...it issues in the kind of binary opposites we have found feminists, especially postmodernist feminists, decrying so vigorously’ (Crotty, 2010: 171). Similarly, Barad (2007: 43), in her quest to understand the natural and the cultural, reveals that ‘there is good reason to question’ the traditional Western philosophical belief ‘that ontology and epistemology are distinct concerns’. Furthermore, Crotty (2010: 171) identifies empirical science as ‘a very male affair’ in its quest to seek control and to predict what will happen, which overall is considered to be ‘a very masculine thing to do’.

Lather (1991: 86) considers the relation of politics and social inquiry to have taken on urgency due to ‘an epochal shift’ in our thinking about the meaning of knowing. From the outset, Hekman (2004: 226) reminds us that feminist politics ‘demand a justification for the truth claims of feminist theory’. In other words, Hekman (p. 226) states that ‘feminist politics are necessarily epistemological’. Although, Harding (2004: 5) points out that politics often function as ‘prisonhouses’ of knowledge, it can also function as a toolbox ‘enabling new perspectives and new ways of seeing the world’ (p.5). Similarly, Butler (2004: 7 – 8) calls for a new sort of feminist politics ‘to contest the very reifications of gender and identity’, one that ‘will be shown to make sense for feminism’. Harding (1991: 105) defines epistemology as ‘theories of knowledge’. The epistemologist, Harding (p. 105) claims, is concerned with the justification ‘in claiming knowledge of some whole class of truths, or...whether knowledge is possible at all’. Furthermore, Harding (2007: 52) acknowledges that researchers ‘often bring to the research situation a higher social status than those they study’. Additionally, Harding (p. 52) outlines the long history of inequality between the researcher and the researched, such as ‘men studying women’, and research that was often ‘intrinsically socially unequal’. As this study undertakes men’s experience as the resource to generate scientific evidence, Harding (1987: 181) suggests that ‘traditional epistemological assumptions can no longer be made’.

‘...feminism is a moral/ political commitment and those so committed cannot be identified by their sex/ gender identities. Not all women social scientists are feminist, perhaps only a minority...’

(Jaggar, 2008: 36)

5.3.1 Feminism and epistemology

Feminism is both ‘theory’ and ‘practice (i.e. praxis)’ (Letherby, 2003: 4). Epistemology, the ‘most central issue for feminist research’ (Harding, 1987, as cited in McHugh, 2014: 140), has a long tradition in philosophy. Epistemology refers to the relationship between the researcher and the reality being researched (Creswell, 1994: 4; 6), and is concerned with answers to the question ‘how we know what we know?’ (Guba and Lincoln, 2008, as cited in Spencer et al., 2014: 82). Epistemology is a framework for ‘specifying what constitutes knowledge and how we know it’, along with ‘who are the knowers...?’ (McHugh, 2014: 140). Harding (1987: 3) supports the notion that feminists have argued that traditional epistemologies ‘whether intentionally, or unintentionally’, systematically excluded women as ‘knowers’. Feminists have always had ‘a special relationship with science’, primarily due to ‘science’s hostility to women in general and feminists in particular’ (Hekman, 2010: 65). A central aspect of that hostility is the feminist belief that ‘the voice of science is a masculine one; that history is written only from the point of view of men’ and that the subject ‘is always assumed to be a man’ (Harding, 1987: 3). Harding (1986) identified three distinct feminist epistemological perspectives, namely empiricism, standpoint and postmodernism (as cited in McHugh, 2014: 140). Acknowledging the view that ‘empiricism is an inadequate basis for research evidence’ as ‘knowledge claims are no more than partial truths’ (Clifford and Marcus, 1986, as cited in Seale et al., 2007: 6) and postpositivism is ‘anti-foundational’ (Creswell, 2003: 7), this study would appear to be placed within the feminist epistemology of postmodernism. However, Hekman (2010: 12) offers an alternative epistemology, one that is not characterized by the relationship ‘between language and the world in terms of representation’. Noting equally the discontent of the linguistic turn as well as various rigid dichotomies that constitutes modernity and postmodernisms reaction to it, Hekman (2010: 13) believes what is needed is ‘not a choice ... but an entirely different approach to the question of knowledge’.

5.3.2 Shifting tides

Kuhn’s (1970) concept of *paradigm shift* was somewhat of a ‘maverick entry’ that powerfully permeating discourse ‘across the disciplines...for almost 3 decades’ (Lather, 1992: 89). Why, Geertz (2000: 160) asks, did Kuhn’s book *The Structure of Scientific Revolution* (1962) have such an enormous impact? As ‘Excellence and significance...assure neither fame nor consequence’, Geertz (2000: 162) believes it was Kuhn’s ability to cross the

‘apparently unquestionable, supposedly uncrossable line’ that separated the intellectual activity of science from science as a social phenomenon. Kuhn (1962) drew the fire of ‘the Old Believers’ (Geertz, 2000: 162), while simultaneously clearing the path for a new discourse on scientific inquiry

Guba (1990: 18) notes that all paradigms, both past and emergent, ‘can be characterized by ... three basic questions ... the *ontological*, the *epistemological*, and the *methodological*’. Crotty (1998) terms the philosophical underpinnings of research as *epistemologies* and *ontologies*, Creswell (2009: 6) labels them as *worldviews* (italics in original). Guba (1990), Lincoln and Guba (2000) and Mertens (1998) identify their philosophical stance as *paradigms*. While Guba (1990: 17) believes that the term ‘not cast in stone is intellectually useful’, Lincoln (1990: 81) considers ‘the thoroughly *universal* nature of any paradigm eventually forces the choice between one view or another’. This study favours Guba’s (1990: 17) definition of paradigms to be the ‘basic set of beliefs’ guiding action. Similar to Guba’s (1990: 18) perspective of paradigms as the ‘starting points...that determine what inquiry is and how it should be practiced’, Leavy’s (2014: 5) philosophical approach to qualitative research embraces Guba’s definition and underpins this study. Leavy’s (2014: 5) philosophical approach encompasses the substructures of paradigm, ontology and epistemology. Guided by Creswell’s (1994: 2) social constructivist approach to qualitative research and Leavy’s (2014: 5) philosophical basis of research, this study holds the theoretical belief that truths, both partial and contextualised, are built in collaboration with the participants of the research and through reflective engagement with research texts. This philosophical stance informs how research ‘should proceed, what can be known, who can be the knower, and how we come to know’, and informs all aspects of the research including topic selection, research design, final representation, dissemination ‘and all phases in between’ (Leavy, 2014: 3).

‘Theory is an activity that does not remain restricted to the academy. It takes place every time a possibility is imagined, a collective self-reflection takes place, a dispute over values ... emerges’

(Butler, 2004: 176)

5.3.3 Paradigm myths

Paradigm, the term used to describe ‘a basic set of beliefs that guide action’ (Guba, 1990: 17), has been synonymous with terms such as ‘inconsistencies’, ‘puzzles’, ‘anomalies’, ‘troublesome’ (Coe, 2012: 6), ‘revolutionary’, ‘a call to arms’ (Geertz, 2000: 163) and ‘incommensurable’ (Coe, 2012: 6; Geertz, 2000: 163). Furthermore, Guba (1990: 17) notes that ‘most persons...are unable to offer any clear statement of its meaning’. Similar to Guba’s (1990: 17) definition of a paradigm as ‘a basic set of beliefs that guides action’, Denzin and Lincoln (1998: 4) define paradigms as ‘belief systems that attach the user to a particular worldview’. The genealogical origin of Coe (2012: 6) and Guba’s (1990: 17) representation of paradigm is in the classic work of Kuhn (1962). Kuhn (1962), who wrote extensively about the paradigmatic shifts of the 1970s, explains paradigms as ‘advance assumptions about the social world, how science should be conducted, and what constitutes legitimate problems, solutions, and criteria of ‘proof’ (as cited in Creswell, 1994: 1). Similarly, Denzin and Lincoln (2008: 31) define a research paradigm as ‘the net’ that contains the epistemological, ontological, and methodological premise of the researcher. Equally, Leavy (2014: 3) cites the importance of ‘theoretical commitments’ in influencing ‘a researcher’s ontological and epistemological positions’. Further to Kuhn’s (1962) view that a research paradigm is a ‘worldview through which knowledge is filtered’ (as cited in Creswell, 2009: 6), Leavy (2014: 3) supports Kuhn’s description of perspective as permeating the crevasses of research. Leavy (2014 3) cites a paradigm as synonymous with sunglasses with different coloured lenses, ‘When you put a pair on, it influences everything you see’.

Although Creswell (1994:1) defines paradigms as encompassing ‘both theories and methods’, Glaser and Strauss (1967: vii) note that many researchers ‘think of “theory” as having little relevance to their research’. Others are uncomfortable with theory. Indeed, Clifford Geertz

‘... social constructionists argue that science is a social construction and that its concepts are constitutive of scientific reality. Yet when feminists argue that gender is a major factor in this social construction, most philosophers of science either turn a deaf ear or become very uncomfortable...’

(Hekman, 2010: 17)

(1973; 1993: vii), one of the most important anthropologists of his generation, admits that the majority of his essays are ‘empirical studies rather than theoretical disquisitions’ because of what he describes as a growth of unease when he gets too far away from ‘the immediacies of social life’. However, Geertz’s concept of ‘thick description’, borrowed from Gilbert Ryle (As cited in Geertz, 1993; 1973: 6), and the opening chapter of his book, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973), namely Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture, somewhat casts a shadow of doubt on this admission. Similarly, Anfara and Mertz (2006: xiii) describe the ‘ongoing confusion about the use of theory’ and ‘its pervasive effects on the process of conducting qualitative research’. This may be due to what Guba (1990: 18) describes as the inability of research to verify truth; it ‘cannot be proven or disproven in any foundational sense’. Furthermore, Anfara and Mertz (2006: xvii-xviii), citing Alexander (1987), note that the social sciences have ‘multiple theoretical orientations’ that will ‘never achieve the degree of consensus ... characteristic of the natural sciences’. Similarly, Leavy (2014: 3) supports this theory stating that qualitative research is ‘multiparadigmatic’ and a ‘highly diverse field of inquiry’. It is oddly the ‘competing theories’ within qualitative research that gives it its strength (Anfara and Mertz, 2006: xviii; Guba, 1990: 17). They, in fact, encourage phenomena ‘to be viewed from multiple perspectives, or lenses’ (Anfara and Mertz, 2006: xviii). Nonetheless, varying ‘emphasis’ about theory and its nature is perhaps the greatest weakness of qualitative research (Anfara and Mertz, 2006: xix).

‘The identity of the feminist subject ought not to be the foundation of feminist politics...’

(Butler, 1999: 8)

5.3.4 The Politics of Paradigm

Feminist research is grounded in political as well as academic concerns (Letherby, 2003: 5). This research is a political endeavour as it locates itself among existing forms of dominant discourses. Firstly, feminism is primarily ‘a social and political force, aimed at changing existing power relations between women and men’ (Thornham, 2001: 41). This study’s feminist theoretical stance is grounded on the ‘politicization of personal experience’ (Lather, 1001: 155). Secondly, the study’s poststructural methodological position illustrates ‘how our invested positionality shapes our rhetoric and practice’ (Lather, 1991: xvii). Furthermore, the

marriage of gender and education, which Connell (2015: 239) cites as a ‘key site of alliance politics’, is further politicised by the socially constructed view of gender. Gender as socially constructed renders it ‘possible to re-interpret personal or psychological ‘problems’ as political issues (Jackson and Scott, 2002). Indeed, Lincoln (1990: 81) considers the ‘rules for action, for process, for discourse, for what is considered knowledge and truth’ are highly political and emotional. Similarly, Denzin and Lincoln (2011: 5) state that ‘all research findings have political implications. There is no value-free science’.

Within a feminist poststructuralist framework, Butler (1990: 2) notes that ‘*politics* and *representation* are controversial terms’. Both politics and representation, of which language is a ‘normative function’, set out ‘in advance the criterion by which subjects themselves are formed’ (Butler, 1990: 2). While, ‘objective reality can never be captured’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011: 5), Stake (2010: 23) believes the purpose of qualitative research is not ‘to attain generalization’ but ‘to add situational examples to the readers’ experience’. Social constructionism argues that we are born into a world in which meaning has already been made; we are born into culture. Indeed, academic and scientific communities often unwittingly contribute to systems of oppression. As stated by Mertens (2005: 17), much of the social and psychological theory which underpins the scientific paradigm was developed by white, able-bodied males. It is necessary for feminist researchers to redefine political science to ‘include anything concerning relations of power and privilege’ and to ‘examine power in terms of who has it and who uses it and how’ (Letherby, 2003: 30). Lather (1992: 92) suggests that the politically value-laden nature of feminist research ‘requires a very different methodological approach to issues of objectivity / subjectivity’, which depends upon epistemological groundings. Chase (1995: 2) states that ‘attention to context and process’ is an ‘important development grounded in traditions of social theory’. Furthermore, Butler (2005: 8) states that ‘I’ must ‘become a social theorist’ because ‘I is the story of a relation – or sets of relations – to a set of norms’.

‘Theory’ is a highly contested term within feminist discourse. The number of questions raised about it indicates the importance of the debate. The aim ... is not to settle these questions, but to generate new and productive directions for them.’

(Butler, 1993: xiii)

5.3.4.1 Theory within paradigm

Theory, like other key terms used in research, such as care, experience, difference and equality, has been defined in abundance and with variability (Anfara and Mertz, 2006: xiv; Hughes, 2002; 1). Theory, defined in the Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research (2014), is ‘an account of social reality that is grounded in empirical data but extends beyond the data’ (Leavy, 2015: 4). Silver (1983, as cited in Anfara and Mertz, 2006: xiv) purports that ‘formal definitions of theory rob it of its true beauty, its emotional significance, and its importance in everyday life’. Yet, Charmaz (2006), student of Strauss’ doctoral programme at University College San Francisco (1968) and further enhancer of grounded theory (as cited in Bryant, 2014: 119), terms the division between theory and research as ‘arbitrary’. Charmaz’ theory (2006) emanates from Glaser and Strauss’ argument that the social sciences in 1960s American had become theoretically frozen (Bryant, 2014: 119). Firestone (1990: 109) advances this theory by suggesting ‘dropping the term paradigm’ and arguing ‘that there are alternative philosophically correct ways to conduct inquiry’. However, as outlined by Howe (1988: 16, as cited in Firestone, 1990: 109) this position ‘pass(es) judgement on the legitimacy of knowledge claims’ setting philosophy above the practice of inquiry.

While the Enlightenment’s quest for knowledge and the importance of scientific research ‘find their echo in feminist theory’ (Thompson & Armato, 2012: 8; Thornham, 2001: 42), feminist thought has moved away from its Enlightenment beginnings and ‘has much in common with postmodernist theory’ (Sim, 2001: 43). Both feminism and postmodernism reject the grand narratives of the Enlightenment because of their loss of credibility (Sim, 2001: 3; Thornham, 2001: 44). Both argue that Western representations are the product of power and not truth (Thornham, 2001: 44). Both offer a critique of binary thinking, insist on difference, reject universal claims and wish to close the gap between theory and practice (Thornham, 2001: 44). Feminism addresses theory ‘in terms of what feminism might become’ (Colebrook, 2000: 5). This opens up the possibility of thinking beyond subjectivity and identity, rendering ‘sexual difference... the question of our epoch’ (Buchanan and Colebrook, 2000; 2-3). This is significant because the dominant discourse in the field of education ‘is rooted in developmentalism’, which encourages a binary way of thinking. Paradigmatic shifts have occurred many times over the past century, usually drawing upon ‘the dominant culture that is under attack’ but not necessitating ‘a total change of thought’ (Firestone, 1990: 109). Mindful of Lather’s (1991: xviii) observation that feminist academics ‘suffer from a tendency’ to do theory ‘for’ instead of ‘with’ people, the challenge for a

feminist study lies in thinking of theory as something that is both theory and practice. Feminisms' ontology is useful in re-thinking over-simplification and in restoring the complexities of the gender/sexuality nexus. (Blaise, 2013: 184). Hekman (2010: 4) calls for 'the articulation of an alternative approach' that emphasises 'a process rather than a concept' (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 1). A novel approach to diverse new challenges is 'to see methodology as a relation between what is and what might be' (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013: 7). Indeed, Dewey (1999), in particular, promoted the idea of theories as tools, to be judged by their usefulness, rather than their truthfulness (Bryant, 2014: 121).

Butler and Scott (1992: xiii, as cited in Hughes, 2002:

2) questioned whether theory is singular or plural, whether it is defined in opposition to something else and whether theory is distinct from politics. Similar to Butler and Scott's (1992: xiii) commentary that 'Theory' is a highly contested term within feminist discourse', Flinder and Mills (1993: xii) argue that 'precise definitions of theory are hard to come by' (as cited in Anfara and Mertz, 2006: xiv). The search for 'fixed, unified and ...accessible meaning' amounts to 'the search for the 'philosopher's stone' ' (Hughes, 2002: 1). Research is located within the 'twilight of foundationalism' (Nicholson, 1999: 7, as cited in St. Pierre et al, 2000: 1), troubling 'foundationalist fictions' (Butler, 1990: 4) that include 'all those things we assumed were solid, substantial, and whole – knowledge, truth, reality, reason, science, progress, the subject...' (St. Pierre et al, 2000: 1). The position has created a 'new form of foundationalism...as unhelpful as the earlier focus on emotions or theoretical constructs'. It began from the perception that 'absolute truth can never be found' (Creswell, 2003: 7) and according to this view the role of social researches is 'to facilitate polyvocality' (Seale et al., 2007: 6) and generate 'catalytic authenticity' (Guba and Lincoln, 1994: 114, as cited in Seale et al., 2007:7). In contrast, Lather (1992: 98) notes the 'proliferation of contending paradigms' has resulted in 'some diffusion of legitimacy and authority'. However, Harding

'What would such a thing look like, this fuzzing of the borders between science and philosophy or, perhaps more precisely, between doing and knowing, practice and theory...? Such a praxis is about ontological stammerings...'

(Lather, 2010: 15)

(1986: 57) states that feminisms biggest challenges are ‘inadequate theories of gender...and a good deal of political struggle’.

5.3.5 Conclusion

Lather (1991: xvi) states that we live in ‘worlds full of paradox and uncertainty’ where ‘close inspection turns unities into multiplicities ... univocal simplicities into polyvocal complexities’. Indeed, feminism and masculinities are one such paradox relevant to this study as both interdepend and exist in juxtaposition to one another. Men and masculinity are central to feminist theory as masculinity studies developed ‘in conjunction with feminist theories’ and feminist theories developed ‘in response to male dominance’ (Gardiner, 2007: 208). Masculinities and feminism are both cultural formations and academic subjects that have ‘asymmetrical, interactive, and changing’ relationships (Gardiner, 2002: 2). For men, feminism became ‘more a critical perspective’ to scrutinise masculinity and ‘less a call for them to act solely as advocates for women’s causes’ (Murphy, 2007: 204). Both are contemporary social phenomena, existing in ‘complex presents, yet simultaneously appearing as ideals (Gardiner, 2002: 10). Masculinity is a ‘nostalgic formation, always missing, lost, or about to be lost’. Equally, feminism is a ‘utopian discourse of an ideal future, never yet attained’ (Gardiner, 2002: 10). This assertion of multiplicity and paradox positively suggests ‘the loosening of the grip of positivism on theory and practice in the human sciences’ (Lather, 1992; 89).

*‘...theory must, in the end,
return to everyday practice.’*

(Connell, 2002: 193)

5.4 Ontological Stance

Ontology is ‘a philosophical belief system about the nature of social reality’, including questions about ‘what we can learn about this reality and how we can do so’ (Leavy, 2014: 3). Within a qualitative paradigm, the ontological view is one that acknowledges reality that is ‘constructed by the individuals involved in the research situation’ (Creswell, 1994: 4). Multiple realities exist (Creswell, 1994: 4; Leavy, 2014: 3) and the truth is ‘contingent, contextual, and multiple’ (Saldaña, 2011, as cited in Leavy, 2014: 3). All research, Lather (2015) outlines, dips in and out of ontological positions and categories depending on what stage of the research process the study is at. Similarly, Pillow and Mayo (2007: 161) state the

main objective across feminist research is ‘a commitment to studying the ‘lived experiences’ of gender and its intersectionalities resulting in theory that is built from lived experience’.

Mindful of Lather (2015) and Pillow and Mayo’s (2007) words, an interpretative ontological position governed the beginning of this study, as fuller social and cultural contexts were sought and the interrelationships between and among these categories were discovered. The interpretative ontological position naturally developed into a critical stance as understandings of how power shapes the environment were established. Overall, the ontological stance of this study is a feminist poststructuralist approach. Inspired by both feminism and poststructuralism the ontological stance of this study is mindful of feminism’s attempt to ‘define a new theoretical position’ and a ‘new approach’ (Hekman, 2010: 3) to the relationship between language and reality. Barad’s (2007: 40) ontological stance supports the aim of this endeavour by seeking to understand ‘the nature of nature’, the interplay of ‘the natural and the cultural’ and how these factors work together (Barad, 2007: 25; 42). Butler’s (1999: xix) ontological position also supports the aim of current feminist research by ‘calling taken-for-granted truths into question’ and by interrogating ‘the terms by which life is constrained’, which places ‘models of assimilation’ or rigid structures on how we live our lives (p. 4).

‘Feminism is about the social transformation of gender relations ... And yet the question of the relationship between feminism and social transformation opens up onto a difficult terrain.’

(Butler, 2004: 204)

5.4.1 What is feminism?

Traditionally, feminist research sought to challenge accepted theories that portrayed women as ‘deficient or inferior to men’ (Jaggar, 2008: viii). Others offered new accounts of women’s ‘previously unrecognised or devalued capacities or achievements (Jaggar, 2008: viii). Some research did both at once. In 1946, Simone de Beauvoir’s famous and infamous text *The Second Sex* began with a simple declarative sentence ‘I am a woman’ (Thurman, 2010: ix; Parshley, 1972: 15). This four word sentence and the subsequent 800-page analysis which followed are commonly considered to have launched the contemporary feminist movement (Hekman, 2014: 1). Beauvoir’s text, which had a profound influence on Butler’s

work (Lloyd, 2007: 4), demonstrates humanity as conceived in terms of men and of male privilege. Beauvoir sought to demonstrate that men represented both the positive and the neutral and that women were, quite simply, the 'second sex'. The fact of being a man was 'no peculiarity' (Parshley, 1972: 15) and women were 'in the wrong', imprisoned by the limits of nature in her subjectivity. Similarly, Barad (2007: 45) states that Beauvoir 'disarticulates the notions of sex and gender' in an effort to 'dislodge the misguided belief' that women's lesser status is in accord with nature. Although man could similarly be said to be imprisoned by the limits of his body, de Beauvoir claimed man thinks of his body 'as a direct and normal connection with the world' (p. 15). Feminists moved away from an analysis of sex differences (individual characteristics and biological essences) to gender relationships (Gottfried, 2013: 25).

Feminist research first arose in critiques of objective, positive methods in the social sciences, especially in research on women. 'The most pressing criticism to emerge early on had to do with how research *on* women was not necessarily beneficial *for* women' (Kirsch, 1999: 1). American psychologist Carol Gilligan's (1982) 'pioneering work on the missing perspectives of women in psychology's theories of human development' (Goldberg, 1996: 3) was the first study to question the role of gender in 'reality...truth, knowledge, and authority' (Lather, 1992: 93). Furthermore, both Gilligan's solo (1982) and collaborate work (1992, 1995) considers differences in ethical perspective as related to gender, for 'any telling of a "story" may be affected by...an infinite list of possible factors that form the scaffolding of relationships between people' (Taylor et al., 1995: 14). Although feminist research such as *Women's Ways of Knowing* (Belenky et al., 1986) has been criticised for its study of 'only women' (Lather, 1992), these works point towards a concern for women that 'is tied to the sort of ethical consideration not typically in the foreground of most objective research' (Kirsch, 1999: 1).

Gilligan's (1982, 1993) *In A Different Voice* takes account of both men and women. However, equating feminist research with the study of women and 'the culturally feminine' was soon viewed to be 'simplistic' (Jaggar, 2008: viii). First, women have been studied for centuries and 'ideas of the feminine have long been explored in the arts and humanities, social sciences, and even physical sciences' (Jaggar, 2008: viii). 'To suppose that an awareness of gender differences is a specifically modern phenomenon is to ignore a long history of public debate about the nature, and implications, of the differences between women and men' (Evans, 2001: 1). Incorporating feminist insights requires 'reexamining prevailing understandings of men and the masculine' (Jaggar, 2008: viii). Similarly, Roberts (1981: xvi) notes that 'good feminist scholarship' is about applying 'academic and scientific rationality ... more widely and more rationally' to use them to question principles and assumptions.

5.4.2 Jamming the theoretical machine: feminist principles of research

Simone de Beauvoir's exploration of 'woman' led women on a journey that has not yet come to an end (Hekman, 2014: 183). Without guidance, feminism began to jam the theoretical machine, as Irigaray famously stated (As cited in Hekman, 2014: 183). Each approach built on and developed the previous theory, all the while challenging concepts that support binary thinking (Barad, 2007: 26). Furthermore, a considerable amount of feminist thinking cuts across epistemic borders of traditional disciplinary frameworks. Barad (2007: 340) describes feminist epistemology as 'questions of the nature of human knowledge'. The objective of each interview is to unpack Barad's 'posthumanist performativity' as a corrective to 'linguacentrism' (Lather, 2010: 85), that integrates both the discursive and the material. Butler's (1990, 1993) theory of gender performativity is used as a challenge to Barad's (2007) theory of intra-action. Butler's (1999) concept of gender is a reiterated social performance, while Barad (2007: 64) compares questions about the material nature of discursive practices to that of a cat's smile, that 'seem to hang in the air like the persistent smile of the Cheshire cat'. While, Hekman (2010: 7) acknowledges that it is 'easy to criticize the excess of the linguistic turn', to give up on language completely would create 'the same dichotomies that imprison modernist

'... feminism has now influenced public thinking ... and one of its long-term consequences has been to unsettle traditional ideas about men and masculinity'

(Connell, 2000: 149)

thought.’ (p. 19). The methodological approach to this study is poststructuralism, a label that Gannon and Davies (2007: 80) signals as the ‘linguistic turn’ to discourse as ‘interconnected modes of being, thinking, and acting’ (p. 82).

Hekman (2010: 65) considers feminisms’ most recent jamming to be the move of emphasis ‘from epistemology to ontology’. Feminist research is characterised by three distinctive techniques, namely method, methodology, and epistemology rather than by the subject of their inquiry: women. Harding (1987: 8) notes that while it is ‘novel to study gender’, Haywood and Mac an Ghail (2003: 8) point forward that it may seem strange to describe the study of men as new, particularly as the ‘current interest in gender’ arose out of a sociology exclusively concerned with men. In contrast to what Lather (2010: 69) calls ‘the romance of collective knowledge’, Barad (2007: 341) claims what is at issue here is not ‘knowledge of the world from above or outside, but knowing as part of being’ (*Italics in original*). A legacy of Kuhn’s (1962) revolution, according to Hekman (2010: 11), included the limitation of truth to two ‘and only two, possible options with regard to truth – correspondence or coherence’. Theorists since Kuhn have argued against ‘a choice between these options’ and for ‘an entirely different approach to the question of knowledge’ (Hekman, 2010: 11). Traditionally, three main feminist theories of knowledge existed, namely feminist empiricism, feminist standpoint theory, and feminist postmodernism (Harding, 1991: 106; Lather, journal sheet). Hekman (2010: 70) uncovers the ‘fourth settlement’ that interweaves theory and practice with materiality. Lather (2010: 65) considers this struggle to be ‘about difference, not sameness that endorses...epistemic reflexivity’ (Pam Moss, 1996, 2005, as cited in Lather, 2010: 65). Similarly, Hekman (2003: 226) noted ‘much discussion’ among feminists ‘of the parameters of a ‘politics of difference’.

‘To recognise that there is more than we have been taught, that what is presented to us is only the beginning of what there is’, is a challenge (Blaise, 2013: 184). Feminism ‘has always been more than a quibble’ and at its most vibrant ‘has taken the form of a demand... to think differently’ (Buchanan and Colebrook, 2000: 2). Hesse-Biber (2007: 23) describes what has come to be known as feminisms’ fourth settlement as ‘an ever evolving, and ...shifting...tectonic plates of knowledge’. Hekman (2010: 2) characterises it as a ‘sea-change’. Lather’s (2010: 68) question of how to ‘keep moving’ in order to ‘produce and learn from ruptures, failures, breaks, refusals?’ can be read in relation to Hekman’s (2004: 225) consideration of feminist standpoint to represent the beginning of ‘a paradigm shift in the concept of knowledge’ despite being regarded as ‘a quaint relic of feminism’s less sophisticated past’ (Hekman, 2004: 225).

5.4.3 The question of emancipation

Feminism has always questioned the efficacy of the theories that promise emancipation (Colebrook, 2000: 5). First, Lynch and O’Neill (1999: 59) highlight the emergence of egalitarian concerns regarding gender race and disability. While they note the feminist and radically informed visions of education, they are keenly aware of the remarkable absence of working-class voices in education, stating that the ‘failure of the social democratic project to have any significant effect on social class inequality in education is now evident in a number of countries’. In order to attempt

to remedy this problem, Lynch and O’Neill (1999: 60) outline a number of strategies to encourage emancipatory research, which are utilised in this research project. They include giving participants the ‘opportunity’ to define ‘the nature and purpose of research on themselves’ and developing a ‘*reciprocal relationship* between the researcher and the research subject’ (Italics in original). Indeed, some feminist principles of research motivate other researchers working in different disciplines. For example, feminisms’ antifoundational

A frequent consideration for feminism is whether it can be anything other than critique? ‘This is a key reason why feminist scholars in the late 1980s and into the 1990s wrote so extensively on feminist epistemology, namely, to discover what might (and might not) constitute feminist research.’

(Bhavnani, 2007: 639)

critique of knowledge is shared with postmodern scholars (Kirsch, 1999: 7). Furthermore, feminist scholars 'join others' in acknowledging their research agendas as 'socially situated and thus profoundly influenced by the cultural, ethnic, and gender biases that research inevitably carry' (Kirsch, 1999: 8).

5.4.4 Postmodernism

Feminist scholars assume the postmodern critique of knowledge 'as a starting point for developing their research agendas' (Kirsch, 1999: 8). The postmodern is neither 'a contemporary fashion nor a unified movement' but 'a very difficult term to pin down' (Malpas, 2001: 1 - 2). Growing out of the positivist view of science (Spencer et al., 2014: 83), postmodernism and its politics have traditionally been 'incessantly interrogated' since it reached a certain critical mass and 'became irresistible to academic interests' (Grant, 2001: 28). This is largely due to its 'anything goes' pluralism and 'its delirious celebration of difference' (p. 28). Positivism assumes the ontological view that 'some objective truth or reality exists that is independent of our beliefs' and efforts in research are 'put toward establishing universal laws' (Spencer et al., 2014: 83). Post-positivism differed from positivism on issues of validity and reliability (Spencer et al., 2014: 84). Jean-François Lyotard (1984: xxiv), one of the most influential writers about postmodernism defined the postmodern 'as incredulity towards metanarratives. Differentiation is made between postmodernism, an artistic movement and postmodernity, the social conditions studied within the social sciences (Malpas, 2001: 3). Theoretical postmodernism emerged from various 'fragments of French philosophy...divorced from their historical, political and philosophical contexts' (Grant, 2001: 28).

A postmodern perspective 'conceptualizes research as a 'knowledge- building process' (Leavy, 2011: 39) and emphasises 'the relationship between knowledge and power' (McHugh, 2014: 143). Unlike positivism, which tries to 'extend scientific methods to the study of society' (Thompson, 1975, as cited in Lather, 1992: 89), postmodernism views knowledge is built from a 'power-laden research process' that rejects 'totalizing or grand theories' of absolute truths (Leavy, 2011: 40). However, Lather (1991: 36) wonders 'about the seduction of postmodernism' and questions whether postmodernism provide greater power to generate more effective explanation and strategy'. Deleuze (1994: 135), citing Nietzsche (1983: 137) warned of the power 'truth' holds, appearing as 'a self-contented and happy creature...continually assuring all' that it is "pure knowledge". Indeed, to 'sail quite

close to the (postmodern) wind' is the belief that 'any framework can contain only a partial truth' (Seale et al., 2007: 7).

5.4.4.1 Poststructuralism and postmodernism

Poststructuralism, like structuralism, believes the assumption that language is not a medium for expression, that language 'produces rather than reflects reality' (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 70). This is due in part to the importance placed on language to describe human knowledge and experience. However, it troubles structuralist theory of the subject as a product of structures that must be understood as 'an effect rather than a cause' (Barad, 2007: 45). Post-structuralism emphasises the social nature of language 'and the arbitrariness of the sign' (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 70). Poststructuralism, with its 'focus on becoming, affect, relationality, creativity and multiplicity' (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013: 2), is particularly helpful as an ontological stance in this research study of masculinities as it facilitates 'the scope for chance, creativity or the unexpected' (Sim, 2001: 4). Poststructuralism functions as a tool 'to help analyze mechanisms of power locally' (Lather, 1991: 156) and represents 'newness, novelty, and an end-to-the-world-as-we-know-it sensibility' (Van Maanen, 2011: 170).

Although, the 'conflation of postmodern with poststructural is not popular with some critics' (Lather, 1991: 4; St. Pierre and Pillow, 2000: 1), postmodernism is viewed as an epistemological position that 'subsumes poststructuralism' (Sim, 2001: ix). Postmodern positions 'challenges us to recognize that there are multiple meanings for an event' and 'multiple perspectives on a person's life' (McHugh, 2014: 143). Postmodernism and poststructuralism have brought to prominence the significance of language in understanding the changing nature of meaning' (Hughes, 2002: 2-3) that challenges 'traditional conceptions of truth and reality' (McHugh, 2014: 143). Scheurich (1997, as cited in Hughes, 2002: 3) notes postmodern theorization as 'the relationship between language and meaning shifts in small and large ways, between people, across time and according to varied situations'.

5.4.4.2 Poststructuralism and feminism

The relationship between self and other 'are increasingly central to both feminism and poststructuralism' (Lather, 1991: xviii). Barad's (2007: 26) theory that 'we are part of that nature we seek to understand' draws a striking resemblance to Butler's (1990: 4) theory that feminist critique 'ought to understand' that the category of 'women...is produced and restrained by the very structures of power through which emancipation is sought'. Both

feminist theorists are ‘deeply interested in the nature of nature’ (Barad, 2007: 46). While ‘the promise of success’ that poststructuralism promotes is ‘uncertain’ (Butler, 1990: xi), Barad (2007: 46) considers ‘What is at stake is nothing less than the possibilities for change’. Poststructuralism is positioned on the ‘non-Habermasian column’ of ‘deconstruct’ (Lather, 1991: 7). Poststructuralist theories, Britzman (2000: 29) believes, raises critical concerns about what it is that structures meanings, practices, and bodies. It questions why ‘certain practices become intelligible, valorized, or deemed as traditions’, while others become ‘discounted, impossible, or unimaginable’ (p. 30). In other words, poststructuralism foregrounds ‘the constitutive effects of our use of language’ and ‘the limits of consciousness and intentionality’ (Lather, 1991: 154 – 155).

Denzin and Lincoln (2011: 14) explain that poststructuralist feminist theories ‘emphasize problems with the social text, its logic, and its inability to ever represent the world of lived experience fully’. Similarly, Van Maanen (2011: 169) describe poststructural tales as resisting both structural’s ‘dreaded form of holism based too often on out-of-date, discredited, and canned theoretical systems’ and realism’s ‘relative lack of a deep reflexivity displayed in the work’. Building on Van Maanen’s depiction of poststructural tales, Jackson and Mazzei (2012: 115) suggest poststructuralist theories as those that have developed as a result ‘of a linguist turn’ and has an ontological view of the worlds as ‘constituted through our language practices, or discursive constructions’ (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 115).

“Women’s (and men’s) experience” is taken as the starting point rather than the terminus of feminist research in the social science’

(Jaggar, 2008: 38)

5.4.5 Running with the wind at our backs: problems with ‘adding men’

There is a dominant theme in qualitative research, ‘the issue of knowledge’ (Olesen, 2011: 129). Harding (1991: 109) questions whether claims produced by women, ‘or by people whose research is heavily motivated by feminist concerns’ to be ‘knowledge’ or opinion? Similarly, Messing (2008: 177) notes that questions of knowledge versus experience ‘are central to the development of feminist research’. Respect for ‘women’s experience and perceptions’ has been proposed as the ‘central element of feminist research methodologies’

(Messing, 2008: 177). Furthermore, as Harding (1987: 48) claims that ‘men respond differently to women and to men’, she also wonders why the effect of one human upon another be a surprise? (Harding, 1987: 48). Is there a set mind-set that only men can understand? Mindful of Gilbert’s (2001: 9) claim that qualitative research ‘is experienced both intellectually and emotionally’, the problem of ‘adding men’ as objects in a research project arises. While, Harding (1991: 274) contends that feminism for ‘women only’ is ‘a luxury’, DeVault and Gross (2007: 180) claim that many feminist researchers do not want to be limited to the ‘cozy’ interview of other women. Rather than find a solution to these questions, it is concluded that gender is historically dynamic, a contradictory formation in many ways and that there are women with masculinity and men with femininity. Gender is ‘a shifting and contextual phenomenon’ that is a point of convergence ‘among culturally and historically specific sets of relations’ (Butler, 1990: 14). Every piece of social research means trying to understand people whose experience is in some ways different from one’s own. Not only do gender experiences ‘vary across the cultural categories; they also are often in conflict in any one individual’s experience’ (Harding, 1987: 7).

5.4.6 Dynamics of power: the relationship between experience and knowledge

Anne Wilson Schaeff (1987: 4), author of *When society becomes an addict* (1987), reminds us that much of what we know about any system can be compared to what the blind men knew about the elephant in the much cited Indian fable. Just as the story tells us that the elephant was more than an animal made of different parts, the story also reminds us that most people who examine a system or process ‘are too close to it and too involved in it to see it clearly’. This is a particularly compelling analogy considering the subject-object relationship in this study, the knower as a female primary school teacher and the known as male primary school teachers. Similarly intriguing to this research study is New Zealander feminist philosopher Susan Moller Okin’s (2000: 40) question as to how one can be sufficiently steeped in a culture and its social context to have ‘any real depth of knowledge about it’, while at the same time ‘have some critical distance from it’. Barad (2007: 49) claims that knowing ‘does not come from standing at a distance representing’ but rather it comes from ‘a direct material engagement with the world’. Similarly, Lather (2010: 9 4) considers the merger of knower and known to be the ‘grok’, an informal verb meaning intuitive understanding, that makes ‘an entangled understanding’ that goes ‘beyond language’. This merger that absorbs and blends ‘comes from being immersed in a context’, going ‘beyond what numbers can capture’ toward

a deeper understanding'. Lather (2010: 94) considers the practice 'knowing through engagement' to be the biggest success stories in 'fostering educational change'.

5.4.7 Don't just peer, interfere: reflexivity as a feminist principle of research

In Denzin and Lincoln's (2002: x) fourth model of moments, feminist research and ethnography calls into question the ability of the researcher to represent. The fourth moment raises critical questions regarding 'researcher authority, identity, and the ethics of representation' (Pillow and Mayo, 2007: 158). Feminist research and ethnography has been integral in questioning the product itself. Feminist theorists remind us that writing responsibly calls for cautious and careful approaches (DeVault and Goss, 2007: 187). The question of praxis is, according to *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought* (Bottomore, 1983: 386, as cited in Lather, 1991: 11), the 'self-creative activity through which we make the world'. Praxis encompasses theory 'both relevant to the world and nurtured by actions in it' (Lather, 1991: 11-12) and postmodernism 'raises questions that press at our efforts toward transformative praxis' (p. 12). Poststructuralism addresses this concern by providing a 'liberatory praxis' that strategically places reflexivity as 'privileged' (p. 13). Postmodernism 'demands radical reflection of our interpretive frames' (Lather, 1992: 13). Rajchman (1985, as cited in Lather, 1991: 13-14) terms self-reflexivity 'the new canon' in a 'post-enlightenment culture' where 'the myths of universality, progress and the autonomy of science are debunked'. Hertz (1997) suggests that reflexivity enables researchers to become more conscious of the ideology, culture and politics of those we study and our own position. Reflexivity and the issue of how 'relations with other bodies diminish or enhance those capacities' (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013: 11) has been 'key' to feminist methodologies.

Britzman (1997: 31, as cited in Lather, 2009: 18) argues that we may be 'in a time and place where we are better served by research if it is a means to see the need to be wounded by thought as an ethical move'. Reflexive writing 'goes by various names', which include 'memos, notes-on-notes' and 'journal entries', its purpose is 'to make your thinking visible' (Luttrell, 2010: 470). The data for this 'tale of the field' (Van Maanen, 1988, as cited in Lather, 1992: 94) are interviews, memos, journal entries and 'my own insights/musings collected' (Lather, 1992: 94) over this four year study of male teachers and masculinities in Irish primary schools. The organising and coding process began as soon as possible after an interview was transcribed, shifting through the transcripts 'time and time again' as I went along (Chase, 1995: 222). While I enjoyed learning about male teacher's experiences and

hearing how they navigate daily school life, there were times when my interpretations of those same experiences were different to those I listened to. Examples included from such as the topic of conversations female staff members engage with in the staffroom, whether male members of staff are more or less suited than female teachers to teach infant classes and the differences in male and female school leadership. In such cases, I discovered that 'I did not share their values' (Kirsch, 1999: xi). Sometimes I disclosed my differing opinions, other times I remained as a 'voyeur', examining the details of other people's lives without having to reveal any of my own (Kirsh, 1999: xi).

5.4.8 Conclusion

Reality is a nice place to visit, Van Maanen (2011: 169) stated, but 'no one really lives there'. This quote may appear odd. Yet, it captures the difficulty of the interview as a method that is concerned with the problems of representation. Indeed, the conduct of ethnography can seem deceptively simple. Although the concept 'sounds easy', in practice it 'is hard to do well' (Connell and Pearse, 2015: 14). Considering that ethnographies join culture and fieldwork together (Van Maanen, 2011; 4) and the current climate is one of considerable uncertainty and change (Hesse-Biber, Year; Jackson and Mazzei; 2012 and Van Maanen, 2011: xv), the attractive and mythic 'ethno' qualities of ethnography must be revisited once again in light of these changes (Britzman, 2000: 27; 1995; 229). The merits of using one primary method of inquiry are often lamented by methodologists (Denzin, 1989; Webb et al., 1966, 1993), particularly the use of the interview as it is often considered to be a 'fallible' (Webb et al., 1966, 1973: 1), 'trivial' (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015: 17) and a 'failed practice' (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: viii). Indeed, Silverman (2000: 14) acknowledges the pursuit and 'yearning for people's experience' has become so repetitive it is often considered best to 'resit it'. The lack of trust in the interview can be sourced to one distinctive feature shared by both the qualitative paradigm and the interview as method, namely the requirement of interpretation on the part of the researcher, the people they study and the readers of the research reports. While, interpretive research leads to creativity and multiplicity of meaning, Stake (2010: 37) aptly summarises the core concern of critics in just four words, 'interpretations can be faulty'. A feminist poststructuralist stance seeks to encourage new ontological ways of thinking, especially in terms of methodological development. The ontology presented in this section gives us an indication of what needs to be rethought in terms of ontology.

5.5 Conclusion of chapter

This chapter sought to present the series of debates that have developed surrounding representation (Britzman, 1995: 229; 2000: 27) and the ‘seductive’ power it bestows (p. 229). One such debate that this chapter is concerned with is ‘working the ruins’ of the interview, whereby the entire interview process tries to be more accountable to complexity (Lather, 1991; 2000). The phrase ‘working the ruins’ is a term used by Lather (2000: 284) to illustrate the possibilities of working out of the failures of the past, as outlined in this chapter. Traditionally, qualitative research is deemed as interpretative research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011; Stake, 2010). Denzin (2014), an advocate of interpretative interactionism, advocates the association of stories with pictures and performances. However, Denzin (2014: 1) concludes that there is ‘no truth in the painting of life’. Similarly, Geertz (1973: 15) believes interpretations to be ‘fictions... “something made”, “something fashioned”...an imaginative act’. This may be due to the lack of an external world or ‘final arbiter – lived experience, for example – against which a text is judged’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011: xii). In other words, Lather (2000: 299) states that the ‘real ... always eludes us’. Stake’s (2010: 38) definition of interpretation as ‘a struggle with meaning’ resonates with St. Pierre’s (2009: 224) description of qualitative inquiry that is ‘no longer itself – it is not one thing’. St. Pierre (p. 224) states that ‘we cannot be sure’ of what qualitative research can mean because the methodologies and methods are ‘reinvented within various epistemologies as well as systems of thought’. Thus, ethnographic writing is anything but straightforward (Van Maanen, 2011: 73).

In any model of communication there is one that speaks and one that is spoken to. As most ethnographic research has been concerned with producing descriptions and explanations, the author’s contribution to the research is assumed to be positive and useful in attempting to capture the picture. Butler (2005: 67) reminds us of the role the reader plays in receiving the text for giving an account is ‘always to someone’. However, it is unclear how the reader of the text will interpret the stories presented for ‘the receiver may not be receiving at all, may be engaged in something that cannot under any circumstances be called ‘receiving’, doing nothing more for me than establishing a certain site’ (Butler, 2005: 67). If ethnographic ‘authority’,

‘...there is no reality, only representations’

(Butler, 1992: 4)‘

Britzman (2000: 29) questions, depends upon 'a tactic agreement among the participants, the ethnographer, and the reader ...how is the ethnographic pact effectuated?' Recent educational ethnographies and writing about the genre, Britzman (2000: 29) comments, are concerned with reading 'against the ethnographic grain'. Engaging in critical reflexivity, Lynch (1999: 12) notes, makes the social relations of research production a subject of critique and investigation. 'Such reflexivity is vital for the development of new approaches to research and theory in the study of equality'.

Inter-text 3 - Emotions

'He drew a circle that shut me out.

Heretic, rebel; a thing to flout.

But Love and I had wit to win.

We drew a circle and took him in.'

(Edwin Markham, *'Outwitted'*, as cited in Bliss, 1995: 293)

What it means to consider emotions and masculinities will be considered in this inter-text. It will focus on the material practices and embodied experiences of emotions, feeling management and power. These three categories are connected due to a difference that remains between men and women as outlined by American sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild (2012: 169), which is the difference 'in the psychological effects of having and not having power'. Similarly, Mac an Ghail (1994: 38) considers it necessary to examine the interrelationship between broader themes, such as the dominant conceptions of authority, power and emotional commitment. There is a gap between what we understand about feelings and the nurturing we expect a school to offer children. People's lives are 'deeply connected, psychologically, economically and politically' (Gilligan, 1993: xiv) and emotions are considered one of the most valuable gifts to give a child. However, the lack of importance placed on emotions in teaching is not surprising. First, the impact of neoliberalism is reshaping the importance given to emotions. Second, traditional stereotypes reflect a conception of adulthood that encompasses an autonomous life, independent of love and care (Gilligan, 1993: 17). Third, there is 'a denial of the importance of emotions and affective realities in politics' (Lynch, 2013: 174). Teaching involves the management of feelings, requires making others feel a certain way and necessitates an emotional effort to carry out one's daily work indicates a need to look at emotions more closely.

Managing feelings and expressing emotions

Reader: What is an emotion?

Author: Emotions are defined differently depending on differing perspectives. For example, a biological

*'Mind-body dualism has
pitted reason against
emotion and male against
female'*

(Goldberger, 1996: 14).

perspective considers emotions as a sealed biological event, ‘something that external stimuli can bring on’ and ‘the individual passively undergoes it’ (Hochschild, 2012: 27). An interactional perspective considers culture to be an impinging factor on emotion. The act of managing our emotions can be seen to be part of what the emotion becomes. Hochschild (2012: xviii) considers emotions as ‘a messenger from the self’ and a feeling that ‘filters out evidence...’ of how we see and know the world (p. 28). Emotions are considered more changeable than feelings.

Reader: Why should we try to understand emotions in teaching today?

Author: Emotions are being reshaped under the impact of neoliberalism. As will be further explored in Chapter 10 - Discussion, schools are part of a profit-seeking drive for efficiency with increasing workloads, decreasing wages and higher opportunities for teacher-burnout. Along the way something else has happened. When emotions are considered in relation to care, then Noddings (1992: 20) notes that ‘The structures of current schooling work against care, and at the same time, the need for care is perhaps greater than ever’. If a child falls on the yard at lunchtime, the question of whether or not the school or the teachers were negligent arises. Sometimes teachers are reluctant to put a plaster on a child's scraped knee. Other times pupils must treat their own injuries: the teacher hands the pupil the first-aid box and the pupil takes out a plaster and sticks it on. If a pupil's parent is available, he or she is often requested to deal with the injury. Furthermore, market forces may be seen to ‘overshadow the essentially human social activity’ of teacher-pupil interactions (Mac an Ghail, 1994: 41). A new bureaucratic schooling hierarchy has emerged whereby the school is positioned within a competitive schooling marketplace leaving little time for pupil interaction (Mac an Ghail, 1994: 41). Each of these trends calls emotions in teaching into question.

‘... the norms of competition, privatization, and possessive individualism need to be countered by an ethic of love, care, and solidarity.’

(Apple, 2013: 18)

Reader: Why an emphasis on emotions in a study about masculinities in Irish primary schools?

Author: Emotions form an integral part of teaching, as will be discussed in Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns. Yet, common-sense understanding considers emotions and masculinities to have little association with each other. Traditional views believe masculinities are built on rationality, individualisation and heroism. Doing work that involves emotions is fundamentally an ‘act of doing gender in the context of ‘women’s allegedly greater facility with emotions – the feminine capacity to console, and comfort, flatter ...’ (Frith and kitzinger, 1998: 300, as cited in Mirchandani, 2008: 265). Similarly, caretaking is considered as women’s

work or feminine not simply because women do it but because women are ‘well-constructed to do it’ (Pierce, 1995: 24, as cited in Mirchandani, 2008: 265). Indeed, the very traits that have defined the goodness of women ‘are those that mark them as deficient...’ (Lynch, 1993: 18). Mac an Ghail (1994: 38) traces the association of power and masculinities to the Enlightenment tradition, in which ‘reason is defined in opposition to nature, that is, our emotions, feelings and desires’. Masculinities are defined by separation, while femininity is defined through attachment. This makes it difficult for men to acknowledge their emotions (Mac an Ghail 1994: 38). It also impacts on daily experiences involving emotions such as advising pupils, diffusing volatile situations and displaying positive / controlling negative emotions in the classroom.

Reader: Do men and women manage feelings differently?

Author: The belief that men and women are more alike than they are different is discussed in Chapter 4. Yet, when it comes to managing feelings, some believe that the differences between the sexes remain because ‘women make a resource out of feeling’ (Hochschild, 2012: 163) and ‘men in general have not been trained to make their emotions a resource’ (p. 165). This point is illustrated in Chapter 9 when

‘Care is constructed both materially (work, activity, burden) and psychologically (emotions, feelings, involvement).’

(King, 1998: 126)

‘A feminine ethic of care is a different voice within a patriarchal culture because it joins reason with emotion, mind with body...men with women...’

(Gilligan, 2011: 22).

David describes a situation where he comforts a crying pupil with words, while a female teacher comforts the same pupil with touch. Connell (1985: 153) considers the incompatibility between the gender-ascribed ‘masculine’ function of discipline and the feminine function of caring. This will be further explored in Chapter 9.

Reader: How are feelings managed in school?

Author: A major cultural shift has occurred in teaching whereby teachers have greater interaction with pupils, colleagues, parents, co-professionals and the wider community much more than before. Like most jobs, teaching calls for a capacity of more interpersonal skills that ‘draws on a source of self’ that

is ‘deep and integral to our individuality’ (Hochschild, 2012: 7). Teaching can be described as one that involves an ‘emotional style of offering the service’ (Hochschild, 2012: 5), which is part of the service itself. Hochschild (2012) describes various feeling rules for occupations. These can be seen in schools in the form of the tough principal, the drama teacher, the caring assistant. Connell (2000: 153) notes that the ‘most important’ feeling rules in schools are those relating to ‘sexuality, and the prohibition on homosexuality’. These feeling rules, Connell (p. 153) maintains, may be particularly important in definitions of masculinities.

Conclusion

Male- and female-dominated occupations require workers to perform different kinds of emotion work. Teachers may feel annoyance or tiredness, but are expected to be calm, caring and in control. Emotion work is, therefore, needed to bridge the gap between how one feels and how one should feel. Given the historical association between women and emotionality, as discussed in inter-text 1, male teachers are required to reproduce accounts of themselves in terms of attributes which commonly represent a type of masculinity. As Tim noted in Chapter 4, it is ‘girlie’ to be a teacher. Emotions may be masked. With this in mind, emphasis must be placed on the gendered nature of work itself in the context of gendered processes rather than identifying the separate impact of gender on emotions. ‘Workers in

‘In the globally hegemonic pattern, care and attachment to young children is the business of women ... while fathers as breadwinners are expected to be emotionally distant.’

(Connell and Pearse, 2015: 82)

homogenous work settings' such as primary schools may do 'emotion work to exert privilege and exclusion' (Mirchandani, 2008: 272). This may be seen in male teachers' authoritative presence in a school. See Chapter 9 – Perceptions of men who work with young children. Emotion work regarding male teachers in dealing with children and a homogenous work setting, in this case female-dominated, would extend the current understanding of emotional labour within an Irish context.

Chapter 6 – Performance and Performativity

The aim of this chapter is to consider performance as something more than words. What one says and how one acts as a response to what is said is a reoccurring theme in the stories of the male teachers. Throughout this thesis and in this chapter in particular, performance is considered to be more than an act performed for an audience. Performance, in this manner, does not take account of the productive effects, both inclusionary and exclusionary, of a performance. This thesis holds the view that performative acts extend beyond discursive practices. It is both speech acts and bodily acts. For instance, this is clearly illustrated in Chapter 9 – Narrative

Patterns when Darren describes being the first male teacher in his school, his feelings of isolation and his decision to stay in his classroom in the morning before school commenced rather than join his colleagues in the staffroom is a clear example that people become subjects through repeated gender practices. Repeated gestural acts produce and reproduce male teachers' subjectivities. This chapter reconciles the complicated relationship between speech acts and bodily acts. It explores the belief that 'the body gives rise to language, and that language carries bodily aims, and performs bodily deeds that are not always understood by those who use language to accomplish certain conscious aims' (Butler, 2004: 199). This chapter encourages an understanding of performativity that progresses from Butler's (1993: 2) perception of performativity as a citational practice to Barad's (2007) theory of performativity as material-discursive practices that produce effects through on-going intra-activity. A theatrical metaphor is used throughout this chapter, yet its limits are known as it does not take into account the inclusionary and exclusionary productive effects of a performance.

'Representing' isn't simply a matter of standing back at some distance and opening one's eyes (Barad, 2007: 52). Images and representations are not snapshots ... but rather condensations or traces of multiple practices of engagement' (p. 53)

6.1 Representationalism - shifts in performative alternatives

All the world's a stage,

And all the men and women are merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His act being seven ages.

William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, 2.7: 139 – 43, (As cited in Robinson, 2006: 4)

Shakespeare famously compared life to a performance played out on a stage. If we are to believe him, as Butler (1988; 1999) and Goffman (1959; 2008) do, then we are all actors who interact with our audience in dramatic fashion. Indeed, the theatre has long been a place to enact changes ‘in the body politic’ (Bell and Blaeuer, 2006: 14). The ‘visibility of bodies in the theatre is at the heart of much political activism’ (p. 14). Music lyrics and televised music performances may be a more contemporary model. Within academia, many researchers over the past number of decades have used performance as a metaphor about social life. Interactions are viewed as performances that are shaped by environment and audience. As with all performances, the response of the audience is fundamental to our outward performance of identity. A dramatic or theatrical introduction can be used, as Barad (2007: 7) states, as ‘an important teaching tool’ for key ideas. Indeed, Barad (2007: 3) uses dramatics to present her framework of quantum theory, which she deems crucial to an understanding of how reality is a material consequence of our actions. Opening with a description of the controversies surrounding the German physicist Werner Heisenberg’s visit to his mentor Niels Bohr, who was of Jewish ancestry, in Nazi-occupied Denmark, Barad (2007: 3 - 4) questions the interpretation and presentation of this story in the Tony Award winning play, *Copenhagen*. Barad (2007: 4 – 5) describes that night as becoming ‘caught up in its very orbit’ (p. 4), as being ‘an invention of the playwright’ (p. 4) and as raising ‘more spectres than it puts to rest’ (p. 5). Indeed, an important spectre that ‘haunts the play’ are questions regarding the playwright’s motivations (p. 8). Yet, Barad (2007: 6) cautions that we cannot hope to do justice to important questions ‘on the basis of mere analogies’. Representation, in this manner, is interconnected with autonomy, democracy and identity. However as noted in Chapter 5 - Methodology, there is continuing scepticism about regimes of truth ‘that have failed us’ (St. Pierre and Pillow, 2000: 1). In addressing these

*‘...language too is an actor
independent of intentions
and authors’*

(Haraway, 2008: 351)

concerns, this research study seeks to produce knowledge differently, to produce different knowledge and to explore different ways of living in the world. This is most clearly illustrated in each inter-text and particularly in Chapter 8 and Chapter 9.

6.1.1 Performance and performativity

Philosophers rarely think about acting in the theatrical sense, Butler (1988: 519) notes, but they do have ‘a discourse of ‘acts’ that maintains associative semantic meanings with theories of performance and acting’. Hochschild (2012; 1983) launched her pioneering study *The Managed Heart* using drama to introduce her theory that addresses the absent (repressed) rationality at the heart of commodity relations. When passing a dish of peanuts among guests Hochschild (2012: xvii) questions if she had passed the peanuts to a person or an actor, ‘Where did the person end and the act begin? Just how is a person related to the act?’ Erving Goffman (1959), arguably the most famous theorist to use the idea of performance, cites Simone de Beauvoir’s (1953) text which stated that a person is ‘the actor on the stage, an agent through whom is suggested someone not there’ (As cited in Goffman, 1959: 65). More recently, Lincoln et al. (2007: 119) outline how some theorists have tried to counter the controversies of foundationalism by casting those engaged in research as ‘unaware actors’ unable and unwilling to act. Exactly what their research has unconsciously engaged in is representations of truth and knowledge (p. 119). Exactly what they are unaware of is their ‘false consciousness’. Rajchman (2001: 12) considers performative theories akin to an ‘incorrigible illusion of living’. These performative theories are important due to the ‘ritual’ status that the ‘act’ acquires through repetition (Butler, 1999: xvii) or the ‘forced reiteration of norms’ (Butler, 1993: 94). Furthermore, Butler (1993: 2) states that performativity ‘must be understood not as a singular or deliberate “act”, but, rather, as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names’. Similarly, the performance, Rajchman (2001) notes, is a fiction ‘or artifice, in which, through habit, we come to believe’ (Rajchman, 2001: 12). Butler (1993: 94) states that ‘a construction is, after all, not the same as an artifice’. Furthermore, Rajchman (2001: 12) observes that it is this illusion of ourselves that becomes ‘fully’ part of nature ‘- our nature’. Additionally, Butler (1999) considers the repetitive performance of gender as becoming a natural effect, which in turn becomes ‘a culturally sustained temporal duration’ (Butler, 1999: xvi). That is to say that gender performativity ‘constitutes (but does not fully determine) the gendered subject’ (Barad. 2007: 62). My relationships with the participants in this study were at the heart of looking at our

co-constructions and co-performances of identities. As will be further explored in Chapter 8, the participants of this study discreetly negotiated power relations before the first interview. Questions regarding ethical approval and intended outcomes allowed the participants and I to co-construct and co-perform our identities. However, it is precisely these tensions of identities, mine and theirs, as examined in Chapter 1- Introduction that allowed me to textually construct the participants as interesting, ordinary and reflexive. In fact, I privileged some participants over others as can be seen in Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns.

The metaphor of drama and theatre is quite helpful in guiding our thinking ‘in interesting ways’ (Robinson, 2006: 4). Yet, performative approaches or performative enactments, ‘are not the same as theatrical performances’ (Barad, 2007: 49). The metaphor of actors giving a performance does not ‘go nearly far enough’ (p. 58) because it does not account for the productive effects, both inclusionary and exclusionary, of a performance. Butler (1999) did not view gender performativity as a synonym for a theatrical performance. As cited in Barad (2007: 62), Butler (1999) cautioned that gender performativity is ‘not to be understood’ as a kind of theatrical performance conducted by a ‘wilful subject’ who could ‘choose its gender’. According to Butler (1999), gender performativity is a ‘tactic collective agreement’ that includes ‘punishments’ for those ‘not agreeing to believe in them’ (Butler, 1999: 190). Since the metaphor of drama and theatre is useful for understanding, can the essence of the theatrical metaphor be salvaged? Is there anything we, the spectators, can hold on to as the play ends and we leave the theatre? (Barad, 2007: 17).

‘Language does not constitute reality nor does reality determine language. Both positions are in error, and to understand the interaction of these elements we need a new understanding of their relationship’

(Hekman, 2010: 39).

6.1.2 Performance and representation

A performative understanding of discursive practices challenges ‘the representationalist belief in the power of words to represent pre-existing things’ (Barad, 2007: 133). Furthermore, the allure of representationalism may make it difficult to imagine alternatives (Barad, 2007: 410). Indeed, the belief of what we take to be real about gender is central to

Butler's (1999) work. Gender is 'a changeable and revisable reality' (Butler, 1999: xxiv). When gender is the central consideration of the performance, one that establishes itself through the performance, performativity can be said to be a theory of agency, 'one that cannot disavow power as the condition of its own possibility' (Butler, 1999: xxv). To this end, Butler (1999: xxiii) questions the perception of reality when one sees a man dressed as a woman or a woman dressed as a man. The representation of gender, in this case, presents an 'ostensible reality' coupled with 'an unreality'. Gender representation renders the appearance of gender as an illusion (Butler, 1999: xxiii). This is further problematized, as Butler (1999: xxiv) illustrates, when we shift the example to transsexuality for the 'reality of gender' is put 'into crisis'. The naturalized and denaturalised forms that gender takes, as outlined by Butler (1999: xxvii), illustrates the prospect of identity becoming an instrument of the power it opposes. Similarly, Hekman (2014: 122) states that we are in power even as we oppose it. Performativity allows us to turn power against itself to produce alternative modalities of power (Hekman, 2014:112). As stated in her book *Bodies that Matter*, Butler (1993: xi) notes that 'Thinking the body as constructed demands a rethinking of the meaning of construction itself'.

6.2 Representation and the future of feminism

Barad (2007: 410) acknowledges how a representationalist understanding of knowledge 'gets in the way of understanding power and knowledge'. Similarly, Butler (1999: 2) maintains that politics and representation 'are controversial terms' and that a 'radical rethinking of the ontological constructs of identity appears to be necessary in order to formulate a representational politics that might revive feminism on other grounds' (p. 7). Just as a rethinking of performativity and its representation leads to a rethinking of feminist ontology; a movement away from representationalism, Hekman (2010: 74) claims, is 'at the same time a movement towards ontology'. Although, both postmodernism and poststructuralism have 'rejected ontology because of its associations with modernity' (Hekman, 2007: 74), Lather (2015) and Barad (2007) call for a return to materialism but not the neo-Marxist

'Why presume in advance that the bounds of the human organism are ultimately the boundaries of the scientific measuring system...?'
(Rouse, 2002, as cited in Barad, 2007: 340)

style. Barad (2007: 44) puts forward an ontology that is fluid rather than fixed stating that ‘performativity, properly construed, is not an invitation to turn everything (including material bodies) into words; on the contrary...’ (Barad, 2007: 133). In constructing a revised account of performativity, Barad (2007: 133 - 135) preserves Butler’s concept of performativity stating that it has been ‘caught in some other orbit around the same nucleus’ (Barad, 2007: 135). Rather than denying the role of discourse put forward by Butler, Barad (2007: 135) acknowledges the limits of ‘the geometrical optics of reflection’ and ‘the representationalist trap of geometrical optics’ where ‘the epistemological gets bounced back and forth, but nothing more is seen’. Barad (2007: 136) puts forward a theory of performativity that promotes both the discursive and the material and provides an understanding of how discursive practices matter.

The dilemma of representationalism, Hekman (2010: 76) notes, is a world of words and ‘things that we are trying, ultimately unsuccessfully, to represent’. Indeed, Van Maanen (2011: 161) states that the ‘representational burden of ethnography has become heavier, messier, and less easily located in time and space’. Barad’s (2007) new ontological intention is particularly useful in highlighting the shortcomings of linguist constructionism, stating that Butler’s (1999) theory of performativity is flawed as it ‘ultimately reinscribes matter as a passive product of discursive practices rather than as an active agent participating in the very process of materialisation’ (Barad, 2007: 151). While, Barad (2007) and Butler’s (1999) theories may place emphasis on differing elements of representation, yet both have a common feminist approach to matters that enhances their compatibility. Just as Barad (2007: 137) claims that representationalism is ‘a prisoner of the problematic metaphysics it postulates’, Butler (1999: 7) similarly contends that ‘it may be time to free feminist theory from the necessity of having to construct a single or abiding ground’. Similarly, Barad’s (2007: 137) critique of representationalism as a concept that ‘never seems to get any closer to solving the problem it poses’, can be read in relation to Butler’s (1999: 7) question of whether the ‘exclusionary practices that ground feminist theory ... paradoxically undercut feminist goals to extend its claims to ‘representation?’ Barad (2007: 141) addresses the need for a new ontology directly in her concept of ‘phenomenon’. ‘Phenomena...come to matter’ through the process of ‘ongoing intra-activity’ (Barad, 2007: 151). Just as reality does not consist of ‘things’ but ‘phenomena’, Barad (2007: 141) states that language does not consist of ‘words’ but of ‘material-discursive practices’ (p. 141). Phenomena are described as ‘*the ontological inseparability / entanglement of intra-acting ‘agencies’*’ (Barad, 2007: 139, italics in original).

The ongoing ‘ebb and flow’ of agency is not limited to the domain of human practices and Barad (2007: 150) calls for matter to be understood ‘in more dynamic and productive terms’.

Theoretical Memo: description and interpretation

The third problem in deconstructivist inquiry, according to Lather (1991: 17), is description and interpretation. A study of language is frequently carried out ‘informally, and often unconsciously’ but nonetheless, ‘constantly, and intensely’ (Robinson, 2006: xiii). A study of language is essential if we are to speak and write more clearly. Furthermore, it assists our communication with others in words. Running concurrently to this view is the commonsense understanding of writing, which considers language to convey meanings and understandings (Denzin, 1989: 44). Through the use of language, words, phrases and sentences, meaning are understood and clearly conveyed. Language presents the truth and ‘reflects the meaning of an experience that has already happened’ (Mazzei and Jackson, 2009: 4). In this view, language is understood to be ‘the stuff of reality’ and the ‘mediating function between knower and known’ (Barad, 2007: 133). However, writing does not consist of the straightforward transmission of meaning. This approach to data forecloses and simplifies stories that prevent them from becoming ‘something else’ (Jackson and Mazzei, 2010: ix). An exploration of what people do with words (Robinson, 2006: xiii) is a topic of much debate and is the lens through which data is read throughout this study.

Theoretical Memo: description and interpretation (Continued)

Derrida, who is not discussed in this thesis but is someone who ‘we cannot think without’ (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 139), challenges the problem of language as a medium. Derrida suggests that language is only différence, which is to say that ‘signs have no stable meanings, but only exist in transformation and traces’ (Denzin, 1989: 45; Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 18). This sentiment is echoed by Barad (2007: 146) who states that to think of language as mere spoken or written word is ‘to enact the mistake of representationalist thinking’. As there is no one-to-one correspondence between words and their meanings, Derrida’s concept of différence (As cited in Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 18) refers to meaning as incomplete and lacking origin. Language represents a concept that is not present and so meaning is missed. Similarly, Robinson (2009: xiii) states that language is ‘there (Where?)’. It is now understood that language does not mirror the world, ‘it creates it’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011: xii). Language considered as a figuration of the world rather than a medium of it is an idea that ‘reverberates in mutated form’ throughout Barad’s (2007: 410) account. In addition, Butler’s (1999: xxvi) account of the status of language ‘as word and deed is ... ambiguous’, which further corroborates différence as concerned with ‘what is not present’ (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 22). Indeed, as ‘speech itself is a bodily act with specific linguistic consequences’, Butler (1999: xxvii) notes, then a deconstructive approach to data adheres to a suspicion that ‘something may be wrong with what we currently believe’ (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 23). In doing so, one holds the belief that no reading or writing of a life is ever complete. From this belief emerges accounts that ‘are playful, open-ended, and incomplete’ (Denzin, 1989: 46; Van Maanen, 2011). It is in this naming and description of thinking of data as partial and incomplete that the data of this study is placed.

6.3 Conclusion of chapter

Performance plays an important part of male teachers' daily lives. This is clearly illustrated by sex-role modelling in Chapter 3, staffroom interactions in Chapter 8 and the intra-actions between the male teachers and the school environment in Chapter 9. Hekman (2014: 122) calls for a 'new way of thinking about subjects and their agency'. As Butler (1995: 47) contends 'The subject is neither a ground nor a product', adding that 'to deconstruct the subject is not to negate or throw away the concept' (Butler, 1995: 49). Barad's (2007) theory does what 'postmodernism and poststructuralism only claims to do' (Hekman, 2014: 151), it is transforming feminist approaches to knowledge. It 'provides a powerful alternative to the dominant orthodoxy of linguistic constructionism (p. 151), devising a framework that analyses the body both in terms of human and inhuman material. As previously explored in Chapter 5, feminist theorists have begun to consider the relationship among science, knowledge and power in their investigation of human knowledge. In their quest to challenge the authority of foundationalism and positivism's claim that only one truth exists, feminist theorists have found possibilities to represent different worlds. They have also found possibilities to represent these worlds differently. In order to address description and interpretation in this chapter, the representational belief in the power of words was challenged. The question of performativity and the shortcomings of linguist constructionism have also been outlined in this chapter.

Barad's (2007) and Butler's (1999) theories are used to illustrate differing elements of representation. Butler's (1999) approach to gender views performativity as a 'theory of agency', which is produced by the dynamics of power' (Butler, 1999: xxv). Butler's theory of gender performativity works to 'unsettle the gender categories that attempt to normalize and regulate people' and 'accentuates a process of repetition that produces gendered subjectivity' (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 67). For Butler (1999) gender is a social construction that is *produced* by gender and that opens up the possibilities of agency. Furthermore, language plays a central role in the construction of gender. Barad's (2007) approach presents a revised account of Butler's gender performativity (Hekman, 2010: 76), one that can be described a *materialist* theory of performativity (Hekman, 2010: 76). Barad (2007) retains Butler's (1999) account of 'performativity' rather than rejecting it as flawed (Hekman, 2010: 76). Barad (2007: 208) suggests reworking Butler's notion of gender performativity from 'iterative citationality to iterative intra-activity'. This may in part be due

to a posthumanist refusal of the division of the natural and the cultural. Matter, for Barad (2007: 210) is not an ‘assumed, inherent, fixed property of abstract’ objects but ‘a doing’. Material-discursive apparatuses are ‘themselves phenomena made up of specific intra-actions, including those among humans and nonhumans’ (Barad, 2007: 206). Barad (2007) and Butler’s (1999) theories of performativity through each other take full account of male teacher agency. It opens up possible discussions of the iterative power of discourses and the power of materialization. Reverting back to the theatrical analogies that opened the beginning of this section, a number of questions arise. If the world is a stage, at a micro-level, is a school the stage and the teachers the props? Are the principals or the education system the directors? What role do inhumane objects play? What exactly are the inhumane objects under consideration? As cited by Butler (1993: ix) bodies have moved beyond their own boundaries, ‘a movement of the boundary itself’, which appear to be ‘quite central to what bodies “are”’. As a result, the community, the education system and the school are all considered to be bodies that produce material consequences. How does the intra-action between staff and the school system, one example of material-discursive apparatuses, impact on the daily experiences of male teachers? Chapter 8 - Data Collection and Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns put these questions in motion. As was highlighted in Chapter 1 - Introduction, the stories gathered from the participants involved in this research journey have been re-presented in this thesis in a disabling, two-column, format.

Inter-text 4 – Feminist Research

Why has the interview a troublesome past?

Science historically informed the foundations of social science (Crotty, 2010). The unquestioned authority of scientific reason and method assumes a neutral knower that can be separated from what is known. It believes that there is an objective reality, or an unchanging truth, that can be discovered (Letherby, 2003; Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011). With this in mind, the interview was used as an ‘instrument’ in the quest to discover a science of society (Letherby, 2003). Additionally, it was often considered the ‘favourite “digging tool” of the sociologist’ (Benny and Hughes, 1956, as cited in Denzin, 1989). As the terms ‘instrument’ and ‘tools’ suggest, a set of interview rules were followed to ensure hygienic and unbiased research. ‘Correct’ behaviour ensured a perfect interview, meaning that detachment was maintained and objectivity claimed. The motif for successful interviewing was to be friendly but not over-friendly (Oakley, 1981). The researcher appears to narrate and presents descriptions as if they are plain fact. If asked a question the interviewer was advised to laugh it off, shake their head and claim they have not thought about that before (Letherby, 2003). After all, the interviewee was an object under surveillance and the interview was a pseudo-conversation (Oakley, 1981). Using a distant authorial voice, the researcher reported a general description of how life is for a particular group of people. The interview was, in this form, a masculine method used to obtain authorized knowledge (Letherby, 2003).

Oakley (1981) was one of the first to challenge this approach to interviewing. Unable to follow traditional interview procedures she argued that the social science ‘pretence of neutrality’ was in conflict with the principles of feminism (DeVault and Gross, 2007). Oakley (1981) advocated a collaborative, interactive and non-hierarchical interview process in which the interviewer is prepared to invest his or her own identity in the relationship. Feminist scholars took up these methods enthusiastically and developed an approach to interviewing that is interested in diverse realities that are constructed linguistically, always being remembered and re-told (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012). Biases stem from a reliance on retrospective memory that can be distorted by social desirability. Both telling and listening are shaped by our histories (DeVault and Gross, 2007).

What is feminisms' relevance to a study of men?

Interview researchers have long been concerned with the identities and social locations of parties to the interview. Traditionally, feminist researchers were concerned that gender differences would produce failures of rapport that would ultimately limit disclosure (DeVault and Gross, 2007). Yet despite a shared gender status, female interviewers very often misunderstood their female interviewees in the moment of interviewing. Catherine Kohler Riessman's (1987) influential article 'When Gender Is Not Enough' is such an exemplar of taking rapport for granted (As cited in DeVault and Gross, 2007). Theorists of gender and sexuality resist 'any simple reliance' on the categorical identity of 'woman' arguing that genders are multiple and that gender itself is a discursive production (DeVault and Gross, 2007). Similarly, feminist researchers do not want to be limited to the 'cozy' interview of other women (DeVault and Gross, 2007). Although, 'woman' hovers over all the feminisms that have developed in the past 60 years (Hekman, 2014), 'woman' is no longer the foundational subject of contemporary feminism. Feminist research may continue to place much of its emphasis on women and 'the symbolically feminine' but it also addresses men and men's lives, animals and other aspects of the nonhuman world (Jaggar, 2008).

What makes Feminist Research *Feminist*?

The answer to this question lies in a number of possible explanations. First, attention to power and *how* knowledge is built is the root of feminist research (Hesse-Biber and Piatelli, 2007). Feminism maintains that understanding and knowledge come from being involved in a relationship with the participants in the research study. Feminist interviewers are cognizant that this researcher-participant relationship marks out two separate social boundaries; "insider" and an "outsider" (Hesse-Biber, 2004). For example, in this research study I am an "insider" as I am a primary school teacher like the men in this study. We are part of the same academic world. Yet we inhabit distinct roles in that world (Principals, deputy-principal, substitute teacher, a retired teacher, and teacher on career-break) and also differ from one another in terms of age, gender,

'Much of the critical work of feminism ... has necessarily been devoted to contesting cultural power: for instance cultural definitions of women as weak, or of homosexuals as mentally ill'
(Connell, 1987: 107)

marital status and a variety of other differences that make me an “outsider” of that world (Hesse-Biber, 2014). Second, feminist interviewers are attentive to the nature of their relationship to those interviewed, careful to understand particular personal and researcher standpoints and mindful what role(s) they play in the interview process in terms of power and authority over the interview situation (Hesse-Biber, 2014). As one participant noted, “Your experiences seem a lot more divided than mine”. How could this be? My career trajectory was quite traditional in that I undertook teacher education in Ireland and had taught in Ireland for my entire career. This male teacher had received teacher education in Wales and subsequently worked in Kuwait, London and most recently Abu Dhabi. This remark was cause for pause. It challenged me to self-reflect on the many assumptions I held as researcher. Practicing self-reflexivity includes paying attention to the specific ways in which our own agendas affect the research process (Hesse-Biber, 2007). It is also a critically important aspect of developing an ethical perspective, which provides insights into the research design, sampling procedures and responsibility towards participants (Hesse-Biber, 2007). Third, the attention given to relationships with participants illustrates the goals of feminist research to be ‘for’ rather than ‘on’ people. This suggests that research ‘on’ a particular group is not necessarily beneficial for them (Kirsch, 2007). However, research ‘for’ people fosters empowerment, gives back reports to participants to check descriptive and interpretive validity and is highly interactive.

Is There a Feminist Method?

There are many prevailing myths about feminist research methods. One common misconception is that feminism only engages with qualitative research (Letherby, 2003). Although, feminist researchers have a strong preference for qualitative methods (Kirsch, 1999), feminist researchers use the full spectrum of qualitative and quantitative approaches to research (Reinharz, 1992). Another misconception is that feminism only employs the semi-structured in-depth interview as a research method. Feminist researchers may regularly employ the interview as method as it enables collaborative and interactive relationships to develop (Kirsch, 1999). However, feminist researchers use a range of methods to answer their research questions (Hesse-Biber, 2014). Feminist research affirms that no single methodology is uniquely feminist even though qualitative methodologies have heavily dominated feminist research generally (Weber, 2007). Today’s methodological challenges lie not in making a choice between qualitative and quantitative approaches but in considerations

of power dynamics and value conflicts that shape knowledge production (Weber, 2007). In conclusion, it is not the usage of a particular method or methods which characterises a researcher or a project as feminist, but the way in which the methods are used (Letherby, 2003).

Why is it difficult to define feminism?

It is ‘no doubt impossible’ to find a definition of feminism that everybody agrees upon (Acker, 1994). Indeed, defining feminism can be a daunting task due to the unique and unstable place of feminism and feminist theory today (Pillow and Mayo, 2007). As with other large social values, such as equality, democracy and freedom, feminism’s meanings are regularly in dispute. This is primarily because feminism is a collection of social and political ideals that continuously change and develop (Jaggar, 2008). Traditionally, the overt ideological goal of feminist research is to correct both the invisibility and the distortion of female experience in ways that will end women’s unequal social position (Lather, 1986). Though the question of the identity of ‘woman’ is central to the tradition of feminist theory (Hekman, 2014), it brings into question the set of assumptions about feminist research (Acker, 1994). These assumptions are premised on the famous feminist mantra ‘the personal is political and valid’, which suggests that women’s experience in patriarchal society is the starting point for research and the purpose of feminist research is to improve women’s lives (Acker, 1994). However, these assumptions are ‘contentious’ (Acker, 1994) particularly in today’s increasingly global world. How is feminism even possible if we acknowledge the range of differences among women? (Pillow and Mayo, 2007). Can men do feminist research? Why not investigate men’s experiences through a feminist lens? With this background in mind, feminism argues the centrality of gender in the shaping of our consciousness, skills and institutions as well as in the distribution of power and privilege (Lather, 1991).

Chapter 7 – Unpacking the Interview Process

This chapter unpacks the interview process from my perspective, offering a generous sense of the method in action. It captures the messiness of qualitative research, as discussed in Chapter 1- Introduction by illustrating that I am both producer and product of the data collection process. It is acknowledged that the reflections in this chapter are not a revelation of an ‘honest or unbiased self’ and as such, needs to be read as ‘a conscious selection written for a particular purpose’ (Weiner, 1994: 11). Events and influences have been selected to illustrate the whole experience. Consequently, it can be challenged on the grounds of ‘interpretation and meaning’ rather than that of a ‘fixed’ truth (p. 11). The objective of this chapter is to present an honest, transparent and uplifting account of the interview as method, one that counters ‘the lust for authoritative accounts’ (Lather, 1991: 85) and presents my own inescapable involvement in the practice of meaning-making.

7.1 A tale of the immaculate perception

The problem with ethnography, Van Maanen (2011: 165) states, is that from the outside it looks like ‘a semi-respectable form of hanging out’. At first glance, the researcher appears to narrate and presents descriptions as if they are plain fact. Using a distant authorial voice, the research reports a general description of how life is for a particular group of people. It is no surprise then that Hammersley and Atkinson (2003: 23) state that at ‘first blush’ ethnography appears to be a ‘rather pleasant, peaceful, and instructive’ form of writing. For the outsider looking in, information collection emerges from what appears to be leisurely cultural descriptions based simply on the ‘face-to-face, soul-to-soul experience’ an author has with a group of people (Van Maanen, 2013: ix). Indeed, the essential core of ethnography, Spradley (1980: 5) notes, is a ‘concern with the meaning of actions and events to the people we seek to understand’. Relying heavily on others, ethnography appears to also rely on ‘common-sense knowledge and methods of investigation’ (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2003: 21). Blurring traditional boundaries between the writer, the reader, the stories and how the stories are told, the writer ‘recognises and courts’ the audience (Van Maanen, 2011: 25). Readers are persuaded that they too can imaginatively step into the world of those being studied (Britzman, 2000: 27). There is an expectation that the researcher is capable of producing the truth from the experiences gained during ethnography and that the reader will be open to this truth. Britzman (1995; 2000) considers this to be ‘the straight version of Ethnography 101’.

Britzman (1995; 2000) can be read in relation to Van Maanen (2011: 161) who considers this, ‘the faith in ethnographic holism’, to be fiction, ‘akin to Newton’s frictionless space’.

7.2 The interview as method

The method of inquiry utilized in this study is a tailored version of the long interview (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015; McCracken, 1988; Spradley, 1979) as described in Chapter 2. The interview, commonly assumed to be the ‘the favourite “digging tool” of the sociologist’ (Benny and Hughes, 1956; Kuhn, 1962, as cited in Denzin, 1989: 102), has a long and troubled history in qualitative inquiry, which is specifically addressed in Inter-text 4. As outlined in Chapter 5, the Methodology Chapter, social science was shaped by the advances of the natural sciences. As a result, it was believed that ‘social’ facts could be discovered in a similar manner to ‘natural’ facts, ‘...i.e. there is one reality and it can be discovered’ (Letherby, 2003: 64). When the interview was used it was used ‘hygienically’, as a tool and instrument (Oakley, 1989: 32), as outlined in Inter-text 4 when the interview was explored in terms of its troublesome past. Following prescribed rules ensured detachment and thus objectivity. It was advised to be friendly but not too friendly. When the researcher was asked questions it was recommended that s/he laugh them off and ‘tell the respondent that they have not really thought of this previously’ (Letherby, 2003: 82). The respondents were required to be passive. Adding feminism to this picture, a register described by Lather (2010: 31, citing Gherardi and Turner, 1987) as a ‘softness where interpretation is central’, and worse still, Harding (1991: 108) claims, a register that is political (DeVault and Gross, 2007; Harding, 1991: 108; Lather, 1991: 155), then one begins to see the landscape of feminist interview research (DeVault and Gross, 2007: 173).

Conscious of Lather’s (1991: 14) description of the present that facilitates both an ‘exciting and dizzying time in which to do social inquiry’, the research design of this study is particularly interested in how feminist approach to interviewing ‘reinvent qualitative methods’ (Lather, 1992: 92). It no longer places the researcher in the position of ‘known author’ as outlined by Denzin (1989: 19), whereby the ‘presence of an author or ‘outside’ observer ... can record and make sense of the life in question’. Instead, the researcher’s voice is placed beside that of the participants, adding another layer to what has been documented and enhancing the richness of possible interpretations. Jackson and Mazzei’s (2013: viii) affirmation that we do not have to ‘give up on the interview as method’ resonates with current feminist calls to work the ruins of foundationalism and interpretivism.

Similarly, Lather's (2010: 70) hope for the future of qualitative research to be negotiated in 'kinds of practices that are on the edge of what is precisely thinkable and doable' can be read in relation to Jackson and Mazzei's (2012: 7) enactment of the interview as a process of 'data / theory / writing' that 'expands / stretches / distorts' previous ways of knowing. Furthermore, Butler's (2004: 178, as cited in Gannon and Davies, 2007: 75) suggestion that calling terms into question 'doesn't mean debunking them' but leads, rather, 'to their revitalization'.

This research design considers the weakness of the interview to be found in its focus on the narrative (Denzin, 2014: 69). Conversely, it will illustrate that the strength of the interview as a method is to be found in the performative 'I' (Butler, 2005; Jackson and Mazzei, 2012) that is 'continually reconstituted through material-discursive intra-actions' (Barad, 2007: 136-41). Jackson and Mazzei (2012: viii) acknowledge that 'very specific assumptions' are made in relation to 'data, voice, and truth' within a feminist poststructuralist reading of data. Like other feminists of the early 1990s, Barad (2007) and Butler (1999) share an interest in the body. However, their differences are most striking in their ontological approach to the body and to discussions of performativity. Butler's approach considers language as proceeding and limiting thought. In contrast, Barad's (2007) theory seeks out how objects emerge through particular intra-actions. Mindful of Barad's (2007: 136) suggestion of ontology as fluid rather than fixed, in what Hekman (2010: 70 – 71) describes as 'the new feminist settlement', a voice-centred, relational method of data analysis according to Mauthner and Doucet (1998) further support the plurality of interpretation offered in the interview as a distinct feminist method. Furthermore, this research design acknowledges the interview as both 'controversial' (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015: 329) and a 'failed practice' (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: viii). In order to counter the belief that it is 'hard to produce new knowledge through interviews that goes beyond common sense' (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015: 341), this study illustrates the merits of feminist research and the performance of the text in which it is presented. This is particularly so when one considers the constantly changing landscape of education research, where multiplicity of method is one of its 'distinguishing features' of qualitative inquiry (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011: 5; Lather, 2010: 68).

7.3 A wink versus a blink: 'doing' poststructural ethnography

When embarking on this research journey I believed that my personal experience would 'make it easier, rather than harder' to do research in this area (Letherby, 2003: 115). I

naively expected the interview to be like a conversation with someone who has a common interest. The interview conjured up dual feelings of anticipation and apprehension. Surviving on a rather minimalist social life as the research journey progressed; the interview became something to look forward to. Engaging with something other than a textbook, a computer screen and a journal article was certainly exciting. Just as ‘action leads to motivation’ (Gardiner and Kearns, 2011: 127), I imagined each teacher would inadvertently fill in the gaps in knowledge and understanding I had acquired thus far. I looked forward to the sense of clarity that would come from the stories the teachers would convey to me. Of course, all positive thoughts were accompanied by a number of rather troublesome doubts that had found their way into my thoughts. Perhaps I was not prepared enough? While Kearns and Gardiner (2011: 129) state that the secret to high output is to start ‘before you feel ready, because you might never reach that point’, I certainly did not want to waste anybody’s time. Maybe I should have read one more journal article? This is what Kearns and Gardiner (p. 129) call the ‘Clarity Myth’. Should I know more before I take to the field? I had almost forgotten Lather’s (2014) counsel that ‘you can’t know everything but you can know something’. Lather reminded me that the crafting of interesting and useful questions lies in collaborative engagement with participants and the world. I consequently commenced arrangements to meet each teacher individually.

Wrestling evening traffic and navigating unfamiliar motorway exits and roundabouts, the time came to meet the first teacher. With five minutes to spare on a wet winter’s night, I rushed into the hotel lobby. The teacher text to say he was at the bar. Given the task of identifying a male teacher in a hotel bar in the evening time, I began to think of clues to identify him. Each clue I sought to identify this teacher with is what Butler (1999) terms the reality of gender. Butler (1999: xxiii) describes gender reality as based on two categories. The first is the anatomy of the body. I imagined the teacher to be slender, average height and perhaps correcting copies by the bar. Secondly, Butler (p. xxiii) identifies the clothes that the person wears and how the clothes are worn as naturalized knowledge based on cultural inferences. The normative expression of gender I sought out was a man wearing a shirt; if not sporting a tie, then definitely a jumper. However, he spotted me first. I imagined the notepad and pen in hand along with my somewhat tired appearance revealed my identity. I expected the first number of interviews to be a personal learning curve from which the additional meetings would benefit. At the end of the first number of interviews I asked each participant if there was anything I could do to improve my questioning. Suggestions were

very forthcoming. I was advised to be comfortable in the silence of the participant as he thinks of an answer. In these moments of silence, I would helpfully offer a number of possible answers to alleviate any confusion I had just caused. However as noted by one participant, 'I would let a silence go for a while, maybe someone would come back to you and say what do you mean by that? But I would think even an example allows them to run on your rails rather than giving them'. This was very valuable advice. 'Staying wakeful to tensions', Craig and Huber (2007: 268) note, sharpens focus on the 'ongoing negotiation of relationships'. Another participant advised me to 'mind your own bias', which took me by surprise. I did not feel very comfortable with the word 'bias' when it came to my involvement in interviewing. Was it true that I had already 'learned a considerable amount of the culture' and was no longer aware of it or capable of identifying it? (Spradley and McCurdy, 1972: 34). Was I taking for granted 'the very things that are supposed to be the object of research'? (McCracken, 1988: 31). However, as stated by Letherby (2003: 5) and Van Maanen (2013) all research is ideological and it is impossible to separate oneself from one's experiences. Furthermore, McCracken (1989: 34) states that personal experience 'is the very stuff of understanding and explication', which represents 'vitaly important intellectual capital without which analysis is the poorer'. Similarly, C. Wright Mills (1959: 197) advised to 'trust, yet be sceptical of your own experience ... Experience is so important as a source of intellectual work' (as cited in Errante, 2004: 431).

A number of interviews took place in classrooms after school. Although, Doyle, (1972: 148, as cited in Spradley and McCurdy, 1972) considers not visiting the school where teachers work has 'certain advantages' for the researcher as it keeps information at the participants' point of view, each visit took place after school had finished and pupils were gone home. Additionally, it provided me with an extra glimpse of the teachers' working life. Tours of each school were willingly given and it was interesting to experience the energy that can be absorbed from walking around a school. As a primary school teacher, I always approach a school searching for clues to the question of what it would be like to work in that setting? I took note of the colours on the corridor, staffroom layouts, how other staff members were described and the orderliness of the teacher's desk. The latter was an observation to satisfy my personal curiosity. Additionally, a number of interviews were conducted via e-mail with Patrick who had recently moved to Abu Dhabi. It was interesting to hear the questions that had been answered by teachers working within predominately denominational schools answered by someone working in an emerging education system in a traditionally patriarchal

society. It was certainly interesting to learn that male teachers in Abu Dhabi can only teach male pupils and cannot teach below Grade 3. Female teachers can teach female and male pupils. It added another dimension to the research. However, conducting interviews over email did not facilitate expansion of discussion on each question. Answers were naturally short. Due to time differences and working schedules when answers were read back, there was no opportunity for further questioning. Some questions could not be answered.

Hotels were the most convenient to arrange to meet at as many are well-known landmarks. 11am on a Saturday proved to be a particularly good time to meet and record an interview as morning breakfast were over, lunch had not yet begun. The hotel is generally quiet. The exact same time on a Sunday was quite a different experience. Hotels are bustling with grandparents, children and parents entertaining the two. Some interviews were conducted in the breakfast dining rooms of hotels as staff prepared for evening meals. Others were in the bar area before the shutters went up and service started. My preference for meeting teachers became the hotel. Not because of the freshly ground coffee but because I sensed I was holding teachers back after a hard day at school when I sat in their classrooms in the evening time. Recently, members of the INTO backed a call for industrial action in response to the continued ban on promotion in schools and increasing workload for teachers. I felt that answering questions on the reasons why teaching appealed to them and what their peers thought of their decision would not be considered in the correct light after a long day at work. The hotel was more social for both parties.

Ann Oakley (1981: 30) was one of the first to critique the traditional criteria for interviewing as 'a one-way process in which the interviewer elicits and receives, but does not give information'. During the first phase the teachers were interested to find out more about me. According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000: 115), the 'researchers' personal, private and professional lives flow across the boundaries in the research site'. Likewise, 'though not with the same intensity, participants' lives flow the other way' (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000: 115). Lather (1991: 57) terms this a 'reciprocity' that 'implies give and take'. As outlined in Chapter 1 - Introduction, reciprocity operates at two primary points in feminist research: the junctures between researcher and researched and data and theory (Lather, 1991: 57). As a result I had to answer questions that were swirling around my head for some time. The most popular question asked by each teacher was 'why men?' The question relating to why I had chosen male teachers as the topic of research was the single most difficult question for me to

answer. I scrambled to find my answer, not wanting a pause to reflect poorly on my preparation for this meeting and on my abilities in general. In trying to answer I suggested that women had been ‘researched to death’. For some reason I felt that male teachers would accept that without further questioning. Yet, this answer does not supply a reason – it only suggests that I was somehow influenced by the excessive amount of literature about women in general and the modest amount pertaining to male teachers. However, Butler (2005: 116) states that my very ‘confusion of ignorance’ illustrates the ‘the subject cannot fully furnish the grounds for his own emergence’. The account I give reveals that I do not know ‘all the reasons that operate’ on me (Butler, 2005: 116). Similarly, Harding (2007: 331) notes that ‘Of course no humans are ever able to understand “what we are doing”, since we lack the historical long view ... and the causes of our collective fears, interests, preferences and desires...’ In other words, my beliefs, values, frames of reference and interests involve ‘a complex relationship between us as individuals, our communities and the cultures of which we are a part’ (Weiner, 1994: 10). I give an account of myself by explaining the research trends of others. Truth is not something I have but is something that is based upon my history and relationship with the world. Butler (2005: 116) views this as ‘someone who is, quite clearly, not a founding subject but rather a subject with a history’. Such moments, Kirsch (1999: xii) believes, have value, ‘they can prompt us to be more reflective, self-critical, and sensitive in our interactions with participants’. This guides us towards ‘more thoughtful renderings of participants’ lives and literacies’ (Kirsch, 1999: xii). The second most popular question was how teachers are taking part in this research and if they were all male? This was nearly always followed with the questions such as qualifications, the expected outcomes, ethical approval and questions surrounding what I was ‘actually trying to do? The answers to these questions were not always obvious to me but I understood the participants’ interest in these particular questions. As cited by Oakley (1981: 41) ‘the goal of finding out about people’ is ‘best achieved’ when the relationship is ‘non-hierarchical’ and ‘when the interviewer is prepared to invest his or her personal identity in the relationship’.

As the data collection phase progressed to the second round, a ‘rationale of personal involvement’ was established (Oakley, 1981: 42). This stage was more like a reunion of old acquaintances. Before the voice recorder was turned on, both the teacher and I caught up on happenings from the intervening period. They were interested to hear how the research was progressing and what themes were emerging from the first round. I was interested to hear how school life was. Both parties knew what to expect from the experience and from each

other. We understood it was really a team effort to create this research endeavour. I certainly did not have all the answers but together we discussed various school experiences. During this phase, one participant brought the 'Men into Teaching' Report (Primary Education Committee, 1994), studied and highlighted, to show me that more men apply for teaching than actually get a place in a teacher education college. He allowed me to keep this report, forwarding on the entire PDF document via e-mail that evening, which allowed me to bring it to subsequent meetings with other teachers. This provided a useful tool, allowing some teachers to disagree with the importance in the varying percentages and explaining why. It manufactured distance (McCracken, 1988), which helped participants view men in teaching from a different vantage point. Collaboration with participants allowed me to validate findings with each teacher as themes emerged. Such 'collaboration' blurs the boundaries between researcher and participant and is 'an important first step toward engaging in ethical and socially responsible research' (Kirsch, 1999: xiv).

The richness of having a second and third layer to the data collection phase became evident during this time. This fed into the richness of the next interview, allowing for broader discussion. Participation in qualitative research, McCracken (1988: 27) notes, is 'time consuming, privacy endangering, and intellectually and emotionally demanding'. However, 7 male teachers were willing to engage in three rounds of interviews. Arguably, these signs of participant involvement, Oakley (1981: 46) notes, indicate 'their acceptance of the goals of the research project rather than any desire to feel themselves participating in a personal relationship with me'. Yet the research 'was presented to them as my research in which I had a personal interest' so it is 'not likely that a hard and fast dividing line between the two was drawn' (Oakley, 1981: 46). One index of their and my reactions to our joint participation in the repeated interviewing situation took place in the final phase of interviewing. The third and final phase of data collection was unique from all the others. Although each interview was carried out individually at different times, the third phase began to take a similar pattern. Very often during this phase dinner was ordered and eaten before the interview commenced. The informal conversation over dinner allowed time to discuss topics not directly related to the research topic. As a result, I found out more about each teacher than I had done in the other two interviews combined.

Just as the beginnings of research relationships often take a considerable amount of negotiation, 'so do endings' (Letherby, 2003: 116). I doubt if we will 'become close friends'

‘visit occasionally’ or ‘write or telephone’ when we have ‘something salient to report’ as expressed by Oakley (1981: 46). This type of close friendship is likely to be structured by the research topic and also by ‘the perceived ‘role’ of the researcher within the research relationship’ (Letherby, 2003: 117). In contrast to Oakley’s (1981) research topic concerned with the transition to motherhood, which facilitated a close bond through shared experiences of ‘the intensely personal experiences of pregnancy, birth and motherhood’ (Oakley, 1981: 42), researching gender is a personal experience of a different kind. Just as the ‘relationship itself does not end with the completion of fieldwork’ (Letherby, 2003: 117), I will be in touch with all participants of this research to communicate the final draft of this thesis. I believe the relationship built with participants during the course of this research is one based on friendliness rather than friendship (Letherby, 2003: 117). This research involved a commitment from the participants as well as from me as researcher, which was recognised through maintaining a ‘flow’ of communication between each stage of the research journey. As a result, I sense the goodwill for what we have created together.

Running concurrently with the belief that the interview is ‘a routine technical practice’, a ‘pervasive, taken-for-granted activity’ (Mishler, 1986: 23, as cited in Fontana and Frey, 2003: 64; Lather, 2010: 70) and a possible ‘sink-or-swim experience’ (Spradley, 1979: 227), is the recognition that interviewing is ‘the main source of social and scientific information about everyday behaviour’ (Shipman, 1972: 76, as cited in Spradley, 1979: 32). Similarly, both Fontana and Frey (2003: 63) and Oakley (1990: 31) remind us that the interview has made important contributions to both qualitative and quantitative research. Indeed, such popularity and universal appeal has moved the reliance on the interviewing in modern society beyond the remit of social researchers. To borrow Atkinson and Silverman’s (1997) description of ‘the interview society’, the interview is now considered to be the universal mode of inquiry for ‘everyone’ to rely on (Fontana and Frey, 2003: 63). Conversely, the very commitment and reliance on the interview that has helped gain this method such popularity has also helped it acquire an ‘institutionalized’ and taken-for-granted status (p. 64). The heavy reliance on the interview within modern qualitative research and wider modern society has created a lack of appreciation for this method. Resistance to this method is often caused by its likeness to a friendly conversation (Spradley, 1979: 58), an enactment that has evolved the researcher-respondent relationship into something that no longer requires extensive training techniques (Fontana and Frey, 2003: 64). However, the researcher-researched relationship is a central issue of feminist inquiry. Hesse-Biber (2007: 117) reminds us that feminist research is

mindful of this relationship and ‘the *power and authority* imbued in the researcher’s role’ (Italics in original).

A simple view of interviewing suggests that talking with people is a ‘fundamental human activity’ (DeVault and Gross, 2007: 173) and that ‘if you want an answer, ask a question’ (Shipman, 1972: 76, as cited in Oakley, 1981: 32). In contrast, DeVault and Gross’ (2007: 181) claim that ‘research relations are never simple encounters’. Similarly, Denzin (1970: 186) notes that ‘interviewing is not easy’ (as cited in Oakley, 1981: 33). The description of the interview, Oakley (1981: 58) cites, as a natural activity enacted in the interview process is ‘the mythology of ‘hygienic’ research’ or ‘the masculinity of the ‘proper’ interview’ (p. 40). Additionally, DeVault and Gross (2007: 173) note, descriptions of the interview as a simple human activity that is systemized are somewhat true. However, they neglect issues central to feminist inquiry. These issues include the dynamics of power involved in any empirical research, the relations between researcher and informants, the complexity of talk, the politics of interpretation, representation and the social consequences of making claims on the basis of science (DeVault and Gross, 2007: 173).

7.4 A journey of discovery: interview questions

What is feminist about a particular research style, Hesse-Biber (2007: 117) notes, are the types of questions asked. In revealing how male teachers navigate masculinities on a daily basis and reporting my interpretation of their various stories as well, the focus of interview questions is placed on the tensions between their actions and how their actions are perceived. As documented in Chapter 1 - Introduction, I do not claim that these teachers are representative of all male teachers in general, but that their voices ‘are worth listening to and taking seriously’ (Brown and Gilligan, 1992: 17). From this particular group of male teachers I have learnt that male teachers are very aware of others’ interpretations of their actions. Widening the conversation to include myself and my opinions calls into question my hidden assumptions. It challenged me to self-reflect on the many assumptions I held as researcher. Practicing self-reflexivity includes paying attention to the specific ways in which our own agendas affect the research process (Hesse-Biber, 2007). It is also a critically important aspect of developing an ethical perspective.

Each round had a specific theme. The theme of round 1 was premised on the personal. Questions in the first round of interviews included:

1. Why did primary school teaching appeal to you?
2. What were peers opinions of your decision to be a primary teacher?
3. Describe your school.
4. What do you think a male teacher brings to a school?
5. Describe staffroom interactions.
6. Who do you sit near in the staffroom?
7. What barriers do male teachers face within the school?
8. What barriers do they face outside the school?
9. What is keeping men out of teaching?

From these questions emerged a new understanding of the role of the researcher as a variable within the research process and addressed the troubling question of unequal and inevitable power dynamics within feminist research (Staller et al., 2010: 39). What is required is ‘not another critique’ but an ‘articulation of an alternative approach’ (Hekman, 2010: 4), a reinvention of a timeworn method in a manner akin to St. Pierre and Pillow’s (2000: 1) collection ‘Working the Ruins’, and Jackson and Mazzei’s (2012: viii) acceptance of the interview as ‘working within and against a project that is failed from the start’. This research illustrates that the inclusion of the personal in the research process, ‘including discussions of reflexivity and a new emphasis on research strategies’ has given rise to entirely new methodological approaches (Staller et al., 2010: 40).

Questions in the second round of interviews were re-written a number of times so that I could explore the various themes I was hearing. Linking emerging themes with feminist theory, the theme of round 2 was based upon the tension between the personal and the political. . Questions in the second round included:

1. Since our last meeting have you thought of anything you wish to add or wish to elaborate on?
2. What are your thoughts on the role of the school within a community?
3. Do you think society still expects to see the ‘school around the corner’ of old even though schools are under pressure with cuts in capitation grants and increased workloads?
4. Should Trade Unions be doing more?
5. Is there a link between an increasing workload and the predominantly female workforce?

6. What are the implications for teacher burn-out?
7. What are your thoughts on the EU and neoliberalism and the effect both are having on our schools?
8. Why are Principal positions and Boards of Management positions so hard to fill in schools?
9. Is teaching a vocation or a profession?

As all interviews informed one another, interview questions were tweaked and improved as information was gathered. However, a specific number of questions were firmly held onto. This allowed each interview to be comparable yet flexible to include further exploration of topics. ‘Holding firmly to the same questions ... prevented us from following [girls] to the places they wished to go’ (Brown and Gilligan, 1992: 11).

The theme of round 3 centred on masculinities emerging through social and cultural interactions. Questions in the third round of interviews included:

1. Since our last meeting have you thought of anything you wish to add? Perhaps there is a new topic you wish to introduce?
2. How can a homogeneous group such as primary teachers address the diversity of a modern day classroom?
3. What teaching experience are you most proud of?
4. Could the education system be failing in a manner similar to the health system?
5. The ‘Men into Teaching’ Report (Primary Education Committee, 1994) suggests that more males put teaching as their first choice than those who get places in teacher education colleges. Why is there a drop in number?
6. What are your thoughts on the increased numbers of teachers moving to Abu Dhabi?

7.5 Conclusion of chapter

This chapter is an honest disclosure of my personal account of data collection. In illustrating my efforts to understand the various interview situations, I focus on ‘the unsaid and the unthought’ (Lather, 1991: 99). Placing my voice alongside the participants and making my thinking visible further illustrates the textual construction of this research study. This will be further explored and clearly demonstrated in Chapter 8 – Data Collection, which explores the major issues emerging from this study. Furthermore, presenting the interview from a historical perspective, which acknowledges the limits of the interview as method and finds a

way to counter these limitations creates a more democratic way of knowing. This chapter intends to raise questions about the workings of power and how we construct knowledge. Overall, the information presented in this chapter lays the foundations for Chapter 8 – Data Collection, which presents the major themes emerging from this study and Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns, which demonstrates the narrative strategies of four participants.

Chapter 8 – Data Collection

This chapter explores in detail the fieldwork gathered during this study. Phase One starts on a personal level, presenting why primary teaching appealed to each participant, staffroom interactions and perceptions of care. The experiences presented in Phase One may not reveal new or unusual experiences for male teachers. King (1998) and Martino (2008) have revealed a number of these variables within an Australian context. Yet, it is the ‘familiar character’ of each story that interests me (Chase, 1995: x). In Phase One, I study each familiar story in order to understand how male teachers make sense of their contradictory experiences of gender in the context of becoming a primary school teacher, staffroom interactions and perceptions of men working with young children. Additionally, Phase One provides a context for understanding the challenges male teachers face on a regular basis such as care, gender negotiation in the staffroom and role-modelling within an increasingly professionally orientated educational framework committed to the techniques of accountability and management. Situated in a feminist poststructural ‘problematic of accountability to stories that belong to others’ (Lather, 2000: 285), issues of critical awareness must be addressed. This research examines ‘private’ and ‘personal’ social worlds, which are made ‘public’ for academic and professional audiences.

*Fieldwork is one answer,
‘some say the best’ to the
question of how to
successfully achieve an
understanding of others,
‘close and distant’*

(Van Maanen, 2011: 2)

In this study, the researcher is ‘unhinged’ in what Lather (2015) describes as illustrating what one knows and what one does not know. The stories are presented as a text that ‘strikes the epistemological paradox of knowing through not knowing, knowing both too little and too much’ (Lather, 2000: 285). The stories are not presented as if their meanings are self-evident or as speaking for themselves. This is what Jackson and Mazzei (2012: vii) consider to be ‘simplistic treatment of data and data analysis’. In a similar vein to Chase (1995: 2), this thesis supports the idea that ‘any representation of another’s speech or action is already an interpretation that reflects the choices and interests of the one presenting it’. Similarly, Van Maanen (2011: 1) states, ‘...the images of others inscribed in writing are most assuredly not neutral’. Furthermore, the ‘truth of a person’, Butler (2005: 64) maintains, may become

‘more clear’ in moments of ‘interruption’, ‘stoppage’ and ‘open-endedness’. Butler’s (2005: 64) view of truth and incoherence suggests that we are ‘ethically implicated in the lives of others’ and ‘constituted in relationality ... by a social world that is beyond us and before us’. The voice-centred relational method of data analysis, as described in detail in Chapter 2 – Research Design, represents an attempt to translate this relational ontology into methodology. It explores ‘individuals’ narrative accounts in terms of their relationships to the people around them and their relationships to the broader social, structural and cultural contexts within which they live’ (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998: 126). Revolving around a set of four readings, it incorporates a ‘reader-response’ element into the first reading. In this ‘reading for our responses to the narrative’, the reader reads for herself in the text, ‘in the sense that she places herself, with her own particular background, history and experiences, in relation to the person she has interviewed’ (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998: 126). In this way, relations among culture, narrative, and experience within the Irish cultural context will be explored.

8.1 Phase One: discovering major issues

The stories of each participant are presented in a two-column format. They are presented chronologically in the order in which I interviewed each teacher. The titles at the beginning of each section were chosen from the words of the teachers themselves. Researchers who share an interest in ‘the complex nature of talk use a variety of transcribing techniques’ (Chase, 1995: 39). The researcher’s specific investigative interests determine which speech practices she or he attends to (Chase, 1995: 39). I am interested in those practices that capture the interview interaction, and those that exhibit gendered negotiations at school. A series of dots (...) indicates that I have omitted part of the speech. Laughter is noted in brackets. Pauses are indicated by [p]. References to academic studies are interspersed in word-boxes to position the stories within larger international research. Additionally, short engagement with theoretical memos follows each data chapter for those who want further information. The aim of this presentation format is to be modestly confessional and thick with detail. First, the presentation of each answer in column format is in accordance with McCracken’s (1988: 7) concern with cultural categories rather than ‘individual affective states’. Instead, the reader comes to know ‘through a form of textual dispersal of discontinuous bits and multiples of’ each participant’s story (Lather, 2009: 19). Each participant shares the same status in so far as they are all male teachers who teach children at primary level. However, each participant does not share ‘a single understanding’ of their

experiences (McCracken, 1988: 74). Contrary to common-sense which assumes that ‘our lives determine our stories’, our stories, in fact, ‘shape our lives and that narration makes self-understanding possible’ (Chase, 1995: 7). In other words, Denzin and Lincoln (2011: xii) state that we know that a text does not mirror the world, ‘it creates it’. Second, the column format is intended to accomplish a presentation of each story as situated among many voices as described by Lather and Smithies (1997: xvi). Situating each story among voices accumulates layered meanings as the thesis proceeds (p. xvi). The presentation of the data in this format draws the reader into the cultural worlds of each teacher, without creating large categories that would counter the deconstructive nature of poststructuralism. Deconstruction, in this sense, does not mean ‘dismantling and replacing’ or ‘de-constructing and re-constructing’ (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 15). It is, in Jackson and Mazzei’s (2012) terms, ‘a constant engagement with the tensions and omissions’ in such a way as to see how received and dominant interpretation has been produced (p. 15). This thesis employs Hekman’s (2010: 129) definition of deconstruction to mean the ‘breaking down of dichotomies’. Deconstruction brings into question the idea of a stable, unified self. This facilitates the possibilities for the stories of each teacher to go ‘far beyond the pages’ of this thesis (Lather and Smithies, 1997: xvi).

A personal reason for presenting the work in this manner is to create what Van Maanen (2011: xi) encouraged; a willingness ‘to take chances’, to be ‘more inventive in our writing practices’ and to ‘experiment in print’. As the words of the male teachers are presented and interpreted, I simultaneously develop a narrative of my own (Chase, 1995: x). While, the risk is that of making the researcher ‘more central to the discourse’ (Edwards and Ribbens, 1998: 3), my personal reflection positioned after each major issue is presented to illustrate hypertextual writing as discussed in Chapter 2 – Research Design. Additionally, the personal reflections ‘narrate the interview data’ (Lather, 2000: 286) around topics on day-to-day teaching realities: an exploration of teaching as a feminine occupation, attitudes towards care in education and staffroom interactions. I am also cautious of Van Maanen’s (2011: 182) warning of poststructural accounts that are ‘crammed with baffling meta-analysis and pounding waves of self-indulgent reflexivity’. These sentiments resonate with Butler’s (2005: 67) admission that the more one narrates ‘the less accountable I prove to be. The “I” ruins its own story...’

Phase One explores the assumptions about gender that have traditionally framed primary school teaching. These assumptions have ‘sometimes been articulated but more often left silent’ (Bryson, 2014: 123; Weiler and Middleton, 1999: 2). Similarly, Noddings (2003: 20) states that much of what is most valuable in the teaching profession ‘cannot be specified’. These commonly held, but seldom voiced, assumptions have a strong impact on male primary teachers and those considering teaching as a career. To be more accurate, it is necessary to investigate the concept of masculinities and its relationship to education at particular moments and in certain contexts. Male primary teachers’ experiences will be placed within various social, cultural and global contexts. Additionally, the paradox of gender in teaching will be discussed as will perceptions of men working with young children. These varying contexts serve to demonstrate masculinities as non-static and as part of larger cultural, economic and social networks. This phase focuses on the tension within Irish culture between the emphases on the connotations of authority as physical strength juxtaposed with connotations of caring as emotional vulnerability.

‘...gender is for and from another before it becomes my own.’

(Butler, 2004: 16)

8.1.1 Becoming a primary school teacher

‘I don’t really remember ever telling someone I am a teacher without someone going ‘Oh?’ or the eyebrows going up’

Suzanne: Why did primary school teaching appeal to you?

Patrick: Well I guess when I was doing my Leaving Cert and obviously thinking about careers and where you want to go um ... I knew I wanted to do something with people or, you know, children. I remember one night, we had ... an open night, where a variety of, I guess, different careers came in and I think there was a local principal that came in ... her talk was actually quite inspirational. She just spoke about, I guess, her own career and what drove her to teaching and, I guess, she just spoke with enthusiasm and, I guess, maybe that stuck in my head as well, when I was applying.

John: It’s slightly complicated because I applied for and was awarded a teaching

place twice with ten years between the two. I only took up the second one ... there were many opportunities then, lots of colleges offering lots of courses and public sector jobs which aren’t there now ... Unfortunately we had a family event which made me feel that it would be best to take up paid employment ... So it took me ten years in the bank to realise that it was the wrong thing to do. I went back to

what I should have done the first time, a little wiser perhaps second time.

Michael: I’m not a hundred per cent sure why, but I suppose teaching was in my family. So, my uncle and two aunts were teachers and I have two older sisters, I have three older sisters and two of them went and did primary

school teaching and I’d say it was more their influence the fact that they were doing primary school teaching that I applied for it.

Neil: I enjoyed life in primary school and secondary school and I can safely say that the secondary school experience that I had was the best time in life full-stop ... It was just six years of bliss. In some ways, I

All individuals are constrained by gender codes. The ‘strict expectations that accompany them severely limit ... boys’ opportunities to be creative, sensitive, and cooperative’

(Meyer, 2007: 19)

was sad to leave it behind me. But it comes to us all that we all have to leave these things too.

Suzanne: And how did your parents feel?

Neil: They were happy with it, you see, I had a lot of cousins who were doing the same thing ... they thought it was a good job ... So they would have been happy for me to go away from the land and stay away from the land.

Tim: (Giggles) Appeal to me? Um ... It came down to my third and fourth class teacher who got me thinking that this is kind of what I would like to do ... Um ... because before that I just felt that teachers were just, like, old-fashioned.

David: ... my mother wanted me to do it ... I kind of had an inkling to do Journalism and New Media and that's probably what I would have done if I was left to my own devices...

Vincent: I've kids myself. I have four kids so I probably got the interest to go teaching from them ... it's the lifestyle, you know? I'm working the same hours as

my kids now ... when they are working, I'm working, that's the way I look at it.

Eoin: I did the Leaving Cert in 1977 ... at the time, I suppose, it was ... the world was a much simpler place. Like, you had the options where you either went to the Guards, the Civil Service, the bank or teaching. I wouldn't say I had an active vocation to become a teacher ... it was like something beyond. It's like a stepping stone. I'm going to do this and be able to explore a lot of other things.

Matthew: Oh God, I hate that question ... When I was younger I swore black and blue, no, I'm not going to be a teacher. It's the worst thing in the world when you are six years old ... My uncle and his wife, they live

next door to us and they were both teachers ... And I do remember my Mammy saying it to me, you know, if you are ever thinking of a job, teaching is the way to go because look at your aunt and uncle.

Paul: My God-mother...aunts and uncles ... all would be in the primary or secondary or third level so ... I nearly allowed myself just to be brought by life in

An assumption about the relationship between masculinities and men rests, for many, between 'a particular correlation ... between men and work'

(Collier, 1998: 74)

that direction. I think it was a national thing nearly not to break the mould and say I am of this tradition in the family.

Darren: I suppose being a male, I thought I would get a job fast enough and that it might be easier to climb the ladder too, to become a Principal ... I remember my family thought I could be something much better, they thought I could be an accountant or a doctor.

Suzanne: Western culture's metanarratives about men – male ambition, competitiveness and selfishness as communicated through literature, popular culture and the social sciences – emphasize men's power and authority. Western culture, at the beginning of the 20th century, presented an ideology that advanced the notion that men and women had different natures. Accordingly, the roles they played in society were believed to be radically different (Korabik, 1999: 3). It was viewed as 'natural' for men 'to immerse themselves in business and commerce', and women to concern themselves 'with domestic pursuits'

Are behaviours and choices attributed to gender?

Performativity claims 'neither a sovereign nor an intentional subject who behaves or makes choices by their own violation'

(Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 68)

(Hunter College, 1983, as cited in Korabik, 1999: 3). In an attempt to make sense of the debates surrounding men and the subject of masculinities; men's aggression, power, sexualities, subjectivities and vulnerabilities have each been discussed and analysed at length (Collier, 1998: viii). However, as Acker (1995) observes, the influence of gender in research has been

minimal, noting that 'there is a small literature making problematic gender issues' for men who teach at primary level (Acker, 1995: 106, as cited in Skelton, 2011: 125). Similarly, Skelton (2001) remarks that diversity 'among male teachers has yet to be taken into account' (Skelton, 2001: 125, italics in original).

Male entry into a highly feminised occupation such as teaching renders it a difficult choice for many men. The perception of teaching as female-dominated, and the associated perceptions of the minority of men who work in them, have possible implications for school leavers' perceptions and decision-making (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Williams, 1995). This may be due to the

fact that our culture defines the public realm as masculine and superior. The private realm, ‘the realm of the moral voice of care and connection’ (Hekman, 2005: 125), is considered feminine and is subject to hegemonic power.

Notes from Suzanne’s research journal:

Meeting for the first time was more challenging than I had first anticipated. Apart from locating suitable places to meet around the country and quiet corners within each location, power was an interesting negotiation that took place discreetly before each interview. In terms of the power balance, Letherby (2003: 115) notes, ‘there are serious problems with the trust that this implies’. Power relations were at play during the initial moments of each first encounter. Questions regarding ethical approval, subject knowledge and intended outcomes allowed the participants to negotiate their positions before the interview commenced. ‘...researchers do not always hold the balance of power’, which may be ‘relevant when researching individuals who are older, more experienced, more knowledgeable, and so on, than us’ (Letherby, 2003: 115).

The initial question to set the interview in motion was always the same: why did

primary teaching appeal to you? Although, it was not obvious to me at the time, during the data analysis phase it *seems* (it is, after all, my reconstruction) that teaching was a career choice developed in the context of family values and family needs. There *appears* to be a lack of desire to become a teacher across the participants. With John and Darren as exceptions, teaching as a career choice was the result of family desire and/or tradition. Understanding the critically formative influences in student teachers’ lives and the extent to which these are reinforced, reproduced and recast in and through student teachers’ lay theories has major significance for teachers’ professional lives (Sugrue, 1997: 213).

Theoretical Memo: Teaching as a feminine occupation

Primary teaching has traditionally been framed by assumptions about gender. These assumptions have ‘sometimes been articulated but more often left silent’ (Bryson, 2014: 123; Weiler and Middleton, 1999: 2). Similarly, Noddings (2003: 20) states that much of what is most valuable in the teaching profession ‘cannot be specified’. These commonly held, but seldom voiced, assumptions have a strong impact on male primary teachers and those considering teaching as a career.

Work is, 'or should be' Collier (1998: 74) considers, 'the key reference point through which men's subjectivities are understood. Historically, work stood as the most fundamental foundation of masculine identity. Haywood and Mac an Ghail (2003: 21) note that men have often been understood through the notion of being a worker, 'with which they have closely identified and invested'. Indeed, an assumption about the relationship between masculinities and men rests, for many, between 'a particular correlation ... between men and work' (Collier, 1998: 74). Connections between masculinities and work are reflected in various social processes and social structures (Evans, 2003: 2; Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2003: 22). Social processes involve the interconnection of becoming a worker with becoming a man. Work, alongside marriage, facilitates an otherwise problematic transition from youth to male adulthood. For those working within the sex role paradigm, work not only matters to men, it is part of them (Edwards, 2006: 8). Entering teaching as a profession means entering a profession that is built upon complex cultural and social networks. This network is constituted by factors including attitudes towards caring, gender-coded behaviour and the gender division of labour in emotion (Connell, 2008: 179; King, 1998: 3).

School culture may be female. As noted by King (1998: 12) school culture may even be 'feminine' but it is 'decidedly nonfeminist'. Indeed, female participation rates do not always constitute a gendering of work. King's (1998) observation can be read in relation to Haywood and Mac Ghail (2003), who note

Why did teaching become a predominately female occupation?

There are a number of interrelated factors to explain historical and current discourse about male teachers. First, the expansion in the teaching profession after the 1870 Act was in the lower status primary schools, not the prestigious schools. Second, working with young children is seen as more suitable work for women than men. The majority of male occupations 'from the military, the Church and the law to working in industry' allow men to demonstrate the characteristics of manliness. However, teaching children at primary level 'allowed for none' (Skelton, 2001: 121). Third, marriage was the assumed 'vocation' of women and the concept of the primary teacher's role as socialising young children 'could be seen as a practice for becoming a 'real' mother' (Skelton, 2001: 121).

that the biological characteristics of male and female ‘do not necessarily equate to masculinities and femininities’ (Haywood and Mac Ghaill (2003: 22). Labelling a workplace as masculine or feminine becomes a question of how dominant values and attitudes are perceived and enacted. For example, the professionalization of teaching and recent changes in educational policies have directed school organisation toward more masculine working styles in Western societies, such as ‘managerialism’ (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2001; 2003). Furthermore, Holmes (2006: 10) notes that it is the ‘interactional style’ rather than ‘a reflection of the sex’ of the workers that constitutes labelling a workplace as feminine or masculine. Connell (1985) claims an apparent incompatibility between the conventional positioning of femininity and the disciplinary role of the teacher. Connell (1985: 153) notes that ‘it is a tension about gender itself. Authority, in our society, is felt to be masculine’ (As cited in Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2013: 94). Additionally, a tension lies in the fact that primary teaching has been understood to be an act of caring (King, 1998). The connotations of authority as physical strength are juxtaposed with connotations of caring as emotional vulnerability. Indeed, care and nurturing have traditionally been defined in the western world as women’s work. Haywood and Mac an Ghaill’s (2012) recent work of the notion of ‘mothering’ provides a useful context to Connell’s (1985: 153) claim of gender tension. In their study (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2013) male teachers most valued teaching styles that included patience, understanding and care. However, the projection of a normal and appropriate teaching style was articulated through a notion of ‘motherly’ care. ‘The effect was that good mothering became an index of good teaching’ (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2013: 94). This may be due to the assertive position women hold as mothers. It may also be caused by social expectations. ‘The world turns to women for mothering, and this fact silently attaches itself to many a job description’ (Hochschild, 2012: 170). As women are considered part of a group from which mothers come, they are often required to nurture, manage, and befriend children and adults more effortlessly than men. Additionally, women have far less access to power, authority, or status in society. As a result, women make a resource out of feelings.

I'm not a hundred per cent convinced that the gender balance is dwindling. I think it is pretty much as it was thirty years ago ... I think that's making a leap too far what you are saying there.'

(Michael)

Women then become more assertive with a mothering approach and use it to keep hold of the power they receive from it.

8.1.2 Staffroom interactions

‘You can over play the thing I suppose as well, you know? Play the martyr...’

Suzanne: Describe staffroom interactions

Patrick: Last week I was in a very large school. There were a thousand children in the school, and a staff-role of sixty so when you go in subbing somewhere like that its very intimidating ... They might take an interest in asking who you are, where you are from, um...where did you train? Oh, you were in London? Where in London were you at? So it’s nice. It gets a bit tiring talking about the same rubbish all the time but you know, they are just being nice.

Suzanne: Do they chat among themselves?

Patrick: And then they might talk among themselves and start talking about their boyfriends or their husbands and whatever else ... I mean, there was one staffroom I was in and I can tell you more about the boyfriends or the husbands than I can

about anything I learned all week, you know what I mean? You just try to join in.

John: In my current staffroom, the females do the vast majority of the talking. The subjects tend to revolve around areas that aren’t of such great interest to males and because males are predominantly fewer in number and often not present at the same time, males will either contribute little or nothing it depends on the topic. The space is almost entirely occupied by a single table around where chairs are put. It has few, one function really and that is to eat and to drink.

Michael: I would feel that at the moment there is quite a healthy balance and I think that’s probably due to the result of the influence of me to a degree but also another male member of staff. When you have a friendly warm staffroom, then you have a friendly warm staff and you are more inclined to work and to get on and to do the job in-hand and I would suspect that if that changed, if we had an all-female staff that um.... it might have a different dynamic, I would suspect it would ...

Neil: Well, I suppose at first it took a while to get used to conversations about *Sex in the City* and clothes and where you got those shoes and where that bag was got and you know, hair and where you got your hair done and all that kind of stuff. Over time you just kind of you get used to it, you have to get used to it. There is no [p] I was warned initially when I started not to go into a three teacher school at all costs because the woman who said it to me said that what will end up happening is that people will start talking about their children, their gardens and their clothes or something, words to that effect, you know? That's what you will have to listen to. As a 21 year old male, is that what you want to listen to? If you couldn't adapt to that you had a problem so ... You either accept that or you reject it and you just have to get used to it, you know? And you can't as the minority party go in and take over the staffroom conversation.

Suzanne: Does it force you to act in a certain way?

Neil: ... you can over play the thing I suppose as well, if you are being honest about it. Often, you know, play the martyr bit too 'Oh, it's dreadful'. It's not that dreadful either because I think the perception is probably the bigger problem. The perception being that this is all that women talk about ... clothes and hair and Weight Watchers. They don't actually, they talk about other things too, you

know? And if you are not going to make the effort to shift the interest of the place, you know, don't expect it to shift for you, you know?

Tim: Um [p] When I started, they were a very open staff, very much you are the newbie, get to know the newbie, see what he's like, see what she's like um [p] You

would nearly gravitate towards the teachers who are in the classrooms around you or who are on the same breaks as you. I wouldn't be big now into the whole watching of the sports now on TV so I wouldn't be mad for... I have nothing to talk to the male staff about so I would nearly gravitate towards the more female staff.

'Female resistance to male power is enacted through the playing out of traditional female roles'

(Paechter, 1997: 26)

Suzanne: Do you enjoy that?

Tim: I find it much easier to talk to the female staff personally, that's my own personal thing whereas I see that all the males would talk to each other bar myself and another fella. We would be much more comfortable talking to the female teachers. Nothing against the other male teachers, it's just that they do give off the vibe of machoism and big bravado and they wouldn't talk about every single interest in the world. They would have their one specific topic and if you are not part of that loop...they won't talk to you. When you think of teaching and because it's very female dominant that you can't give off any viable femininity in your personality or your character or else you would have to assert your masculinity ... I can see it in them that they would have to portray 'Yeah I am the man. I am a man here in this job. I do what men do', kind of thing 'I will talk like a man, I will walk like a man, I will teach like a man' and I don't get that. I don't get how do you teach like a man?

'Men teachers have been shown to locate themselves as 'properly masculine' by drawing on gender relations such as aligning themselves with 'the lads' or questioning the masculinity of others'

(Mac an Ghail, 1994; Francis and Skelton, 2001, as cited in Skelton, 2001: 117)

Vincent: It can be difficult, um, you know, when you are just itching to be talking about the World Cup or something and you know, there is a conversation about handbags and make-up and lipstick and things like that. But ... I don't mind that at all, I don't mind that, that doesn't upset me ... And there are some girls there

that will talk about soccer as well so it's not too bad.

Eoin: I would always go to the staffroom regardless of what like ... just for the break and just the change of scene from the classroom. I think it's important like to keep up the social contact with the staff members and with people on the staff. We are kind of like cows or sheep....that....that you do, you do tend to sit in the same place and I suppose there would be a few people on the staff that you would generally kind of talk to or whatever, it wouldn't be fixed like but it would be like I suppose 70 or 80 per cent of the time you would be kind of talking to the same circle.

David: I do go in there but sometimes, sometimes you go through lunch-times without saying anything because they are talking about stuff that I don't really care about, pregnancy and stuff, debs dresses ... but I think a lot of that is down to age as well sometimes you would be with younger teachers who would be female as well and you can chat to them about whatever.

Matthew: Now there is the whole ... the staffroom thing with all the lads in one corner and then, you know, I would sit with a group of girls that like we all started together, you know? We are actually pretty close friends. We would all go out you know once a year and ... but all the lads sit together and we would have three new male members of staff and they sit over with the lads.

Paul: Certainly my previous school, they were heavily gendered and a lot of SNA's in that school as well. There was a passing around as well of wedding photographs, children's confirmations ... the Avon catalogue used to be passed around, people were making orders and all the ladies would sit at the table and all the lads would stand separately and chat and to be honest, I found the whole thing kind of painful. In my school where I now am Principal ... there are more females,

Presenting hegemonic masculinity:

Hegemonic masculinity is considered to be a 'selective range of categories culturally associated with the masculine' (Collier, 1998: 19). These categories include qualities such as aggression, 'macho', pride, competitiveness and duty. However, the concept of hegemonic masculinity, 'a list of 'masculine' traits' (Hearn, 1996: 207, as cited in Collier, 1998: 20), is limited. First, the characteristics associated with hegemonic masculinity could apply to women as well as men. Second, the concept is presented in a contradictory manner. It is presented as the cause and the effect of masculine behaviour. The traits associated with hegemonic masculinity are seen to signify 'the masculine' in many circumstances. Yet, these very indicators of masculinity are also considered the cause of men's behaviour.

significantly more, on the staff than males so ... there can be a kind of, there can be

maybe a bit of an atmosphere sometimes that's different when the lads are sitting there than when the females are sitting there.

Darren: Um, I suppose it's not the greatest place for a male, really. You would have to zone out at different times I suppose or, you know, you would lose interest in the conversation. I suppose it can be quite isolating at times as well. Last year there was such a big group of them, they all had their own clicks of maybe three or four people and you can find yourself on your own a lot of the time as well. You can either be very much on your own or you can be very much the centre of attention, I suppose. You know, sometimes they kind of rejoice in having the male and they kind of celebrate you but other days then, they can be very wrapped up in their own conversations about pregnancies or engagements or afternoon tea or all these things ... They used to send a note around going for coffee this evening if you are interested ... you know it wouldn't always appeal to you either, you know, being the only male and going out for coffee. I suppose then you would be kind of fearing as well- oh if my friends see me now with all these ten women going out for a coffee, drinking tea, do you know? Where I am from?

The emotional traits associated with hegemonic masculinity are aggression, dispassion and ruthlessness (Gottfried, 2013: 83). Similarly, hegemonic masculinity, which signifies 'a position of cultural authority and leadership' (Connell, 1996: 209), privileges the expression of 'care-free' emotional displays 'that appear natural and rational' (Gottfried, 2013: 889). Furthermore, schools are organisations that establish what Connell (2002: 53; 1987: 120) terms a 'gender regime'. These regimes work to maintain existing gender norms within organisations.

You would be kind of conscious of that as well.

Suzanne: Meeting for the second time felt much more productive. There was no need to establish each other's agenda. Instead of marking our boundaries as was the case in Round One of interviews, Phase Two was more like revisiting an acquaintance. Each interview began with a warm greeting and participants were

interested to hear emerging findings from round one. It was during phase two that the process began to feel collaborative. I informed the participants of interesting observations and they either agreed or disagreed with these results and gave their reasons. During Phase Two, I began to engage in lines of inquiry that I never would have thought of. This was due to the guidance received from participants.

Notes from Suzanne's research journal:

Men's lives are shaped by the statuses they occupy. As teaching is considered a 'soft option' career for men (Connell, 1985) and an essentially feminine occupation rather than a masculine one, the masculinity of male teachers is continuously in doubt. Male teachers are constantly aware of others' attention to their maleness (Thornton, 1997, as cited in Skelton, 2001: 127).

Interestingly, Michael recounts the difference in conversation style when male teachers are in a majority in the staffroom. It seems that male teachers are more willing to use coarse language in each

other's company and appear to encourage each other to do so.

Michael: I was in a heavily male dominant staff one time, so there was twenty of us ... bad language as in swear words would have been ... all the time in the staffroom. Effing and blinding, the whole lot. The Principal was atrocious, in a nice way, you know? F-this ... you know? He set the

tone so the rest of us would have felt comfortable then about letting fly as well.

Similarly, Neil states '... you would be less maybe concerned and you could go further with the banter or ... where as you would be slightly more cautious when the genders cross because men have a different view of what you can slag people off on

or ... have a bit of banter about them than maybe what women have. Women when together might understand, have a different view point on what is, kind of, fun or in that sense ... There's just a different view point really more than anything else.'

Haywood and Mac an Ghail (2013: 14) state that men occupy a hegemonic masculinity 'or assert a position of

'Within a postmodern frame, gender and sexual identity are shown to be thoroughly socially constructed, internally unstable / incoherent, and performative'

(Rodriguez, 2007: ix)

superiority' by 'winning the consent of other males ... in order to secure their (hegemonic) legitimacy'. Furthermore, Bradley (2013: 157) claims, even in situations of warmth and companionship 'embodied masculinity remains on display'. Just as Tim understands male teachers' unwillingness to broaden the topic of conversation as a fear of portraying too much femininity, 'You can't give off any viable femininity in your personality or your character or else you would have to assert your masculinity' Bradley (2013: 157) notes that where friendship groups are heterosexual, wariness remains about possible misinterpretations of emotionality.

Theoretical Memo: The Staffroom

Concerns regarding staffroom isolation and professional communication were common topics for the teachers in this study. One important part of staffroom discussion highlights segregated sex roles. This is particularly evident in the stories the male teachers recounted of female conversation topics, which revolved around children, clothes and jewellery.

'Hegemonic masculinity has been routinely associated ... with those characteristics which depict men as being unemotional, independent, non-nurturing ... There is, however, a profound problem here. As Gilmore (1993) and others have shown, cultural ideas of manhood can also encompass qualities which might be deemed ... 'positive'

(As cited in Collier, 1998: 19)

For men and women who are trying to understand and share ideas with their colleagues in the staffroom, interpersonal and professional relationships are clearly divided along gendered lines. Additionally, male teachers continue to negotiate their masculine identities in the staffroom as illustrated by Tim.

Tim recalls feeling isolated by other staff members because of regular interaction with female colleagues. There is also distinct, though not absolute, hegemonic patterns of conversation among male teachers. This is illustrated by Michael's story of male teachers' use of coarse language in the staffroom. The use of offensive language was a way of demonstrating masculinity to oneself and to others. In order to identify as 'real men', the male teachers engaged in verbal exchanges that they normally would not have done. The verbal exchange in this story brings into question hegemonic masculinities in schools. According to Connell (1996), hegemonic masculinities sustain a number of relationships with men that operate through processes of subordination, complicity and marginalisation (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2013: 105). It may be deduced that the male teachers in this situation were working within the structures of a 'gender regime' (Connell, 1987: 120). This pattern suggests that male teachers are able to change the structure of working relationships by positioning other men as subordinate and marginalised.

Theoretical Memo: The limits of knowledge – what were these teachers not saying?

The dominance of the subject in thought and language in creating a universal understanding has led Lather (2009) to question the limits of knowledge. Furthermore, the demand for feminist research to be centred on authenticity, emotion and voice, to be 'comfortable and comforting', has been a central reason for feminisms' move away from material (Lather, 2009: 17). 'At risk is a romance of the speaking subject and a metaphysics of presence that threatens to collapse ethnography...' (Lather, 2009: 20). Lather (2009) recommends methods of representation that 'circulate among many questions, sharpening problems, making insufficiencies pressing and marking the limits of any easy resolutions of issues around voice and authenticity'. This thesis employs various representational strategies (inter-texts, journal entries, participants' voices and theoretical memos) to trouble meaning-making.

8.1.3 Perceptions of men who work with young children

‘I don’t get it? How do you teach like a man?’

Suzanne: Do pupils interact differently with you as a male teacher?

Patrick: I think sometimes there’s an expectation of male teachers should be more authoritative than females. I think sometimes there’s an expectation you have to hold, um, like a role of discipline in the school ... the females have more of a caring role and males have more [p] I guess a power driven role. I think it’s the perception maybe just in society, that those caring roles are female roles and I think that’s something that just is not necessarily discussed, something that people have within them.

John: I’ve been thinking about that over the last while because this year we’ve hired another male teacher and even

though he is inexperienced, his relationship with a pretty tough sixth class is different and possibly more effective with the boys than a female would have experienced in the same room, in my

opinion ... maybe there is something genetic about it? ... in a pupil/teacher situation, I think you’ve got a little stone-age element of that going on.

Michael: I would suspect a male presence in a school definitely changes an atmosphere [p] or not ... not [p] It has to be more than one teacher I will suspect. It has to be some sort of a cohort. ... I would worry about it, about the impact on boys in school. I definitely think it has an impact like for example second or in third level no...the ratio of males to females is [p] imbalanced and that there’s something like, I

don’t know, nearly sixty per cent of third level students are now female and forty maybe forty-four or whatever it is, and I asked the question why, why is that? I am not a hundred per cent sure but I would

‘I get the sense that the Dads gravitate towards the male staff members and nearly get a sense of ‘Ooh, we have found a little island to chat to each other in the morning’ or have a big chuckle about something...

I think that is just male and female dynamics at play ... I don’t think it necessarily hinders nor positively enhances, it’s just a reflection of the state of affairs.’

(Paul)

think it could be tied back into education, into primary school. I know in our own school we have [p] fourteen children receiving resource or shared resources. Thirteen are boys. Why? I think we accept it. I think we say ‘oh, sure, they are boys’ but I don't think we examine the dynamic that goes on in school enough and challenge that a little bit.

Neil: I think sometimes they do. Like, you're different. You can't argue with it. You are different. If you are one of only two fellas in the building and the rest are female, like, you are different. You are marked out as different, you sound differently. You know you probably are taller more than likely in most cases you know? Your manner and your physical deportment is possibly different, you know? They are not blind

once they hit Third or Fourth Class. They probably have their own view of gender specifics, what a man is and what a woman is. You can try and tell people about integrating different views and all that like, but they have their own vision of what that should be at that stage.

Tim: Oh, I find it very much so... I think it's down to the situation because of my school I am in. Because we are inner-city, I have found very much last year in particular that some of the kids had no respect for their mothers. They just literally caused a ruckus and the parents can't understand how they come into school for five hours and they are amazing. They deem the female like their mother and if they have no respect for their mother, they are not going to show respect for a female teacher so in a sense that if it's a male teacher and if they are not used to male company at home this is new, this is strange, how do I act around this person?

Vincent: For sure, yeah for sure. Yeah I notice that myself especially if they are ... especially if they don't have a father at home. I suppose if you want to get into the crux of it, I do think that definitely men are needed because you can have a good influence on the boys, you know what I mean? Because there's fellas in your class. I have come across them in

‘... in cultures where fathers are relatively uninvolved, boys define themselves in opposition to their mothers and other women and therefore are prone to exhibit traits of hypermasculinity ... as a way to display masculinity’

(Kimmel, 2013: 67)

every class. They need men to talk to them ... you are always trying to get an angle that you can try and explain something to them, whatever they are interested in, you know? ... Because if they realize that well, this fella knows what he's talking about. I can talk about Minecraft or I can talk about some game that they are interested in and they say alright this fella, he kind of knows, so I am going to listen to him.

David: I think there is definitely a novelty about it ... I think the boys kind of prefer a man and I think the girls kind of prefer a female because at that stage boys want to be with boys and girls want to be with girls ... I remember I was subbing in one school and this girl she was in Junior Infants but there was twelve buttons on her coat, so she wasn't able to take it off herself. So I remember I had to take it off for her and when she was going home I had to put it on and then button it up, you know that kind of stuff that you don't really think about? Um [p] And like sometimes as well I remember at one stage a girl in Junior Infants asked me to tie up her hair. I was like, 'I don't know how to do that'. I had no idea how to do that so I was like, 'Sorry I can't help you'. I remember a time this girl said her earring was hurting her and she said 'Will you take it off?' and I said, 'Yeah sure'. I was trying to take it off and I was afraid I was going to pull it

through her ear because I had never taken off an earring before so we had to find a female teacher to take it off for her.

Eoin: No

Suzanne: Or do you think they give you more or less respect or the same?

Eoin: The same really I think, yeah.

Matthew: They come over to me for a hug just as quick as they would to any of the female teachers in Infants that I would have worked with.

Suzanne: And do you feel that you can give that hug?

Matthew: When I started first because it was drummed into me in college, that this putting a hand on a kids shoulder is too much, that I was kind of terrified about it and after a while I kind of went he's balling his head off, I'm going to give him a hug and I do.

'... coming towards the end of the year, they can tend towards hugging you and I just say save your hugs for Mams and Dads'

Michael

A sense of connection – touch in education

Touch is the first sense to develop and is ‘a fundamental need throughout our lives’ (Montagu, 1978, as cited in Goldschmidt and van Meines 2012:15). Touch and the way it is provided by hands is an important way of communicating. Wave, hug and shaking hands can have positive effects on mind and body. Touch can easily trigger a wide spectrum of emotions such as love, kindness and compassion. ‘Both research and new thinking in the philosophy of mind are now breaking down the previously existing Cartesian barriers between mind, body, and heart’ (Elmsäter and Héту, 2010: 37). The way in which children perceive and respond to teachers is influenced by their expectations of ‘adults’ capacity to act as care-givers’ (Hardy and Prior, 2001: 54). However most teachers, regardless of gender, steer clear of touch because of its pejorative connotations.

Paul: ...I am aware of psychological research in terms of you know high status

individuals that children see high status individuals and if they are of the same gender they are more than likely to imitate them as well. From a research prospective I am aware of it ... I try to just be a human being but with the right values to be an appropriate human being

Darren: This year the boys, you know, a lot of parents said this year the boys just jump out of bed and say you know, ‘I just can’t wait to go’ and do you know, I suppose, they kind of thanked me for finally being a male teacher? And they thanked the Principal on several occasions. She has come to me as well saying ‘the parents are so delighted that there is a male teacher in the Infant School for the purpose of a role model’ and so on.

Suzanne: As illustrated in Inter-text 1 – The Body, the disjunction of Western culture’s metanarratives about men and bodies (Mind and body) is a dominant theme that runs throughout this thesis. Each teacher is aware of the persistent cultural expectation that men should hold positions of power and authority in schools. Although their narratives are gendered – for example, through attention to sport or physical appearance - each teacher embraces the positive effect that they can have on pupils because of their gender.

Notes from Suzanne’s research journal:

Being a male is a potential source of simultaneous advantage and disadvantage within the gendered structure of power in primary schools (Allan, 1993). The fact that men are particularly under-represented in teaching at primary level offers them

both advantages and disadvantages.

The majority of the teachers interviewed noted having a particularly positive effect on male pupils. They also noted the delight conveyed by parents to them, simply because they are men.

However, Darren notes the hesitation of both the school and parents of having a male teacher stating, ‘they were nervous at the start and even the parents were nervous. They didn’t know what it would be

like for their boys having a male ...’

The main reason given for the apparent gender advantage was the public’s demand for male role models in the classroom. All male teachers interviewed were happy to be considered role models for pupils and

were happy to act out the traditional role of authority in their schools. However, Michael believes that role modelling is not assigned to a specific gender in schools. He believes both males and females model good practices but he believes they model

different aspects of positive living.

Michael: You are a role model in generosity, you are a role model of kindness, and you are a role model. That doesn’t have to be a male or a female thing ... a role model models different aspects of life.

Michael believes, however, that ‘there is some little thing missing when there isn’t a male teacher, there is some male role model missing’. Interestingly, Darren’s following story of the first day of the new school

year coincides with Michael’s ideas. Darren’s account illustrates the effect that the lack of having a male schoolteacher can have on a young child, particularly if the child does not associate teaching as a male activity.

‘Current calls for more male teachers as role models need to be understood as part of a broader cultural project of re-masculinization, which is manifested in terms of a backlash against the perceived threat posed by women who have begun to make some “headway toward equality”.

(Faludi, 1991: 46, as cited in Martino, 2008: 190).

Darren: One boy got so shocked by having a male teacher that he vomited, he vomited ... there were coco-pops everywhere. But I cared for that boy by cleaning up and calming him down and calling the Mum and ever since, he's just been so happy in school.

Most pupils in primary school will only come into contact with a male teacher at the senior end of the school, if this is even a possibility.

Theoretical Memo: Perceptions of men working with young children

Being a teacher means being able to establish human relations with the people being taught (Connell, 1993: 63). Gender relations within a feminine environment are central to understanding masculinities in primary schools. Many of the 'central concerns of men and masculinities' are directly linked 'with bodies' (Hearn and Morgan, 1990: 10). Another central concern of men and masculinities is the sociology of the sexuality and the sociology of the body (Hearn and Morgan, 1990: 10). This may be due to the fact that our culture defines the public realm as masculine and superior. The private realm, 'the realm of the moral voice of care and connection' (Hekman, 2005: 125), is considered feminine and is subject to hegemonic power. The separation of

public and private worlds, whereby schooling falls into the public domain and care falls under the private domain, marks discussion about men, sexuality and children as 'cloaked in silence' (King, 1998: 119). Connell notes that gender relations involve the 'structuring of social practice around sex and sexuality' (Connell, 1987: 245).

Indeed, gender 'involves a specific relationship with bodies' in which 'our social conduct does something with reproductive difference' (Connell and Pearse, 2015: 11). This is clearly illustrated when adult behaviours, such as patting and hugging, are deemed feminine until they are performed by men. Then they are marked as 'conspicuous' (King, 1998: 137). 'There is something about the combination of children and men and a caring environment which is seen ... as outlandish to the point of being a risk' (Cameron et al., 1999: 132, as cited in Skelton, 2001: 158). As a result, part of the construction of male teacher identities is an awareness of how others perceive male teachers and care (King, 1998: 139).

Teaching involves care and emotions as much as ‘pure reasoning’ (Connell, 1993: 63). Caring about children as a teaching philosophy and caring for children as enactment of that philosophy are valued descriptions of primary teaching (King, 1998: 23). Indeed, ‘teach the child, not the subject’ is a common mantra of primary teachers. In Western culture and in our society, women usually fulfil the role of care-giver (Hekman, 2005: 125). According to Reskin (1991: 147) women are said to have a ‘natural talent’ for caring and ‘similar work’. As a result, when teaching is understood as an act of caring, men’s work as caregivers ‘is a complex endeavour’ (King, 1998: 4). This is in part due to the fact that emotions are treated and interpreted differently when expressed by a woman or a man (Gottfried, 2013: 83–84). Furthermore, it is a result of the complicated ways in which gender is constructed and embedded in work norms and practices. When men work within an environment of care and exhibit caring and emotional attributes, ‘these qualities are not consonant with dominant definitions of masculinities’ (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2003: 27). Consequently, men appear out of place when performing work contradicting gender-stereotypical expectations. When men do not correspond to the perceptions of occupational masculinities, assumptions regarding heterosexuality are informed by ‘ordinary and academic discourses on sexuality’ (Butler, 1999: xxi). However, men in female-typed jobs often experience different expectations and rewards from women doing the same work (Gottfried, 2013: 84). A male teacher can shift from exhibiting nurturance to exercising rational authority without appearing abrupt. This notion of feminization suggests a more complex analytical understanding that goes beyond the simpler framework of male and female employment participation rates (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2003: 27). As education is a process ‘operating through relationships’ (Connell, 1993: 19), care is an issue that confronts all teachers in primary schools. However, for men who wish to teach within a caring environment, the understanding of these issues can take interesting “twists and turns” (King, 1998: 24).

‘Within an established profession such as teaching, why is gender assignment more substantial than competence, ability, experience, or wisdom?’

(King, 1998: 126)

Correlations between bodies and characteristics

Representations of men and women have different meanings in different contexts. For example, in accounts of male violence men appear to have ‘little problem expressing their emotions’ (Collier, 1998: 28). This suggests a strong link between the male body and characteristics which are deemed masculine. To state as much is not to make an essentialist claim (p. 28) but to suggest the ways that history, culture and psychology have intertwined to create accepted notions of masculinities. It also suggests that teachers’ awareness of other male teachers’ discipline styles, which are informed by notions of masculinities, create ‘good’ teachers. As Matthew believes from his story, the female teacher in his company felt happy that he took charge of the situation in a masculine manner through the use of his body; his powerful voice and authoritative presence in this instance.

Matthew: ‘...the kids as well would respond to my voice quicker than they would to the girls’ voices during assembly or things because I’m louder, you know my voice is deeper, it’s different, you know. They are not used to hearing that voice’.

8.1.4 Conclusion of chapter

An important area of education and masculinities highlighted in this chapter is the potential difficulties for male teachers working in what is perceived as a highly feminised environment. Connell (1993: 62) proposes that the school should be viewed not only for its teaching but also its atmosphere as a workplace, ‘...we also need to think about the character of the school as a workplace’. As in all workplaces, there is a structure of authority of control. In schools, an institutional expression of the power is in school administration

(Kimmel, 2001: 38). Similarly, Connell (1993: 62) notes the ‘obvious features’ of a school’s system of authority of control as ‘school administrative apparatus (principal...)’ and ‘financial arrangements (links to the school board, department of education, etc.)’. Less obvious features are ‘... the informal balance of power among the personalities and factions among a school’s staff’ (p. 62). Connell (1993: 62) refers to the political order of a school as an institution, which is the ‘set of arrangements and divisions that define who has authority or power, and over what’. The political order of schools have changed in the past decade as teachers develop and contest new work identities in response to contradictory workplace demands. This will be further discussed in the following chapter, Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns.

‘...what kind of role models do we want to provide boys with? ... Also, what are the implications for the hierarchy of primary schools if the numbers of men teachers are increased? Would we be exasperating the current images children have of predominantly men in powerful positions ... while women do the ‘housework’ of the school (classroom assistants, lunchtime supervisors, cleaning staff)?’

(Skelton, 2001: 117)

Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns

Inspired by Jackson and Mazzei's (2012: vii) reading of data as 'both *within and against interpretivism*' (Italics in original), this chapter presents the narratives of four participants using methods that 'diverge from conventional social science methods ways of listening to interview talk' (Chase, 1999: 177). Seeking to resist an easy story (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 3; Lather, 1991) without reverting to macro and 'sweeping generalisations' in order to illustrate from 'all' the data (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 3), I use the data from only four participants in this section. Rather than cataloguing what each primary teachers has to say about masculinities in their daily lives, I focus 'intently' on specific data 'chunks' (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 3). In order to break down the particular identity of a 'male primary school teacher', I present the patterns in how each male teacher told his story, patterns that illustrate how discursive constructions intra-act with their material conditions. To encounter what is simultaneously materially and discursively produced, Jackson and Mazzei (2012: 121) claim, requires not just a material reading of the data but a reading 'that relies on a re-insertion of ontology into the task of knowing'. Considering that qualitative data interpretation and analysis 'does not happen via mechanistic coding, reducing data to themes, and writing up transparent narratives that do little to critique the complexities of social life' (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: vii), each participant is selected for their expressions of ambiguity, contradictions and multiplicity. The data from these four teachers are ones that I returned to over and over again as they surprised me in the ways they described and 'inscribed' their experiences (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 4).

9.1 The Data - Phase Two

'I think we accept that too easily ... we don't examine our own behaviours or their dynamic within our school'

(Michael)

Mindful of Butler's (2005: 7) assertion that there is 'no "I" that can fully stand apart from the social

'The belief that nature is mute and immutable and that all prospects for significance and change reside in culture merely reinscribes the nature-culture dualism that feminists have actively contested'

(Barad, 2007: 183)

conditions of its emergence', the data from the four teachers could be read within subgroups based on age, similar teaching experiences or positions held within the school. Certainly, a description of their differences can be given in categorical ways: Michael and Eoin have both taught for 26 years or more and are located within the in-career phase of the teaching continuum. David and Darren have both taught for five years and are both placed within the induction phase of the teaching continuum. Eoin and David have both worked primarily in urban schools. Michael and Darren work in rural schools. Michael and Eoin have both held managerial positions as part of the school's structure; Michael as Principal, Eoin as holding the IT special duties post in his school. David and Darren have not had the opportunity to gain promotional posts within schools. One explanation for this is that a moratorium on filling posts of responsibilities in schools is in place since March 2009 and continues to apply (Circular 0022/2009; Circular 0004/2014). Yet, these categorical similarities and differences are not treated as comparative, correlational, or casual. Analysis in that manner, Jackson and Mazzei (2012: 4) state, would remain 'entrenched in liberal humanist identity-work of centering and stabilizing the subject'. During the initial stages of coding the data using a voice-centred relational method of data analysis (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998), I focused on themes about gendered experiences (jobs male teachers are asked to do, positive and negative experiences in schools) and themes of gendered bodies (teaching as a vocation, society's view of the school and the labour market). As I attempted to articulate the meanings expressed in specific stories, I found that it was difficult to maintain the separateness of language and bodies.

9.2 Phase Two: Gendered experiences and gendered bodies

This chapter shows how the narrative strategies of these four teachers – highlighting both gendered performativity and material performativity – reinforce the disjuncture between the discursive realms of gendered experiences and the material construction of gendered bodies. There is nothing 'pure' about what each teacher says, as each teacher has already 'made meaning' of their experiences as they choose what to reveal and what not to reveal (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 3). In order to emphasize 'difference within' rather than 'data saturation' (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 4), the data of the four teachers are placed beside each other, layering each voice and troubling each voice. Each teacher presents data that allows the reader to understand how social life gets made along with the dynamics of theory and philosophy, not how it is understood (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012).

As I analyse how male teachers talk about their experiences, I find ‘they do struggle to tell their unconventional stories’ but the struggle does not lie where I anticipated (Chase, 1999: 9). It is not the feminine characteristics of their professional position that causes them the most narrative difficulty. While, they are certainly aware that their caring roles violate the persistent cultural expectation as one that is ‘premised on Westernised aesthetics and consumption’ (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2013: 73), they also embrace the positive role modelling effect a male teacher can have in a school. However, it is the material tension between gendered experiences and gendered bodies that highlight many assumptions that male teachers navigate and negotiate on a daily basis. ‘Actors come in many and wonderful forms’ (Haraway, 2008: 350), as characterised in Chapter 5. In revealing the agency of the world as an actor that produces many new possibilities for truth, ontology will be placed alongside epistemology in presenting the data in this chapter. In other words, the ‘activation’ of the previously passive categories of objects and knowledge will provide a rich way of engaging the reader with the world’s active agency (Haraway, 2008: 350).

Finding answers to the questions of how the social becomes material illustrates the various ways that feminist objectivity ‘makes room for surprises and ironies at the heart of all knowledge production’. Feminist theorists, such as Barad (2007: 170), have developed an approach that is concerned with the interaction of bodies and the environment whereby the focus is on ontology rather than epistemology (Hekman, 2010: 82). ‘Bodies (“human”, “environmental”, or otherwise) are integral “parts” of, or dynamic reconfigurings of, what is’ (Barad, 2007: 170). Reading 4 of a voice-centred relational method of data analysis was particularly helpful as I placed the participants’ accounts and experiences within broader social, political, cultural and structural contexts (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998: 132). However, Reading 4 is only given one sentence explaining its purpose, ‘...placing people within cultural contexts and social structures’ (p. 132) and further assistance was required. The theories of Barad (2007), Jackson and Mazzei (2012) and Hekman (2010) further developed the discursive and material patterns in the analytic analysis of this data.

The overarching theme of this chapter is that reality is an on-going dynamic. This chapter begins with stories that reveal isolation. The patterns of isolation are the result of the bodies of the male teachers and how others react to them. It illustrates how gendered relations and divisions are formed through reiterative performances that take on different meanings in over time and place. This chapter illustrates the ways culture is both embodied and challenged

through corporeal performance. The body that performs the routine makes a conscious decision to resist or to conform to the dominant culture. Perhaps, as noted by Butler (1999: 8), representation will be shown to ‘make sense for feminism only when the subject of ‘women’ is nowhere presumed.’ This chapter concludes with a discussion of how abstract bodies such as increased workloads intra-act with male teachers to create frustration and lower moral. These are not just discursive enactments but economic practices that show how masculinities are materialised through iterative and intra-active agencies of time, place and individuals emerging through one another.

Michael: At the time of our interview Michael is a Principal in a large rural school. He is keenly interested in the topic of gender in schools and particularly the effects the feminised environment of the primary school can have on boys. In his narrative, he recounts how he negotiated his teaching identity both as a male teacher and as Principal and how he continually exercises those professional strengths in engaging staff with gender related issues, ‘I would suspect teachers in my school would realise that gender issues are important to me...’.

Eoin: Eoin has thirty-four years of teaching experience and recently retired from his position as mainstream teacher in a large urban school, ‘I was able to retire now at the age of fifty-five ... but I think the new early retirement for teachers would have to be sixty ... officially the belief is that teaching is getting easier’. In Eoin’s view, society expects the same level of care even though abstract bodies such neoliberal agendas are reshaping teacher-pupil relations. In his narrative as a recently retired male teacher, Eoin describes the Irish education system as a structure that is in free-fall and as a result is locating itself in an increasingly difficult position to attract and retain candidates.

David: David has been teaching for five years. In the first four years of teaching he has subbed in twenty different schools. He now holds a temporary one-year position in an urban school. In his narrative, the uncertainty of the current teaching climate forms the backdrop to his experiences as a male teacher. Regarding the current pay scale for teachers ‘it’s a big loss for me in comparison to other people ... if you are out on your own and you are relying on that wage, I think you quickly realize that maybe it’s not sustainable’.

Darren: Darren has recently gained a permanent contract in an urban school. He is the first male teacher to be employed in his current school. Consequently, he is the first male teacher to teach in junior infants. Additionally, he was the only male pre-service teacher in a group

of thirty undertaking the Infant Education module as part of Curriculum Specialisation in the B. Ed programme. In his narrative, Darren expresses awareness of his minority position pre- and post- teacher education. As a result, he is keenly aware of how gender shapes his professional and personal life experiences, ‘...you might say something and the girls might give a look to each other and throw a few eyes. So you kind of learn things that way...’

9.2.1 Feelings of isolation

After hearing about staffroom interactions, primarily past staffroom dynamics coupled with current staffroom negotiations as Principal, Michael recounts another story of a past school he worked in. He had just secured the position of mainstream class teacher, temporary capacity, and was the first male teacher to ever work in this school.

Michael: ...that was my very first posting and I'll never forget it. It was in an all-girls school ... it was a huge school. There was twenty-five teachers or something in it, you know, and that was a very unusual dynamic ... That was a very funny dynamic. I mean it was like I was a specimen then to be honest as well. Which, certainly for the children, I would have been a specimen because there was this man walking around the school and then for the staff, I don't know, I presume I might have been a specimen as well, 'Oh my God. We have a male'.

During the second interview Michael recounts this story once again:

Michael: I was the first male appointed in that school in 1987, which I suppose is a good few years ago. But I mean no man had worked in that school up to that and that continued on for years afterwards until

only a number of years ago a new Principal was appointed and it was a male Principal. For whatever reason, I don't know, but he is the only male in the school.

Suzanne: Michael's response is recognisable as 'an abstract that summarizes the whole story' (Chase, 1995: 66). It also clearly illustrates Barad's (2007: 183) claim that 'discursive practices are not human-based activities but specific material (re)configurings of the world though

which boundaries, properties, and meanings are differentially enacted'. In Michael's story, female teachers appear to exert considerable influence over the hiring possibilities of male teachers. This interpretation resonates with Barad's

The quality of teaching is determined not just by the 'quality' of the teachers ... but also the environment in which they work. Able teachers are not necessarily going to reach their potential in settings that do not provide appropriate support or sufficient challenge and reward'

(OECD, 2005: 9, as cited in Day and Gu, 2010: 9)

theory of performativity (2007: 184), which claims to be *'iterative intra-activity'* (Italics in original). The influence of female staff members over male teachers is not uncommon among the participants. For example, Eoin recalls the time he gained, by chance, a position in an all-girls school. That is to say, he secured a teaching post in a school due to what he believes to be an error of the Principal.

Eoin: The school I am in at the moment ... I went there via the panel. It was a Nun who [p] I was the only person on the panel and she made the mistake of applying for a teacher and then when she realised I was going to be a man, she was kind of like ... frantic efforts to back-peddle. But

obviously the whole thing was in motion then. Some of the other teachers told me she used to refer to me as the man (Laughter) ... I suppose in a Convent School, the idea of a male even applying ... I mean the applicant would be regarded as crazy and the school and the Principal would be regarded crazy even considering someone for interview.

Suzanne: To transfer a reading of data from 'discursive to material ↔ discursive' is to read these words as 'material' (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 111). These words are not merely a discursive construction based on gender stereotypes. This experience is a material enactment understood through the 'inseparable connections between the linguistic, social, political, and biological...' (p. 119).

These words spoken to Eoin do not have the same significance as they would if spoken by the principal. Yet, these words register as significant because they are expressed by colleagues who speak from privileged positions within schools; female and in a majority.

Darren: In this school they never had a male teacher before, ever. So I was the first ever and there's eight of us in the infant school ... I was the first male teacher that was ever seen in the school, in a permanent capacity anyway. So I was a big shock to the system ... I suppose the children were a bit shocked, I suppose, to see a male teacher at the very start. Lots of them would have presumed 'Oh you are going to be so much more

'The body "says" something, and those who encounter [it] "say" something about the body that they encounter'

(Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 121).

strict and we can't do anything bold' and they would all be on their best behaviour and almost kind of afraid to talk.

David also recounts his experience in the new school he is in:

David: It was ok, it was a little bit awkward ... I don't know if this was a sign but I got into my first conversation with like the only, no [p], one of the male teachers ... I find we usually sit down beside each other, not all the time, but ... I would probably sit beside him more than I would the other teachers.

Suzanne: As cited by Jackson and Mazzei (2012: 121), Eoin and the other male teachers cannot escape their bodies, nor can they escape the construction of

abstract bodies, such as the school in the community, the cultural landscape upon which the school is placed and the education system governing the school system. Each teacher can be in their bodies but how others treat them is the result of their bodies is a material encounter. Jackson and Mazzei's (2012: 121) intra-active reading of agency as

materially and discursively produced resonates with Butler's (1993: 3) concept of an 'exclusionary matrix'. In the exclusionary matrix, Butler notes, a domain of 'abject beings' are formed. The abject beings, or others, are those who are not yet subjects. The subjects are those constituted 'through the force of exclusion and abjection' and create 'a constitutive outside to the subject, an abjected outside'

(Butler, 1993: 3). The regulation of identificatory practice threatens to expose 'the self-grounding presumptions of the sexed subject' (p. 3). Michael recalls a similar story that can be read in relation to Butler's (1993: 3) 'abjected outside', created in and by a six-teacher, all-female staff. It is a story his friend relayed to

him when he mentioned he was partaking in this research study. Michael describes the school in question:

Michael: They would never look for a substitute male teacher because they were familiar with each other, they were familiar with a kind of 'mammy role' and that was how they liked to run a school ... it was a conscious decision by that school.

'Gender norms determine what is and is not a valuable body. Bodies that are not valuable – the abject – can only be recognised if we expand what counts as a valuable body...'

(Hekman, 2014: 122)

Notes from Suzanne's research journal

The assumptions presented by Michael and Eoin are the result of their discursive construction as a male teacher. However, it is further produced and reinforced in the history of care and children, whereby attributions of care have tended to shape or have been shaped by public perceptions of care. This assumption is further reinforced as care was traditionally considered to be 'intuitive, instinctive, a function of anatomy coupled with destiny' for women (Gilligan, 1993: 17). Furthermore, Gilligan's (1993) theory connects language with voice, believing that the care voice is 'thematically feminine' and 'is associated with culturally defined feminine values' (As cited in Hekman, 2005: 125). The male teachers presented here cannot escape gender as 'a shifting and contextual phenomenon' that is a point of convergence 'among culturally and historically specific sets of relations' (Butler, 1990: 14).

Seeing is not believing

If humans are part of the world-body space and open-ended dynamics of intra-activity, does this mean Barad (2007: 172) questions, that humans have no responsibility for the outcome of specific practices? Or, perhaps they are merely pawns in the game of life?’ (p. 172). The answer to these two questions, Barad claims, is categorically no. Barad (2007: 172) argues that it is the liberal humanist conception of the subject, not her concept of agential reality, which encourages the notion that responsibility begins and ends with a wilful subject ‘who is destined to reap the consequences of his actions’. Furthermore, Barad (p. 172) claims, responsibility is not the exclusive right of humans. It is through human advances that ‘we participate in bringing forth the world in its specificity, including ourselves. We have to meet the universe halfway...’ (Barad, 2007: 353). Discourse is not literally what is said as examined in Inter-text 2 – Voice where voice was explored in relation to bodies, inner life and truth. Discourse is what enables and constrains what is said. Through the dynamic interplay of everyday exchanges ‘cause and effect emerge through intra-actions’ (p. 176). Whether human, nonhuman or environmental, ‘...marks are left on bodies: bodies differentially materialize as particular patterns of the world as a result of the specific cuts and reconfigurings that are enacted’ (Barad, 2007: 176). To address the shortcomings of ‘the Cartesian separation of intelligibility and materiality’, Barad puts forward a ‘posthumanist account of performativity that challenges the positioning of materiality as either a given or a mere effect of human agency (Barad, 2007: 183). This theory is called agential realism (Barad, 2010: 175; Hekman, 2010: 74). Agential realism, Barad claims, examines how discursive practices are related to material phenomena (Barad, 2007: 45; Hekman, 2010: 74). ‘Through the ‘enfolding of phenomena, as part of interactive intra-activity, the domains of “interior” and “exterior” lose their previous designations (Barad, 2007: 181). This theory claims that agency is an enactment, not something that someone or something has (p. 178). Our intra-actions not only effect what we know but ‘contribute to the differential matterings of the world (Barad, 2007: 178).

When personal becomes epistemological

Merging personal and professional lives

Tim: ‘... Because you are a teacher you are nearly everything. You are the carer, you are the psychologist, you are the...I won’t say the Mammy, you are more the guardian...’

For some, teaching children is synonymous with caring (King, 1998: 121). Lightfoot (1983) offers the view that female teachers typically seek to integrate their domestic responsibilities with their professional identities (as cited in Pajak and Blase, 1989: 285). This tendency to merge personal and professional issues is often interpreted incorrectly by researchers and policy makers as a sign of weak commitment and attachment to work (Pajak and Blasé, 1989). However, motherhood and mothering are widely acknowledged as important roles. Indeed, women, as mothers, are very powerful in the domestic arena, and as a result assume power by acting the role of mother. As a result, we fail to recognize and understand how teachers integrate and fulfil the multiple roles they enact both within and outside of school. With this in mind, caring for young children can come at a personal cost to male teachers. King (1998: 122) suggests that eighteenth- and nineteenth-century models of asexual teachers have fashioned a notion of teachers as ‘frozen in a revered state’ and disconnected from their bodies. Furthermore, King (p. 122) states that ‘we have not fully rejected the previous century’s notion of teachers as disembodied, desexualized care providers’. Within this stereotype, male teachers’ identities are constructed by others in a way that will keep men out of teaching.

The chunks of data from each of the four teachers appear to hint at encounters of isolation from both pupils and staff due to the minority status of male teachers in schools. However, the discursive performance of each teacher does not fully constitute him because ‘possibilities do not sit still’ (Barad, 2007: 177). There are other performative acts that the male teachers engage in that extend beyond ‘the naiveté of empiricism or the same old narcissistic bedtime stories’ (Barad, 2007: 183). For example, Michael narrates his work history with ease. This may be due to his current position as Principal, which he reveals has ‘a new dynamic, yes.’ Michael uses the word ‘dynamic’ very often when describing the interactions and intra-actions of male and females, principal and staff, staff and staffroom. This suggests that the stories Michael presents have been ‘filtered, processed, and already interpreted’ (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 3). Reality is ‘therefore not a fixed essence. *Reality is an on-going dynamic of intra-activity*’ (Barad, 2007: 206, italics in original). Furthermore, the effects of gender practices, in this case male Principal, point to the performative dimension of gender (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 72). In other words, Barad (2007: 206) claims, humans are part of the formation of the world, ‘humans are *of* the world, not *in* the world, and surely not outside of it looking in’. People do not choose their gendered identities, Jackson and Mazzei (2012: 72) state, because gender ‘gets produced as people repeat themselves’. Furthermore, people do not take on roles to act out; ‘*people become subjects through repetition*’ (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012:73, italics in original). Similarly, Barad (2007: 177) claims, ‘matter plays an agentive role in its iterative materialization’. This is what Butler (1993: 10) terms construction as ‘neither a single act nor a casual process initiated by a subject’. It is itself ‘a temporal process which operates through the reiteration of norms’ (Butler, 1993: 10). Just as human practices are ‘not the only practices that come to matter, but neither is the world ... independent of human practices (Barad, 2007: 206). Similarly, Barad (2007: 206) claims, we do not make the world ‘simply in our image’. Shifting our ontological understanding to a combination of discursive practices and abstract practices, this ‘opens up space for a new formulation of realism (and truth)...’ (Barad, 2007: 207) The goal is to neither privilege the discursive nor the material but to better understand reality through the dynamic relationship between language and reality (Hekman, 2010: 3).

9.2.2 Agency, performativity and materiality

Michael and Darren introduce the topic of agency, performativity and materiality at a micro-level. Principalship, Michael reveals, can be ‘a bit tricky’ and ‘a funny dynamic’ that both he and the staff had to settle in to.

Michael: ...once we settled and got into it, because I was there for seven years and we did settle after a while, but once we settled into it, it would have continued to have been a lonely place to work.

Suzanne: Michael further reveals that as Principal he tends not to initiate staffroom conversations as he is ‘conscious about imposing on their time and their free time’. Additionally, Michael describes the ‘dynamic’ of the staffroom as something that he ‘would never choose to involve myself in ... but I had to like obviously’. Michael’s explanations of both linguistic and bodily performances such as being present in the staffroom and being ‘very friendly with maybe two or three’ staff members to keep up social relations are citational and bodily practices

that take up the norms of the culture and produce Michael as an effect of the performance (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 73).

Darren: ...there used to be kind of a breakfast club before school as well, some of the staff would come in and have breakfast kind of early ... but ... they weren’t particularly the nicest bunch so I wouldn’t really have gone over all the mornings. I would stay in my classroom and just get ready and then run over at eleven o’clock when it was break time and then for big break later on.

Suzanne: Michael and David’s agency is mutually constituted, produced materially and discursively, by both men and by the other teachers.

Attention can be drawn to the how the material of gender (in this case the body) and the discursive constructions of gender (what our ideas are regarding gender that come to us through language) are entangled to produce something other than would be produced singularly (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 121). There is an interruption between the corporeal and the linguistic that signifies social

‘The body has its invariable public dimension; constituted as a social phenomenon in the public sphere, my body is and is not mine’

(Butler, 1993: 21)

meaning. The intra-actions between the male teachers and the school environment are entangled with their subjectivity (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 121). Darren's decision to 'stay' in his classroom and 'run' over to the staffroom at break times further produce Darren as the effect of the performance. Eoin and Michael further explore the theme of agency, performativity and materiality at a macro-level. Just as the repeated citation of speech acts can either strengthen or undermine a normative identity, repeated gestural acts can either 'reconsolidate naturalized identities' or 'produce 'a dissonant and denaturalized performance that reveals the performative status of the natural self' (Butler, 1999: 146).

Eoin: Yeah, then it [the school] went Co-ed I suppose five, seven years ago. I would say the Principal felt like the numbers were starting to dip and you had a situation in the local area where say, boys were going to a different school, to an all-boys school and like I say, she was a Nun and she wanted to try and maximise numbers by going co-ed and she thought that she

would be able to bring in boys, so beef up the numbers.

Michael: I was talking to another Principal there recently. He is a Principal in a boy's school ... they receive the first class pupils from the other schools in the locality and the other schools are still in the same vein whereby they have mixed classes as far as

first and then the boys go to this school and the girls continue up to sixth. If both schools were to describe themselves they would describe themselves as girls schools ... no boy got a psychological assessment in junior, senior or first... it was like the boys in that school were tolerated until first class and then began the girls' school that they call themselves. And I

hadn't mentioned this topic of conversation with him before but he was talking about it, in relation to the high number of applicants needed in second class in comparison to other classes ... they have to have a bit of work done by the time they come to third and fourth class because they would have high incidence of

'One of the key claims that conservative modernizing forces have advanced is that education is not only a crucial cause of the economic and cultural crises many nations are experiencing, but it is also a major part of the solution'

(Apple, 2013: 102)

Resource Hours. They have 250 pupils, we would have 300 pupils. We have 60 hours of Resource, they would have 110 hours of Resource. That has huge impacts on all those boys so straight away they are starting off on a negative. I am not saying that the Resource hours would have been the be-all-and-end-all. If they were treated with the same esteem as the girls they would have been feeling better about themselves and they would have been in a better position. So it contributes to all those little issues that arise afterwards; the discipline issues, the inability to learn properly after it and all those things are contributed to by that gender issue, you know, that gender attitude, you know? ... and very often you are biased towards your own gender so therefore it stands to reason that if you have 86% of the teaching cohort is female then 86% of the bias is likely to be tending towards the feminisation of the school or whatever it is and I think that needs to be explored more.

Notes from Suzanne's research journal:
Barad (2007: 207) highlights the material

'How far can we make generalizations about 'boys' as a bloc? If boys are having trouble in school, which boys, and what are the sources of their troubles? How far can schools affect masculinity and its enactment?'

(Connell, 2000: 150)

constraints, exclusions and 'the material dimension of regulatory practices' together are important to the process of materialisation, 'performativity must be understood as not simply an issue of how discourse comes to matter' but how matter makes itself felt (Barad, 2007: 208). Approaching knowledge as knowing in being (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 119)

requires a different approach to thinking theory with data. It necessitates a fundamental break in discursive privilege of knowledge as the sole domain of epistemology (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 119).

Theoretical Memo: To borrow Barad's (2007: 185) term 'onto-epistemology', thinking with theory in this study holds the belief that we obtain

knowledge by being part of the world, as 'practices of knowing and being are not isolable' (Barad, 2007: 185). Barad (p. 209) questions 'what is the relationship between materiality and discourse such that regulatory apparatuses are susceptible to being reworked through resignifications as well as through material

rearrangements?’ Butler (1993: 21, as cited in Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 120) states that the body has an ‘invariable public dimension; constituted as a phenomenon in the public sphere, my body is and is not mine. However perceived, gender is socially constructed and is ‘a reflection of dominant ideas and a place where these ideas are played out or resisted through practice’ (Weiner, 1994: 4). Gendered relations and divisions are formed ‘through ideology and concretized in practice’ (Weiner, 1994: 4).

Language and dynamic effects: Michael describes common terms used to refer to male and female teachers, which are in common usage in schools and given little thought.

Michael: I know a primary school where, um ... the Principal who has just retired, he was always Sir, and the teachers called him Sir. He was the only male amongst eight, a staff of eight. He was the only male and the other seven were female and they called him Sir and the children all called him Sir. I would say it was kind of more a term of endearment on behalf of the staff because they really liked him and thought he was really good and he was very good and very efficient. But why the word Sir? You know, it doesn’t have anything but power connotations ...

‘...certainly the female teachers that I would know of within the school, three or four of them, would have...bowed would be too strong a word but certainly would have [p] um [p] I would have described his position as a powerful position within that school.

Notes from Suzanne’s research journal:

There has been a long association between work and masculine self-identity. Traditionally male teachers, who held positions of power as Principals in schools, were referred to as Master or Sir. While terms such as ‘Sir’, ‘Master’, ‘lads’ and ‘girls’ may appear ‘innocuous’, they are ‘historical categories subject to social interpretation and cultural politics’ (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2013: 38). As noted by Jackson and Mazzei (2012: 68), ‘...language-as-a-social-practice does not reflect the intention (or action) of the individual; language produces the discursive possibilities of performance ... “the doer” becomes an effect of that language’. Similarly, Paechter (1998: 24) notes that the ways in which language is regulated and used in school ‘both reflect and prepare students for gender inequalities in language use in wider society’. Indeed, terms of sexual and gender divisions, such as male/female, boy/girl, feminine/masculine ‘permeate the way we think and talk about ourselves and

each other' (Siann, 1994: 1). Furthermore, power, as a result, can be employed in 'subtle and sophisticated ways ... to get women and men to comply with societal expectations of the appropriate ways to perform tasks inside and outside the home.' (Chapman, 2004: 2). Bourdieu refers to this as 'symbolic violence', which he describes as 'a gentle violence, imperceptible and invisible even to its victims' (Bourdieu, 2001: 1). Similarly, Hargreaves (2003: 59) describes teachers as 'casualties of the knowledge society' resulting in 'more and more teachers are pressured to teach as they are told'.

Language is power. It is a form of social practice and 'an important mechanism for structuring thought.' The ability to name and create concepts through discourse is a form of control and domination. 'This means that if our language is part of a discourse in which particular groups are treated as Other, then our thinking will focus on the dominant group...'

(Paechter, 1998: 6)

9.2.3 The performativity of the educational landscape

‘It’s like air traffic controls, no one would presume that you could change small things and it’s not going to have an impact on the actual thing...’

Eoin: The school now is competing in a modern kind of labour market ... We are moving in an era now where there is a lot more flexibility and teachers now, they don’t probably see themselves as having a vocation, like, that they are going to put up with, you know, bad working conditions. They are now in a jobs market, a labour market, and they will move out of that if they feel there are better working conditions or, even, eventually move out of teaching entirely.

Michael: ...we have produced too many teaches so it is, in my experience, it is soul destroying for a number of reasons ... I came out of college in ’87 at a time

when there was no jobs. It was not quite as bad as it is now but it was very bad ... at the time it was the be all and end all, a permanent job, that’s what you were becoming a teacher for, to get a permanent job. It was the way, the outlook of the country at the time ...

Eoin: ...if you say, someone who’s subbing ad hoc. That’s doable for a few years but really as people get on in years they probably start asking questions like is this really a feasible option? But I think the public still has the idea that, you know, the school is there, it’s sort of ... it’s almost like a permanent feature. It can’t change. It’s a constant.

Michael: The last four or five years, I am dealing with substitute teachers who are qualified for three years, four years and one is even qualified for five years and has been on the train for the last five years. I think it’s terrible, very difficult ... in relation to younger teachers. I think that they have a very demoralising road ahead of them ... I don’t know is it a symptom of or is it

‘The EU has certainly ushered in a whole new era of laws ... but I don’t think the EU has direct impact on schools and I think a lot of Irish policies are short-term ... an expanding school population and cutting the budgets at the same time was just pure short-term housekeeping. No one has a vision for education.’

(Eoin)

indicative of the way employment is going in the country anyway?

Darren: I was one of the 2011 graduates, well 2012 graduates but I did a day's subbing in 2011. That made me eligible for the lower pay. There's three pay-scales, there's pre-2011, there's the 2011 one and post ... so I am on the middle one, the lower pay-scale. I suppose you'd feel very angry at the start, at the beginning. I am kind of getting used to it now, I suppose. I'm just stuck with it and there's nothing I can do ... Like, I never remember any day being told your pay is going to be less than other people who graduated last year. It just seemed to happen overnight.

David: ...it's a big loss for me in comparison to other people and it's not really fair. It's just because we are a year younger, just because we came out at the wrong time and basically it's a thing that will affect you for the duration of your career...

Michael: And I'm ashamed that even personally I sat back and I said it was terrible at the time ... but now I saw a survey being done where a young teacher ...she had three pay scales anyway and the differentials with teachers starting say on the two days beforehand and then afterwards over forty years is 230

something thousand euro ... like, that's terrible and I think it's so unfair

Darren: I was just at my INTO meeting two weeks ago after a Croke Park hour ... I have gone to all the meetings, I always bring it up, myself and another local girl that's on the same pay-scale. Do you know the older teachers seem to be in the position of Chairperson and Secretary and you know they don't really empathise too much really? It's not really shock to them. I suppose they are so [p] They have got a massive wage at their stage or whatever ... When you mention it at the meetings then all you are told is that we are working on that at the moment, the INTO is working on that. It's a funny reaction, it's like oh we'll pass that message on to the CEC rep ... Another thing at the meetings, when you do bring it up like, I actually have had that response as well, teaching is a vocation. It's not about the money ... That's what I was told by an older teacher ...You wouldn't really feel great after hearing that you know amongst the group ... It is kind of degrading and it is not really incentivising us to go out and do a good days work either ...

David: ...the thing that would irritate you about the Trade Unions is that it's all kind of older teachers who are involved and that when these changes came in for newer

teachers, obviously younger teachers they wouldn't really know what's going on when they are just after getting a job, they don't really have representation because they were just graduating from college so they are like the most vulnerable yet like the Trade Unions didn't do anything to protect the most vulnerable ...because it didn't affect them they didn't, they didn't seem to stand up for it, you know what I mean? I went to an INTO meeting recently and they were going on about it but still it's like you always get the impression that they should be doing more.

Eoin: I would say first of all I have never been very active mainly because I think, I just think they are more like a professional organization for the teachers rather than a trade union. Yeah, they lost any kind of connection, grasp or influence that they ever had.

Michael: No it's not on their radar, a lot of teachers we'll say about your age ... none of them will ever engage with the Union ... In my section, in my union group, we have this small little thing, 85 teachers and 30 out of the 85 voted. Not even 50%, not even close to 50%. It's terrible.

Eoin: I remember seeing the ... was it the last Teaching Council election? The actual

turnout, it's on their website ... the turnout was something absolutely chronic, you were talking about 15% or 20% turnout ...I'm just saying that if you had in some kind of developing world country, if you turned out in a general election, 15 or 20%, you would have all the UN observers declaring it null and void (Laughs) ... I suppose I think the problem with the INTO as an organisation is that they never kind of stand up and kind of call something. They are too obsessed with just the immediate. They won't spot like a cultural trend ...

Darren: I don't know are the teachers in general, just kind of take things on board rather than going on fighting ... when that actually happened I don't remember people taking to the streets ... I think if it was a more male dominated profession it mightn't have happened as easy. It seemed to just happen overnight.

David: ...a guy who is in my school, he's a member of the INTO ... he was saying like younger teachers should literally just be coming to every INTO meeting and just giving out until they are heard but that's very hard to do. He was saying that it's like amongst younger teachers there is an acceptance of these new cuts, like people aren't actually doing anything about it.

Eoin: I think a lot of parents actually would like to see a lot more males in teaching. I really think it's vital for the future of primary teaching because I just think in the occupation of say 85% female, I think in terms of say Trade Union stuff like that, what 85% of females are actually going to accept, like, if it was say 50:50 they wouldn't be taking a lot of the initiatives that are being kind of bounced into the schools like... What is the school actually for?

Notes from Suzanne's research journal:

As I attempt to understand how the discursive constructions of these four teachers intra-act with their material condition, the performativity of education and its intra-action with other major institutions in society is brought into question. As I sought to present the performativity of the educational landscape questions of how people (In this case, teachers) and power (the economy) intra-act. Locating the school on the cultural landscape meant bringing culture and society into an 'uneasy relationship' (Butler, 1993). While schools have

historically 'served as engines of working class mobility' (Apple, 2013: 19), schools also participate in 'the process through which particular groups are granted status and other groups remain unrecognised...' (p. 21). The conversations of these four teachers highlight how hegemonic control can only be viewed as 'the *partial* exercise of leadership by dominant groups' and that

a multiplicity of power relations govern our schools (Apple, 2006: 15).

Theoretical Memo: A relationship exists between education and larger issues of economy and politics (Apple, 1996: 5), explored in further detail in Chapter 10 - Discussion. Indeed, the domain of education is one in which the Right has gained increasing

control (Apple, 2006: 6). Apple (2013: 130) advises that more attention be paid to the creative ideological work that the Right has been doing for '... we are *not alone* in acting in the space of changing the connections between education and other major institutions in society' (Apple, 2013: 128). The panic about failing boys, illiteracy and school violence have been

'It's almost as if schooling itself as a collective process is an enemy, a source of pollution that threatens the purity of market solutions and possessive individualism'

(Apple, 2013: 4)

used by dominant groups to shift debate on education ‘and all things social’ onto the ‘terrain of traditionalism, standardization, productivity, marketization, and industrial needs’ (p. 6). Part of the success of this shift of focus has been the tension between a neoliberal emphasis on market values and a neoconservative attachment to traditional norms and values. This tension and the driving force behind it have established ‘ideological tendencies’ that have been introduced to schools such as ‘neoliberal marketised solutions to educational problems, neoconservative intellectuals who want a ‘return’ to higher standards and a ‘common culture’ ... accountability, measurement and management’ (Apple, 2013: 128). It supports the binary between us and them; hard-working and law abiding with lazy and permissive (Apple, 2006: 7). Behind this ideological agenda is ‘a thoroughgoing attack on teachers and especially teacher unions ... a massive weakening of teachers’ power plays a large part here’ (p. 7). This observation relates to Neil’s description of teaching,

Neil: ...there is no support for teachers now ... Nobody feels like it’s their job.

Similarly, Darren description of teachers’ union resonated with Apple’s (2013) claims,

Darren: Nobody knows what’s going on behind the scenes.

Suzanne: Apple (2013: 130) cites the Italian theorist Gramsci who believed that cultural experiences and religion coupled with people’s ‘good sense’ and ‘bad sense’ embodied popular understanding. ‘...dominant groups work off the elements of good sense that people have (Gramsci, 1971, as cited in Apple, 2013: 128)’. Within education we must question the neoliberal agenda and how it has influenced common sense understandings of schools and society’s expectation of what a school should provide. Eoin hints at the aspects of neoliberalism such as working long hours and the demand to be geographically mobile without adequate child-care provisions that impinge on common-sense understandings of the school.

Eoin: Society’s view of the primary school now is more like of a care-giver and a lot of parents, like working parents are actually quite happy with the idea. You know, there’s no problem if there’s an all-female institution, it’s probably kind of better. It’s almost like an extension of say crèche or pre-school where you have all-women and they [the children] would be looked after and very caring and I think with the whole raft of initiatives, the anti-

bullying, everything there's a public view there of some people who kind of say it's actually probably kind of better or that it's no big deal if its all-female.

Suzanne: A 'management by stress' (Robertson, 1992: 36, as cited in Apple, 2006: 7) pattern can be read in the account' of these 4 teachers, particularly Darren's and David's stories. Indeed, a comment made by Neil in Phase 3 is relevant here. Neil alluded to the concept of 'management by stress' when he referred to a lack of teacher support from managerial levels.

Neil: '... that creates a climate of fear because when you know there is no back up at the top that creates [p] ... if you know there's nothing behind you, you are done. A lot of schools, I think a lot of teachers feel that now. They kind of say to themselves that's creating this culture ... there is bad management, they will abandon you immediately to make sure to protect themselves ... That creates a very bad atmosphere in schools...'

'... the thing about culture is that ... it's almost an invisible thing. But you can measure indicators. Even the amount of males applying [for teaching] and the number of males being successful. You can make a deduction from that. Or, say the number of applicants for Principalships and how that is falling. That tells you something about the culture within a school...'

(Eoin)

Teacher professionalization has been ‘a historically precarious project: resisted by governments, bureaucracies and business interests without, and undermined by ambiguities of loyalty, strategy and identity within’ (Hargreaves and Goodson, 1996: 2). Indeed, during the mid-1960s, the movement towards the professionalization of teaching in Ireland coincided with demands for the restructuring of education and, in particular, the reorganisation of teacher training at primary level. However, this initiative ‘never got off the ground properly due to the flurry of other activities’ taking place within the Department of Education and the Department of Education’s ‘reluctance to share power...’ (O’ Toole, 1994: 4). Furthermore, Coolahan (2004: 9) notes that economic difficulties during the mid-eighties resulted in ‘a number of policy “wobbles” caused ‘a slowdown of momentum’ in teacher education. Policy reports on teacher education were not fulfilled. The country’s largest teacher education college, Carysfort College, was closed in 1987 and a Cabinet decision was made to close three of the five university education departments offering Higher Diploma in Education Courses (Coolahan, 2004: 9). The latter decision was never implemented. These developments caused uncertainty within education at the time but were later replaced by a neoliberal drive towards measurement and management. Within the sphere of education, a parallel can be made between Ireland’s growing economy and a professionally oriented middle-class. This has resulted in on-going attempts to introduce market logics inside public sites such as education (Apple, 2013). It also illustrates ‘the neoliberal and neoconservative reconstructions of our institutions, of our common sense, of the meanings associate with democracy, and of our very identities’ (p. 128). This reconstruction is intrinsically linked with teachers’ daily lives and particularly with employment and unemployment rates, differing wage rates, recruitment and retention of teachers and teacher burnout.

9.2.4 Conclusion of chapter

The stories presented in this chapter illustrate a sense of powerlessness and a sense of attack. In relation to production and work, masculinities have ‘come to be associated with being a breadwinner’ (Connell, 1995: 90). A current call for educational reform surrounding education and paid work has important implications for masculinities in schools. The notion of the male ‘breadwinner’ has its origins in historical developments but have been reproduced through the separation of the public and private spheres (Reed, 1996: 105). Traditionally, the breadwinner’s wage was ‘won’ and the ‘size of the wage was used ... to indicate their manliness’ (Baron, 1992: 72, as cited in Reed, 1996: 105). Similarly, Andrew Tolson argues that ‘in our society the main focus of masculinity is the wage’ (As cited in Connell, 1995: 93). Indeed, the ‘breadwinner’ wage objective was at the price of driving divisions between male and female workers (Connell, 1995: 29). However, ‘this definition of male ‘breadwinner’ will come under pressure when it becomes impossible for men to win the bread’ (p. 90). In other words, the competitive ethos of neoliberal solutions and a reduction of paid employment for teachers marginalise those who do not share these ideological values or who are not able to participate in their practices due to work constraints or family commitments. This chapter highlights how the ‘affective components of daily life ... emotional capital’ have been minimized and ignored in education. (Apple, 2013: 15).

Teachers are ‘heirs to a distinguished tradition of professional dedication and service’

(Coolahan, 1981: 230)

‘In schools, what you have had for the last 25 years are people saying ‘we will take on this initiative and we will take on another one’. It sounds nice at the time ... but it’s in keeping with the very idea that the teacher is generous and [teaching] is a vocation...but the whole system starts crumbling’.

(Eoin)

Chapter 10 - Discussion

This chapter discusses the main concerns emerging from the study from the vantage point of bodies, care and hegemonic masculinities. Throughout each phase of interview, the three themes of bodies, care and hegemonic masculinities constantly emerged in conversation. In previous chapters, particularly Chapter 8 – Data Collection and Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns, the discussion of these topics was segmented. This is because poststructural studies ‘seek to avoid the deceptive simplicity of one-word, categorical explanations’ (King, 1998: 124). This study sought to answer two embedded questions using Butler’s (1999) theory of gender performativity and Barad’s (2007) theory of ‘intra-action’:

1. What are the performative acts that (re)produce male teachers’ subjectivities as primary school teachers?
2. How do male teachers intra-act with the materiality of their world, such as the school, the community and the education system, in ways that produce different becomings?

10.1 Bodies, Care and Hegemonic Masculinities

For the purpose of concluding this thesis, the categories of bodies, care and hegemonic masculinities will be discussed under each embedded question. The issues will be considered as follows:

Research question 1:

Performative acts that (re)produce male teachers’ subjectivities

- Care;
- Caring professions – gender divisions;
- Sexual division of labour, power and neoliberalism;
- Hegemonic masculinity;
- Authority of control;
- Authority of marginalisation.

Research question 2:

How male teachers intra-act with the materiality of their world in ways that produce different becomings

- Hegemonic masculinity and intra-action;
- The school building;
- The body as power;
- Bodily boundaries;
- Addressing assumptions.

10.2 Research question 1

10.2.1 Care

Care, when considered as a performative act, reproduces male teachers' subjectivities in the workplace. This is because caring and emotional attributes do not correspond with workplace perceptions of masculinities. Caring can be defined in a number of varied ways but this study takes Noddings (1992: 15) definition of care as relational, not as a virtue or an individual attribute. 'A caring relation is ... a connection or encounter between two human beings – a carer and a recipient of care'. It is a way of being in relation, not a set of specific behaviours (Nodding, 1992: 17). However, when men exhibit caring attributes at work, they are not considered compatible with dominant definitions of masculinities. Indeed, motherly or caring qualities are not deemed appropriate to the male domain of management or authority. Furthermore, a caring approach to education may suggest an anti-intellectual approach. David alluded to this when he proposed that female teachers are more suited to teach young children as discussed in Chapter 3 – An Exploration of Masculinities where different perspectives of masculinities were explored.

Sustaining beliefs about men and masculinities can be read in relation to the 'global subordination of women to men' (Connell, 1987: 183). Within this framework, which connects masculinities to wider social and economic forces, caring is

Connell (1995: 36) notes that economic circumstances and organisational structure 'enter into the making of masculinity at the most intimate level'. A key step in understanding gender in schools is to 'think institutionally' (Hansot and Tyack, 1998, as cited in Connell, 2000: 152). For example, in schools, gender is embedded in the daily functioning of a school such as division of labour and authority patterns (Connell, 2000: 152). These are sites of gender politics which provides the context of gender relations in individual schools (Connell, 2000: 152).

associated with ‘subservience’ (Noddings, 2006: 228). Similarly, King (1998: 126) notes its ‘subordinated status.’ Holding on to the ‘centrality of women’s oppression’ in a study of masculinities, Haywood and Mac an Ghail (2003: 9) note, has ‘generated some of the most exciting work on men and masculinity’. With this in mind, understandings of masculinities impact on what is considered as work. Alvesson and Billing (1997: 90) contend that gendered work is ‘deeper than sex typing, meaning that not only is a job openly viewed as women’s or men’s work, but that it refers also to non-explicit meanings, unconscious fantasies and associations’. In other words, what men do is synonymous with what men are. The gender of care, as examined in Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns, is considered female (King, 1998: 126). This is because, Noddings (2006: 228) notes, care and caregiving are treated as the same. The dual nature of care, the technical concept involving attention and response and hands-on caregiving, may help to explain the ambiguity of care in education. Caregiving has long been the domain of women and ‘the ethics of care seems to have its origin in female experience’ (p. 229). Within this in mind, this section draws out the links between men and work within a caring context.

10.2.2 Caring professions – gender divisions

In Chapter 8 – Data Collection and Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns, attention was focused on how large social forces impact on men who teach at primary level. In Chapter 8 – Data Collection, care was placed centre-stage in discussions about the perceptions of men who work with young children. A number of reasons set care apart as a performative act that reproduces male teachers’ subjectivities in the

Values and virtues:

Gender and institutions

Gender has an integral relationship with work and organisations. It is a key concept for knowing ‘what is happening with individuals in their working lives’ and for identifying ‘how people encounter encouragement, scepticism, support and suffering’ at work (Alvesson and Due Billing, 1997: 1). The process of gendering is difficult to discern because organisational logic seems on the surface to be gender neutral

(Acker, 1990: 142, as cited in Gottfried, 2014: 86).

workplace. One major reason was the relationship between men and work. The idea that gender-based relationships of social and work roles are ‘appropriate’ for women and ‘inappropriate’ for men must be viewed in terms of larger social and cultural ideologies. Work has traditionally been understood as an important moment in the passage from boyhood to adulthood, as discussed in Chapter 3 – An Exploration of Masculinities through explorations of men, emotions, identity and external performance. Similarly, Chapter 8 – Data Collection examines work as a fundamental foundation of masculine identity. Historically, Haywood and Mac an Ghail (2003: 22) note, ‘many processes involved in becoming a worker simultaneously interconnect with becoming a man’. With this understanding, an important passage is made from the private family sphere to the public sphere that is characterised by a shift in values from ‘dependence to independence’ (p. 22). Matthew alludes to such values,

Matthew: ‘...men have to rule the world and they have to be in charge...’

Similarly, Neil alludes to the link between work and masculinities.

Neil: ‘It is not a very masculine job to admit to, ‘I’m a primary school teacher’ versus you’re a plumber, you know what I mean? You are good at doing things we expect men to be good at doing ... laying pipes ... fixing blockages or you are a brick-layer or you’re a cabinet maker. We expect men to be good at those things. ‘You are a teacher. What do you do?’ ‘I teach, I write [p] I do long-term plans...’ Like, how manly is that?’

The social aspects of care locate it within the personal or private realm. Furthermore, economic aspects relegate care to the status of unpaid labour (Noddings, 2006: 126). However, when male teachers enact caring behaviour it disrupts the subordinate status of care. When the boundaries of public (the workplace) and private (care) become blurred, male teachers adopt alternative resources to validate their masculine identities. Care may manifest in caring-*for* and caring-*about* (King, 1998: 126). Engaging in caring-*for* behaviour involves listening, speaking softly, touching, hugging and providing space. Women, in general, have been expected to care in this manner, ‘that is, to provide tender, hands-on caregiving’ (Noddings, 2006: 229). These acts may seem ‘unnatural’ when enacted by male teachers. Indeed, King (1998: 126) notes that it is ‘...striking that the options for care are identical for men and women, but the choices are weighed differently based on gender’. Furthermore, there is an expectation that caring is something one does with young children. This

behaviour is seen as appropriate for female teachers, not for male teachers. This is illustrated in David's story about holding children's hands on the yard.

David: *'I remember as well there was a special unit in the other school I was working in ... I remember I had to bring them out to the yard and you have to hold hands with them and stuff but I wouldn't feel comfortable holding hands with kids. I know it's for their safety but still you wouldn't feel comfortable holding hands and people walking past the school and I am walking around holding hands with all these kids. Whereas for a female teacher, probably, it's completely natural.'*

Similarly, Matthew recounts a story about caring for pupils that further illustrates that caring options are more limited for male teachers.

Matthew: *'One of the girls [Teachers] here wouldn't have thought twice about giving them a hug, wouldn't have thought twice, but as a man you do think twice.'*

Furthermore, Michael clearly outlines his limited caring options,

Michael: *'I would hold their hand no problem, certainly to direct a Junior Infant and a Senior Infant. First Class, I am beginning to think about it. Second Class, I won't ... I would tend to a knee but I would stop at a hug ... There's no way I would ever give a hug.'*

Additionally, Darren feels restricted in offering a caring-for approach to the junior infant pupils in his class. This is evident in situations where young pupils are not fully toilet-trained.

Darren: *'I can't change them so I would send them off to change on their own...'*

Male teachers may distance themselves from these behaviours and 'only care about' pupils (King, 1998: 126). In other words, male teachers will represent their students, encourage and

Willis' (1979) study of working-class culture suggests the hard, physically demanding labour of manual work is understood and reinterpreted by working-class men as being heroic and as requiring physical and mental bravery'

(Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2003: 29)

discuss them with others but overall they will ‘appear not to care’ (p. 126). Also evident is the manner in which male teachers reinforce existing stereotypes, with hardness and toughness, rather than challenging them. In Chapter 8 – Data Collection we observe the lived reality of hegemonic masculinity, the notion of complicity and male teachers who work within the structures of a ‘gender regime’. As stated by Connell (1995: 79) ‘masculinities constructed in ways that realize the patriarchal dividend, without the tensions or risks of being the frontline troops of patriarchy, are complicit in this sense’. Complicity is one side of the relationship to hegemonic masculinities; marginalisation is the other (Connell, 1995: 81). Complicity forms part of the gender order and was evident at various instances throughout my meetings with the participants. While challenging the normative ascriptions of masculine behaviours, some of the teachers in this study also took up a heroic sense of masculinity, whereby they pioneered the care of young children (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2013: 108). For example, Matthew states, ‘I think I am probably a little bit tougher on the kids ... You know toughen up, grow up ... some of the temporary female teachers as well ... they wouldn’t tackle it as bluntly and I come in like a sledge hammer ...’. Additionally, Matthew recalls a time the bell rang signalling the end of play-time but the children refused to stop playing and to ‘freeze’.

Matthew: ‘I started roaring at the top of my voice ‘Freeze! Freeze! You! You!’ ... my poor colleague ... said that it was great having me there because my voice would carry a hell of a lot further than hers did.’

This notion of courage and fearlessness in teaching children illustrates the benefits of patriarchy at school in terms of men’s prestige and right to command. It also brings into question how neoliberal aims for education have reconstructed ‘our common sense’ and ‘our very identity’ (Apple, 2013: 128). Apple (p.13) states that the overall aim of a neoliberal approach to education is to provide the educational conditions believed essential ‘both for increasing international competitiveness, profit, and discipline for returning us to a romanticised past of the ‘ideal’ school’. Similarly, Collinson and Hearn (1996: 1) note the ‘strange silence’, which reflects ‘an embedded and taken-for-granted association, even conflation’ of men with power, authority and prestige. In this case, the ‘remasculinization of teaching ... is characterised by emotional detachment’ (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2003: 64). Haywood and Mac an Ghail are referring to what Whitehead (2002: 51) terms ‘the masculinist paradigm at the heart of education’ that encapsulates ‘competition, outcome,

achievement, work ethic and performativity, as both the purpose and defining character of education' (As cited in Haywood and Mac ah Ghail, 2013: 89). This is a challenge for male teachers to care in schools, which is a largely unexamined concept in education (King, 1998:15).

10.2.3 Sexual division of labour, power and neoliberalism

Manhood is associated with power – over women and over other men (Kimmel, 2001: 38). Within education, the most striking internal division is the gender division of labour (Connell, 2000: 148). The sexual division of labour is 'at its simplest' the 'allocation of particular types of work to particular categories of people' (Connell, 1987: 99). It is a form of social control as 'this allocation becomes a constraint on further practice' (p. 99). Social control in this manner can enter our inner space, our consciousness, and impact on decisions made in school. Neil provides an example of this in relation to taking photographs at school sports events.

Neil: *I will give you an example of something that I won't do ... if we go to matches sometimes, you know, someone brings a camera and takes a team photograph. There is no way I am taking that. Absolutely no way and sometimes they might take photographs during the match and that's fine too but there is no way I am doing it because I just feel as a male that someone's going to say 'He's there with a camera and he's taking photographs of children' ... I don't think anyone would assume anything of a female doing it'.*

Although gender alone cannot provide an adequate lens for understanding the ways in which people make certain decisions, as was discussed in inter-text 1, a gendered division of labour is evident in Neil's story at a micro-level. In this example, taking photographs of pupils at a school's sports event is considered appropriate for a female teacher but inappropriate for a male teacher.

Noddings (2006: 227) notes that the caring professions are mostly filled by women and are 'relatively ill paid' reinforcing society's tendency 'to exploit women'. Connell (1987: 99) notes that an employee entering a firm is given 'job X if a woman, job Y if a man'. In most cultures, women are responsible for child care (Kimmel, 2013: 62). Within this context, caring-for young children is 'often associated with a cultural definition of women as caring, gentle, self-sacrificing and industrious' (Connell and Pearse, 2015: 3). This was highlighted in Chapter 3 – An Exploration of Masculinities where the participants gave many examples

of their experiences of sex-role modelling. The conventional sexual division of labour has strong cultural and historical supports. As illustrated in Chapter 1 - Introduction, the majority of Irish workers in skilled trade are males and the majority of Irish workers in caring, leisure and other services are female. The sexual division of labour also involves the design of the work (Connell, 1987: 101). As children grow, they need less care and so male teachers are seen as more suitable to teach senior classes in schools.

Paul: *'There is a perception that ladies may be more in tune with the emotional side of things ... and as a child grows and breaks the kind of parental attachments and becomes a bit more independent and grounded in themselves that they are only then able for a man ... it's not something that I share but then I should probably practice what I preach...'*

The sexual division of labour is part of a larger pattern, 'a gender-structured system of production, consumption and distribution' (Connell, 1987: 103). This pattern has much to do with sexual politics and connecting particular skills with particular forms of masculinities and femininities. Similarly, Kimmel (2013: 63) notes that if a sex-based division of labour has outlived its usefulness, it must be held in place by 'the power of one sex over the other'. For example, in teaching women are less equitable involved in senior management (Lynch, 1999: 154). Teaching has taken on a business management style. As a result, the exploration of masculinities in schools has been accompanied in the last decade with 'a neo-liberal and neo-conservative political agenda' that continues to impact on social and educational policy (Martino, 2007: 47). Business management, Connell (1987: 103) notes, incorporates forms of masculinities such as 'interpersonal dominance' and a 'tough' stance towards leadership and language. Importantly, 'language does count' (Apple (1996: 17). Bordo (2003: 171) notes the masculine language of 'self-control, determination, cool, emotional discipline, mastery, and so on', which is evident in neoliberal discourse. The performativity of education and its intra-action with other major institutions in society was brought into question was discussed in Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns. As was shown in Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns, the debate on education has shifted to increased economic productivity with a strong emphasis on a common culture. This shift, which relies on 'winning consent' (Apple, 1996: 15), has succeeded in Ireland because 'so many parents are concerned about the economic and cultural futures of their children' (Apple, 1996: 6). 'Rightist discourse connects with the experiences of many working class and middle class people' (p. 6). Yet,

such policies, Apple (p. 7) notes, are ‘sapping our way of life’. This pattern of ‘sapping’ energy is evident in both Neil and Michael’s stories.

Neil: ‘... *the job is overwhelming. It’s all encompassing... It’s the first time that on a Sunday I am thinking about Monday.*’

Michael: ‘...*it’s a foregone conclusion now, it’s assumed that you are not finished at three. There’s very few teachers that walk out the door every day at three o’clock ... by and large most of the teachers that walk out today at three o’clock maybe one day a week, then it would be half past three two days a week, then it could be half past four another one day a week and maybe even later again. That’s the rate of input that teachers that I see are putting into teaching at the moment*’

The threads of care, the sexual division of labour and masculinities woven here form a picture of current trends of performative acts that (re)produce male teachers’ subjectivities. In order to further consider the cultural politics of education, the following section demonstrates how hegemonic masculinity shines a light on the performative aspects of public masculinity.

10.2.4 Hegemonic masculinity

A key aspect of male teachers’ identity is the performance of a public masculinity. Masculinities are produced through the work that bodies do as discussed in Chapter 9 - Narrative Patterns. As a result, male teachers adopt different styles in the workplace, as explored in Chapter 8 – Data Collection during discussions of men and care and in Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns in discussions of staffroom interactions. Just as masculinities are aligned in relation to setting practices, such as the staffroom or the classroom, schools themselves are sites where ‘male dominance is regulated, normalized and legitimized’ (Skelton, 1996: 23). Many kinds of practice produce knowledge (Connell, 1995: 37). One practice termed hegemony or the organisation of masculinities into hierarchical order, was a regular pattern in the stories told by participants. Hegemonic masculinities refer to modes of masculinities that claim the ‘highest status and exercise the greatest influence and authority’ (Skelton, 1996: 50). That is to say that they are both dominant and dominating. Chapter 8 – Data Collection contains clear illustrations of hegemonic masculinities at play in staffroom interactions. In primary schools, the concept of authority has been associated with male teachers and with hegemony. This can be seen through various institutional practices: male teachers are more likely to have responsibility for senior classes, occupy decision-making roles such as

Principal, Assistant Principal, and generally maintain discipline throughout the school. Hegemony, the form of dominant masculinity prevailing in a school, was referred to throughout this thesis to explain behaviours *among* male teachers. Connell (1995) maintains that to recognise diversity within a setting is not enough. We must also ‘recognize the *relations* between the different kinds of masculinity’ (Connell, 1995: 37). In order to achieve this we must consider the gender regime of the school. In other words, we must identify the pattern of practices that construct various kinds of masculinities among staff and students, which orders them in terms of ‘prestige and power, and constructs a sexual division of labor within the institution’ (Kesser et al, 1985: 45, as cited in Skelton, 1996: 23). Patterns of masculinities appear most evident through authority patterns: authority and surveillance - appropriate gender behaviours; authority of control - discipline and authority and alliance – the marginalisation of others both male and female. ‘These authority patterns carry with them particular implications for modes of masculinity and femininity’ (Skelton, 1996: 29). Authority and discipline are often synonymous with the role of a male primary teacher. When authority is considered in relation to male teachers and their working relationships with other male teachers, it suggests exclusionary practices that are relevant to a materialist reading of data.

10.2.5 Authority of control

The themes of ‘machismo’ and creating bonds with male pupils are evident in the stories recounted by many of the participants in this study. ‘When teachers (male or female) adopt more authoritarian types of discipline with male pupils ... they are helping to create the ‘macho’ modes of masculinity ...’ (Skelton, 1996: 30). Writers argue that ‘a violent discipline system, particularly one locked into an educational system of academic success or failure, invites competition in ‘machismo’ ... between the boys and male teachers’ (Skelton, 1996: 30). Vincent gives us an example of how bonds can easily be created with male pupils.

Vincent: ‘... *talking to the fellas in the class ... if you are talking about sport and you are talking about things like that... I understand those sorts of things and they understand those sorts of things ... I can talk about those things ... I can remember one time I arrived into a class of sixth class girls with my Ireland jersey on and nobody took any notice ... it made no difference to them because they just didn’t understand. Whereas if there was a bunch of boys ... there would be a bit of banter with them and you would feel you have a bit of a connection with them...*’

Boys were a common topic of concern for the male teachers in this study. For instance, John notes ‘the difficulty of being male’, which resonates with Vincent’s earlier remarks about connecting with male pupils

John: *‘...boys occupying a bigger social space in the classroom whether it’s for volume of conversation or distractibility or need for teacher attention or just literally physical space in the playground ... that’s the way it is and so the response to that, the response to a male teacher is different ... perhaps it may be easier for a male teacher to get somewhere with those particular pupils ... that’s the only time I’ve seen that to be male is an advantage because boys will respond and I’ve seen it respond differently and perhaps a little more positively to a male interaction.’*

Gendered engagements with pupils illustrate how boys occupy a particular place within discourses on masculinities, ‘...one which places ‘masculinities’ as, at once, of far more significance than ‘femininities’ (Skelton, 1996: 32). Additionally, drawing attention to ‘macho’ modes of masculinities in communal spaces such as the staffroom and public arenas such as the golf classic referred to below provides teachers with ‘kudos’ (Skelton, 1996: 31) among their colleagues.

10.2.6 Authority of marginalisation

Differences are not solely due to gender but to different positions in different times (Kimmel, 2013: 11). These relationships are constructed through practices that exclude and include, that intimidate, exploit, and so on (Connell, 1995: 37). The following stories illustrate that men are able to position other men and women by way of subordination and marginalized relationships. Tim also alluded to this in Chapter 8 when he suggested that other male teachers would not include him in their conversations because he was not ‘part of the loop’. Furthermore, hegemony does not mean total control (Connell, 1995: 37) as was also seen in Chapter 8 when Michael and Neil illustrated their efforts to win the consent of other men in staffroom conversations. For instance, relations of alliance, domination and subordination were evident in the stories of the Tim and Matthew.

Tim: *‘I watch the GAA and that’s about it but when GAA season is over, I am kind of like, I have nothing to talk to the male staff about ... Not that they won’t talk to you, it’s just that like, you would be sitting there in the middle of the conversation going ‘I have nothing to say*

here. I have no interest in this whatsoever' ... I don't know how to approach this conversation so nearly at that I am glad a female member of staff is sitting beside me...

Matthew recalls a time that the Principal in his school marginalised female teachers from male teachers.

Matthew: *'There was a golf classic on a Friday afternoon for a sports club, I think it was the GAA club or something ... the Principal took about six or seven of the lads to play golf at about half twelve during the day out of school when they were supposed to be working and got other people [female teachers] to fill and look after their classes ... he didn't ask any of the female teachers if they wanted to play.'*

Matthew has also been marginalised through the use of technology.

Matthew: *'On another occasion actually he sent a text around. He was looking for people to play golf with and he sent a text around saying 'Men of X-town'. It was the only time he sent me a text. He wouldn't consider me one of the men. I was one of the annoyances in his side to be honest with you ... he wouldn't text the girls.'*

Similarly, marginalisation is evident when Matthew does not participate in staff races during the school's annual sports days.

Matthew: *'I am useless at sport. I do not get involved in Sports Days ever. I bring my class over and we take part and all the rest but in terms of staff races and things like that I don't take part. It used to be commented on by our Principal he was like 'oh you are not taking part there, Matthew?'*

Connell (1987: 84 - 85) notes that images of masculinities in Western countries 'are constructed and promoted most systematically through competitive sport'. This may suggest why the Principal of Matthew's school is surprised that he is not partaking in the teacher race and may partly offer a reason why Matthew does not wish to engage in the race.

10.3 Research question 2

How male teachers intra-act with the materiality of their world in ways that produce different becomings

Teacher identities provide salient contexts for how pupils respond to educational institutions (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2003: 63). These are enacted through school discipline and

teaching styles. Thinking with Barad's (2007) theory of intra-action assists in establishing an approach that re-inserts the material into the process of analysis. This is particularly useful when asking how male teachers intra-act with other bodies, both human and nonhuman (Staff members, pupils, increasing workloads, caps on promotions and decreasing pay scales). By thinking intra-actively, it is possible to consider 'not just how discourses were functioning' to produce male teacher identities but 'how they materialize' (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 135). Barad's thinking shifts our thinking away from how performative speech acts or bodily repetition creates gender to understanding how gender is emerging from a set of linkages with other bodies. In Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns, attention was focused on how masculinities are materialised through language and the intra-active agencies of time, place and individuals emerging through one another. Special attention was placed on abstract bodies such as economic practices and its relationship to education as illustrating how materiality intra-acts with male teachers that produce different becomings. This section will further discuss hegemonic masculinities in relation to the concept of intra-action and bodies.

10.3.1 Hegemonic masculinity and intra-action

Connell (1995: 71) considers gender a social practice that 'constantly refers to bodies and what bodies do but is not a 'social practice reduced to the body'. The starting point of this definition is that social practice interacts with historical situations and not the result of individual actions (Skelton, 1996: 49). Connell (1995: 72) terms this as gender projects or the 'processes of configuring practice through time, which transform their starting-point in gender structures ...' Just as Butler (1999: xvii) considers gender to be an internally complex structure, Connell (1995) puts forward a 3-fold model of the structure of gender relations as discussed above in relation to care: power, production and emotional attachment. This model provides a means of considering masculinities and femininities in relation to one another rather than looking at gender differences. It does not, however, illustrate how social practices emerge through intra-action. Barad's theory (2007) of gender performativity through material and discursive intra-action will be referred to in this section to illustrate how masculinities are constituted alongside discursive practices.

10.3.2 The school building

Social practices, when identified through intra-action, bring into question social location or 'the notion of position' (Barad, 2007: 243). The school building is not a neutral observing device that allows observers to specify the social location of individual workers or to track

‘the trajectories of identity formation’ (Barad, 2007: 243). Rather, the apparatuses that make ‘position’ intelligible are implicated in the iterative (re)production of particular material-discursive boundaries among workers (p. 243). The notion of position is a category that is produced, contested and is changed through time. Indeed, ‘worker’ is not a ‘fixed and unitary property of individual human beings’ but a disorganized category ‘that refers to material-discursive phenomena (not individuals)’ (p. 243). Furthermore, gender is constituted through structural regulations of power such as class, community and, in this case the institutional power of schools. Butler (1999: 3) contends that subjects regulated by such structures ‘are, by virtue of being subjected to them, formed, defined, and reproduced in accordance with the requirements of those structures’. Barad’s (2007) theory of intra-active performativity brings into question the nonhuman environment of the school. Specifically, it questions what it is about the school building that creates certain realities of masculinities for male teachers?

David: *‘What I would always be conscious of too is being left with one or two in the evenings at home time. I try to leave all the doors open that I can, so that if there are teachers out photocopying, the photocopier*

Barad’s (2007) theory in relation to workers

Barad (2007: 243) considers it ‘inappropriate’ to consider workers as ‘pawns occupying different, but uniform, spaces on the chessboard of an overarching static structure called capitalism’. Capitalism itself is a contested and ever-changing concept that is iteratively (re)produced through the dynamics of intra-activity. Conditions in a capitalist workplace ‘certainly affect the construction of masculinity ... capitalist economies do not guarantee employment’ (Connell, 1995: 93). Apple (1996: 5) advises ‘let us not act as if capitalism has somehow disappeared ... let us not act as if all the things we learned about how the world might be understood politically have been somehow overthrown because our theories are more complex’. The nature of masculinities depend on these changing dynamics.

is next to my door, so at least they can be hear in and listen in.'

Interestingly, Neil uses the adjective 'conscious' in recounting the efforts he makes to ensure he is visible at all times.

Neil: *'I would be very conscious now of things like 'blinds down'. You know, sometimes when the sun comes in I am very slow to put down the blinds. I feel you have to make sure that the place is visible at all times and that people can see in, you know? You should be very conscious of that'*

David's and Neil's stories illustrates that complex intra-action of bodies, size, location and position in the production of masculinities in schools. Understanding the dynamics of this complex 'trans-action', Barad (2007: 244) notes, involves not only material and discursive boundaries but 're(con)figuration' of the space-time-matter 'manifold'. Analysis of this kind must re-evaluate size and shape (in this instance, human and environmental bodies) in terms of boundary, connectivity, interiority, and exteriority (p. 244). Inquiry of this kind brings into question the concept of 'spatiality', which Barad (2007: 245) considers to be 'always an exclusionary process'. In this manner, scale is a property of spatial phenomena intra-actively produced, contested, and reproduced (p. 245). Spatial phenomena include 'the different scales of individual bodies, homes, communities, regions...' understood as being intra-actively produced through one another' (p. 245). In this study, the dynamics of male bodies, classroom size and possible perceptions of those within the community can be considered topological dynamics. These are questions of boundary, connectivity, interiority, and exteriority, as described above, which reconfigure masculinities in Irish primary schools.

The material and discursive dimensions of the school building vary in time and in space. The four walls of the classroom do not simply locate a place of learning; it locates biological, cultural, economic and historical factors as well. These examples show that ‘there are material as well as discursive factors that are important to the process of materialization’ (Barad, 2007: 194). This has important implications for the performance of masculinities in Irish primary schools. For example, Neil’s story of keeping the blinds open even when the sun is shining into the classroom or Darren’s example of ensuring the classroom or office door remains open when pupils are in the presence of male teachers are not simply acts of discourse but productive cultural and historical practices.

10.3.3 The body as power

‘Power is what a body can do’ (Colebrook, 2004: 219).

Butler (2005: 62) questions if there ‘is a way to link the question of the materiality of the body to the performativity of gender?’ Butler (2005) maintains that performativity must be understood as citational practices ‘by which discourse produces the effects that it names’ (p. 62) and not as deliberate acts. Butler (2005) develops a notion of gender performativity that links subject formation to the production of the body’s materiality. Although Barad (2007: 192) commends Butler’s (2005) ‘insightful and powerful analysis’ of ‘real flesh-and-blood bodies’ from a discursive dimension, Barad (2007) considers this analysis as flawed on two major points. Butler’s analysis does not ‘give us any insights into how to take account of

An adequate theory of gender requires, Connell (1987: 91) believes, a theory of social structures or frameworks ‘much stronger’ than role theory. In relation to shaping masculinities and femininities in the workplace, an adequate theory must call into question the relationships between men and women in terms of authority and power. Connell (1987) outlines three frameworks that structure gender relations at work. The first framework is the division of labour such as the creation of ‘men’s jobs’ and ‘women’s jobs’ (p. 96). The second framework is power. This includes ‘the hierarchies of the state and business’ and ‘sexual regulation and surveillance’ (p. 96). The third framework is connected with emotions.

the material constraints' or 'the material dimensions of agency' (Barad, 2007: 192). While Butler calls for the recognition of matter's historicity, she appears to assume that it is derived from the agency of language and culture. 'Questions about the material nature of discursive practices seem to hang in the air like the persistent smile of the Cheshire cat' (Barad, 2007: 64). However, we know that the matter of bodies is not a purely cultural phenomenon or the end result of human activity. Bodies intra-act with other material forces in a process of materialisation. Masculinity is often considered fixed as it is believed to be a natural consequence of male biology. It is a common perception to think that men behave the way they do 'because of testosterone, or big muscles, or a male brain' (Connell, 2000: 57). Men are considered to be part of the powerful elite group, which tips equality in their favour. It seems unnecessary to give more equality to those who already have more power than many others in society. While many such as liberal feminists want women to have 'parity with men's power, prestige, and position', others such as material feminists believe that social structures, 'not men as individuals', are the cause of men and women's disadvantaged positions (Gardiner, 2002: 3). However, we know that masculinities are enacted in different ways in different cultures. Through social institutions and discourses, 'bodies are given social meanings' (Connell, 2000: 58). It is this intra-action that plays an active role in the workings of masculinities in Irish primary schools.

Men's bodies are 'not blank slates' (Connell, 2000: 12). Furthermore, the matter of bodies is not completely social in nature. Barad (2007: 64) considers the questions are we to understand matter 'as a purely cultural phenomenon, the end result of human activity?' If we assume this to be true then we are once again crossing out nature with culture by failing 'to recognize matter's dynamism' (p. 64). How can we apply this to the question of masculinities in Irish primary schools? How does one take account the body's materiality, which includes its physical appearance and other material forces that include nonhuman forces, such as economic practices in the form of pay-cuts and increased workloads in the process of materialisation and exclusionary practices? Neither

Many issues about gender can be understood in terms of 'the production of heterosexuality and homosexuality ... with the socially structured antagonisms of gender (woman-hating, -hating, self-hatred) ... and with the emotional relationships involved in rearing children'

(Connell, 1987: 97).

Barad (2007) nor Butler (1999; 2005) presents us with an answer to these questions. They do, however, pose important questions that can lead us to our own conclusions. Barad (2007: 23) and Butler (1999; 2005) provide us with an indication of what needs to be rethought, not how to rethink the relevant issues. Barad's (2007) and Butler's (1999) theories when used together seek to challenge an account of matter's passivity toward a consideration of the body's historicity in which 'it's very materiality plays an active role in the workings of power' (Barad, 2007: 65). In order to advance our understanding of the materialization of all bodies Barad (2007: 66) offers her theory of agential realism, as discussed in Chapter 9. Agential realism provides us with a way of understanding matter's dynamism and elaborates the theory of performativity. In this account, matter is not a fixed substance nor is it a thing; matter is a doing. 'Matter is a stabilising and destabilising process of iterative intra-activity' (Barad, 2007: 151). This process brings matter into question. Matter is not simply 'a kind of citationality' (Butler, 1993: 15). Barad (2007: 151) considers matter is an active agent in its on-going materialisation. In terms of this study of masculinities in Irish primary schools, materiality is understood to be discursive and material. From a discursive perspective, gender is performed through on-going reconfigurations of boundaries evident throughout this thesis in staffroom conversations (such as actively engaging in or actively avoiding conversations), enactments of authority in public spaces (for instance, enforcing discipline in the classroom and the school yard) and by caring for pupils with words rather than touch. This form of gender performativity was discussed in Chapter 8 – Data Collection. Materiality is simultaneously understood as material, evident in this thesis by constraints and exclusions on male teachers gaining positions in primary schools, practices of actively avoiding the staffroom in the morning-time or lunch-time, differing pay-scales and the organisational practice of separating mixed classes into all-boy and all-girl classes. In the latter situation male pupils are removed from the school and taught in another school while female pupils remain and complete their primary education. These material boundaries are discussed throughout Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns.

10.3.4 Bodily boundaries

The body is not an answer to all our questions (Colebrook, 2004). It is not 'something that we would find at the end of knowledge and questioning' but must be considered a 'power to provoke the ways in which we think' (Colebrook, 2004: 219). There is an obvious physical body understanding by the way our social conditioning teaches us to see a person.

Nevertheless, ‘why should our bodies end at the skin?’ (Haraway, 1991). Considering Haraway’s (1991) reading, Barad (2007) considers bodies as always in the making, never made. In this reading bodies in the making are ‘never separate from their apparatuses of bodily production’ (Barad, 2007: 159). Judith Butler (1999) detailed a body made explicable within processes of discursive designation and location. Butler offered a model of performativity that outlined the body as inscribed by gender. The boundaries of our understanding of bodies is not merely epistemological (what we know to be true) but ontological (how we understand the world). To move to a more onto-epistemological understanding of bodies is to consider the nature of reality, not merely ‘human experience or human understandings of the world’ (Barad, 2007: 160). Barad (2007) proposes a reconfiguration of causality, materiality, agency, dynamics and topology to achieve this (p. 176). Causality is the pattern of cause and effect. In this thesis, causality is evident in the stories of male teacher’s connection with male pupils. Materiality is understood as both discursive and material as outlined above. Agency is ‘doing’ and ‘being’. It is the process and the product. In this study, agency was evident in the intra-activity of male teachers with their environments: conversations with male pupils, enactments of public masculinities and negotiating the school building, keeping buildings up and leaving doors open. Dynamics are illustrated through the shifting boundaries between public and private in relation to work and the performance of masculinities. Topologies bring into question boundaries such as interiority and exteriority and ‘the relationship between the local, the national, and the global...’ (Barad, 2007: 246). In this study, questions of abstract bodies such as neoliberalism, neoconservatism, meeting economic needs and their intra-action with education are topological concerns. Body matters have a ‘tenuous link’ to gender domination in feminist theories (Gottfried, 2013: 85). Feminism shares with poststructuralism not only ‘the sense of a crisis of the Logos’ but the need for renewed conceptual creativity of the present (Braidotti, 2002: 11). Extending the body beyond discourse to consider the material encourages us to think not what a body is but what a body can do. ‘This means that ‘embodied’ accounts illuminate and transform our knowledge of ourselves and of the world’ (Braidotti, 2002: 12). Research on the body provides ‘...a fresh look at the social construction of femininity and masculinity ... and a new focus on embodiment’ (Gottfried, 2013: 86). Traditional representation of the body is purely in biological and natural form (Bordo, 2003: 33). As outlined in Inter-text 1 – The Body, the body is located on the nature

side of the nature / culture divide and as such, is ‘conceived as relatively historically unchanging ... and unitary’ (Bordo, 2003: 33).

The body has always been different to the mind and as such has always been considered passive and inactive. As a result, differences within the generic description of ‘man’ were lost. As a result, we know very little about masculinities. Socio-political perspectives on boyhood have been very useful in highlighting the importance of culture and historical context in how boys learn to define and negotiate their masculinities (Martino, 2007: 46). This thesis considers the relocation of the body to the cultural side of the nature / culture dichotomy as particularly fruitful as it disconnects masculinities from the body. In doing so we ‘are problematizing the suggested nature of power relations between men and women’ (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2003: 16). Power is not only understood through the logic of domination but as a performative process that encompasses agency, causality, dynamics and topologies as described above. An exploration of masculinities in this format allows for a broader framework that includes human and non-human intra-actions, creating possibilities for other forms of power to constitute the body.

10.3.5 Addressing assumptions

Feminist scholarship became engaged with what Dorothy Smith (1990: 20) termed an ‘alternative way of thinking’. The most compelling aspect of this alternative approach to

Accessing truth through experience

The tradition of science studies is to position oneself at some remove, to consider the nature of scientific practice ‘as a spectator, not a participant’ (Barad, 2007: 247). In Barad’s (2007: 247) theory of performativity ‘the study of science and the study of nature go hand in hand’. We are part of the nature that we strive to understand and so we must give equal consideration to the material and the discursive. Material enactments are part of the reality we seek to describe. ‘... our ability to understand the world hinges on our taking account of the fact that our knowledge-making practices are material enactments that contribute to, and are part of the phenomena we describe’ (Barad, 2007: 247). However, this is not an easy challenge.

traditional forms of thinking is the inclusion of the historically feminine into the knowledge – building process: emotion, embodiment, interpretation and subjectivity. ‘Instead of viewing these aspects as contaminations or barriers to uncovering *the* objective truth’, feminist researchers believe that human experiences and perspectives ‘may actually become a *tool* for knowledge building and rich understanding’ (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2007: 12). Most recently a new feminist alternative has emerged that wishes to ‘build meaningful conversations’ (Barad, 2007: 25) between the sciences, a traditionally male sphere and the humanities, a traditionally female sphere. More clearly, it indicates the direction this conversation should take. ‘...there is a building consensus among feminists and critical theorists that a new approach is needed and that feminism is and should be at the forefront of that effort’ (Hekman, 2010: 68). This new direction reinstates the material into the discursive, ‘an ontological re-orientation’, that emphasizes the inseparable nature of language and the material (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 112). Knowledge has a specific relationship with this new direction that includes moving the boundaries of what can be known to include larger material configurations of the world. ‘There is an important sense in which practices of knowing cannot fully be claimed as human practices’ Barad (2007: 185) claims. This is ‘not simply because we use nonhuman elements in our practice but because knowing is a matter of part of the world making itself intelligible to another part’ (p. 185).

‘Because schools both reflect and contribute to the social construction of gender ... teachers, as individuals and as colleagues, may be influential in addressing these issues’

(Maher and Ward, 2002: 74)

10.3.6 A return to the data

Education has framed its engagements with masculinities, such as sex/ gender, man/ woman, as biologically fixed and final. This understanding of what can be known is closely linked to Western philosophy’s traditional conception of knowledge as ‘never too far removed from the human’ (Barad, 2007: 378). Yet, we know that knowledge production ‘is not ours alone’ (p. 378). This is particularly relevant to understanding the performativity of gender as put forward by Butler (1999; 1993; 2004). As noted by Butler (2004: 3) one ‘cannot *be* without *doing*’. Gender is not an attribute of individuals. Gender is a performance that is dependent

on how others receive the performance. Gender is a doing but ‘not in the sense that there is a pregendered person who performs its gender...’ (Barad, 2007: 57). Gender is part of a ‘matrix through which all willing first becomes possible’ (Butler, 1993: 7). Existence is dependent on ‘being able to do something with what is done with me ... I am constituted by a social world I never chose’ (Butler, 2004: 3). Engagement with our social world, through language and action creates on-going responses and further enactments. In other words, Butler states that gender is not a characteristic feature of individuals nor a fundamental essence that is revealed through acts, gesture and enactments (Barad, 2007: 57). Gender is ‘an iterated doing through which subjects come into being’ (p. 57). ‘Entangled practices matter’ (Barad, 2007: 58).

Knowing is ‘a direct material engagement, a practice of intra-action with the world as part of the world in its ... ongoing articulation’ (Barad, 2007: 379). Teachers in this study engaged with colleagues and pupils in ways that led me to think ‘not just how discourses function, but how they materialize’ (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 113). Daily intra-actions with the materiality of their teaching worlds create sets of linkages with other things and other bodies. For example, the hiring opportunities made possible for male teachers by administration and how others react to male teachers because of their bodies, as discussed in Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns and Chapter 10 - Discussion, are inscribed onto their bodies and constitute future actions. ‘...materiality holds the memories of the traces of its enfoldings’ for neither ‘the past nor the future is ever closed’ (Barad, 2007: 383). Present actions make future actions possible, ‘...the “new” is the trace of what is yet to come’ (p. 383). We form a partnership from our intra-actions with social bodies. We are an inextricable part of the relationship created between humans and materiality. A return to the data prompts a reading that seeks the discursive construction of male teacher identities as never quite right, possible in an intra-action between their discursive selves and their material self. The intra-action between the discursive construction of the feminine institution of teaching and the material constitutions of the classroom, the staffroom and the school playground as masculine due to their public nature exist simultaneously and continuously

‘...we continue to act as if gender applied only to women. Surely the time has come to make gender visible to men.’

(Kimmel, 2013: 7)

engage. This indicates how 'social institutions are constituted by the interface of the discursive, the material, the natural, and the technological' (Hekman, 2010: 8). This complex construction requires more than an understanding of discourse as words to explain it, as was detailed in Chapter 6 - Performance and Performativity.

‘The fish are the last to discover the ocean’: making the invisible visible

This ancient Chinese proverb is borrowed from Kimmel’s (2013: 6) descriptive paradox, which reveals men as invisible beings that can be seen everywhere. To explain this contradiction further, men are considered ‘ubiquitous’ in the public sphere, as described in Chapter 3 – An Exploration of Masculinities. Men hold positions of authority in business, defence forces, governments and universities. Academic historical writing, Connell (1995: 28) notes, has always ‘been about men – at least, about rich and famous men’. Men’s studies, as opposed to women’s studies, form part of mainstream education for both children and adults, ‘except we usually call it “history”, “political science”, “literature”, “chemistry” (Kimmel, 2013: 6). The history of men is governed by male-dominant ideals that have been presented and accepted for a long time. We know quite a lot about powerful men. Both Jaggar (2008) and Kimmel (2013) allude to the prominent position of ‘man’ almost as a disguise for non-monolithic masculinities. Jaggar’s (2008: 4) depiction of the ‘culturally masculine’, which depict diplomatic and military histories as ‘silencing people with less social power and confidence’ can be read in relation to Kimmel’s (2013: 6) depiction of men’s lives as ‘political leaders, military heroes, scientists, writers, artists’. Furthermore, the history of men ‘...taught us a great deal about the relation of men to masculinity, but only as evidence of the male body’s abstraction into the normative domain of the universal...’ (Wiegman, 2002: 33). There could only be one form of ‘man’; dominant and powerful. Consequently, there is very little information about men as something other than leaders or warriors resulting in ‘virtually no information on masculinity’ (Kimmel, 2013: 6). What was missing from men’s history was the idea of masculinities. This was often referred to as ‘a history of the male role’ (Connell, 1995: 28) and was supported by male sex role literature. However, as noted in Chapter 4 – Literature Review, this sex-role theory was dismissed due to vagueness and generalities.

10.4 Conclusion of chapter

In this study, evidence of action was not sought. It was, in Lather's (1991: 151) words, a 'self-reflexive pondering' on agency as materially and discursively produced between male and female bodies; male bodies and a female institution; male bodies and a cultural context. Gender as an identity marker was used to identify indications of masculinities as simultaneously culturally and biologically produced. As Butler (1993: 20) contends 'we have to present ourselves as bounded beings' whose identity is constituted in the public sphere. Hekman (2010: 25) presents the 'mangle' as a means of explaining how 'the agency of matter is intertwined with human agency'. Science, nature, technology and politics engage with and in the mangle. These are elements that impinge on almost everything that we do (Hekman, 2010: 25). Used as a verb and as a noun the mangle teaches us 'that rather than being shocked by this mix we should accept it and seek to understand it' (p. 25). Overall, it is a useful metaphor for locating ourselves in the world and for advancing knowledge of our contemporary world. The entanglement of men, care, young children and what they say and evoke is an effect of cultural associations, social processes and on-going intra-actions. As discussed in Chapter 8 – Data Collection, gender encompasses a specific relationship with bodies that is constructed and embedded in social interactions. Our bodies belong to us but are dependent on others. Our bodies 'belong and do not belong to us' (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 120). The male teachers in this study are identified partly by how others conceive their interactions with others (the language of bodies) and the language they use. This illustrates agency as mutually produced and bodies as materially constituted. The teachers in this study are responded to not just as male, or as male teachers, but as bodies that produce and evoke different responses. These intra-active responses cause these teachers to question their actions and how they could possibly be received by others 'looking in'. As stated by David 'I keep the door open even though it's freezing'. Although men are considered by history as disembodied knowers, the male teachers in this study indicate that they are very much of and in their bodies. They are always already viewed differently by colleagues, parents and pupils by virtue of their bodies and its connection to masculinities. This is perhaps why Butler (1993: 21) suggests 'bodily autonomy' as 'a lively paradox'.

How the bodies of the male teachers in this study are located in the mangle is useful for examining men in our modern world. As outlined in Chapter 3 – An Exploration of Masculinities, Kimmel (2008) suggests that since the 1960s there has been a steady decline in

the kinds of normative standards and traditions that had once defined an individual's transition from boyhood to manhood. Social reality and our experiences within it are continuously shifting. Technological innovations are creating new issues that 'reverberate within and across segments of ...social groups' (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2008: 8). Truth is multiple. Subjects are unstable. Equality is much more than the often cited feminine subject. Gender is no longer defined in dichotomous terms of man and woman. Male power and privilege are constituted and represented through these changing events. We are all vulnerable to other bodies. The intra-action of the natural and the cultural is illustrated in how we are 'surrounded with violence, of having perpetrated it, having suffered it, living in fear of it, planning more of it.' (Butler, 2004: 22). Butler's (2004) depiction of an interior language of feelings and an exterior manifestation of language resonates with the male teachers' depiction of an interior world seeking to care, to guide and to teach that intra-acts with an exterior world that both values and is suspicious of those traits.

Chapter 11 - Recommendations

This chapter presents five recommendations for future explorations of masculinities in Irish primary schools. The recommendations presented in this chapter are concrete, practical and tangible. They seek to encourage new ways of thinking about masculinities in Irish primary schools through initiatives that encompass future research designs, pupils, teachers and teacher education institutions. Serving as a catalyst to further explore masculinities in Irish primary schools, the recommendations are considered under the following headings:

- Developing a positive image of male teachers: second level students and the future of teaching;
- Developing a positive image of male teachers: primary school pupils;
- Developing a module of care for Initial Teacher Education programmes;
- Continuous Professional Development: primary school staff and gender relations;
- Empowering research: developing democratic designs.

Systematic research on gender in schools tends to be based upon people's personal and professional instincts, which are informed by 'political perspectives, social and cultural understandings and so on' (Skelton, 1996: 6). It is not surprising that clear solutions to the decline of male teachers have not been established or implemented with success. Understandings of masculinities and femininities in schools encompass several different viewpoints, which cannot be assumed to take on the same meanings for everybody. The information gathered during this research study highlights the importance of engaging the entire education system from primary level through second level to third level entry points to teaching if gender equality in education is to be achieved. Gender-responsive policies, plans and strategies will be discussed in this section, beginning with the school level and developing into a wider discussion of the everyday effects of neoliberalism on teaching in Ireland. Participants' voices are used throughout this chapter to support the recommendation made. This may be an unusual feature in comparison to traditional qualitative research studies. Its purpose is to reflect the multi-layered collaborative process of this study and to reveal how each participant has played a role in the knowledge production of this study.

The first part of this study's recommendations will focus on four tangible contributions to be made in teaching, learning and curriculum development that encompass the primary, secondary level and teacher education colleges. These contributions focus on the major

stakeholders in education: students, staff and parents at primary and second level together with those engaged with initial teacher education institutions. The second part of this study's recommendations will focus on the methodological benefits of placing male teacher voices at the heart of future inquiry. This study's recommendations will conclude with a commentary on neoliberalism and its impact on the declining number of male teachers in Irish primary schools.

11.1 Developing a positive image of male teachers: second level students and the future of teaching

This study recommends designing, developing and implementing a highly visible campaign to promote primary teaching as a career for male students. The campaign would have male primary teachers at the centre of its development, whereby they would address the common concerns of young males at second level considering primary teaching. The positive influence of a passionate guest-speaker at second level careers night was outlined by Patrick in Chapter 8. A similar objective could be achieved where male teachers would address transition year students, parents and those attending careers fairs. On these occasions, male teachers could describe their job and the influence it has on their professional and personal lives to young men and women considering teaching as a career. It would provide an opportunity to clarify misconceptions, promote teaching in a positive light to parents and students and other prospective teachers. As Vincent remarks, males are unaware of teaching as a career option:

Vincent: '...fellas don't know enough about it. I think if I got the chance to talk to some Leaving Cert students or fellas who were thinking of becoming teachers you might be able to convince them or you might be able to tell them 'Well, this is the way it is'. That is badly needed.'

The majority of the participants in this study highlighted the fact that teaching was not an obvious option for them to consider at second level due to a number of informal barriers. These barriers include guidance received at second-level, family opinions and peer perceptions. Darren alludes to a lack of endorsement by career guidance counsellors in relation to primary teaching as a career for males, particularly if the pupil was deemed a high-achiever.

Darren: *'No, nobody ever suggested primary teaching to me and I did go to the Guidance Counsellor a good few times and I suppose it was just towards the end of Sixth Year that she said why don't you try primary teaching ... right near the very end and I was meeting her since Fifth Year.'*

As noted in Chapter 8, primary teaching was not a valued career option for a number of the participants in this study. This was either a personal opinion, as noted by Matthew in Chapter 8.

Matthew: *'I swore black and blue no, I'm not going to be a teacher ... I'm not going to be a teacher just because it was the worst thing in the world to be when you are six years old...'*

Additionally, as noted by Darren and Paul, teaching was not an occupation that was advocated by their school, family or friends if the participant was considered a high-achiever at second-level. Both Paul and Darren have had similar experiences:

Paul: *'Some key friends said ... oh my God Paul, I always saw you as a captain of industry.'*

Darren: *'... my family thought I was a bit mad ... they thought I could be something much better ... you know, they didn't really want me to go for it. They thought I could be an accountant or a doctor and I got quite high points and everything so they thought I could have done a bit better.'*

Furthermore, peer perceptions largely influence male second level students' perceived options of career choice. Neil recounts unwelcomed remarks from peers regarding his decision to become a primary school teacher.

Neil: *'I can remember the kind of giggle, the kind of joke. Like, what are you going doing that for? Not necessarily even peers, you know it would be fellas that you would be hurling with. As I said, this is where the banter comes in, you know? I mean, how much was serious or not but certainly some of the things they would be saying ... implying about, you know? Looking back on what some fellas would have said you could see why a lot of men would have been steering clear of these jobs, you know what I mean? You know, the odd remark would have been fairly close to the bone to be brutally honest about it. So, you could see why guys would have been steering clear of that kind of work.'*

Similarly, David explains the difficulty in admitting his choice to become a primary school teacher to his peers. David recalls:

David: *'...I used to always say I didn't know what I wanted to do although when I filled out the CAO first of all that was my first choice ... if anyone asked what I was doing, I said I don't really know ... I never got a slagging over it ... I stayed away from those boys...'*

This study acknowledges the need to demystify the role of male primary teachers by encouraging them out of the shadows and placing them centre-stage of this campaign. It recognises the success of previous campaigns to attract more men into teaching,

The majority of the participants of this study, depending on their age, were aware of the MATE (Motivation, Ability, Teamwork, Excellence) campaign as mentioned in Chapter 1 - Introduction.

Vincent: *'I know there was a big campaign, a big campaign ten years ago, was there? Yeah, I can remember hearing things about it, you know? ...like, the campaign was obviously successful in that people would say to you they are looking for men.'*

This study recommends building on the success of previous efforts to increase the number of male teachers in primary education. This study believes the success of a new campaign is in actively placing male teachers as the inspiration and motivation of the campaign and allowing their voices to be heard.

11.2 Developing a positive image of male teachers: primary school pupils

Gender is a concept that is widely misunderstood, as discussed in Chapter 3 – An Exploration of Masculinities. From a very young age, we learn what it means to be male or female through stereotyping and sex-role modelling. This study acknowledges that boys and girls receive mixed gendered messages from gender specific roles that male teachers are asked to perform. These roles have been outlined in Chapter 3 – An Exploration of Masculinities, Chapter 8 – Data Collection and Chapter 9 – Narrative Strategies. Additionally, the teaching profession paints a mixed picture when it comes to gender parity and equality issues due to the unequal distribution of male and female teachers. Vincent illustrates that gender inequalities manifest as early as primary school:

Vincent: *'I can remember being in a class one day and I just went in to observe a friend of mine [Class Teacher] because I was thinking of doing teaching. This Fourth Class fella said to me, 'What would you want to be a teacher for? They don't earn any money at all?' ... this was Fourth class ...'*

This study recognises that young people's opinions on gender and appropriate gender behaviour must be taken into account if we are to further advance positive images of male teachers. Increasing pupil awareness of stereotypes enhances the opportunity to change learned behaviour from a young age. This study recommends that schools take more account of gender issues in their curricula. Lessons could be planned at whole school level and could link and integrate with the school curriculum, for example, English (Oral language, debating), Art (Increasing awareness through posters), History (The origins of stereotypes) and SPHE (Cultural variations of common stereotypes, discovering matriarchal societies). Images could be used to stimulate discussion on common gender stereotypes, their usefulness and whether they are fact or fiction.

11.3 Developing a module of care for Initial Teacher Education programmes

This study recommends the development of a module to address the concept of care in primary education for both male and female students of initial teacher education. The complexity of care, as reflected in Inter-text 3 - Emotions, Chapter 3 – An Exploration of Masculinities, Chapter 8 – Data Collection and Chapter 10 - Discussion, makes a compelling case for critical analyses of this concept beyond common-sense perceptions. Care is a priority topic for all teachers due to the key roles they play in the transmission of values, knowledge, and the development of human potential and skills. Care is also a practical consideration for every teacher regardless of gender as illustrated in Chapter 8 – Data Collection. However, care in relation to male teachers is a concept that is often misinterpreted and surrounded with suspicion. David alludes to this suspicion by giving an example of a junior infant female teacher who *'might have them up on their lap'* and who *'might give the child a hug, you know like, kind of affectionate stuff...'* However, a male teacher does not have the same options of care *'... if that was a male, they couldn't really do that, it isn't an option ... and it's not professional either ... it only takes one person to be suspicious'*. Care and male teachers is not a topic that is formally addressed with students on initial teacher education courses, resulting in the topic being cloaked in silence. As Vincent states, *'...you figure it out yourself as you go along.'* Consequently, misinformation is very often disseminated to students. Although Matthew stated in Chapter 8 that *'... it was drummed into me in college, that this putting a hand on a kids shoulder is too much'*, David states, *'Well, you wouldn't really be told ... like, a Principal said it to me. He just said 'By the way, you know, never put yourself in that position'*.

The evidence that this study has gathered believes that misinformation surrounding men and care and the subsequent apprehension surrounding it are due to a lack of clear guidelines regarding care. Students and teachers at third level teacher education colleges are unable to address this sensitive topic because there is no module specifically addressing good practice and care in an open manner. However, teacher education colleges hold a powerful position in addressing concerns about care, *'Teacher education institutions (TEIs) play a key role in education systems, and generally have great influence beyond their walls as change agents in society'* (UNESCO, 2015: 18). This study recommends a module on care that would assist in removing false information surrounding men and care in primary teaching. It would introduce care as a concept to both male and female students that would bring to their attention personal options they may have surrounding gender and care. This module would discuss the various meanings and associations people have of care, examine the various ways that teachers can provide care to young children and explore the different caring options available to male and female teachers who care for young children. The objective of this conscious-raising module would be to remove the shroud of secrecy surrounding gender and care and provide real examples of how to negotiate care and masculinities in Irish primary schools.

11.4 Continuing Professional Development: primary school staff and gender relations

The aim of a continuous professional development module for primary school staff is to address stereotypical assumptions and behaviours of teachers in contemporary schools. The evidence gathered throughout this study highlights the various ways male teachers feel isolated due to their gender status. This is clearly illustrated in Chapter 3 – An Exploration of Masculinities, Chapter 8 – Data Collection, Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns and Chapter 10 - Discussion. This study believes that these situations will continue to arise for male teachers if attention is not drawn to them. Indeed in Chapter 1 - Introduction, Michael acknowledges a growing awareness of gender issues in his school because he has made the staff in his school aware of his involvement in this study.

Michael: *'... engaging in this project has ... afforded me the opportunity to be a little more open about ...my own hidden agenda ... gender balance and gender equity ... for example, I came in to one of the rooms today to do the bins ... so I said can I get eight pupils, ochtar le*

teacht amach, and immediately she [Class teacher] picked four girls and four boys ... I know that she thought you won't want to see eight boys doing this.'

This example illustrates the positive potential that raising awareness among staff can have on a school. Michael has shown that talking about gender issues with colleagues, even in an informal manner, can change behaviour within a school. The majority of the participants in this study expressed times when they have been given extra tasks to carry out by female colleagues. These tasks were always outside of their professional brief but which they are expected to carry out because they are men. As recounted in Chapter 3 – An Exploration of Masculinities, Neil has been asked to remove a dead bird from the school gates, David has been asked to fish out a ball from a near-by stream and Eoin has been asked to reset timers on school boilers. Indeed, Neil further illustrates a time when he was asked to plant flowers in the school garden on the day of the summer holidays.

Neil: *'I was asked to dig a flower bed once.'*

Suzanne: *'Dig a flower bed?'*

Neil: *'Yeah ... I don't think anyone else was asked to do it.'*

Suzanne: *'Did you dig the flower bed?'*

Neil: *'I did. Just the day before the holidays, I didn't mind. It wasn't that nice a day now but I was told to go out. It was a grand flower bed though.'*

Similarly, feelings of isolation can occur in staffroom interactions. As Darren recounts in Chapter 8 – Data Collection and Chapter 9 – Narrative Patterns, it is difficult to feel connected with other staff members when they are unaware of their behaviours.

Darren: *'... they can be very wrapped up in their own conversations about pregnancies or engagements or afternoon teas or all those things...'*

This study recommends drawing attention to male and female attitudes towards gender behaviour, sex-role modelling and gender specific tasks through in-school continuous professional development. This would take the form of a minimum of two sessions throughout the year whereby a variety of approaches to addressing gender relations in primary schools would be utilised. These would include group presentations, guest speakers and discussion activities involving common scenarios male and female teachers encounter surrounding gender identity, gender assumptions within education and an examination of

various ways of addressing the common concerns of staff in relation to gender. We need to discover taken-for-granted beliefs in education and the authority they hold over teachers in schools in order to begin to address the concerns of the teachers in this study. This study recommends continuous professional development for teachers on the topic of gender relations as having huge potential in encouraging positive change in schools.

11.5 Empowering research: developing democratic designs

This thesis recommends rethinking the relationship of qualitative research to educational policy within and against a neoliberal climate (Lather, 2010). The conditions of neoliberalism, ‘audit, accountability and evidence’ (Lather, 2010: 2), have resulted in the publication of a number of reports documenting the number of men in teaching, as discussed in Chapter 1 - Introduction. However, these reports have been more dutiful than engaging and have had little impact on the lives of male teachers. This is, in my opinion, due to the nature of their design, which is similar to Lather’s (1991: 62) description of a ‘container into which the data must be poured’. Current educational research is ‘handmaiden to official governmental forces in policy making’ that decide the contexts and directions educational research takes (Lather, 2010: 5). However, Lather (1991; 2010) argues for a critical approach to educational research that focuses on ‘democratic capacity building and interruption of “top-down” directive approaches and “state instrumentalism” (Ozga, 2000: 76, as cited in Lather, 2010: 5). This study recommends that future research should engage with feminist research practices, as discussed at length in Chapter 1 - Introduction, Chapter 2 – Research Design, Chapter 5 - Methodology, Chapter 7 – Unpacking the Interview Process and Inter-text 4 – Feminist Research. This study believes the initial step of a feminist approach is to develop ‘an understanding of the world view of research participants’ (Lather, 1991: 63). Central to this understanding is a research design where participants are actively involved in the construction and validation of knowledge (p. 63). As was the framework of this study, a reciprocal approach corrects researcher preconceptions and inspires cultural transformations through consciousness-raising. It requires conducting research in a non-elitist and non-manipulative manner where ‘accountability is to a research community rather than to a client or sponsor’ (Lather, 2010: 6). Additionally, this form of critical inquiry focuses on fundamental contradictions, such as neoliberal / neoconservative nexus described above, which assist people in seeing how inadequate their ‘ideologically frozen understandings (Comstock, 1982: 384) serve their interest’ (Lather, 1991: 63). ‘Empowering methods

contribute to consciousness-raising and transformative social action' (Lather, 1991: 72). In sum, a rethinking of qualitative research and its relationship to educational policy requires a research stance which is open-ended and 'profoundly sceptical of appearances' and 'common sense' (Lather, 1991: 65). This thesis is a contribution to a long-term and general approach to ideological struggles necessary if we are to tackle the various structural inequalities associated with increased corporate interests in education and new public management.

11.6 Concluding remarks

The information arising from this study has implications for additional explorations of masculinities in Irish primary schools in conceptual, methodological and relational terms. It is hoped that these recommendations develop a community of practice to address the principle concerns of male teachers in contemporary Irish primary schools.

11.7 Artificial boundaries and the politics of knowledge

The fact that the number of males entering teaching is declining and that male teachers within the profession feel isolated due to various forces are not neutral occurrences. They are not natural economic patterns. In order to address the reason why masculinities in Irish primary schools does not count as knowledge requires us to think '*relationally*' (Apple, 1996: 24, italics in original). In other words, the lack of interest in men in teaching is the result of cultural, economic and political conflicts, compromises and tensions that organise society (Apple, 1996). Education is 'always part of a *selective tradition*, someone's selection, some group's vision of legitimate knowledge' (Apple, 1996: 22). Men in teaching, including the declining number of male teachers and the concern of those within the profession, is considered an issue of little concern, importance and validity in society today. This thesis recommends placing a growing appreciation on the need for research that advances a more equal world. It recommends exploring '...the links between knowledge and power' (Lather, 1991: 19) and challenging accepted forms of knowledge or 'the naturalness of social arrangements' (Lather, 1991: 63). To bring this point home I will focus on the work of Apple (2013; 1996) and Gramsci (1971), whose preoccupations are the centre of educational debate today – the ideology of education and the politics of culture.

Global forces impacting on education and masculinities are premised on conflict, resistance and contradictions (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2013: 61). For instance, the school may be considered to have a 'humanistic' design, one that Gramsci (1971: 26) considers as

developing in each individual ‘the fundamental power to think and ability to find one’s way in life’. However the school, at varying levels, has also been created to serve ‘entire professional sectors’ (p. 26) that creates ‘for itself cultural associations of its own’ (p. 27). A tension emerges from this contradiction, described by Apple (2013: 55) to be an inconsistency between ‘... child-centeredness and overt political commitments’. The challenge of a ‘bureaucratic body’ (Gramsci, 1971: 27), which produces an ‘artificial boundary’ (Apple, 2013: 55) between the global and the individual marks education out as a site of conflict and struggle between conservative restoration and neoliberal agendas. Such themes of analysis provide a conceptual space in which to explore the intra-action between education and masculinities. On the one hand, processes of globalisation produce educational spaces ‘...in which global compressions of masculinity converge’ and on the other hand rework ‘...distinct formations of masculine subjectivity’ (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2013: 60). Yet, it is important to view globalisation as acting through or intra-acting with masculinities and not just acting *upon* it (p. 60). One of the characteristics of globalisation intra-acting with masculinities is the emergence of neoliberal masculine discourses that shapes educational policies and practices. In relation to education policies in Ireland, this creates a dominant form of knowledge that assumes that ‘policy makers should focus more on the quality of entrants to the profession rather than whether they are male or female’ (Drudy, 2009: 167). Declining numbers of male teachers is not a policy concern within Irish education as neoliberal policies promote competition and entrepreneurialism while shaping ‘individual subjectivities based on ... global market demand’ (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2013: 62). The notion that effective teachers should be recruited regardless of their gender underpins neoliberal masculine assumptions about what is ‘rational’ (Apple, 2013: 15). The rightist movement has been very effective in moving the blame of unemployment and the loss of economic competitiveness away from economic, cultural, and social policies to the school and other public agencies (p. 28) ‘It assumes that self-interest and competitiveness are the energies of creativity’ forcing ‘all people to conform to what at first could only pretend to be true’ (p. 30 – 31). Gender plays an active role in this ideological drama. Official knowledge suggests that efficient, high-calibre teachers (which echoes the competitive and efficient masculinist rhetoric of neoliberalism) should be employed without consideration given to gender (a predominately feminist concern that is considered a binary opposition between we and they – ‘we’ are authority and ‘they’ are very different).

In order to change what counts as official knowledge it requires working hard against the neoliberal restructuring of society and assembling ‘a considerable line of defence against dominant groups’ predictable reactions’ (Apple, 2013: 165). However overwhelming this challenge sounds, it is achievable. It is possible, Apple (2013: 127) contends, to ‘break away from a forged (and at times forced) consensus, thus opening up the space for a new social and educational imaginary’. It requires work on many levels (cultural, economic and historical) and in many sites (policy and practice). We all have a role to play. ‘...answers can best be found by joining in the creative and determined efforts of building a counter-public’ (Apple, 2013: 166). This thesis is a creative offering towards our responsibility as teachers and researchers to produce more research that is in response to the experiences, desires and needs of marginalised groups.

11.8 Multiple Endings

In exploring male teachers' understandings of masculinities and how they impact on their daily lives, it is evident that masculinities is a concept that has been relegated to the margins primarily due to economic and political goals. In order to disturb common-sense understandings of masculinities, to make the invisible visible, it is important to consider masculinities in schools as an entangled practice. This study assumes that masculinities emerge through intra-actions with human and environmental practices that encompass an understanding of the roles of human and nonhuman, material and discursive, and natural and cultural factors. This approach provides 'important theoretical tools' needed to move conversation 'beyond the mere acknowledgment that both, material and discursive ... play a role in knowledge production by examining *how* these factors work together' (Barad, 2007: 25).

11.8.1 Pondering power and privilege

This study began out of a desire to explore masculinities but developed as a concern for gender relationships more broadly. Parallelisms, interdependencies, and asymmetries between men and women, masculinities and femininities, male teachers and female teachers have been identified throughout this study and particularly exemplified in Chapter 8 and Chapter 9 (Gardiner, 2002: 2). This is because masculinities and femininities are interconnected elements of one whole; gender. 'Masculinity, too, is a gender' and so men as well as women 'have undergone historical and cultural processes of gender formation' (Gardiner, 2002: 11). Gender shapes men as well as women (Gardiner, 2002: 8) and so positions the importance of gender 'in both the most personal and the most public dimensions of social life' (Cohen, 2001: ix). Men as well as women are shaped by gender. However, Barad (2007: 58) cautions that it is a mistake to think the main point is to include gender, sexuality and other social variables in one's analysis. 'The main point is not simply a matter of inclusion. The main point has to do with power' (p. 58). Clearly, 'we do not see merely with our eyes' (Barad, 2007: 157). Intra-acting with and being part of the world is 'part and parcel of seeing' (p. 157). Lather (2010: 15) suggests being accountable to complexity 'where embracing not knowing is a condition of a less dangerous doing'. Lather (2010: 15) terms this a type of 'getting lost' kind of research 'where we are not so sure of ourselves and where we see this not knowing as our best chance for a different sort of doing'.

11.9 Epilogue

‘Thinking is not something “we” do; thinking happens to us, from without. There is a necessity to thinking, for the event of thought lies beyond the autonomy of choice. Thinking happens’

(Colebrook, 2002: 38, as cited in Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 137)

In most research studies, Lather and Smithies (1997: 215) note, the researcher takes ‘entitlement to apply their analyses and perspectives to data’. Once the ‘subjects’ or participants, as they are referred to in this study, involved in the research process give permission for his or her story to be told, they typically have no control over their story or what is said about it. Participant contributions in the form of feedback, observations and reactions are very often not sought or considered necessary. Participants may never read the outcome of their participation and the part they play in the overall research process is significantly reduced. ‘At best’, the participants ‘receive a copy of the article or book’ (Lather and Smithies, 1997: 215). This study followed Lather and Smithies (1997) reciprocal format. The participants were consulted at every stage of the research journey. Along with reviewing their personal transcripts after each interview, each participant was forwarded full chapters towards the end of the research journey. They were invited to read the chapters and feedback was encouraged. In this manner, the participants became part of ‘the editorial board’ (Lather and Smithies, 1997: 215). The goal of this methodological approach is characterised by negotiation: negotiation of description and interpretation (Lather, 1991: 58). Although, the final draft is generally ‘the preserve of the researcher’ (p. 58), this approach resulted in returning to the thesis to revise in light of their varied suggestions. The attractiveness of this approach is ‘that all participants, within time constraints, are allowed a role in negotiating the final meanings of the research’ (Lather, 1991: 58).

11.10 Making the path by walking: reciprocity

Suzanne: Deciding to forward the first draft copy to the participants, Chapter 7 - discovering major themes, was a decision I pondered over for a long time before hitting the send button. Was there really a need to forward a full chapter to each participant to review? After all, I was satisfied with how the chapter had come together. Wasn’t that enough? As I had previously forwarded personal transcripts to each participant to review, perhaps I had asked for more than enough of their time already? In truth, I was anxious about presenting them

with my arrangements of their words and their stories. What if I had misunderstood what they intended to convey and totally missed the point? Worse still, what if they were irritated by this presentation and wanted me to remove what had been said? Time was a major constraint and consideration. However, the theme of reciprocal research designs is to provide an environment that participants can reject the researchers understandings of their world. ‘The point is to provide an environment that invites participants’ critical reactions to our accounts of their world’ (Lather, 1991: 64). In fact, I was also uneasy about not asking for their opinions on the draft chapters of data collection. The participants formed such an integral part of this study and had given it so much time that to omit them from the final stages seemed strange.

Recalling Apple’s (2013: 139) advice that memory and ‘especially memory under stress is an imperfect vehicle’ I hit the send button. Not all participants

responded to my email outlining the overall findings and discussion

topics. To my surprise and relief, those who did had very encouraging words to say and worthwhile observations to make.

‘I’m so impressed ... I’ve only ever worked in the same school so it was really eye-opening for me to see what other men are experiencing in other schools.’

(Matthew)

Glad to see the project moving along! Your extract makes for interesting reading. A point or two for your consideration: my motives for entering teaching are outlined in your text and include the role modelling effect of my primary teachers - not family desire/tradition. Do I belong in the same category as Darren? Your observations of the power relations and negotiated positions of interviewer and interviewee during our interviews are fascinating! Thanks for the preview. I look forward to reading the finished product!

(John)

11.11 Final words

Rooted in a particular, situated inquiry about masculinities in Irish primary schools, the parameters of deconstructivist work have been explored. Many voices and interpretative stances were incorporated into the study that dispersed my authority as author to reveal ‘the text’s own construction of meaning’ (Lather, 1991: 99). Those parameters ‘blur genres, unsettle received definitions, and create a space from which to do otherwise in the name of the human sciences’ (p. 151). Reading the data through Barad (2007), Butler (1999) and with the participants in this study resulted in ‘simply, thinking’ (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 138). Engaging with the theory and data in this manner was messy and unpredictable, as outlined in the introduction chapter, Chapter 1 - Introduction and Chapter 7 – Unpacking the Interview Process, where the messiness of qualitative research was captured. Up against time constraints and a desire to ‘get-to-grips’ with what was emerging from the data, thinking with theory reminded me of Bly’s (1990: xi) words in ‘Iron John’, ‘...we make the path by walking’. This form of engagement with the data was a way of thinking, as Jackson and Mazzei (2012: 138) describe, that spreads thoughts and questions in ‘unpredictable patterns of waves and intensities’. Resulting from thinking with theory is an on-going engagement with new possibilities. It caused messy and unpredictable data analysis. Yet this feeling of uncertainty was not new to me. Throughout the various interview stages and just when I thought I had grasped the answer to my questions, it was replaced by many more questions. To reflect this the presentation of the thesis is written in such a way as ‘to not talk to the reader about what sense we made of the data, but to try to bring the reader into the threshold with us’ (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 138).

‘Well done on that – it’s very readable and the cross section of opinions makes for very interesting reading.’

(Eoin)

11.11.1 Theoretical memo

The words of participants were constructed as a ‘playlet’ (Lather, 1991: 146) or ‘reflexive tale’ that uses a narrative rather than a challenging rationality (p. 150). The texts are used to display rather than to analyse, to demonstrate and perform rather than ‘to support an analysis’ (p. 150). This form of presentation seeks to ‘illustrate rather than claim’ (Van Maanen,

1988: 122, as cited in Lather, 1991: 150). In traditional qualitative research, the voice is heard and recorded, coded and categorised. The data was presented in this study in a manner intended to disrupt and irrupt meaning making (Mazzei and Jackson, 2009: 5). It requires listening to participant voices with ‘soft ears’ or ears that are ‘open to more nuanced understandings and interpretations ... demonstrating the ways that an appeal to poststructuralism affords researchers a broader framework for better understanding the obvious...’ (Mazzei and Jackson, 2009: 8). Grounded in the experiences of male teachers, I have attempted a counter-discourse to de-familiarize common-sense understandings of bodies, care, masculinities and work. The work is presented to counter ‘homogenous spaces of collective consensus and communication’ (Lather, 2009: 23). I cannot know more about the participants and their experiences than they know about themselves. As a result, authenticity and validity are assured through not knowing.

11.11.2 Issues of understanding

Understandings are always imperfect (Connell, 2014). As a result, emerging themes have been offered to the public for debate and discussion in the form of three publications. These publications: *The Interview as Method: Doing Feminist Research* (2017), *SAGE Research Methods Cases - Education, What are male teachers’ understandings of masculinities? – An exploration of sex, bodies and gender* (2016), *Palgrave Communications* and *Why the decline in male primary school teachers?* (2014), *InTouch Magazine, INTO*, have been offered to the public for discussion and examination. Additionally, I have presented my findings at many conferences over the past four years. Each occasion has presented opportunities to discuss emerging themes with the public and to listen to their thoughts and perceptions of masculinities. Ending with Connell (2014), if we have made contributions to the public process in the form of publications then ‘we have done the right thing’.

‘Memory is not a record of a fixed past ... The past is never finished.’

(Barad, 2007: ix)

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Appendices

Appendix 1



COLÁISTE MHUIRE GAN SMÁL
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH
MARY IMMACULATE COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK

What are Irish male teachers' understandings of masculinities and how do they impact on their daily lives?

Informed Consent Form

Dear Participant,

As outlined in the **participant information sheet** this study will investigate Irish male teachers' understandings of masculinities and how they impact on their lives.

Details of what is involved in participating in the study are contained in the **participant instruction sheet**. The participant information sheet should be read fully and carefully before consenting to take part in the study.

Your anonymity is assured and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time. All information gathered will remain confidential and will not be released to any third party. In accordance with the MIC Record Retention Schedule all participant data will be stored for the duration of the project plus three years at which time it will be destroyed.

Please read the following statements before signing the consent form.

- I have read and understood the **participant information sheet**.
- I understand what the project is about, and what the results will be used for.
- I have completed the **questionnaire**.
- I am fully aware of **all** of the procedures involving myself, and of any **risks and benefits** associated with the study.
- I know that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the project at any stage without giving any reason.
- I am aware that findings from my interview will form part of a thesis.

Name (PRINTED): _____

Name (Signature): _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2



How do masculinities and power influence the actions, practices and interactions of Irish primary and secondary school teachers? Participant Information Sheet

What is the project about?

The aim of this study is to explore how gender impacts on power relations within Irish primary and secondary schools. The study will explore daily interactions with colleagues and daily challenges encountered in the workplace. The male teacher as a role model and traditional stereotypes related to the teaching profession will also be explored.

Who is undertaking it?

My name is Suzanne O' Keeffe and I am a Postgraduate student attending Mary Immaculate College. I am presently completing a PhD in Education in the Department of Learning, Society and Religious Education under the supervision of Professor James Deegan. The current study will form part of my thesis.

Why is it being undertaken?

Recent reports describe the significant decline in the number of male teachers in both primary and secondary schools. The objective of this study is to explore what it means to be a man in the teaching profession today. This project will highlight reasons for the decline in male teachers.

What are the benefits of this research?

It is hoped that the data gathered from participants will (a) enhance our understanding of masculinities in primary schools, (b) may benefit our understanding of power relations in primary schools, with particular focus on actions, practices and interactions among colleagues, and (c) may have implications for preventing a further decline in male teacher rates.

Exactly what is involved for the participant (time, location, etc.)

The study will consist of two parts: a brief **questionnaire** and **one interview**. The purpose of the **questionnaire** is to confirm basic background information such as nationality, gender and date of birth along with information on teacher training education and current school setting (urban or rural). It will take approximately ten minutes to complete. The questionnaire will be forwarded to you via e-mail for completion. You will be required to e-mail the completed questionnaire to me within one week. If you do not have an e-mail address I will post the questionnaire to you with a stamped addressed envelope included for its completed return. The questionnaire will serve as a basis for the interview.

| |
|---|
| <p>The interview: The interview will consist of one meeting between November 2014 and January 2016. It will be conducted on a day and time of your preference. The interview will last</p> |
|---|

approximately an hour.

Right to withdraw

Your anonymity is assured and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without consequence.

How will the information be used / disseminated?

The data from your interview will be combined with that of the other participants in this study and used to form the results section of my thesis. Summary data only will appear in the thesis, individual participant data will not be shown. Findings may be used in research publications in summary form not identifiable as individual participant data.

How will confidentiality be kept?

All information gathered will remain confidential and will not be released to any third party. A random ID number will be generated for each participant and it is this number rather than the participant's name which will be held with their data to maintain their anonymity.

What will happen to the data after research has been completed?

In accordance with the MIC Record Retention Schedule all research data will be stored for the duration of the project plus three years. *(This is the minimum retention period for research records set out in the MIC Record Retention Schedule. If you intend to retain the data for a period longer than this you must make this clear in the information sheet.)*

Contact details:

If at any time you have any queries/issues with regard to this study my contact details are as follows:

Suzanne O' Keeffe

E-mail: okeeffesuz@hotmail.com

Tel: 087 – xxxxxxx

If you wish to contact my supervisor, his contact details are as follows:

Professor James Deegan

E-mail: jim.deegan@mic.ul.ie

Tel: 061-xxxxx

If you have concerns about this study and wish to contact someone independent, you may contact:

MIREC Administrator

Mary Immaculate College

South Circular Road

Limerick

061-xxxxxx

mirec@mic.ul.ie

Appendix 3

Copy of open-call for participants

Submitted to InTouch Magazine, 2014, issue 148, p. 43

In this world of profit and efficiency the topic of gender is often overlooked. However gender is impacting on Irish society and culture in new and interesting ways. This year alone saw the first openly-gay contestant crowned the 56th Rose of Tralee; the annual Lisdoonvarna Matchmaking Festival includes a weekend for the LGBT community and Panti Bliss' 'Noble Call' oration on homophobia in Ireland grabbed international attention. The landscape is shifting particularly for Irish women. Women have taken to the political and economic stage like never before. The May 2014 elections saw a rise of 34% in the number of females elected to political positions. The appointment of two additional women to cabinet in July 2014 marked a breakthrough in Irish public life with the highest number of women in senior ministerial positions ever. While the gender equality lens has traditionally focused on women the spotlight is now firmly fixed on men, a spotlight that Michael Kimmel (2010) believes obscures as much as it illuminates. For that reason, what are the consequences for men when women can both bring home the bacon and fry it up in the pan? (p. 3)

Gender in Ireland: A brief overview

The 1922 Irish Free State Constitution guaranteed inter-alia equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens. However the definition of citizenship heavily depended on gender-role expectations. The word 'woman' meant domesticity, nurturing and dependency. Hence citizenship for women was clearly defined in their roles as wife and mother. Up until 1973, women were forced to resign from the civil service when they got married so they could concentrate on domestic duties such as home-making and child-rearing. It was not until Ireland joined the European Union in 1973 that Irish progress on gender equality in education was reflected in legislation. European legislation introduced The Amsterdam Treaty (1999), which for the first time gave power to outlaw all discrimination based on gender. Irish legislation introduced The Employment Equality Act (1998) and The Equal Status Act (1999), which outlawed sexual harassment and discrimination respectively. However not all initiatives were welcomed. The Exploring Masculinities Programme (1999) was developed

and piloted in a number of all male secondary schools (1997 – 1999). The programme aimed, among other objectives, to investigate different perceptions and experiences of masculinity. The programme was developed with funding from the European Social Fund. However, the programme failed due to misconceptions surrounding the concept of masculinities.

The Question of Masculinities in Schools:

Recent reports describe the significant decline in the number of male teachers in both primary and secondary schools. The Central Statistics Office census data (2011) reveal that just over a quarter of primary and secondary school teachers combined are male. The gender gap is wider when one considers primary level only. Current undergraduates in Irish teacher training colleges support this gender trend. The decline in male teachers is not unique to Ireland. UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2012) illustrates that the gender crisis within the teaching profession is a world-wide phenomenon. This leads us to the question of masculinities in Irish primary schools. The caring qualities needed for teaching are deemed to be natural, intuitive, and inherently feminine. Unfortunately such stereotypes coupled with longer hours and reduced pay discourages men from joining the teaching profession. Nevertheless the Y chromosome can make a significant impact for pupils and colleagues in the primary school setting. There are 87,357 teachers registered with the Teaching Council in Ireland (2014). This number comprises of 77% female teachers and 23% male teachers. A recent decline in the participation rate of male teachers in the primary school workforce is in proportion with the shrinking number of male teachers in positions of power. A recent report compiled by the ESRI on behalf of The Teaching Council suggests that male teachers had low job satisfaction levels compared to their female counterparts. Indeed, gender has been mentioned more frequently than any other aspect of identity as a source of unfair treatment in schools (Lynch and Lodge, 2002).

Conclusion:

My aim is to explore in depth what it means to be a man in the teaching profession today and wish to invite you to participate in this research. If you are motivated to make a contribution to this research topic or have any queries about this article please do not hesitate to contact me at: okeeffesuz@hotmail.com

References:

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About the author:

Suzanne O' Keeffe is a primary school teacher in Askeaton, Co. Limerick. She is pursuing doctoral studies in Mary Immaculate College, Limerick under the supervision of Prof J. Deegan, Head of Graduate School.

Appendix 4

Authors engaged with the research question

Primary methodological engagement

Patti Lather: thinking with poststructuralism

Patricia (Patti) Lather, Professor of Education in the School of Educational Policy and Leadership at Ohio State University, has taught qualitative research, feminist methodology and gender and education at Ohio State University since 1988. Lather taught for 5 years in a high school in Indiana where she would have ‘stayed forever if I had found enabling conditions to foster good teaching’ (Lather, 1992: 87). Lather found ‘small reward for hard work’ (p. 87), a sentiment repeated word for word by a participant in this research study, and ‘a bureaucracy seemingly intent on thwarting my every attempt to teach creatively’ (p. 87). She pursued a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from Indiana University (1983) in the hope of making schools places where passionate teachers could have lifetime careers.

Lather’s research interests include (post)critical methodology, feminist ethnography, and poststructuralism. Lather’s work is concerned with the methodological implications of critical theory, a position that encourages understanding of how power shapes the world. It explores issues in the developing area of emancipatory research. She is the author of four books, *Getting Smart: Feminist Research and Pedagogy With/in the Postmodern* (1991 Critics Choice Award), *Troubling the Angels: Women Living with HIV/AIDS*, co-authored with Chris Smithies (1998 CHOICE Outstanding Academic Title), *Getting Lost: Feminist Efforts Toward a Double(d) Science* (2008 Critics Choice Award) and *Engaging (Social) Science: Policy from the Side of the Messy* (2010, 2011 Critics Choice Award).

Lather lectures widely in international and national contexts and held a number of distinguished visiting lectureships. I was fortunate to meet Patti when I attended her open lecture on (post)qualitative research at Trinity College, Dublin in 2014. During her lecture, ‘*Top Ten+ List: (Re)Thinking Ontology in (Post)Qualitative Research*’, she presented a “top ten+ list” of lessons learned from the ontological turn. During this session she introduced the audience to key authors engaging with this turn, such as Karen Barad and Susan Hekman. These authors call for a new theory of understanding, one that considers both the cultural and the natural elements of world we live in. Many of the authors mentioned that day coupled

with a voice-centred relational method of data analysis form an integral part of this research study. Just as Van Maanen (2011: xvii) describes his writing style as developing ‘by paying close attention to those ethnographic works I admired’, I too have paid close attention to Lather and Smithies (1997) unique account of women living with HIV and AIDS. The account of these stories presented in *Troubling the Angels* was a particularly helpful blueprint to guide the narrative representation and style presented in this thesis.

Lather engages with the methodological and poststructural debates of this research.

Secondary methodological engagement

Sandra Harding: thinking with a feminist standpoint

Sandra Harding is Distinguished Professor of Education and Gender Studies at the University of California in Los Angeles where she teaches philosophy of social science and postcolonial and feminist studies. She has written or edited fourteen books and special issues of journals that focus on feminist and postcolonial epistemology, methodology, and philosophy of science. In 2013, Harding was awarded the John Desmond Bernal Prize of Society for the Social Studies of Science. This is the society’s highest award.

Harding engages with the epistemological and ontological debates of this study.

Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber: thinking with feminist methods

Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber is Professor of Sociology at Boston College and Director of the Women’s Studies Programme. She is the founder and director of the National Association for Women in Catholic Higher Education. Hesse-Biber is editor of the *Handbook of Feminist Research. Theory and Practice* (2007), co-editor of several books, including *Feminist Perspectives and Social Research* (2004) and *Approaches to Qualitative Research* (2004), and is co-author of books including *Emergent Methods in Social Research* (Sage, 2006). She has also written numerous articles in the fields of body image, qualitative methods, and computer approaches to qualitative data analysis.

Hesse-Biber engages with the feminist research design of this study.

Primary ontological engagement

Raewyn Connell: thinking with gender

Raewyn Connell, Professor Emerita at the University of Sydney, and a Life Member of the National Tertiary Education Union, is one of the world's leading scholars in the field of gender studies. Connell became Professor of Sociology at Macquarie University in 1976, moved to the University of California at Santa Cruz in the early 1990s and later returned to the University of Sydney, where she retired from her University Chair in July 2014.

As a sociologist, Connell became known for research on large-scale class dynamics, such as *Ruling Class, Ruling Culture* (1977) and on how class and gender hierarchies are made and re-made in the everyday life of schools, such as *Making the Difference* (1982); *Teachers' Work* (1985). She was one of the creators of the international field of research on men and masculinities. Connell was a recipient of the American Sociological Association's award for distinguished contribution to the study of sex and gender, and was invited by United Nations agencies to lead international discussions of masculinities, violence and peace-making, and the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality.

Connell is best known internationally for studies on masculinity and her article *Teaching the boys: New Research on Masculinity, and Gender Strategies for Schools* (1996) was my first introduction to Connell as an author and to the field of masculinities. I found it, along with Connell's online blog, to be particularly stimulating and engaging as I began to discover the area of masculinities. I contacted Raewyn via e-mail to convey to her my interest in her work and its possible theoretical links to the Irish context. I also wished to ask her a question that had been troubling me for some time, 'How can I as a female researcher fully understand the concept of masculinities and the male mind-set?' Professor Connell replied: 'I have to ask the same question about my own research! But it's only a problem if one thinks there is a fixed mind-set that applies to males and only to males. And we know that isn't so. Gender is historically dynamic. Even when one is a member of the group under study ... there is always diversity of experiences and outlook. The task is to find good evidence, to study it carefully, to learn from other research, and to put together the best understanding we can' (via e-mail 13th August 2014).

Connell addresses issues of gender, masculinities and schooling in this study.

Michael Kimmel: thinking with masculinities

Michael Kimmel is Distinguished Professor of Sociology and Gender Studies at Stony Brook University, State University of New York (SUNY). Kimmel is among the leading researchers and writers on men and masculinity in the world today and has provided a powerful voice to 'the problem with women'. A sociologist at Stony Brook University in New York, Kimmel is among the leading researchers and writers on men and masculinity in the world today. Kimmel's body of work examines the topic of gender in an invigorating manner, which addresses 'the myths, half-truths, and either inadvertent or deliberate misreadings of the evidence' (Kimmel, 2000: xi). As the number of males who support feminism rise, his books are borne from a 'frustration with the dominant public conversations about gender in the US' (Kimmel, 2000: xi) and tend to focus on the perceived differences between men and women along with male dominance. Kimmel is editor of the *Men and Masculinities* journal, which became one of the first academic journals focused on men. He is also a spokesperson of the National Organization for Men Against Sexism (NOMAS) and an advocate of engaging men to support gender equality. In 2013, Kimmel founded and became Executive Director of the Center for the Study of Men and Masculinities at Stony Brook University, New York. He has lectured at more than 300 colleges, universities and high schools. Kimmel has delivered the International Women's Day annual lecture at the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council of Europe, and has worked with the Ministers for Gender Equality of Norway, Denmark and Sweden in developing programs for boys and men. Kimmel's book, *Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men* (2008), was the incentive for undertaking this research.

Kimmel addresses the issue of contemporary masculinities in this study.

Secondary ontological engagement

Mairtin Mac an Ghail: thinking with education

Mairtin Mac an Ghail is Professor of Education at Newman University College, Birmingham. Professor Mac an Ghail's area of academic interest lie in the fields of educational and social inequalities, ethnicity, racism and cultural belonging, the sociology of masculinity, and the Irish diaspora in Britain. He has a particular methodological interest in critical ethnography.

Mac an Ghail addresses issues of masculinities and education in this study.

Primary theoretical engagement

Karen Barad: thinking with intra-action

Karen Barad is Professor of Feminist Studies, Philosophy, and History of Consciousness at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Barad earned her doctorate in theoretical physics at Stony Brook University, New York. Barad held a position in a physics department and has written many articles in the field of physics. Inspired by theoretical physics, much of Barad's theories revolve around an approach she terms 'agential realism', 'intra-action', 'performativity', and 'onto-epistem-ology'. These various terms describe one concept; the concept of 'entanglements'. To be entangled is not simply to be intertwined with one another. Barad's (2007) theory suggests that existence is not an individual affair (p. ix). To exist to be part of many entanglements that rely on each other to exist. Each body, both human and inhuman, are entangled and intertwined because each one lacks 'an independent, self-contained existence' (Barad, 2007: ix). Bodies do not precede their interactions; they emerge through 'intra-action'. Additionally, Barad (2007) claims, events are not once and for all happenings. Events are processes that are continuously coming into existence through memory and language in the course of their inter-action. This in turn makes time and space, like matter and meaning, 'impossible to differentiate in any absolute sense between creation and renewal ... past and future' (p. ix).

Barad's theory is 'beginning to transform feminist approaches to knowledge' (Hekman, 2014: 151). It also marks a deep inroad into an area 'that has always been central to feminist analysis: the body' (p. 151). Bodies, both human and inhuman, serve as the endpoint and the starting point 'for meaningful and objective scientific practice' (Barad, 2007: 120). Barad's theory provides a useful framework for considering how bodies in education; the community, the education system, male teachers, the school building, and their interactions and 'intra-actions' can reproduce male teachers subjective experiences.

Barad engages in debates surrounding school culture and the system of teacher recruitment.

Judith Butler: thinking with performativity

Judith Butler is Maxine Elliot Professor in the Department of Rhetoric and Comparative Literature at the University of California and holds the Hannah Arendt Chair at The European Graduate School in Switzerland. Butler received her B.A. (1978) and her Ph.D. (1984) in Philosophy from Yale University. Butler is the author of over fourteen books. She is most

associated with her book, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990; 1999), which questions the assumption that there is such a thing as the unity of the experience of women. Butler's theory of gender performativity is central to all her work that opens a space in which the repetition of old thought is no longer necessary or inevitable (Davies, 2008: xiii). It also seeks to 'undo normative categories' that place 'rigid structures on how people live out their lives' (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 67). French Philosopher, Michel Foucault, has a consistent presence in Butler's work (Salih, 2004), and his technique of deconstruction, which analyses the discursive production of sex and sexuality, provided the foundations for Butler's (1990) critique of sex, sexuality and identity in her most famous work, *Gender Trouble*.

Butler addresses the issue of gender as a performance in this thesis.

Secondary theoretical engagement

Susan Hekman: thinking with nature

Susan Hekman is Professor of Political Science at the University of Texas, Arlington, USA. She received her doctorate at the University of Washington. Beginning with *Gender and Knowledge* (1990), she has published five additional books in feminist theory: *Moral Voices/Moral Selves* (1995), *The Future of Differences* (1999), *Private Selves/Public Identities* (2004), *Material Feminisms* (with Stacy Alaimo) (2008) and *The Material of Knowledge, Feminist Disclosures* (2010). She has also published in the methodology of the social sciences and feminist theory.

Hekman addresses the materialist debates in this thesis. She also facilitates the theoretical link between Barad's (2007) concept of intra-action and Butler's (1999) concept of gender performativity.

Notable absences

As I compile the list of authors engaged in the topic of feminist research and education, I consider two female authors from the Southern hemisphere that have contributed largely to the area of feminist educational research but who have largely been omitted from this study.

Bronwyn Davies

Bronwyn Davies is Independent scholar and Professorial Fellow, University of Melbourne. Before becoming an independent scholar in 2009, Davies previously held the positions of

Professor of Education at James Cook University, Northern Australia, and chair of the Narrative, Discourse and Pedagogy Research Unit at the University of Western Sydney, Australia. Her publications include over 17 books and more than 130 book chapters and papers. Davies has published second editions of *Frogs and Tales and Feminist Tales* (2003) and *Shards of Glass* (2003). *Frogs and Snails and Feminist Tales* (2003) won the Outstanding Book Award from the American Education Association and has been translated into Swedish, German and Spanish and chapter 1 into Hindi. Furthermore, Davies was awarded an Honorary Doctorate at Uppsala University, Sweden, for her work in early childhood education upon the book's publication as *Hur flickor och pojkar gör kon* in Swedish in 2003. Many of her written works have been co-authored, such as 'Feminism / Poststructuralism' in *Research Methods in the Social Sciences* (2005) with Susanne Gannon. Davies now divides her time between writing and traveling. Recently, she has visited America, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, England, Finland, Ireland, Norway and Sweden to lecture and run academic writing and research workshops.

The question that perplexes me when compiling Davies biography is why her work has not featured more prominently throughout this study. I believe that geographical location has been an unconscious factor in this decision. All authors engaged in this research, except for Connell, live in the global north. Butler's work (1999; 2005) naturally led to Barad's (2007) theory of intra-action and Hekman (2010; 2014) provided a bridge to link the two author's together. These authors tend to reference each other a great deal resulting in an indirect unconscious geographical research trail running parallel to this research topic. Indeed, Connell (2009: vii) notes that social science is 'at best, ambiguously democratic' and embeds the viewpoints and perspectives of 'the rich capital-exporting countries of Europe and North America – the global metropole'. Furthermore, Lynch (1999: 6) notes that the 'intellectual discourse' of sociology, including sociology of education, 'is dominated by sociologists who either live in, or are part of, dominant cultural traditions'.

Sue Middleton

Sue Middleton is Senior Lecturer in Education at the University of Waikato, New Zealand. She has taught in elementary, junior high, and high schools. With a particular interest in education, Middleton explores life-history methods interweaved with autobiographical perspectives of policy and pedagogy. Although, Middleton explores many postmodern feminist theories that would support this thesis, her approach is on multiple power relations

and on the ‘personal experiences of contradictions that such multiple positions bring about’ (Middleton, 1993: 18). Middleton positions her research with regard to ‘other women’s life histories’ (p. 31), which I found to be particularly helpful during my introductory phase to feminist research. However, I temporarily part ways with Middleton’s work because this study is not a life-history account of masculinities in Irish primary schools.

Engaging the research question with Judith Butler

Why Butler?

In 1990, one of the most influential books of the coming decade was published: *Gender Trouble*. Taking the feminist community ‘by storm’ (Hekman, 2014: 117), Butler considered the political assumption of a universal female identity, ‘assumed to exist cross-culturally’ (1999: 5), as false. Taking the distinction between sex and gender as her starting point, Butler considered the power at play between identity and identification. In developing her critique, she questioned whether ‘a’ gender was an attribute someone is said to have, or ‘an essential attribute that a person is said to *be*’ (p. 10). The book, together with its author, reached ‘iconic status’ (Hekman, 2014: 117; Lloyd, 2007: 1) and unsettled all that was considered stable and unwavering within feminism. Outside of academia, Butler received the rare accolade of being cited in British style magazine, *The Face*, as one of 50 people who had the greatest influence on popular culture in the 1990s. Translated into 25 languages, Butler was indeed the ‘superstar of 90s academia’ (Friedman, as cited in Robinson, 2006:67) or as Hekman (2014: 117) describes as the ‘dominant influence in feminist theory in the 1990s’.

Troubling encounters

Trouble appears to be a popular choice of adjective among feminist scholars, ranging from Goldberger’s (1996: 13) ‘troublesome’ demands for ideal epistemology in a postmodern era ‘in which universals and absolutes are decried’ to Lather and Smithies (1997) award winning book title, *Troubling the Angels*. Additionally, Wanda and Pillows (2012: 1) describe our current time and space as one that ‘troubles’ all that was once assumed to be solid, substantial, and whole. Recalling her childhood, Butler (1999) remembers that causing trouble was something one was advised never to do ‘precisely because that would get one *in* trouble’ (p. xxix). Marking this as her first critical insight into the subtle plot of power, that putting one in trouble will keep one out of trouble, Butler accepted the ‘ruse’ of power as inevitable and as something that ‘usually related to ... all things feminine’ (p. xxix). Butler’s radical critique of identity, specifically the traditionally stable and unified notion of women, caused seismic shock waves to ripple the foundations of feminism. It was as if, in Butler’s words, it might ‘culminate in the failure of feminism’ (1999: xxix). The book became, as Butler acknowledges in the preface to the tenth anniversary edition, ‘a provocative ‘intervention’ in feminist theory’ (p. vii). It transformed queer theory, the theory of ‘gay’

identity, becoming its ‘founding text’ (Butler, 1999: vii; Robinson, 2006: 66). Before Butler (1999) reshaped the categories through which we experience and perform our lives and bodies, it was assumed that one was ‘either gay or straight’, and representations, how one talks about and presents oneself, ‘actively reflected that fact’ (Robinson, 2006: 66). Butler’s theory of performativity (1999) considers gender as a performance that one grows into through repetition. Both Butler (1992) and Lather (1991; 2000) outline the possibilities of ‘working out of the failure of received knowledge’ (St. Pierre and Pillow, 2000: 17).

Representationalism to performativity

To begin to understand the complexity and importance of what Butler initiated, which was to question the feminine subject as the ultimate category of representation, one must begin with the history of representationalism. A concept so ‘downright natural’ with a ‘common-sense appeal’ (Barad, 2007: 48), has, in fact, a rather complex history. Beginning with the personal, the starting point of all feminist research, it is agreed that the world comprises of individuals. These individuals exist as part of stable and unified category, such as the category of women and the category of men. Within these two categories are individuals that, in Barad’s words (2007: 46), are to be ‘represented’. Butler (1999: xxxii) terms this representation as ‘identity’. These individuals, the women and the men, are believed to be ‘awaiting or inviting representation’, according to Barad (2007: p. 46) or awaiting ‘identification’ in Butlerean terms (1999: xxiii). Together, the representations and the entities to be represented combine to form the ‘representation of the category’ (Barad, 2007: 46). In other words, the identities and those to be identified, together form a ‘masquerade’ (Butler, 1999: xxxiii). However, this ‘taken-for-granted ontological gap’ produces numerous questions ‘of the accuracy of representations’ (Butler, 1999: 47). Collectively, this masquerade creates the framework of representationalism. Barad and Butler’s descriptions can be read in relation to Van Maanen’s (2011: 3) claim that culture, akin to ‘a black hole that allows no light to escape’ and ‘certainly a cosmic idea’ is only made visible ‘through its representations’. Butler is often associated with troubling the framework of representationalism. In an attempt to ‘formulate understandings of the possibilities for political intervention’ (Barad, 2007: 47), Butler (1999) questions the ‘configuration of power’ that constructs the ‘binary relation’ between men and women and the ‘internal stability’ of those two terms (p. xxx). Such questions include, ‘What new shape of politics emerges when identity as a common ground no longer constrains the discourse on feminist politics?’ (Butler,

1999: xxxii). This question is particularly interesting when applied to a research study of male primary teachers.

Barad (2007: 48) terms representationalism as a 'Cartesian byproduct' (Citing Rouse, 1996). It is an 'inconspicuous consequence of the Cartesian division between 'internal' and 'external' that breaks along the line of the knowing subject'. Barad (2007: 49) claims this dual understanding to be 'part of Western legacy' and 'simply a Cartesian habit of mind'. Similarly, Butler (1999: 28) references Michel Haar's (1977: 17-18) critique of the illusions of 'Being' and 'Substance', which have resulted in the grammatical power that governs 'much popular and theoretical thinking about gender identity'. All psychological categories, Haar (1977: 17-18) states, 'derive from the illusion of substantial identity' (As cited in Butler, 1999: 28). This illusion developed upon a faith in the truth of language (p. 28). This belief in language, or the 'asymmetrical faith we place in our access to representations over things' (Barad, 2007: 49), was inspired by 'Descartes' certainty that 'I' is the subject of 'think' rather than the thoughts 'that come to me' (Butler, 1999: 28). However, the subject, the self, the individual are all false concepts or 'fictitious unities' (Haar, 1977: 17 – 18, as cited in Butler, 1999: 29). Butler (2005: 66) develops this theory of illusion in her subsequent work, stating that 'I' is the 'most ungrounded moment' in a narrative because 'every account of myself' is 'partial and failed' (p. 78). This account of oneself, or 'I', becomes the 'moment of failure in every narrative effort' because 'I always arrive too late to myself' (p. 79). It is this failure of representation that is the site of much possibility for theorists named as 'new materialists' or 'material feminists' who engage in questions of ontology. Considering 'not just how discourses function, but how they materialize', our thinking is shaken up to reflect on how subjectivity is understood as connections with other bodies and other things (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 113). This is particularly interesting when reflecting on how masculinities intra-act with the materiality of their world, such as the school, the community and the educational system, in ways that produce different becomings?

Complex gender identities, Butler (1999: xxxiii) outlines, are 'pursued' through an analysis 'of identity, identification, and masquerade'. However, it is important that the main point in this analysis is more than inclusion. The main point for both Barad (2007) and Butler (1999) is, in fact, power. Additionally, the main point of their analysis is the exclusionary practices that power produces (Barad, 2007: 58; Butler, 1999: 3). This third party highlights an ontological gap due to a 'failure to take account of the practices through which

representations are produced (Barad, 2007: 53). The third party may be ‘the knower’ (Barad, 2007: 46) who holds the power to represent or the ‘power’ that appears ‘to regulate political life’ (Butler, 1999: 3). This third party, which both Barad and Butler describe as power in different forms, generates ‘questions of the accuracy of representation’ (Barad, 2007: 47). It threatens the prospect of identity ‘becoming an instrument of the power one opposes’ (Butler, 1999: xxviii) by mimicking the strategy of the oppressor (p. 18). In an attempt to remedy this ontological gap, Butler questions ‘the exclusionary practices that ground feminist theory’ in the stable notion of ‘women’ as paradoxically undercutting feminist goals to extend its representation (1999: 7). This is particularly interesting for this study of male primary school teachers as is Butler’s account of ‘the workings of gender oppression in the concrete cultural contexts in which it exists’ (1999: 5). In this study, these cultural contexts are considered to be the school and the society in which the school exists.

Getting into trouble

It is questionable whether there is any utility in analysing, yet again, the work of Butler and particularly that of ‘*Gender Trouble*’. Mindful of Hekman’s (2014: 117) position regarding this question, there are two possibilities of answering such a question. First, as Butler’s theory has had such a profound effect on the evolution of the feminine subject, her theory could possibly be revisited in order to extend a contemporary thesis of the masculine subject in light of current global transformations. Second, Butler’s theory has fruitfully evolved since *Gender Trouble* to include the materiality of the body, addressed most directly in the introduction of *Gendered Bodies* (1993: ix), ‘I began writing this book by trying to consider the materiality of the body’. This alone, Hekman (2014: 117) believes, ‘constitutes a significant reason to return to that work’. In order to directly address the question of performativity and gender in primary schools the aim of this essay is to link Butler’s epistemic/ ontological inquiry of gender performativity to the life of a male primary school teacher on the grounds of gender presupposition, gender performativity and the possibility of agency.

Gender presupposition: troubling universality

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s within the Anglo-American context, gender came to ‘dominate the feminist lexicon’ (Lloyd, 2007: 28). The term was developed as a means of contradicting the idea of biological determination. Taking its cue from Beauvoir, that one is not born a woman, but rather becomes one, feminist theory came to define gender as ‘a

matter of culture' (Oakley, 1972, as cited in Lloyd, 2007: 28). Beginning the first chapter of her book, Butler (1999: 1) lists five quotes from the work of Beauvoir, Kristeva, Irigaray, Foucault and Wittig, respectively. Taking Beauvoir's and Kristeva's quotes that 'One is not born a woman, but rather becomes one' and 'Strictly speaking, 'women' cannot be said to exist' respectively (p. 1), Butler develops her theory of gender presupposition that casts doubt on women as the essential category of feminist inquiry. Butler seeks to outline that gender, like an authoritative disclosure of meaning, is an expectation that produces the very phenomenon that it anticipates. Just as Butler's text sought to demonstrate how the category of women has been deployed within feminism (Lloyd, 2007: 26) by calling into question 'the stability of gender as a category of analysis' (Butler, 1999: xi).

Butler and the masculine subject

Sex and *gender*, like all entanglements, implies 'the joining of separate entities' yet a lack of an 'independent, self-contained existence' (Barad, 2007: ix). Butler calls into question 'not only the sex-gender binary' foundational to feminist theory and gender analysis, but also 'the nature of agency that is entailed in the inscription model of construction' (Barad, 2007: 61). French Philosopher, Michel Foucault, has a consistent presence in Butler's work (Salih, 2004), and his technique of deconstruction, which analyses the discursive production of sex and sexuality, provided the foundations for Butler's (1999) critique of sex, sexuality and identity in her most famous work. Butler examines the ways in which gender was traditionally understood in feminist theory and politics, unsettling all that was considered stable and firm within feminism. Gender, for Butler (1999), is not a question of having or of being, but a performance brought into existence through action and repetition, rather than the expression of a pre-existing reality (Connell, 1990; Jackson and Mazzei, 2012).

Butler's (1999) ontological view illustrates gender as a culturally authorised performance that requires a body to execute within a heteronormative matrix of intelligibility. The naturalisation of gender performance, Butler (1999) claims, naturalises and privileges heterosexuality. Butler's (1999) theory of gender performativity works to unsettle the normalizing and regulating categories of gender through the surface politics of the body. When the body is regarded as a cultural locus of gender meanings, the natural aspects free of cultural imprint, becomes unclear.

Major Contribution

Butler's theory of gender has been 'enormously influential' (Barad, 2007: 59 – 60). At the centre of her work is a 'seemingly simple question' of which bodies count as human (Brady and Schirato, 2011: 1). *Gender Trouble* (1990), described by feminist and physicist Karen Barad (2007: 60) as 'ground-breaking and influential', is Butler's best known work (Brady and Schirato, 2011: 2).

Critics

Critics of Butler have attacked her from many directions (Hekman, 2014: 152). The key issues critiqued in Butler's (1999) text were poststructural concerns of 'subject, agency, and resistance' (Hekman, 2014: 117-18). One critique that stands out for Hekman (2014: 152) is the claim that 'despite the aspiration of postmodernism to deconstruct dichotomies, Butler's approach to the body ... reifies the modernist dichotomy of the body'. Indeed, Barad (2007: 64) notes Butler's (1999) 'inability to spell out' the material nature of discursive practices. Questions surrounding the materiality of the body 'seem to hang in the air like the persistent smile of the Cheshire cat' (Barad, 2007: 64). In 1999, a special tenth anniversary edition of *Gender Trouble* was published with a comprehensive new preface. In it Butler addresses 'the barrage of criticisms of her work' by explaining her intent in the book (Hekman, 2007: 117). Butler (1999: xxv) acknowledges that the text 'does not sufficiently explain performativity' and that the clarification sought by the academic audience 'guides most of my subsequent publications'. Similar to Barad's (2007: 64) critique, Susan Bordo (2004), for example, has argued that Butler reduces gender to language, contending that the body is a major part of gender, thus implicitly opposing Butler's conception of gender as performed. Connell, a structuralist theorist, has dismissed Butler's work on gender (McInnes, 2008: 109). 'Butler ... the main proponent of the 'performative' account of gender, is strikingly unable to account for work, child-care, institutional life, violence, resistance (except as individual choice), and material inequality' (Connell, 2000: 20, as cited in McInnes, 2008: 109). Butler (1999) acknowledges that much of her subsequent works have addressed the concerns of these authors.

Awards

Butler has received countless awards for her teaching and scholarship, including a Guggenheim fellowship, a Rockefeller fellowship, Yale's Brudner Prize, and an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Distinguished Achievement Award.

Engaging the research question with Karen Barad

Why Barad?

Karen Barad, in her book *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (2007), opens with the statement, ‘matter and meaning are not separate elements’ (p. 3). This statement is the beginning of an ‘ambitious, readable, risk-taking and very smart book’ (Haraway, 2007), which takes up Lather’s (2007) call for an interrogation of the enabling limits of research practices in order ‘to grasp what is on the horizon in terms of new analytics’ (As cited in Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 118). Similarly, Hekman (2014: 150) describes Barad’s book as ‘revolutionary’ in the sense that it ‘throws down the gauntlet against the current orthodoxy, particularly in feminist theory’ (Hekman, 2010: 72). Barad along with Nancy Tuna (1983), a material feminist whom I do not refer to in this study, illustrate how material readings can produce rich new meanings that take into account how the material and the discursive interact to produce new meanings. The bone of contention for such material feminists’ lies in the privileged status language has acquired in feminist theory. However, other feminists denounce a return to modernity’s realist desires to develop concepts that mirror nature. Having rejected ‘woman’ (Butler, 1999) and metanarrative, feminists have found themselves in an era that is both ‘productive and problematic’ (Hekman, 2014: 147).

The natural and the cultural

Language, Barad (2007: 132) powerfully states, ‘has been granted too much power’. In fact, Barad (2007: 132) claims, ‘the only thing that doesn’t seem to matter anymore is matter’. Since the linguistic turn in the mid-21st century, language, it is agreed, is how we make sense of the world (Barad, 2007: 132; Hekman, 2014: 145; Hekman, 2010: 1). Language is what constitutes the reality that we inhabit and the structures that define it (Hekman, 2010: 1). Indeed, it is difficult to argue against an understanding of the world through language. Yet, linguistic constructionism and postmodernism create a particular dilemma for feminism. Recent times have been characterized by ‘overwhelming material consequences’ (Hekman, 2010: 1) that language cannot fully account for. Earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes and terrorist attacks dominate international headlines. While, linguistic constructionists tell us that we understand all events linguistically and that it is this reality that constitutes their reality, Hekman (2010: 1 - 2) questions if our concepts constitute the many and varied

material events of recent times? Language alone is insufficient in answering the question of material consequences and destruction.

For some feminists like Barad (2007) bringing the material back in will be the path that ‘leads us out of the morass that takes absolutism and relativism to be the only two possibilities’ (Barad, 2007: 18). Barad (2007) seeks to develop a framework of analysis that provides performative alternatives encompassing theories of language and materials. Rather than rejecting the insights of linguistic constructionism, Barad (2007: 45) shifts the focus from the nature of representation to the nature of discursive practices. Central to this framework, Barad (2007: 45) states, is ‘a strong commitment to accounting for the material nature of practices and how they come to matter’. As the devastating material events of recent times have illustrated, a new conception to understand the world is needed. Barad, a theoretical physicist and feminist theorist, marks feminisms move from an emphasis on the discursive to what Jackson and Mazzei (2012: 110) illustrate as ‘the material ↔ discursive’. Feminists have always had a ‘special relationship with science’ (Hekman, 2010: 65). However, as a whole generation feminist critique demonstrated, science was ‘no friend to feminism (Hekman, 2014: 148). Barad believes that a new approach is needed in understanding our world. Like many other material feminists, she believes that ‘feminism should be at the forefront of that effort’ (Barad, 2007: 68). Barad’s (2007) new framework reminds us that theories and discourses ‘have material consequences’ (Hekman, 2010: 90).

Barad’s (2007) proposed ‘epistemological-ontological-ethical framework’ (Barad, 2007: 26), described by Jackson and Mazzei (2012: 112) as ‘an ontological re-orientation’, questions not only how discourses function but how they materialise. In fact, Barad (2007: 3) claims that matter and meaning are so entangled that they ‘cannot be disassociated, not by chemical processing, or centrifuge, or nuclear blast’. This theory, which she describes as an epistemological-ontological-ethical framework (Barad, 2007: 26) provides an understanding of the role of human and nonhuman, material and discursive, and natural and cultural. Hekman (2010: 67) considers this a possible solution with the ‘most potential’ for addressing concerns posed by the current crisis in knowledge.

Barad and Butler

‘Words and things’ is the entirely serious title of a problem

- Michael Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, as cited in Barad, 2007: 46

Representationalism takes the notion of separation as foundational (Barad, 2007: 137). Subjects are constituted by social norms ‘but this constitution is not complete’ (Hekman, 2014: 180). This is because the subject cannot be understood in ‘stable or abiding terms’ and so ‘the qualifications for being a subject must first be met before representation can be extended’ (Butler, 1999: 2). Together, Barad (2007) and Butler’s (1999) theories points towards ‘an important reconciliation of the Cartesian separation of intelligibility and materiality’ (Barad, 2007: 175). It encourages the reader to consider constructions and interactions as mutual productions of ‘both subjectivities and performative enactments’ (Jackson and Mazzei, 2010: 111). Butler reads the ‘iterative citationality’ of performativity in terms of repetition, thereby linking the question of identity with the materiality of the body (Barad, 2007: 63).

Major Contribution

Hekman (2005: 65) notes that it is far easier to criticize the excesses produced by the linguistic turn than to express a theoretical position that moves to an articulation of a new theoretical approach. Hekman (2015; 2010) notes Barad (2007), along with Tuna, as the only academics to offer an alternative to the excess of the linguistic turn.

Critics

Criticism of Barad’s theory is in the form of criticism to all theorists who consider the nonhuman and human in shaping social experience. Connell and Pearse (2015: 128) acknowledge material feminists as reviving attention to nonhuman aspects of our world, at an ‘important point in our history’. However, critics of material feminisms, such as Lena Gunnarsson (2013, as cited in Connell and Pearse, 2015: 128), argue that these works overemphasize the dynamic and unbounded qualities of nature. As claimed by Gunnarsson (2013), material feminism fails to account for the constraining effects of biophysical properties on gender. Similarly, Connell and Pearse (2015: 128) state that ‘the best work in this field is research where feminist materialism is combined with analysis of green political prospects and movements’. However, this understanding of environments illustrates a rather limited and traditional view of a term. Barad (2007: 170) considers environments to be in dynamic interaction with bodies. Bodies ‘do not simply take their place in the world’ (p. 170). They are not ‘simply situated in’ particular environments but are ‘intra-actively co-constituted’ (p. 170). Bodies can be understood as environments. Furthermore, the environment, the body and the school can be understood as existing intra-actively. As stated

by Butler (1999: 12), the very meaning of ‘construction’ provides ‘a clue as to what cultural possibilities can and cannot become mobilized’. Grosz (1995: 105) supports this theory by considering the body and the school to have a ‘de facto or external relation’. Just like a city, as cited by Grosz (1995: 105), the school too is ‘a reflection, projection, or product of bodies’. Furthermore, Butler (1999: 12) considers the usefulness of gender as a cultural construction, bound by the limits of its own analysis, ‘the very meaning of ‘construction’... presuppose and preempt the possibilities of imaginable and realizable gender’. This study considers the intra-acting elements of the school and the education system as powerfully shaping the social reality faced by teachers.

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