MASCULINE IDENTITY FORMATION

DURING AND AFTER SCHOOL

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INTRODUCTION

"(What's so funny 'bout) Peace, Love and Understanding?" – Elvis Costello

Christopher

Throughout my twenties and the first half of my thirties, I resisted becoming a

father. When asked why, an event that seemed to occur with alarming regularity, I would

offer the perhaps too facile reply that I would not wish childhood on any child. What I

meant by this reply was that I would not wish *my* childhood on any child, and, to take it

one step further and get to the heart of the matter, what I really meant by that reply was

that I did not look back on school with favor. For me school, especially secondary school,

was largely an inscrutable place where things happened for reasons only dimly

understood. In school I knew that there were students "above" and "below" me, and that

those students did not seem to change their positions over the course of time, but only

vaguely understood the mechanisms by which students were sorted. I also knew that I

was often in trouble in school, and though I was repeatedly told by my teachers that

making my situation better was up to me, nothing much ever changed, and so the

reputation as a "weirdo" that I had unwittingly developed in junior high school followed

me through senior prom (which I did not attend) and graduation (which I did). In short,

school was an unhappy, bewildering place for me, and even as an adult it remained a

mystery, making it only natural that I would become a teacher, work in a limited fashion to construct a better classroom, and try to redeem some of my own experiences in school.

Even though my negative experiences with school motivated me to become a teacher, I never deeply interrogated those experiences; instead I focused on avoiding replicating the most blatantly unhappy examples of what had happened to me as a male who never fit into the idealized configurations of masculinity. In other words, like many classroom teachers I tended to focus on situations as they arose in my classroom, treating them individually rather than examining the underlying discourses of culture and gender that constructed them. While my physical presence in the classroom allowed me to take this route, to evaluate and react "on the fly," I was eventually confronted with a situation that mandated a deeper understanding of schooling and the way it interacts with identity. After many discussions with my wife, who convinced me of at least the possibility that misery is not the predetermined childhood experience of school, Christopher was born, and I was compelled to revisit many of my childhood experiences.

With the birth of my son, childhood was no longer the stuff of memory. In what seems like a very short time, Christopher is going to have to learn to navigate school and the demands of masculinity and identity. As a result, I began working toward a better understanding of these concepts in the hope that his experiences might be more positive than mine. One of my first steps involved carefully revisiting my high school experiences, through reflection and writing, in order to understand them better.

During my childhood I did little more than respond to situations as they were presented; the idea of seeking a deep understanding of the cultural or institutional forces in play, or of understanding my identity within those cultural or institutional forces, was

quite beyond me. Looking back there were, however, starting points. For example, the evidence that certain males were powerful in the school system was readily available. "Preps," our name for males who excelled in sports, made good grades and were highly involved with the school, were at the top of the ladder, and their elevated status seemed natural, as if they were somehow born into these positions of power over other students. Similarly, the group we called "hoods" were also powerful and better left alone or avoided. Antagonizing members of that group was considered a death sentence, or at least a ticket to a beating. In fact, the only people who seemed able to stand up to them were the "preps." The rest of us were dominated by these two groups, and you were either were one of them, or you were not.

Always lurking in the background, and occasionally occupying center stage, was violence. At the time I was primarily focused on my relationship with violence, which consisted mainly of attempts to avoid it. I remember being picked on for a variety of reasons, including my clothes, my classroom behavior and my inability to say the right thing. Sometimes I was picked on and could not figure out why, and always there were other males who had it worse than I did, who seemed to be non-stop targets for abuse. The bullies themselves were not always the largest and strongest individuals, either. One of the worst bullies in my school was a boy who was probably eight inches shorter than me, and yet he and I both knew our places in the hierarchy that existed, and I would never had dared challenge him. Besides, any action I might have considered taking would have surely invited more violence and hostility. Looking back, it seems that violence and bullies were an inescapable part of school.

Indeed, at the time even the language to voice many of my concerns was beyond me since the predominant narratives within my school environments centered on the existence of equal chances and the central role of personal responsibility. I was told repeatedly that my success or failure was entirely up to me, which gave me no one to blame but myself when things did not work out.

As an adult I have taught high school, pursued graduate degrees, and conducted research on masculinity, identity, and school. As a result, I have gained a better understanding of both my experiences in school and the ways in which individual males navigate the social and institutional demands within school systems. As an adult I now see that schools, including the schools I attended, often construct a narrative that asserts that everyone receives an equal chance to succeed and that no single group is officially acknowledged as better. This narrative is often viewed as a basic tenet of public education even while a clear, informal hierarchy holds sway that for males is maintained by a variety of methods, including violence. Because of this narrative of equity that permeates schools, there is little awareness of a need to resist these constructions on an institutional level, since events that contradict these narratives are largely internalized as blame or praised is placed on the individual. While my research will continue, I am beginning to feel some confidence that I will be able to assist my son as he makes his way through school.

Though my research here was sparked by the birth of my child, its genesis can be traced back to my own experiences in school and my desire to better understand the ways males navigate the school environment. In this study, I investigate males' perceptions of the construction of masculinities in their lives, their own understandings of identity and

the meanings attached to it, and the roles that schools have played in constructing masculinity.

Research Problem and Purpose

Theorists in the field of masculine studies have made gender identity problematic. Masculine identify formation appears to be fragmented and ambivalent (Mac an Ghaill, 1994). Males face pressures to live up to hegemonic ideals they cannot attain, as well as having to navigate the multiple masculinities available to them (Connell, 1995). Male identity performance in response to institutional settings such as school and work is often complex and misleading; discourse that appears to promote emancipatory practices can actually entrench existing oppression by being stylized and impoverished (de Certeau, 1984) or by claiming spaces outside of culture (Applebaum, 2004). Males' individual agency, defined by Bilton, Bonnett and Jones (2002) as "the capacity to influence events and behave independently of the confining restraints of society" (p. 16) is also complex, in that it is difficult to separate individual discourse from cultural constructions, to see systems and their relationships to them (Foley, 1990), and to perceive the sheer number of complimentary discourses of power brought to bear in a given location (Foucault, 1980). In addition, one form of agency, tactics, is limited since it is temporary and covert (de Certeau, 1984).

The nature and uses of tactics and strategies regarding males in an educational setting have been undertheorized and are not completely understood. In this setting masculinities come into play, tactics and strategies operate, and multiple forms of resistance occur in ways that are not clear, even to those who are resisting. Since young

males are often unaware of their locations within systems and may only gain an understanding of this lack of awareness over time, it is worthwhile to look at the recollections of adult men and their experiences with schooling.

Because it is situated in the broader discourse of feminist studies (Connell 2000, 1995, 1987; Gutterman 2001; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Rose and Rose, 2000), this research is intended to add to the understanding of patriarchy and the ways in which males negotiate it. The hope is that from this research greater understanding of the ways in which schools influence the construction of masculine identity, the ways in which power is encountered, utilized and resisted by males in school, and the ways in which school experiences continue to inform masculine identity construction among adults might emerge. Perhaps this research will offer educators ideas toward the development of tools with which to create more equitable forms of education.

In recent years, educational theorists have begun to focus on masculinity studies as a means of gaining an understanding of the forces that develop and maintain inequity in schools. Specifically, masculinity studies has provided a starting point in understanding how discourses of maleness function both in relation to females and to other males. It is the hope of many educators that a better understanding of masculinities can lead to more informed and just schools. One form masculinity in a given setting can take is hegemonic, which is described by Connell (2000) as the form of masculinity that is most honored or ideal. In settings such as school, hegemonic masculinity is an idealized form that sorts males, identifying them as more or less masculine. Specifically, the nature and uses of tactics and strategies (de Certeau, 1984) regarding males in an educational setting have been under-theorized. It is in this setting that masculinities come

into play and that tactics and strategies operate. Because students are often unaware of their institutional systems in which they are embedded (Foley, 1990), it is an important piece of the puzzle to look at the recollections of adult men and their experiences with schooling. Through a better understanding of male experiences in school, opportunities for creating more just and equitable environments within the school environment may occur.

It is also significant to look at the meanings that adult males have made of their experiences with school and masculinity. This line of research challenges prevailing essentialist notions that claim the best means of understanding males in and out of an educational context can be deduced from identifying universal qualities of maleness (Gabarino, 1999; Ghiglieri, 2000; Gray, 1992; Sommers, 2001).

This dissertation focuses on masculine identity formation and how it is affected by schooling. Through this research, I sought to answer questions regarding the forms of resistance adopted by males in school, their understandings of these forms of resistance at the time, and how that understanding and awareness has changed as they have moved into adulthood. The following questions have guided this research:

Research Questions

1. What role does schooling play in masculine identity formation in the recollections of adult males?

2. How do adult males articulate their experiences with institutional power in school?

3. What are some of the tactics, if any, available to and utilized by white males as they form masculine identities?

4. In what ways, if at all, do the subjects recall employing tactics to resist hegemony, and if so what were they?

These research questions became the basis for a series of open-ended phenomenological interviews used to inform a dissertation with a subjectivist epistemology that positions all knowledge as value-based (Crotty, 1998) and a feminist/constructivist theoretical perspective, which acknowledges the existence of multiple realities while seeking social justice (Luke & Gore, 1992; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). The theoretical frame for this research draws much of its basis from Connell's (2001, 2000, 1995, 1987) studies of masculinities and power, de Certeau's (1984) work in the ways in which power is resisted, and Butler's (1990) work on gender and identity.

This dissertation provides the basis for several arguments. First, while males in school do adopt tactics as a means of contesting cultural constructions of masculinity, they also use them as a means of enhancing personal power and status. Also evident is the disciplinary power expressed through both hegemonic masculinity and the institutional framework of school. These forces often work in tandem to entrench existing power relations within the school setting. Third, males in school express limited awareness of social and cultural forces at play in school, and while they gain some understanding of the various cultural and institutional powers enacted within school after leaving the school environment, they tend to continue to construct identities that reflect (and in some cases endorse) the violent and patriarchal environment of school. Finally, males who identify themselves as possessing little agency in the school environment

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tend to retroactively position themselves as agents when reflecting upon their school experiences, which places them in line with the more hegemonic males who remembered possessing strong agency in school.

<div align="center">Significance</div>

Because they contribute profoundly to the generation of cultural discourse, schools are particularly relevant sites for the focus of this research. I am a white male who, as a student and then a teacher, experienced both school and masculinity. It is my hope that this research will help me move toward the creation of a more equitable and just environment for all students who enter my classroom. Additionally, I hope this research will add to the dialogue regarding masculinity studies that has emerged within the field of education. Specifically, adult males who wish to reflect on their own educational experiences may find this text worthwhile, as may both K-12 educators seeking to better understand the experiences of male students and theorists in the fields of feminism and masculinity studies.

There are many ethnographic studies of schools and students that provided a starting point for this research. Willis' (1977) work was groundbreaking in providing a detailed, ethnographic portrayal of the ways in which the discourses of school reproduce the class relations of the larger society. Willis' focus on disenfranchised students challenged the prevailing narratives of equality that still exists within schools. Foley (1990) continued this work when he visited a small Texas town that was divided between Anglo and Mexicano cultures. Foley's study deftly captured the complexity of multiple subject positions and the ways in which competing lines of cultural discourse inform each

other. Ferguson's (2000) study of an underserved school and the minority students who attend it might seem at first glance a classic study of race within a school system, where the predominately African-American students are taught by an almost completely white faculty. Ferguson digs deeper, however, when she examines some of the competing cultural demands placed on male African-American students. Many of these students face the terrible situation of encountering racial and academic mandates that cannot be reconciled. They are required as students to remain quiet, to cooperate with teachers, and to not cause trouble, while at the same time navigating cultural demands as African-American students to be disruptive and uncooperative. For these young men, getting into trouble in school in some ways actually enhances their status. Duneier's (1992) ethnography of the Hyde Park neighborhood in Chicago provides additional insight on race and class relations as well as alerting me of the ways in which cultures can change over time. His 1999 study of New York street vendors, *Sidewalk,* illustrates the ways in which individuals within a culture can confound the identity placed on that culture by society. My research builds upon these studies using Connell's (2001, 2000, 1995, 1987) theories of masculinities as a lens for analysis.

There is a need for educators to develop a more sophisticated understanding of gender. Recently, educators have been inundated by popular essentialist readings (Gabarino 1999, Gray 1992) that seek to frame gender as fixed and natural. Other texts have emerged in recent years (American Association of University Women 1999; Sommers 2001) that seek to categorize the gendered experiences of students as largely one-sided. These texts lack an emphasis on the complexity of identity as described by Foucault (1980, 1978), Butler (1990) and Applebaum (2004).

The most direct ancestor of this research is Corrigan's (1988) wonderful article on what it meant as a schoolboy and an adult to grow up in the British education system. Corrigan uses autobiography to explore the ways in which school shapes discourses of masculinity and the damage that is done to individual boys within this system. I think it unlikely that this work could improve upon Corrigan's and merely hope to add additional voices and settings to the discussion already begun there. My choice of interviews as a research method was based upon this premise. By hearing the stories of adult males, I seek to come at the questions of identity construction in schools from the inside and to hear the varied and individual ways in which males navigate the demands of masculinity in an educational setting.

However, because identity performances are naturalized within cultural norms, individuals often cannot see the subjective nature of the collective performances of gender or allow for variations upon that performance. When certain culturally privileged concepts of gender begin to be perceived as natural, standards by which less culturally privileged concepts can be judged as lacking are rendered immutable. This process of essentialization serves to bulwark existing power relations and prejudices. Researchers such as Connell (2000, 1995, 1987) look for ways by which the subjective elements of cultural constructions of gender can be brought back into the foreground. While keeping within the limitations of gender (male) and context (school) that are the focus of this project, I followed Connell in seeking individuals whose stories represented a variety of subject positions.

Looking Ahead

This dissertation contains the following components: Chapter 2 offers a review of relevant literature in the context of masculinity studies, schooling and agency, and resistance. Chapter 3 positions this project as being an interview-driven phenomenological study. In Chapters 4-6, I present the findings stemming from this research divided along major emergent themes of "Support and Rejection, " "Violence," and "Reflection and Agency." Chapter 4 details some ways in which masculinity is framed in school as well as the corresponding advantages or disadvantages that accompany each of these framings. Chapter 5 explores some of the meanings and uses of masculine violence in school. Chapter 6 looks at individual power to act as an agent of change in school as remembered by adult males as well as the ways in which males continue to construct identity positions that correspond to those constructed in school. In the final chapter, Chapter 7, I summarize the main findings and resulting arguments of this dissertation and its implications for further study. I also address ways to expand this research, perhaps by focusing on other groups of adult males in order to learn about the similarities and differences between their experiences and those found in this research. There is also a possibility that specific programs aimed at curricular reform could be developed based upon this research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON MASCULINITY STUDIES, IDENTITY

DEVELOPMENT, AND THEIR RELATIONS TO EDUCATION

Introduction

This project is grounded in the concept of masculinity and in the field of

masculinity studies. Connell (2000) identifies masculinity as a pattern of gender practice.

Many theorists resist the use of the singular term "masculinity" as privileging hegemonic

forms of maleness, adopting the plural form "masculinities" instead. Masculinity studies

is an offshoot of feminism and shares many of the same tenets, including a desire for

social justice and a focus on enculturation processes over essentialism as a critical area of

study (Whitehead & Barrett, 2001). Resisting patriarchy is often a central component of

work in this field.

In terms of organization, this chapter is broken down into subcategories,

beginning with an examination of gender and identity, where gender is defined in terms

of power relations. Additionally, in this paper I draw on the work of Butler (1990) and

position gender as something that is performed rather than as an innate natural quality.

Gendered identities are thus based upon power relations and are constructed through

discourse. Within the masculine constructions of gender and identity are multiple

discourses leading to various forms of masculine identity. These constructs are set within

hierarchies that are fluid and contested but often perceived as static and natural. Occupying the top spot in this fluid and contested hierarchy of masculinity is the cultural ideal against which all other forms of masculinity are judged. One powerful line of reasoning that seems to have captured the public's imagination is based on the idea of essentialism, that there are certain static sets of traits and behaviors that connote maleness. Often these traits are comprised of many of the qualities attributed to the dominant cultural masculine ideal. Finally, this chapter examines different theories regarding the types and efficacy of agency available to males in the school setting.

Gender and Identity

I have based my research on the idea that identity (meaning here a set of attributes that characterize one's sex, gender, or sexuality, and subsequently render it intelligible) is something one does rather than what one is or has. In other words, identity exists as a performance (Butler 1990) in relation to culturally constructed sets of understood identities that occupy various positions of power or marginalization (Foucault 1980). This definition opposes essentialist framings that seek to establish identity as immutable or pre-determined (Ghiglieri 2000, Pollack 1999). According to Hall (1990),

> Identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a production, which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside representation. (p. 222)

The production of identity not only reflects dominant role models but also creates a range of masculinities available to be negotiated and occupied. These masculinities are often conflicted, ambivalent, confused. (Mac an Ghaill, 1996, p. 385-6). Likewise, masculinity does not only vary across time and across culture; within any cultural context, there are multiple ways of performing masculinity. As Connell (2000) states, "Within the one school, or workplace, or ethnic group, there will be different ways of enacting manhood, different ways of learning to be a man, different conceptions of the self and different ways of using a male body" (p. 10). Connell looks to comparative studies and especially ethnographies to support this claim.

Masculinity studies shares with feminism a treatment of gender as an examination of social relations. Rather than identifying gender with biological sex, these theorists define gender as "a set of power relations, whereby men, as a social group, have more power over women than women have over them; they are socially constructed, not biologically given; and they are not fixed, but rather are subject to historical change and can be transformed" (Hall, 2000, p. 228). In gender relations, the masculine exists in opposition to and in power over the feminine, with masculine often being defined as that which is not feminine (Whitehead & Barrett, 2001). Because the idea of being identified as masculine is often culturally imbued with more power than being identified as feminine, the discourse of gendered identity constructions is violent. Males who occupy masculine identity positions can use that identity to gain power, while males who occupy positions considered feminine, or non-masculine, often suffer a loss of power, typically when the feminine label is imposed upon the male by others.

Following the feminist concept of gender as a set of power relations, Butler (1990) sees gender as action, with the subject coming into being as it is positioned by discourse. Just as the giving of a name to a baby places it in a context that confers power and restrictions, so the act of identifying a baby as male or female contextualizes the individual, placing her within certain contexts while excluding her from others.

Butler argues against any original subject position that exists before discourse, including any concept of a natural or essential human gender that exists within the human genetic code. Essentialist arguments (to which Butler objects) place the gendered subject as always present, even prior to discourse. For Butler, when gender is presented as essential it is moved beyond critique. According to Butler, since gender is a performance enacted by and upon the subject, the body is a major site of performance, seen as an object that is used to express location within culture. These gendered performances "congeal" over time to produce the illusion of being natural, which, as mentioned above, renders them intractable to critique.

As a means of troubling the tendency to identify gender in essentialist terms, Connell (1987) argues that bodies must be identified as agents of practice, with the practice itself setting up the limits and ranges of available acts. Rather than focusing on cultural gender ideals or existing conceptions of gendered identity, Connell seeks to focus attention on individual bodies as a means of understanding the wide range of available gender practices. This move works to define gender in terms of what is being enacted today rather than historical cultural/theological conceptions that account for only a small part of total gender practices. What emerges is a simultaneous transfer of defining and being defined between the body and the social arena. Under Connell's framework, gender

is conceptualized by the multiple ways in which it is enacted at a given time. As they occurred, new or emergent gender practices would be incorporated into existing understandings of gender, as these understandings would shift or expand to accommodate new practices.

Multiple Masculinities and Power

Part of acknowledging bodies as agents of gender practice entails understanding that there is no single masculinity, or even single traits that can be defined as always masculine (Whitehead & Barrett, 2001). In order for bodies to contribute to the construction of the social arena, there needs to be variance in the construction of individual bodies. Masculinity, defined as a pattern of gender practices, is thus contextual in origin.

This line of argument works to resist certain power practices, including science's tendency toward totalities and love of hierarchy. Over time, these power practices cease to be seen as arbitrary, coming instead to be known as natural and undisputable. Males are then ordered within increasingly narrow and rigid boundaries, which privilege those few who meet these criteria while marginalizing the rest. Males who are able to perform in ways that emulate existing privileged positions regarding masculinity are able to draw upon the power of that privileged position. Conversely, males who identify themselves in ways marked as non-masculine are often oppressed within the culture and unable to draw upon the power of masculine privilege. This form of power relations comprises the prejudicial cultural setting many of the theorists drawn on in this research work to disrupt. One means of disruption involves tracing cultural constructs back through time

in order to underscore the subjective nature of their constructions. For example, Foucault (1978/1976) examined whether defining homosexuality as a culturally privileged or a marginalized part of being masculine depends on the individual and the individual's position within culture, history, socio-economic hierarchy, race, and other factors.

In *The History of Sexuality,* Foucault (1978/1976) argues that power produces individual subjects and dictates personal identity as well as social relations. According to Foucault, knowledge is constructed by the powerful and reflects the desires of those in power, and individuals are positioned in relation to standards and norms constructed by power. Additionally, individuals understand themselves in relation to these constructions. Foucault's treatment of homosexuality (a form of masculine behavior often not recognized as masculine in Western contemporary society) provides a well-known example of this process. Foucault identifies the invention of homosexuality in the 19th century by means of the "specification of individuals" (1978/1976, pp. 42-43). This process produces new sexual identities around particular acts previously regarded at worst as non-permanent aberrations in behavior. Around the figure of the homosexual was constructed a whole "personage, a past case history and a childhood, in addition to a … life form and a morphology" (p. 43). Thus homosexuality was simultaneously naturalized and separated from the realm of masculinity. As articulated by Foucault, "masculine" came to be defined in one way as that which is not homosexual, instigating numerous legal codes and systems of discipline designed to remove those engaging in homosexual acts from the boundaries of accepted society by adopting punitive measures toward people associated with this act. Pinar (2001) notes that this process continues today when he states:

Because contemporary masculinity bans from its performance those acts, practices, or subjects suggestive of what is feminine or homosexual, it constitutes itself as a regulatory gender identification. Regulation creates, indeed guarantees, transgression. (p. 951)

In schools this regulation of gender practices works in various ways to privilege those who approach accepted standards of masculinity while automatically creating an underclass of males who are seen as non-masculine. Males who are positioned as non-masculine are subject to a variety of disciplinary actions that work to keep them on the margins. This manipulation of the meaning and enforcement of masculine practice was and is a product of the culture that produced it. In other words, masculinity is constructed around dominant cultural discourses and ideologies (Whitehead & Barrett, 2001) and, as seen above, is inextricably linked with power relations. Masculinity as defined within a culture must be constructed by that culture in order to serve as a reflection of its own privileged values. As Pinar (2001) noted above, however, the singular construction of masculinity guarantees resistance.

Essentialism

When masculinity is viewed as constructed, gender-based forms of power are seen as contested, kinetic, and always in play (Butler, 1990). This culture-based conceptualization of masculinity exists in tension with the concept of the fixed, natural man and theories that position power as innate. Perhaps because it is based upon dominant existing cultural definitions and is thus more useful in certain political agendas, some recent treatments of the subject of masculinity have been strongly grounded in

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essentialist doctrine. I refer specifically to those fundamentally essentialist theories and texts that have dominated the popular media recently. These writings position maleness as defined by one overriding characteristic (all males are violent) or identify certain behaviors as always male (to be male is to be violent), or look to biologic and genetic explanations as a totality in understanding masculinity. These texts (Gabarino, 1999; Ghiglieri, 2000; Kindlon & Thompson, 1999; Pollack 1999; Sommers, 2001; Wrangham & Peterson, 1996) are often constructed around statistics involving males' violent actions, academic failures, and emotional disturbances as well as the increasing number of victims of male violent behavior among the general population.

Among the several streams of essentialist literature, studies in the field of physical anthropology (Ghiglieri, 2000; Wrangham & Peterson, 1996) have made the case for an essential, genetic-based source of masculine behavior. Research in this field often draws upon studies of primates and parallels primate behavior with violent human behavior such as rape, murder, war and genocide, which is then identified as "natural" male behavior. These authors identify male violent behavior as an inherent reproductive strategy that remains a very powerful impetus in all males today (Wrangham & Peterson, 1996). Thus, males have been identified as predispositioned toward using violence as a means of attracting and keeping females, and this imperative informs any resultant conceptualization of maleness and masculinity. By identifying violent male behavior as natural, these authors privilege an oppressive, culturally dominant form of masculinity while relegating other forms to the margins, something which pro-feminist writers work to resist.

Other forums in areas such as educational psychology or various conservative religious/political movements differ only in the type of male behavior they essentialize as natural. Whereas the anthropological studies focus on violence as essentially masculine, these works tend to portray males as naturally stoic and unemotional. The problematic aspects of essentialism mentioned above, however, remain unchanged in that males are framed within oppressive and limiting standards. Since these works reify rather than resist existing harmful power structures, their usefulness to this project is limited.

It is worth noting that this type of scholarship attempts to position certain qualities as incontestably male and thus not subject to argument. When maleness is defined in these terms, it becomes something that *is* rather than something that *is performed* or *is enacted*. Power relations stemming from essentialized male/female behaviors are seen as innate rather than constructed. Ironically, the essentialist positioning itself creates a cultural construction of masculinity as it imposes standards of judgment on males based on its rigidly prescribed qualities of masculinity. As noted above, Hall (1990) encourages the idea of identity as a construction, and something that is never complete. Understanding masculinity as a construction places an emphasis on its subjectivity, and undermines the artificially narrow boundaries that define acceptable male behavior.

Hierarchy of Masculinities

Rejecting essentialist arguments in favor of those endorsing cultural construction does not guarantee a move toward social justice. Specifically, Connell (2000) has stressed that understanding that masculinities vary within a culture does not ensure that they receive equal status. While it might be an easy task to identify variance among male

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behaviors, there is a cultural tendency to identify only the most privileged masculinities as natural (and thus truly masculine) while relegating other male behaviors to the borders or even categorizing them as non-male. In other words, there is a hierarchy of masculinities and masculine behaviors in a given context.

This hierarchal structure is based on a complex web of social relations that simultaneously informs cultural constructions of masculinity. According to Connell (1987):

> There is an ordering of versions of femininity and masculinity at the level of the whole society, in some ways analogous to the patterns of face-to-face relationships within institutions. The possibilities of variation, of course, are vastly greater. The sheer complexity of relationships involving millions of people guarantee that ethnic differences and generational differences as well as class patterns come into play. (p. 183)

There is a difference between the variety of countless individual relationships and the way in which they are categorized and constructed by society. Taken on an individual level, the field is rich and the variations almost endless. When these individuals are placed in a hierarchy of social relations broader, more coarse categories emerge that gloss over individual variation while retaining, and perhaps maximizing, the desired application of power:

> But in key respects the organization of gender on the very large scale must be more skeletal and simplified than the human relations in the face-to-face milieux. The forms of femininity and masculinity constructed at this level are stylized and

impoverished. Their interrelation is centred on a single structural fact, the global

dominance of men over women.

This structural fact provides the main basis for relationships among men that

define a hegemonic form of masculinity in the society as a whole. (Connell, 1987,

p. 183)

While there is great variation among power relationships at the personal level, and a great

number of possible identity positions to occupy, the structure of gender relations as

articulated on a large field (quite often the way in which gender is invoked and

conceptualized) is ordered within a more simplistic and hierarchic frame.

Corrigan (1988) explains how males in school are sorted in this simplistic and

hierarchic manner in his semi-autobiographical account of schooling in England. In his

article Corrigan describes schools he attended as adopting rigid militaristic frameworks

as a means of sorting students. Violence against underclassmen, known as recruits, by

upperclassmen, known as officers, is legitimized as a necessary disciplinary technique.

Males who do not fit this militaristic framing are marginalized within the school, and are

forced to reconfigure their identity performances in order to meet the cultural,

institutional and hegemonic demands of their environment. Additionally, once an

individual is positioned within this hierarchy he tends to be kept there.

Foley's (1990) ethnographic study offers a slightly more open example of a

hierarchy of masculinities. Foley's study takes place in a small-town Texas high school

divided along racial, cultural and economic lines, the major groups being long-privileged

Anglos and an increasingly mobilized Hispanic population. The males in each population

occupy a variety of positions and perform a variety of masculinities, not all of which

correspond to the privileged white/ marginalized Hispanic binary. For example, Foley identifies several white male students who associate and sympathize with the *vatos*, the Hispanic males regarded as troublemakers and dopers by many of the school's teachers and administrators. One student, Brian, is especially liked by the *vatos*. His drug use and liberal political position exist in tension with his privileged racial status and its conservative demands.

With the exception of those occupying the very top of the status hierarchy, the crossing of class and race boundaries was fairly common in the high school Foley (1990) studied, yet it was persistently viewed by the majority of students as the exception rather than the norm. Foley perceives a discourse of equality among the population contending with a discernible hierarchy between the different identity positions that are available for occupation. The power relations inherent in the hierarchy are available but not always used to keep order, perhaps due to the simultaneous discourse of equality that informs the student body. This discourse denies the existence of hierarchal boundaries, perhaps drawing on the Anglo cultural myth of radical individualism that confers absolute agency and responsibility on the individual. In all contexts, some masculinities enjoy more favored status than others do. Uneven social relations exist between those occupying and performing different masculine roles in the form of a hierarchy.

Hegemonic Masculinity

Occupying the dominant position in this hierarchy is what Connell has coined hegemonic masculinity. According to Connell (1987), hegemonic masculinity is the idealized form of masculinity within a culture and the form against which other

masculinities are valued. Connell (1987) goes on to identify hegemonic masculinity as relating both to and against femininity and other subordinated forms of masculinity. There are several identifiable traits that are characteristic of the construction of hegemonic masculinity in the contemporary United States, including physical strength and bravado; suppression of certain feminized feelings such as remorse, empathy, and uncertainty; strict heterosexuality and a corresponding obsession with heterosexual "conquests"; economic power; and authority over women and other men, and capacity for violence and aggression (Connell, 1995).

Hegemonic masculinity draws upon a variety of resources to maintain its power. Connell (1987) notes that while physical force can support the ascendancy of hegemonic maleness, in order to sustain itself hegemony must also incorporate a broad spectrum of social values and practices like "religious doctrine and practice, mass media content, wage structures, the design of housing, welfare taxation policies and so forth" (p. 184). Because hegemonic values are built into the fabric of society, Connell contends, mutual agreement and acclaim for hegemonic forms keep them in power. In other words, because the values of hegemonic masculinity are embedded in multiple cultural forms, marginalized and subordinated groups recognize and then validate hegemonic forms of masculinity along with the privileged, dominant groups.

It is important to note Connell's (2000) observation that hegemonic masculinity serves as an ideal rather than an attainable state. Often, hegemonic figures are invoked or created as recognizable public icons that can be used as a source of power to draw upon. As an ideal, Connell argues, hegemonic masculinity is far removed from the norm. Connell examines American masculine heroes to illustrate his point. Many figures said to

embody American hegemonic masculinity, Connell argues, are impoverished forms of fictional (Superman) or stylized (John Wayne) public figures. Connell also argues that actual living individuals, such as champion athletes who approach hegemonic ideals of masculinity, are often so far removed from the general public that they continue to function as unattainable. Lance Armstrong, who against all odds survived a deadly form of cancer and then went on to win multiple bicycling championships, is a good example of this.

If men typically cannot achieve hegemonic masculinity, then questions arise as to its purpose. Connell (1987) has identified hegemonic masculinity as "not necessarily what powerful men are, but what sustains their power and what large numbers of men are motivated to support" (p. 183). Simply put, hegemonic masculinity is useful for men as a resource that can be drawn on to consolidate power.

Non-hegemonic Masculinities

Connell (1995) also identifies three categories of non-hegemonic masculinity: subordinated, marginalized, and complicit. These categories are produced simultaneously with hegemonic forms. Subordinated masculinities are those masculinities that have been feminized. For instance, if athleticism is hegemonic within a culture, then being non-athletic or even non-proficient in athletics will be a form of masculinity that is subordinated by associating it with feminine behavior, even though it is still masculine (in that it is a behavior exhibited by males).

In schools, key figures such as adult male authority figures or students closest to the hegemonic ideal are often those who work to subordinate males whose behavior they

consider unacceptable. Pollack (1999) identifies a common source of oppressive

feminization, the high school athletic coach. As described by Pollack:

> Eighteen-year-old Mike D'Amico recalled one such traumatizing lacrosse coach:
> "He acted like an army officer or something – a total drill sergeant. He would
> shout out your name and then just tell you off like 'D'Amico – you're doing push-
> ups like a little sissy! Now get your woman ass in gear!'" (p. 284)

In the act of identifying requirements for masculine behavior (in this case aggressively

completing required exercises), the coach defined and identified corresponding non-

masculine behavior. By placing his critique of certain males in the context of femininity,

the coach has violently positioned certain males as not male. Presumably, persistent

failure to meet the coach's expectations would result in dismissal from the team and a

further loss of power and status for the students involved. Those who are not proficient in

displaying strength and competence in athletics embody one aspect of subordinated

masculinity. This quote also illustrates the powerful misogynistic aspect of hegemonic

masculinity. Females in this discourse are othered, positioned as weak and objects of

derision.

Marginalized masculinities, Connell's (1995) second form of non-hegemonic

masculinity, exist among exploited or oppressed groups, such as ethnic or religious

minorities. These males may share values regarding hegemonic masculinity with

dominant groups but still be socially oppressed. The Mexicano population in Foley's

1990 ethnography maintains a broadly parallel hierarchy of masculinity to that of the

Anglos while still being suppressed and largely subordinated by them. Similar to the apex

of the Anglo hierarchy, the top rungs of the Mexicano hierarchy were occupied by varsity

football players and students in advanced placement courses, even though representation among these groups was far smaller than among Anglos, especially in terms of advanced academic placements. Dropouts, students suspected of drug use, and students pursuing vocational education occupied the bottom rungs in both groups. These groups were overly represented among the Mexicano population and under represented among Anglos. Additionally, there were informal but strictly enforced rules of segregation even within parallel spots in the hierarchies that privileged the Anglos and subordinated the Mexicanos. These included seating arrangements in school areas and unequal treatment by the faculty and townspeople, as well as teacher and student interactions within individual classrooms. Marginalized masculinities are the result of other forms of prejudice, such as racism or religious bias. Males being judged by these standards are subjected to criteria that do not depend on the enactment of certain forms of masculinity but, rather, other markers of socio-cultural status. While these males are subordinated for reasons other than their relation to masculinity, it is important to remember that this terrain is complex and confused; some blurring of the boundaries does occur (Mac an Ghaill, 1996).

Complicit masculinities comprise the third form of non-hegemonic masculinity. Complicit masculinities share in the benefits of patriarchy while not maintaining an aggressive defense of patriarchy. Males occupying these positions can identify as pro-feminist, for example (Levinson, 1998), or refute the existence of gender bias and patriarchy while still drawing benefits from patriarchal societal structures. Connell (1995) identifies complicit masculinity as not embodying hegemonic forms but not identified conclusively as non-masculine, either. These individuals, of course, cannot

escape societal power relations but in Connell's view have remained somewhat passive within it. These are the "ordinary" men who do not overtly question or support the gender order.

Agency (Limited)

The unequal power relations among and between masculinities and femininities call for the exploration of avenues of resistance and the limits of agency. Masculinity discourses are sufficiently powerful and entrenched to present difficulties (but not impossibilities) regarding agency for males, who are subject to critique for either failing to approach the hegemonic ideal or performing maleness in alternative ways. Similarly, Butler (1990) noted that culture becomes ingrained in the public's perception to the extent that resistance and reform of masculinity roles becomes problematic. It is desirable to find an understanding of agency consistent with this conceptualization of masculinity that includes and accepts non-hegemonic forms.

While males cannot escape societal power relations altogether, several theorists have shown that it is possible, in a limited fashion, to resist the hegemonic and hierarchal forces of masculinity. It is also possible to occupy multiple simultaneous positions within a hierarchy. Connell notes Foley (1990) as a particularly rich example of migratory masculinities within a single context. As noted above, in the high school Foley studied males generally identified/ were identified with Anglo or Mexicano culture. Within this division, however, were multiple options along the lines of socio-economic class, academic achievement, athleticism and religious values, among others. Additionally, within each of these subcategories were limited opportunities for males to cross the

Anglo/Mexicano divide. As discussed earlier, however, even within these parallel situations inequalities remain.

Offering perhaps a starting point for discovering possibilities for agency, Foucault (1978/1976) has argued that power is productive as well as oppressive, meaning that subjects are produced by power relations in the form of discourse. Indeed, Foucault (1980) identifies resistance as an inherent component of power relations and thus always present:

> There are no relations of power without resistances; the latter are all the more real and effective because they are formed right at the point where relations of power are exercised; resistance to power does not have to come from elsewhere to be real, nor is it inexorably frustrated through being the compatriot of power. It exists all the more by being in the same place as power. (p. 142)

Resistance being linked to power, then, does not mean that resistance is always completely controlled by or subordinate to power. Powerful and productive modes of resistance can be located in or near masculinity at the points where patriarchy is enacted.

After accepting that resistance is inherent in power it is difficult but not impossible to perceive the means by which cultural discourse can be rejected or even reformed. As stated earlier, Connell (1987) has argued that cultural discourse is a simplified, stylized version of the sum of individual variations. In other words, individuals do not perfectly reflect the discourse of the culture in which they are located even while culture is constructed from the sum of these variations. Perhaps this "slippage" is one means by which cultural discourse can be resisted.

Educational theorists working on anti-racist educational strategies have articulated these moments of slippage. Applebaum (2004) draws upon key concepts from Butler and Foucault when arguing that the individual cannot by choice move outside of her culturally established location. Since the individual is produced through discourses of power, it remains there:

> Power is also located in the norms and conventions that regulate discourse. This means that having subject status depends upon complying with and participating in dominant norms and conventions. One speaks and acts intelligibly (that is, one is a subject) only insofar as one is able to conform to the norms that regulate discourse. As such, social norms are both enabling and constraining: these enable a subject to speak insofar as they constrain the subject as a subject. (p. 64)

Even while noting the inescapability of enculturation, Applebaum argues that there is room for resistance and a certain amount of agency because one can acknowledge and contest her situatedness in culture. Again following Butler, Applebaum argues that resistance takes the form of exposing and interrogating the individual's subjective and complicit aspects of her relationship with culture in sustaining systems of oppression. Any declaration seeking to place the subject outside of enculturation, such as a white male student claiming to not be racist, sexist, or otherwise privileged, only serves to render invisible and thus entrench the oppressive systems he is claiming to reject. (If a person claims to not be racist, the person attempts to deny her place within her culture.)

Both Butler (1990) and Applebaum (2004) suggest the possibility of limited avenues of resistance. Butler (1990) locates agency as starting with the act of recognizing culture as arbitrary and subjective. Once culture is perceived as arbitrary and subjective,

individuals can play with its forms and conventions in order to expose cultural

subjectivity on a broader level. In a more reflective vein, Applebaum has suggested an

inward, moral turn toward an interrogation of personal complicity as a means of

identifying the individual's role in oppression. Once the individual has identified his role

in patriarchy he can work to resist dominant cultural norms. These theories of resistance

involve the local and personal as a point at which the systemic and cultural can be

contested.

<div align="center">Tactics and Strategies</div>

The forms of resistance advocated by Butler (1990) and Applebaum (2004) offer

additional insights when viewed within the theory of hegemony and resistance developed

by de Certeau (1984). Framing the relationship between the more powerful and the less

powerful in terms of production and consumption, de Certeau looks at the ways in which

systems of cultural disciplines are produced, consumed and to some extent transformed

by individuals and groups embedded within the systems. Similar to the way Applebaum

and Butler argue that the individual cannot escape culture, de Certeau takes pains not to

separate the individual from the systemic, arguing that social relations are always

involved:

> Analysis shows that a relation (always social) determines its [the individual's]
>
> terms, and not the reverse, and that each individual is a locus in which an
>
> incoherent (and often contradictory) plurality of such relational determinations
>
> interacts. (de Certeau, 1984, p. xi)

For de Certeau, the individual is just a plurality of these relations and is thus inseparable from them. However, the individual can act in ways that do not perfectly reflect those locales.

According to de Certeau (1984), responses made by consumers do not perfectly reflect the intent of the disciplinary systems they inhabit. Instead, consumers consume in ways that better suit their own interests. Referring to the indigenous populations' response to Spanish colonization, de Certeau identifies the clandestine ways in which the natives subverted the colonizers' intentions. Even though Spanish cultural forms were followed, the colonized tribes were able to transform them:

> For instance, the ambiguity that subverted from within the Spanish colonizers' "success" in imposing their own culture in the indigenous Indians is well known. Submissive, and even consenting to their subjection, the Indians nevertheless often *made of* the rituals, representations, and laws imposed upon them something quite different from what their conquerors had in mind; they subverted them not by rejecting or altering them, but by using them with respect to ends and references foreign to the system they had no choice but to accept. (de Certeau, 1984, p. xiii)

De Certeau thus finds agency in the native resistance to colonization. As argued similarly by Butler and Applebaum, however, de Certeau identifies said agency as quite limited in scope. It is limited to covert acts that follow the colonizer's intent regarding form but not content.

In this example, the individual is able to achieve some movement within culture, but without being able to escape it completely:

They were *other* within the very colonization that had outwardly assimilated

them; their use of the dominant social order deflected its power, which they

lacked the means to challenge; they escaped it without leaving it. The strength of

their difference lay in procedures of consumption. To a lesser degree, a similar

ambiguity creeps into our societies through the use made by the "common

people" of the culture disseminated and imposed by the "elites" producing the

language. (de Certeau, 1984, p. xiii)

It is in this localized response to culture that I believe de Certeau locates agency. The

indigenous population, confronted with Spanish cultural demands that it lacked the power

to overthrow or reject, nevertheless were able to temporarily create room within for their

own cultural imperatives. Even though they had no choice but to occupy the space and

utter the words demanded by the Spanish conquerors, the Indians were able to muster

forms of covert resistance and retain distinct parts of a separate culture.

Their method of consumption of Spanish law created the opportunity for this

means of cultural expression. The same ambiguity occurs in our society, as consumers at

first glance seem to be following the forms but on a subtler level are corrupting those

forms to their intent. According to de Certeau (1984), even though they are unable to

escape the dominant discourse of culture, individuals can nevertheless utilize it for their

own purposes. Following this line of reasoning, males who to some extent all occupy

non-hegemonic positions should be able to utilize hegemonic discourses as a form of

resistance. This would be done on a personal and covert level in ways that might

resemble those posited by Applebaum and Butler, such as playful or stylized

performances of hegemonic activities such as sports, or the employment of culturally

feminized symbols such as fashion as a means of articulating the oppressive and subjective qualities of hegemony.

Not all individual actions count as resistance for de Certeau (1984). De Certeau differentiates between consumer responses that resist hegemony and those that entrench it through the concepts of "tactics" and "strategies." Both tactics and strategies work to meet the needs of the consumer. Whether tactics or strategies are employed depends on the position of the user. Strategies are employed by those in power (producers). Producers work from a regulated, rule governed, institutionalized location that has "an exteriority comprised of targets or threats" (de Certeau 1984, p. 36). Exteriority can exist within the confines of the institution in the form of marginalized populations. In schools, the policymakers, administrators, and to some extent the teachers act as producers, regulating student (consumer) responses in terms of what counts as succeeding within dominant discourses.

Adding urgency to the matter is de Certeau's (1984) argument that the ranks of the marginalized are swelling. He has identified modern society as becoming increasingly more regulated and static. As society becomes more monolithic and concrete, points of production are shrinking and power shifts away from a greater percentage of the population, moving them into the groups of the marginalized and the oppressed. This trend resembles Connell's (1987) argument describing hegemony as an ideal that cannot be achieved by the general population. De Certeau (1984) could well be referring to Connell's ideal, media driven, unattainable hegemonic masculinities when he states "Marginality is becoming universal. A marginal group is now becoming a silent majority" (xvii). Along with all other groups, males in a school setting encounter

institutionalized forms of patriarchy along with all other forms of oppression. Contemporary schools (as well as all other producers of discipline) are becoming such regulated spaces that de Certeau has wondered how the individual avoids being reduced to the sum of those disciplinary practices. His answer is tactics, the form of resistance available to consumers. If de Certeau is correct, the increasingly regulated spaces within schools could be quite harmful to students. Faced with ever-growing disciplinary regulations, students would find themselves increasingly isolated and oppressed, with voices of opposition becoming steadily more covert.

De Certeau (1984) identifies the use of "tactics," non-permanent modes of resistance that allow the individual to temporarily meet her needs, as a response to expanding technologies and the loss of local systems. Tactics, as described by de Certeau, are subjugated by intent as a means of evading the increasingly hegemonic disciplines enacted upon the individual. Marginalized populations then seek out opportunities to resist disciplinary practices. However, since the arena of power relations is dominated by producers who create and define disciplined spaces, tactics are temporary and covert. Tactics do not overthrow the system or change its rules but rather allow consumers to enjoy momentary victories over producers. De Certeau offers as examples of tactics the acts of surreptitiously adding to one's pay from the company till, writing a long e-mail to a friend during work, or borrowing a shop tool for the weekend to help finish a personal project. The acts do not challenge the existing regulations directly and depend upon opportunity and the ability of the user to remain hidden. Nevertheless, tactics allow those on the receiving end of disciplinary practices a means to resist. When considered on an

individual basis, these tactical acts would seem to do little other than provide a sort of psychic balm for the oppressed consumer.

Tactics as a Medium for Cultural Change

One area that needs to be examined, then, is the extent to which tactics can provoke institutional change. If tactics are temporary, personal and covert, how can they work to affect systems or cultures? Buchanan (1993) argues that producers are always one step behind consumers, a motif that places systems in the position of reacting to consumers. Lankshear and Knobel (2002) note that given a sufficiently robust tactical response the situation could become stressful for producers. They ask "Could armies of tacticians up the ante to the point where strategies pop?" (p. 9). While not claiming certainty, Lankshear and Knobel offer a vision of tactics reaching critical mass and catalyzing radical change within a culture. Lankshear and Knobel's question brings to mind a classroom where a stentorian teacher is driven to distraction or even abdication by tactical activities of sufficient groups of students. According to Lankshear and Knobel, at least, tactics could provide powerful means of resistance if adopted in sufficient numbers.

Like de Certeau (1984), Butler (1990) and Applebaum (2004) focus on the local as the space in which resistance occurs. Both Butler and Applebaum also advocate resistances that are local and covert. Although they do not use de Certeau's language, there is significant overlap among the three. The potentialities for a reform through tactics noted by Lankshear and Knobel seem equally applicable to Butler's playing with forms and Applebaum's inward moral turn. Individuals who can identify hegemonic masculinities as marginalizing could use the tactic-like methods advocated by Butler and

Applebaum as a means of resisting oppressive elements of masculinity and perhaps even contributing to their reform.

In the Context of Education

Schools as social institutions are particularly relevant sites for the focus of this research because they contribute so dramatically to the generation of cultural discourse. Shools function as nexus sites, institutional arenas of production and consumption, where masculinities are performed and hegemony is articulated and resisted. Several studies, including among others the ones mentioned above, touch on this and present themes and problematics that need to be addressed, including the ability of educators to connect with marginalized populations (Applebaum, 2004; Ferguson, 2000; Hytten & Warren, 2003), the possibilities for agency in students who face oppressive hegemonic forces (Ferguson 2000; Foley, 1990; Mac an Ghaill, 1996), the potential for marginalized students to develop awareness of systemic oppressions (Foley, 1990; Willis, 1977), and others. These problematics provide entry points for my research.

As stated above, schools are powerful sites for the construction of masculinities. While it does not refer directly to de Certeau's theories, Ferguson's (2000) study maps onto his theories remarkably well. In her study, Ferguson observed African-American males in an impoverished school and found that getting into trouble is in some ways empowering for them, due to the way maleness is constructed within the schools. According to Ferguson, in schools "Masculinity is constructed as the practice of power plays and brinkmanship. Boys are expected to learn how to take body contact in stride, to handle situations independently, and to not get ruffled by them" (p. 43). For many

marginalized male students, especially students of color, the essential framing of

hegemonic maleness that occurs in schools all but guarantees the production of strategies

that perpetuate their oppression. For these boys, masculinity is constructed in ways that

do not lead to success in most regimented school environments:

> The hegemonic, cultural image of the essential "nature" of males is that they are
>
> different from females in the meaning of their acts. Boys will be boys; they are
>
> mischievous, they get into trouble, they can stand up for themselves. This vision
>
> of masculinity is rooted in the notion of essential sex differences based on
>
> biology, hormones, uncontrollable urges, true personalities. Boys are naturally
>
> more physical, more active. Boys are naughty by *nature*. There is something
>
> suspect about the boy who is "too docile," "like a girl." (Ferguson, 2000, p.85)

Ferguson found that boys are able to proclaim their adherence to hegemonic masculinity

by defying the producers of schools' disciplinary systems. Rather than tactics and

strategies coming into play here, two competing strategies seems to be employed, the

disciplinary power of the school vs. the cultural discipline of maleness and race. When

male students articulate racial identity as a strategy (which is not covert), their disruptive

conduct conflicts with the strategic demands of the school's disciplinary power. The bind

this places on male students is obvious. Male students who openly refuse to behave, to

adhere to the school's disciplinary practices, can gain status as they display hegemonic

masculinity. Unfortunately, as noted by Ferguson, this behavior also produces strategies

on the part of school personnel that further oppress the young boys, such as no-tolerance

policies. As stated above, the individual is both reactive to and productive of culture.

Males who openly adopt competing cultural values by attempting to "produce" can

engender an aggressive response. The males in Ferguson's study are thus caught between schools' essentialized framings of maleness and the disciplinary spaces produced within the school. Because she is not specifically using de Certeau as a lens, Ferguson does not define what counts as "tactics" and what counts as "strategies" in these situations. One possibility is that a single act, such as covertly disrupting a class, could work simultaneously as a tactical response to the institutional power of school and a strategic one in regards to the informal social hierarchy of the school. It is also possible that the boys are subverting the strategies of the school by tactically appropriating hegemonic masculinity. What does become clear is that tactics and strategies, at least in terms of the hierarchal structure of masculinity, are going to be messy and intertwined.

Lankshear and Knobel (2002) make an argument involving educators and de Certeau that threatens to render Butler and Applebaum's social justice projects (not to mention this paper) impossible. Lankshear and Knobel identify those in a sufficiently academic position to invoke theory as already/always producers and thus intrinsically alienated from consumers and their practices. When explaining de Certeau's lack of popularity relative to Foucault, Lankshear and Knobel write:

> We think it is easy to see why de Certeau's approach had been overshadowed by Foucault's, and, to the same extent, needs to be given a longer look. Our view here is that the people who get to take up Foucault and apply the theory to education (and beyond) are themselves typically producers in de Certeau's sense of the term. They/we are interested in how power works from the standpoint of *operating power* [author's italics] – even if, in many cases, this is with a will to try and [sic] help orchestrate a few 'wins' on the part of others. Producers, by

definition, are less directly acquainted with the responses of Consumers, and are too involved in Producing for the option of looking at Consumer operations to be seriously available to them. (p. 4)

I find myself concurring with this statement, at least partially. Based on my readings, research in education seems to draw upon Foucault much more than de Certeau. I also agree that educators by and large are interested in the productive aspects of power. However, it is possible that Lankshear and Knobel are not taking into account the multiple roles and locations of the individual here, especially in terms of the construction of masculinities. Academics are also bound up in power relations and do not always occupy privileged positions both within and outside of the academy. Male academics are still bound by the discourse of hegemonic masculinity that, as stated earlier, they are unable to achieve. As described earlier, with hegemonic masculinity set up as an ideal, it might be true that all males receive the benefits of patriarchy while in some situations existing as othered consumers.

Some researchers argue that many students are largely unaware of the oppressive aspects of the institutional environments they inhabit; instead, students act in ways that serve their local, particular interests, and it is through discourse that hegemony works, supplying the images for what counts as their resistance. Foley (1990) found that marginalized adolescents are only vaguely aware of the systemic oppression they encounter. For Foley, resistance is not predicated on individual awareness of institutional oppression as in the work by Willis (1977), which inspired Foley's study. Situating his study in a poor to working-class neighborhood of an English industrial city, Willis focused on young males in school. Willis found that these young working class males

were acutely aware that school is not set up in their favor. Knowing that schools were organized against them, and seeing through school-generated false discourses of equality and opportunity, the "lads" response to school was one of complete and heroic rejection.

For Foley (1990), however, students walk a middle line between reproduction and resistance of hegemonic cultural values while for the most part possessing only a vague awareness of cultural and societal forces. These young people keep options open by avoiding total acceptance or rejection of any disciplinary or hegemonic discourse, while remaining covert in doing so. The local and covert qualities of student resistance noted by Foley are reminiscent of de Certeau's description of tactics. Perhaps by refusing to be pinned down, or in de Certeau's terms to be reduced to the systems of discipline they inhabit, they are better able to seize local, temporary opportunities as they arise and use them to their advantage.

Near the end of his book, Foley (1990) writes in response to Willis' critique that Foley overlooked or missed the presence of resistance and awareness among the students he observed:

> Like Willis's study, my study shows how conscious the Pacos and Taras were of the school and youth scene, therefore of adult society as rigged against them. But he [Willis] is right when he says that I did not place the same emphasis on their awareness and "resistance" that he did. In my tale, the vatos and white trash kids end up with a vague populist notion or cultural nationalist discontent rather than with a clear counter-hegemonic class-consciousness. In Willis's language, their "penetrations" of the ideological hegemony, like those of his lads, were only partial. (p. 195)

The vatos and white trash kids inhabited the lowest rungs of Hispanic and Anglo society, respectively. As such, they were subject to strong forces of oppression and marginalization because of class and race prejudice. However, their awareness of this oppression did not engender direct resistance to it, as evidenced by their adherence to the racist and sexist codes that were working against them.

Instead of claiming an unbridgeable gap between the privileged and the oppressed, Foley (1990) argues for more of an osmotic effect, where desire and movement from one culture to another does take place to some extent. One form of resistance to prejudice against one's culture can take the form of attempting to modify the individual's culture in ways that would make it more acceptable to the dominant status groups. In this way, certain high-achieving Mexicano kids are able to enter partially into the high-status Anglo classes and social groups at the school. Likewise, certain low-achieving Anglo students are allowed to join similar Mexicano groups.

The looseness present within the hierarchies Foley (1990) observed seems to support the notion that if discrimination and marginalization were rigidly and utterly enforced the situation would not be tolerated. One of the insidious aspects of oppression in terms of gender and race is that oppressive strategies remain loose enough to ensure that oppressive structures remain in place and tolerated, thus complicating anti-hegemonic actions. Strategies respond to tactics as well as inform them, retreating or colonizing where necessary in order to maintain extant power relations. Explicating this point, Buchanan (1993) has noted that tactics are more than reactive forces. Tactics, according to Buchanan, are productive as well, working to shape and define the forms

and limits of strategies. Tactics and strategies are both in play at all times, reacting to and informing each other.

Denial of Privilege

According to Hytten and Warren (2003), one area where strategies seem to have responded to and absorbed discourses of resistance is in identity formation practices of students and teachers. Education researchers have noticed a tendency of the privileged to identify themselves as outside of oppressive institutional structures. Thompson (2003) studied this phenomenon through the lens of race, focusing on white students and white teachers as they confront racism. I turn to whiteness studies as a means of addressing masculinity studies because of the similar role that hegemony seems to play, because of similar experiences regarding resistance and entrenchment, and because of the parallel privileged status conferred upon maleness and whiteness in Western culture.

Specifically, Applebaum (2004) identifies tendencies among white pre-service teachers to employ a variety of tactics that allow the students to position themselves as unimplicated by racism. Thompson (2003) notes a similar occurrence among white professors of education. Often, it seems, white professors focus their teaching on social justice issues in order to position themselves as having solved the problem of racism (Thompson 2003). Applebaum (2004), Hytten and Warren (2003), and Thompson (2003) all speak of the efforts of teachers and students in higher education to self-identify as unimplicated and note how those attempts are parasitic on the racism they are meant to challenge. All call for new and better ways of theorizing and identifying whiteness on a social and personal level. According to Applebaum (2004), the danger is generally one of

complacency and denial-- that by self-identifying as good whites, as friends of people of color, or as victims of racist-like experiences, individuals attempt to absolve themselves of both implication and responsibility. By positioning oneself outside of racism, it becomes possible both to resist action and to ignore local and personal privilege. The net effect is the maintenance of oppressive systems, as oppression remains unchallenged at the local level. In this way, the system in power has colonized social justice discourse to serve its own purpose.

While these researchers have focused on race issues, there is a similar tendency for males to deny their own complicity with patriarchy. Masculinity and whiteness share similarities as hegemonic discourses that drive power relations in culture. Individuals identified as non-white or as non-masculine encounter similar effects of oppression and marginalization. As mentioned earlier, these hegemonic forms are fluid, context-based ideals not attainable by the general population. These hegemonic ideals act as constructs used to fuel power relations between groups, with those able to claim closest proximity to these ideas most able to access their power. Those who are not considered to be proximate to these ideals face increasingly oppressive and marginalizing forces the further they are positioned from the ideal. Even those who come closest to these ideals, however, are defined and disciplined by them in restrictive ways. Both the tendency for students to remain unaware of the institutional power forces that surround them and the tendency of males to deny complicity regarding patriarchy, present possible difficulties for this research project. My strategy for dealing with these possibilities will be described in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In order to fully address the methodology used in a study, the foundational

elements that comprise a theoretical perspective or philosophic framework and the

specific methods must be articulated (Crotty, 1998). In this chapter I first position my

study within a specific theoretical perspective. Then I describe data collection and

analysis processes before ending with a discussion of issues of rigor, including researcher

subjectivity, limitations and dependability.

Theoretical Perspective

The research conducted for this project is qualitative in nature. Qualitative

research investigates the realm of human interaction and seeks to understand the lives and

stories of a person or group of people. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) define qualitative

research as involving "an interpretive, natural approach to the world. This means that

qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of,

or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (p. 5).

Creswell (1998) offers a similar definition while adding a focus on researchers'

responsibility for writing in an open and natural fashion, stating that qualitative research

is undertaken "in a natural setting where the researcher is an instrument of data collection

who gathers words or pictures, analyzes them inductively, focuses on the meanings of participants, and describes a process that is expressive and persuasive in language" (p. 14). It is the role of the researcher to hear the stories participants tell of their experiences, with a special focus on the meaning they attach to these stories. As Sears (1991) notes, "Social scientists cannot expect to discover The Truth; we can aspire to convey the various truths held by others" (p.21).

Sears's statement captures a key element of the poststructuralist feminist epistemology (Luke & Gore 1992) that frames this paper. Because masculinities are local and complex (Connell, 1987), understandings and experiences of those encountering masculinity will be widely varied. It is emphatically not the purpose of this project to determine some universal experience or articulation of masculinity or to prove or disprove existing theories; instead, this project will be undertaken from a poststructuralist, feminist epistemological standpoint, with the understanding that "knowledge is always provisional, open-ended, and local" (Luke & Gore 1992, p.7). Additionally, I drew my analysis from the data "without presupposing in advance what the important dimensions will be" (Patton, 2002, p. 56). As explained below, once individual participant responses were obtained, they were individually coded and individual cases were constructed. Afterwards, the data underwent cross-case analysis, which Patton describes as a "search of patterns and themes that cut across individual experiences" (p. 57). Doing so helped to make sure the patterns were grounded in the specific cases and their contexts.

The theoretical perspective for this research was phenomenological, focusing on the question "What is the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience for this

person or group of people?" (Patton, 2002, p.104). Patton notes that phenomenological

findings grow out of three kinds of data collection: in-depth, open-ended interviews;

direct observation; and written documents. Since this is a study of recollections, defining

and occupying a natural setting through direct observation were a less important task for

this research than learning the meanings participants bring to their own past experiences.

Gaining an understanding of the perception and insight of the participants as they look

back was considered to be of utmost importance.

Interviews, which according to Fontana and Frey (2003) tend to focus on "the

hows of people's lives (the constructive work involved in producing order in everyday

life)" (p. 62) were well suited to this project. Using open-ended lines of questioning

(Appendix B), I learned how the participants, in their own words, perceive and articulate

their own experiences with school and masculinity. Patton (2002) notes the importance of

using participants who have life experiences with the phenomenon in question: "one must

undertake in-depth interviews with people who have *directly* experienced the

phenomenon of interest; that is they have 'lived experience' as opposed to secondhand

experience" (p. 104). Each of the participants in this project was asked to describe

memories of personal experience in school and reflect on the meanings that he has

attached to those experiences.

Foley (1990) argues that males in school are often unaware of the socio-cultural

forces of power surrounding them, and it is for this reason that I interviewed older males

about their past experiences. The participants' ages ranged from twenty-eight to sixty-

nine. van Manen's (1990) description of phenomenological research seems to support

the use of reflection to describe lived experience.

A person cannot reflect on lived experience while going through the experience. For example, if one tries to reflect on one's anger while being angry, one finds that the anger has already changed or dissipated. Thus, phenomenological reflection is not introspective but retrospective. Reflection on lived experience is always recollective; it is reflective on experience that is already passed or lived through. (p. 10)

van Manen's (1990) stance that reflection is recollective and Foley's (1990) observation that students are often unaware of the networks of power that surround them proved significant during the pilot study for this project. The pilot study differed from this dissertation primarily regarding research subjects; for that project I interviewed young men who had graduated from high school within the last year. What emerged from those interviews were largely non-reflective accounts of various high school experiences. The research participants were able to describe quite accurately the physical locations and personal feelings of high school, but they did not articulate an awareness of their position within different networks of power or even to a large extent the existence of those networks. Even when, in desperation, I asked leading questions, (such as "In what ways do you think sitting alone at lunch was a result of your quitting sports?") the answers largely fell back on notions of general equality and radical individualism similar to those noticed by Foley in his study. Since the participants seemed unaware of the cultural and institutional forces at play in school, which in turn rendered de Certeau's theories inappropriate in this context, I felt it necessary to re-think my research strategies.

It is for this reason that the implementation of something akin to the feminist research method of memory-work (Norquay, 1993) proved beneficial in this project. As

noted by Castle and Bryant (2000), research has determined that memory-work can provide a useful means of examining identity construction though memory:

> Stephenson, Kippax and Crawford (1996) describe the use of memory-work in the construction of self: "Subjectively significant events or episodes are remembered and reflected on in the search for intelligibility. Remembering and reflecting on experience are thus intimately bound up with the construction of self" (p. 183). They maintain that memory-work provides a basis for theorizing women's experience and highlighting the conflicting nature of discursive positions and moral dilemmas. (p. 21)

As indicated above, the students I interviewed in the pilot study seemed completely unable to articulate the discursive positions they encountered in school. While not adhering strictly to the conversational group format suggested for memory-work, the open-ended interviews I utilized do resemble a form of memory-work in that they were conversational in tone. Additionally, several of the interview prompts were phrased to encourage reflective narration among the participants.

Memory-work also requires that the researcher and participant share similar life experiences:

> Collaborative memory-work bridges the gap between the subjects and objects of research. "Indeed, memory-work is only possible if the subject and the object are one and the same" (Haug, 1987, p.34). Haug and her co-researchers engaged in memory-work in exploration of identity formation and feminist socialization. (Castle & Bryant, 2000, p. 20)

It is possible that the age and situational differences between researcher and participant in my pilot study contributed to the difficulties I encountered. In the research for this dissertation, I spoke with subjects with whom I share adult recollections of maleness and schooling; these similarities facilitated a more productive environment for the interviews, as I was able to draw upon my experiences during conversations with the participants and establish a common ground for conversation.

As a final point, memory-work emerged out of feminist research and to my knowledge has been primarily used by and with females. While using memory-work with males did not turn out to be problematic, some of the results were unexpected. Even considering the feminist theoretical underpinnings of this project and the feminist basis upon which memory-work is constructed, some of the participants in this research sought to reinscribe themselves within patriarchy while reflecting upon their school experiences. Rather than seeking to highlight "the conflicting nature of discursive positions" as described by Castle and Bryant (2000) above, the men I interviewed tended to work towards a reconciliation of identity and hegemonic masculinity.

Data Collection

The research methods for this study were chosen to facilitate the understanding of the construction of masculinity among males in school. My objective was to interview adult males, eliciting their recollections of school while learning some of the ways in which masculine identity performance plays out in the multiple contexts of school. I began this research with the intent of using purposeful sampling in order to emphasize heterogeneity. Patton (2002) describes this technique as "maximum variation sampling"

noting that "common patterns that emerge from great variation are of particular interest and value in capturing the core experiences and central, shared dimensions of a setting or phenomenon" (p. 235).

I initially sought participants who fit the criteria of gender (male), age (over 21) and level of education (high school graduates). As Patton (2002) notes, there are different strategies involved in purposeful sampling, with each serving a purpose relevant to the individual study. Because I envisioned a somewhat narrow band of parameters in selecting my participants (age, gender, school history), I attempted to achieve maximum variation sampling within this group. Patton (2002) explains that maximum variation in a small sample "begins by identifying diverse characteristics or criteria for constructing the sample" (p. 235). The primary variant that was used in determining the sample population was socio-economic. On a secondary level I looked to maximize variance among this group in terms of age, race, level of education achieved, and sexual orientation. The participants ultimately included one African-American, and one individual identified himself as gay during the interview; the remainder consisted of white males who either identified themselves as heterosexual over the course of the interview or did not mention their sexual orientation. While this does not represent a great diversity in the areas of race and sexuality, I feel it was important to hear the stories of these two men as each of them explained in some detail the way that race and sexual orientation, respectively, worked in the construction of their identities in school. I was more successful in finding a diverse group of respondents in terms of age, level of education, and socio-economic class, though that process, too, was not without its difficulties. I initially sought participants from three distinct groups that correspond

roughly to upper, middle, and lower socio-economic status. In order to facilitate this strategy, I contacted three gatekeepers in Tulsa, Oklahoma: a lawyer working for a prestigious law firm, a member of a church located in a working class neighborhood, and the director of a government-funded welfare relief agency. Each of them agreed to help me find participants.

I adapted my recruitment strategy during the course of this research to accommodate the availability of participants. One minor misunderstanding that occurred involved a lack of clarity on my part. The first gatekeeper I contacted was the lawyer, and he agreed to help me find candidates. I assumed this meant I would be granted access to other lawyers in his law firm, but his intention was to provide me with access to members of his social peer group. Since this was my first group of interviews, and the participants largely reflected the upper socio-economic class I was seeking, I did not find it difficult to accommodate him. His method ultimately proved beneficial, as he provided me a broader spectrum of professional men to interview than I had originally foreseen.

Another relatively minor difficulty involved the participants recruited through the welfare relief agency. At the time of the interview, the director had two male clients who agreed to be interviewed. However, neither of them was a high school graduate, which was one of my original sampling criteria. Again, this did not seem to present a great difficulty, since the criteria I had chosen for education level was arbitrary. Once these participants became available, it seemed clear that the stories of males who quit school could be a valuable addition to this research (this proved to be true), and so I simply changed this criterion from "graduate" to "attended".

The situation with the third gatekeeper (the member of the working-class church)

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proved more delicate than the first two, and it ultimately led to significant changes in my recruitment process. As the interview dates neared, he seemed increasingly reticent. He was also a participant, and finding an acceptable time and date proved difficult for him. We rescheduled several times. When it occurred, the interview itself was a tense affair: many of his answers were single words or even nods of the head, and he fidgeted in his chair and largely avoided eye contact. Because the results were less detailed than I had hoped for, I scheduled an additional interview for the next week. During the second interview he was somewhat more expansive with his responses, while still making it clear that he was not comfortable with the process. As I left this second interview, his wife took me aside and told me that they were having "some difficult times right now, and we will call you when things get better." I expressed my understanding, took her hint, and did not contact him further.

Over the course of several months these three gatekeepers provided me with eight contacts who eventually participated in the research, and I used convenience sampling to fill in the gaps. Individuals who were directly recruited as possible participants included a bus driver, a man I occasionally play golf with, and a regular customer at the bike shop where I work summers. These individuals were chosen to facilitate a roughly equal distribution in terms of socio-economic status as well as age among my group of respondents. The final number of participants was eleven, ranging in age from 28 to 69. Six are college graduates (two have graduate degrees), three are high school graduates, and two did not finish high school.

TABLE 1

List of Participants

Name	Description
Joe	69 years old. Retired oil company manager. Attended a large urban high school (Rebel, Non-Athlete). College graduate, bachelor's degree.
Vern	50 years old. Airline Mechanic. Attended a large urban high school (Non-hegemonic, Athlete). High School Graduate.
Jack	28 years old. Bus Driver. Attended a large high school transitioning from rural to suburban (Became hegemonic senior year, Cowboy). High School Graduate.
Jacob	38 years old. College Professor. Attended a large suburban high school (Non-hegemonic, Non-athlete). Ph.D.
Hank	45 years old. Unemployed Truck Driver. Attended multiple schools, both rural and urban (Non-hegemonic, Non-athlete). High School Dropout.
Paul	37 years old. Lawyer. Attended a mid-sized rural high school (Non-hegemonic, Non-athlete). Law Degree.
Greg	33 years old. Unemployed Electrician. Attended a small suburban high school (Rebel, Athlete). High School Dropout.
Darren	34 years old. City Planner. Attended a small Evangelical Christian school (Non-hegemonic, Non-athlete). Bachelor's Degree.
Guru	34 years old. Translator. Attended a large urban school (Hegemonic, Elite Athlete). Bachelor's Degree.
Daniel	44 years old. Television Producer. Attended a small, rural school (Hegemonic, Elite athlete). Bachelor's Degree.
Stan	30 years old. Artist. Attended a large urban magnet school (Non-athlete, non-hegemonic). High School Graduate.

I obtained consent forms from all participants, and their privacy was protected (see Appendix A). Any information that participants provided that could reveal their identity was kept confidential. In the written research findings, participants were given fictitious names to protect their identities. Participants were advised of confidentiality procedures, as well as their rights as participants, in the Informed Consent Form. Data from this study, including interview transcripts, audiotapes, and confidential documents have been stored in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's home, and computer files were password protected. Upon completion of the study, all audiotapes will be erased.

The locations of the interviews were left up to the participants. Four chose to be interviewed in their homes, four chose to be interviewed at work, two chose to be interviewed in restaurants, and one chose to come to my house to be interviewed. The interviews ranged from thirty-five to ninety minutes in length, and the average length was one hour. Three participants were interviewed over the course of two sessions. Two of these were due to time limitations that caused the first session to end before the interview was complete, and the third, described above, was primarily a repeat interview. There were also several instances when additional information or clarification of points emerged out of conversations that occurred subsequent to the interview. These discussions were informal, though notes were taken during or just after the interaction.

As noted by Patton (2002), there is no hard and fast rule regarding proper sample size in a qualitative study. Choosing between deeper or broader inquiry does not involve "choices between good and bad, but choices among alternatives, all of which have merit" (p. 228). Since I began this research expecting to do a very thorough analysis of the data, and also considering limitations on time and resources, the sample size of this project was

projected to be approximately ten to twelve, and as mentioned earlier the final number was eleven.

Methods of Analysis

Analysis for this research was influenced by the body of literature mentioned earlier, as well as by my experiences and assumptions regarding masculine identity formation in school. Part of my intent during interviews was to engage participants in conversation that was free flowing. Following Patton (2002), who notes that "the fluid and emergent nature of naturalistic inquiry makes the distinction between data gathering and analysis far less [than] absolute" (p. 436), the process of analysis was concurrent with data collection. During the course of the interviews I worked to make sense of responses in order to form appropriate follow-up questions. I also composed quick field notes during and after the interview to capture impressions and underscore statements of particular importance. During this process I also wrote memos detailing each individual in terms of physical description, mannerisms and body language, and perceived emotional state during the interview.

After transcribing each interview, I read the entire text of the transcript, making generalized notes at the end of the reading. I then began a more detailed analysis, re-reading the text and circling and labeling phrases or sentences that indicated potential themes. A third reading was conducted that allowed me to revisit my earlier notes and the transcripts as a whole in order to refine my earlier notes. The themes that emerged from these various readings were sorted and rearranged, and occasionally discarded.

I then began using note cards to compose analytic statements based upon the results of my earlier readings (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). I returned regularly to these note cards as the research progressed in order to modify and update them. These statements eventually became the basis for more formal analytic memos. During this process I repeatedly returned to the transcripts for clarification in order to keep my analysis grounded in the data as much as possible. Peer-checking (explained in more detail below) was also used throughout the process as a means of providing a different perspective on the emergent themes. These responses were incorporated into decisions to enlarge, modify, or eliminate certain themes. Consultations with my dissertation advisor occurred throughout the analysis process.

Issues of Trustworthiness

In describing the challenges facing researchers seeking to make their projects trustworthy, Lincoln and Guba (1985) ask, "How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of?" (p. 301). Over the course of this research I relied on three primary strategies for making sure that my findings were trustworthy. The first strategy, peer debriefing, was used throughout the research process. Lincoln and Guba (1985) define peer debriefing as "a process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytic session and for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer's mind" (p. 308). While I exhibited what was probably a tiresome tendency to discuss my findings with anyone who would listen, the primary peer debriefer for this study was Christopher Malone, a

faculty member in the English department at Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. Chris and I talked frequently throughout the course of this project, discussing the methodology, the data, and the framing of the study. I also utilized member checking when I desired further clarification of some of the data. As described by Lincoln and Guba (1985), member checking is a process through which respondents verify data and the interpretations thereof. I utilized member checking roughly ten times over the course of the research, either by telephone or in person. In all cases, I explained that I wanted to talk further about our discussion, and after the participant was given the opportunity to peruse the transcript I asked if he had anything to add to the conversation and shared my preliminary analysis. I found member checking quite useful as I worked through the analysis portion of this project. Finally, I used a form of constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) throughout the dissertation process. As mentioned earlier, the coding, memoing, theoretical sampling and theoretical sorting process described by Glaser and Strauss (1967) comprised an integral part of the research process. This process allowed me to capture my analysis along the way, to treat earlier thoughts and feelings captured on memos as artifacts. Revisiting my memos allowed me to "bracket" those earlier thoughts as I worked to develop a richer understanding of the data.

<center>Researcher Subjectivity and Limitations</center>

As constructivist research, this project centers on the local and subjective. As noted by Patton (2002), social construction and constructivist criteria for judging research center on subjectivity "as a pathway deeper into understanding the human dimensions of the world in general as well as whatever specific phenomena they [researchers] are

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examining" (p. 546). Subjectivity demands acknowledgement by the researcher that it is more appropriate to work to understand local contexts and differences than to find universal truths. Additionally, subjectivity demands reflective practice on the part of the researcher, who must work to determine and acknowledge the ways in which personal experience and opinion affect the research project itself. As a result of maintaining subjectivity, constructivist research (such as this project) works to remain open to differences in its findings, offering perspective and encouraging dialogue rather than proclaiming fact (Patton, 2002).

My whiteness, my maleness, and my experiences as a student are bound up in my desire to research this topic. As a pro-feminist (Connell 1987), white male, I acknowledge the need to learn about male experience, about male identity formation, and male responses to patriarchy. While I possess some awareness of the ways in which patriarchy and racism function around and through me, I remain open to the fact that much remains invisible. At first glance, my schooling experiences could be described as largely oppositional to many social and institutional demands. I was not particularly successful academically (my grades placed me in the bottom 25% of my graduating class) or socially (I spent several months of my senior year in suspension, isolated from the rest of the student body) during my K-12 years, yet I was still able to advance to college and beyond. I look back on my schooling years only hesitantly – it was a time of great stress and anger for me. While I brought these experiences with me into my research, I was careful to attune myself to the voices of the respondents. One feminist critique of phenomenological research states that it is not possible to avoid our cultural constructions (Patton, 2002). I am aware of this and within my abilities have remained as

open as possible to other forms of maleness and masculine identity as expressed by the participants.

    While some readers might see the limited number of participants in this research as a drawback, I would remind them that this research is not intended to be used to develop grand theory, but works instead to communicate the participants' experiences and reflections and to bring them to the attention of those interested in education and/or gender issues, and that when the choice was made between breadth and depth (Patton, 2002), I chose depth.

CHAPTER 4

MASCULINE IDENTITY PERFORMANCES IN THE INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

OF SCHOOL – SUPPORT, REBELLION AND OTHER

Introduction

As stated by Connell (1995), hegemonic masculinity is an idealized construction

that males can draw upon to increase their social power. Performing aspects of

hegemonic masculinity confers social status, Connell argues, and allows hegemonic

males to develop reputations for dominance and strength. In school, males can draw on

aspects of hegemonic masculinity in order to enhance or maintain status and power. In

this chapter I present my interpretations of my respondents' recollections of their

experiences of drawing upon hegemonic masculinity and other masculinities during

school. During interviews, participants described the qualities that would best position a

male for success in school, with success being defined in terms of qualities of hegemonic

masculinity such as social status, physical dominance, respect from other students, and

power. As articulated in these men, hegemonic masculinity in schools is constructed

around two seemingly incompatible but imperative practices: representation of the

institution and rebellion against the institution. For my respondents, representation of the

institution means occupying positions of power in the school setting that are endorsed by

the school and that offer the opportunity for in-school displays of hegemonic masculine

identity. These pro-institutional positions for males often involve successful participation

in high-profile school sports such as football and basketball. Of the two hegemonic constructions available to males, my respondents place representation of the institution in a more privileged position within the school than rebellion. In individuals, one of the two identities is usually foregrounded, even though pro-institution males acknowledge the strategic value of displaying both sides as they construct their identities. Males who develop identities based on rebellion encounter some difficulty in performing aspects of the pro-institution role, and like pro-institution males limit the extent of displays that do not reflect their primary identity. Finally, males who are unable to construct identities as either representatives of the school or rebels against it are often perceived as possessing no masculine identity, which in addition to dramatically curtailing their power and status in the school, often marks them as targets for acts of violence. As described by de Certeau (1984), tactics occur along non-hegemonic sites of identity performance as males work to resist the limiting aspects of the identities in which they are framed or, less frequently, the oppressive and violent aspects of school culture.

The analysis in this chapter begins by focusing on pro-institution males, and examines the mechanisms by which they and the school work to maintain their hegemonic position. It is followed by a look at males who adopt a rebellious persona in school. The reasons for making this choice are explored as well as some limitations and advantages of occupying this position. Finally, I look at males who occupy non-hegemonic positions within school, and the ways in which their identities are sorted in relation to hegemony. By contrasting the recollections of males who portray themselves with varied masculine identities, I piece together a necessarily partial interpretive framework for describing the formation of masculine identities.

Elite, Pro-institution Masculinity and the Importance of Athletics

"So what do you got, you got athletic ability, proven athletic ability and proven ability to get with the girls, to date the prettiest girls, and he did all that."

Male identity construction that reflects integration into the institutional structure of the school demands what Butler (1990) describes as "the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame" (p.33). For elite, pro-institution males, there are certain activities that serve as displays of identity positions reflective of both the status of the individual and his support of the institutional structure of his school. According to the participants in this research, the most critical component of elite, pro-institution identity performance is participation and excellence in varsity athletics. Paul was typical in describing athletic ability as "90 percent of the equation for male status." The sports identified as conferring the greatest amount of status and power to those who participate in them are football and basketball. These two sports were described as the best stages for participants to display and receive recognition for hegemonic masculine qualities of strength, skill, and aggression. Darren, a non-athlete, described an example of formal and informal recognition of athletic talent involving a hegemonic male who not only played basketball, but also was named "Mr. Basketball" for his school.

> There was a guy a couple of years older than me. His name was Mike Phillips.
> [The names mentioned by participants are also pseudonyms.] He was popular.
> He played basketball. He was a star basketball player. He was a starter. He was
> Mr. Basketball of that year, which was voted on by the students. He was dating
> the Homecoming Queen. He was student council president and he was on his

way to….actually, I don't know what has happened to him in life, but I can only

imagine that it was great. Everyone admired him.

The qualities that Darren noted as admirable, specifically a reputation for athletic

prowess, access to elite females, and occupation of student leadership positions are all

markers of hegemonic masculinity indicative of the formal and informal benefits

conferred on males who serve as institutional representatives. It is worth noting that

Darren qualified his observation that Mike played basketball with more detail, noting

both that he was a star and that he was a starter. In doing so he makes an important

distinction between participation in athletics, which is considered less hegemonic, and

dominance in athletics, which is considered more hegemonic. Also noteworthy is the

observation that Mike Phillips was bound for great success as an adult. Darren clearly

feels that hegemonic identity performance in school confers benefits that last far beyond

school, a sentiment that echoes Connell's (1987) observations that athletic performance

and physical strength has in our society become a primary means by which overall

masculinity is judged.

When asked to list the qualities of the ideal male in school, almost all of the men

interviewed identified participation in athletics as critical. Jack, at 28 the youngest

participant, noted that a male who wanted to maximize power and status in school would

be "a football player, star, quarterback or running back" while 69 year-old Joe described

in very similar terms a hegemonic male he remembered from his school, as a means of

conveying the way hegemonic masculinity was constructed in his school:

Frank Staton was…a running back on the football team and he wasn't a very big

guy but he was a very handsome young man, and he was well liked, very good

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personality and very athletic, played basketball and football and dated

cheerleaders, and the whole bit. He was…so what do you got, you got athletic

ability, proven athletic ability and proven ability to get with the girls, to date the

prettiest girls, and he did all that.

While Darren and Joe did not participate in athletics or identify themselves as hegemonic,

Guru was a star athlete who was a dominant presence in his school. Nevertheless, his

description of hegemonic masculine qualities echoed those of the non-hegemonic males.

[The ideal male would be] Athletic, star of one of the teams or maybe a few, good

in school. Football star was always a good thing, but if you were a superstar in

one of the others that would work. Basketball was good. If you were a super

basketball player and you led the team to state it was just as good as being a star

football player and making it to conference or district finals or something.

While masculine identity constructed around athletics occasionally shared hegemonic

status with other forms, most notably the cowboy identity favored in rural schools in this

area, it was never omitted or replaced at the top of the hierarchy.

Hegemonic Males as Representatives of the School

"You have a certain status or visibility, a little bit of responsibility, I guess, yeah."

In addition to offering individuals opportunities for displays and recognition,

football and basketball were important components of the construction of school – many

all school activities were formed around supporting, celebrating, and acknowledging the

teams and players. Daniel, a varsity athlete, remembered the ways in which athletes were

displayed as icons in his school, and celebrated in all-school functions:

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Because of those pep rallies, and being out on the gym floor, the football team is

just lined up there and all the students are in the crowd just yelling. They

introduce you and you go out to the middle of the floor, and then at the end of

school all the football players would go through the halls, and the band would be

playing and the other kids would run out of their classrooms to follow us, so it

was like a big thing:

Paul remembered his school constructing events and opportunities for recognition around

athletes, who were then displayed as integral components of the institutional framework

of the school. Paul, who was not involved in athletics, felt that he was shut out of many

opportunities because of the effort the school made to maintain the hierarchy that

privileged athletes and marginalized others:

When special things came along, when special activities or leadership things came

along, they would go first to the cheerleaders or the jocks, you know, that was

how it was done, I think that there was just a big effort to perpetuate that

framework, to make sure that these groups were always taken care of, and were

the ones the school put on display, so to speak.

According to Paul, one of the ways in which the school maintained privilege for

elite male athletes was by making other leadership positions in the school available

primarily to them. Paul described faculty and administration bringing opportunities to the

attention of athletes while presenting these opportunities as less available for non-

athletes. Sometimes this was done publicly, when a teacher might approach an athlete in

class and encourage him to pursue elected office or other leadership positions. At other

times, opportunities would emerge and positions would be filled without Paul ever being

made aware of their existence. He believes that as a non-hegemonic, non-athletic male, he was not included in certain discussions.

For hegemonic, pro-institution athletes like Guru, leadership opportunities occurred regularly, and assumption of these positions of power was seen as a matter of course, as a natural extension of identity. During one discussion, Guru explained the factors involved in his decision to run for student government vice-president:

> I guess when you are in the position I was you have a certain status or visibility, a little bit of responsibility, I guess, yeah. Yeah, so I always ran for vice-president. I am not sure what our student organizations did, it was one of those things you felt like you should run for because you were always one of those names that would pop up, just because.

Guru's first sentence illustrates the trade-off that elite, pro-institution males make with the school system when he noted that the student leadership position he occupied conferred advantages, but carried with it an obligation to further the agenda of the school itself. Cast in this light, ancillary leadership positions within the school take on multiple meanings. Occupation of these positions works to celebrate and cement the power and status of select males, but also serves as a form of advertising for the school, which can then present disciplined, supportive students as a form of public standard, or ideal for other students to emulate. In general, the focus on those occupying school leadership positions is high, with student leaders being asked to speak at assemblies, lead school government, and make various public appearances. However, attention is not paid to the significance of the way these positions are made available only to select students and the subsequent expectation placed upon these students to support the school's agenda.

Hegemonic masculinity and, using de Certeau's (1984) phrasing, technical systems of discipline are simultaneously produced and entrenched in a very quiet manner in order to avoid exposing some of the less egalitarian ways schools work to maintain existing power relations through control of student leadership positions. For students like Guru who occupied these positions, the process seemed quite natural:

> So when this stuff came up it was a question of "Are you going to get involved?" so it was like a culture of it where you did it without thinking. That's why I'm saying if you just have to sign your name or sometimes even not sign your name and people vote you vice-president and you don't have to do anything, then why not? [Laughs]

For Guru, being student council Vice President had less to do with the actual job than with the symbolic weight and status of occupying the position. While he has no memory of the responsibilities of the Vice-President, he remembers vividly the ease with which he was able to access this and other leadership positions. Guru's observation that "it was like a culture of it where you did it without thinking" or his later comment reflecting on his overall high school experience "I consider myself lucky because I was able to do all this stuff and sort of float through it" speak to the forces present in schools that work to sort and arrange students. The idea of "floating" through school brings to mind a stream with multiple currents, where students who are well positioned by characteristics such as race, gender, and athletic ability can relax and be swept along to their goals. For these students, success in school seemingly involves just stepping into the current. What they find hard to realize from their position in the stream is that other students are caught in other currents, which work to keep them separated from students like Guru, and take

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them in directions that are far less desirable. In fact, this stream metaphor works well as a general definition of hegemony.

For pro-institution males like Guru and Daniel, their masculine identities and the institutional desires of their schools each complemented the other and were mutually supportive. It is worth noting, however, that the privilege and power conferred on elite pro-institution males by the school is not given freely; males who occupy these positions are constantly reminded of their responsibility to the school. Teachers and administrators often frame these males, quoting Daniel, as the "face of the school," which means they are expected to support the school's agenda by refraining from any behavior that might be seen as embarrassing to the athlete and the school. Later in his interview, Daniel explained what he meant when he described elite male athletes as the "face of the school":

> The athlete is the … real friendly guy, going to class, never really getting into
> trouble. Teachers liked him because they always told him that he represents the
> school. You know we never wanted to do anything to disgrace the school or our
> teammates, to give being an athlete at that school a bad name. It was always a
> positive image. And the school wanted it that way.

Displaying qualities of strength, dominance, and even violence in ways that promoted the agenda of the school, pro-institution, hegemonic males were in turn offered a variety of opportunities for public approbation within their schools' formal institutional framework. This combination of individual display and formal group endorsement reproduced the status of the elite, male, pro-institution athletes as the most powerful and desirable identity performance in the school setting.

Hegemonic masculinities in schools are constructed around limited and disciplined identity performances that correspond with larger cultural practices. Males who occupy these positions are required to utilize some of their power to enforce the institutional practices of the school. In other words, hegemonic males possess power, but they are limited in how and where they can use it, and they must keep the desires of the school in mind or risk removal from many of the positions that identify them as hegemonic, including athletics and student leadership positions.

Hegemonic Males and Rebellion

"Away from school you have to be up for partying, drinking, raising hell, and that stuff"

Hegemonic males are positioned in school as both producers and consumers of the technical systems of discipline described by de Certeau (1984), and it can be difficult at times to determine whether some of their actions are tactical, working to resist oppression, or strategic, working to enforce it. As such, hegemonic males occupy simultaneous positions as producers and consumers in de Certeau's theory of power relations. Pro-institution hegemonic males enforce and embody hegemonic values within the school in cooperation with the institution itself and are thus strongly committed to the maintenance of existing power relations. This cooperation, however, limits the scope of actions available to them in the school setting. Perhaps as a response to these limitations, the elite, pro-institution males who participated in this research adopted a rebellious persona that was performed outside of the gaze of school faculty and staff. When viewed as an effort to escape a disciplinary and limiting system that constrains them, this development of limited rebellious personas outside of the school environment can be seen

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as tactical; these secondary personas are limited, covert actions that allow the users to score temporary wins over the institution of school, a producer of technical systems of discipline to which these males are bound. While it is perhaps difficult to see these elite males as oppressed, they are nevertheless limited as agents within the setting of school, a problematic that speaks to both the unattainable nature of hegemonic masculinity and the multiple subject positions that students occupy.

Because rebellion against the school runs contrary to their positions as representatives and supporters of the school system, pro-institution males work to limit the place and extent of these displays. For Guru and Daniel, this display of independence from the institutional disciplines of school took the form of breaking school rules by drinking, having sex, and attending off-campus parties. Both of them expressed the importance of developing this persona in adjunct to their pro-school masculine identities. In describing the qualities of hegemonic masculine identity in his school, Guru listed many attitudes and activities that supported the functioning of the institution. He also mentioned the need to temper that identity with some rebellion:

> You could probably have sort of a school demeanor but also needed a party
> demeanor which is away from school. In school you are straight and everything is
> cool but away from school you have to be up for partying, drinking, raising hell,
> and that stuff.

Similar to Guru's, Daniel's response emphasizes a perception that hegemonic, pro-institution males need to display rebellious behavior within certain narrowly defined limits, in order to create an identity that encompasses rebellion but does not fully engage it, and in attempting to accommodate the contradictory demands of multiple hegemonic

masculinity constructions that seem to require the individual to support and reject school simultaneously.

> Out of class he [a hegemonic, pro-institution male] would be social, probably drinking, but drinking at a function that is off campus, probably out somewhere with a group of guys who are either athletes or at a party or something, but he's not drinking to be drunk, you know, he's only drinking what you call sociable drinking where he's got a beer, just downing a beer. But he's not the drunkest person at the party, you know, he'd never be that one, and he's probably like talking to a girl, you know, and he's having sex, but not going crazy with it or anything.

According to the participants, if a pro-institution male "went crazy with it" he would risk being framed as opposing the institutional structure of the school, thus limiting his ability to draw on its power. Presumably a sufficiently robust performance of "rebellion" could also lead to formal and informal disciplinary action by the school. Males who assume hegemonic identities that function cooperatively with the school system benefit from multiple formal opportunities to display and be recognized for hegemonic traits. However, performing alternative, rebellious identities away from school allows them to draw upon the hegemonic quality of rejection and rebellion as well and resist the limiting frameworks in which they are positioned. The possibility that these actions might be tactical is reflected both in that these performances are performed away from school and are thus to some extent covert, and more significantly, perhaps, in that none of the non-hegemonic males who participated in this research identified the rebel, off-campus identity as a component of elite hegemonic maleness.

Rebellion as an Alternative Hegemonic Identity Performance

"I was pushing the envelope back in those days, pretty hard"

The other identity around which hegemonic masculinity is performed was described by participants as that of rebellion against the institution of school. Males like Hank and Joe who centered their identity performance in school on displays of rebellion feel that they occupied less hegemonic positions within the schools than pro-institution males, while still being more masculine, and therefore more privileged, than most other males. While often disparaging in their description of the group as a whole, the rebels acknowledged the superior status of the pro-institution males when describing masculinity in the context of school and framed the pro-institutional identity as the most advantageous choice for males. Joe described his journey into rebellion in terms of a search for a role that was more attainable than that of a pro-institution athlete, which he considered his first and best choice:

> In my school, if you were a guy, you needed to be an athlete. If you weren't, then
> by God you had better go out and search for some niche that you could exploit. I
> never had great athletic ability so couldn't be a star in high school. My particular
> niche, I was not particularly athletic and uhh, I became a little bit, in my particular
> way, hoodish, I tried to be tough or at least appear tough. I didn't feel that way
> inside, but I put on that façade fairly successfully, I think. It worked as far as I
> was concerned.

Joe fingered athletic identity as the most powerful aspect of male hegemony in school, as what "you needed to be" to succeed as a male. Once he determined that he was not going

to be able to craft an identity around athletics, he looked to other masculine roles that he could utilize to establish power. For Joe, his "hoodish" identity involved rebellion, projecting an image of toughness, and disregard for school rules. Significantly, Joe only identified the positions of athlete and rebel when describing acceptable options for masculine identity, which speaks to the power of hegemony and the limits it places on masculine identity performance.

Hank, who constructed an identity around rebellion and aggression, also noted a sharp divide between the power and privilege produced through hegemonic and non-hegemonic identities.

> Obviously the blacks and heads [short for "potheads," later identified by Hank as the "drug users, or hippies"] are at the bottom and the jocks are at the top and still are in any school. I don't care if you are the number one quarterback and are the poorest person in town, you will still be treated different and things will be different for you, in terms of better, much better. I know you have to think before you say. But I think the jocks were the ones who could get pulled over in a car for drinking and get taken home, where the heads or the blacks would have been taken to jail.

The raced aspect of Hank's comments are worth noting here, as he perceived African-Americans as least likely to have been treated with leniency in his community. As explored in more detail in the next chapter, Hank viewed African-Americans in his school as violent, and mentioned that racial violence contributed to his decision to drop out of school. Like Joe, Hank identified athletics as the surest path to privilege in school, and regretted not participating in athletics in school. Whereas Joe did not participate

because he felt he lacked talent, Hank was kept from playing by his abusive and alcoholic

father, a situation he looks back on with some bitterness. Perhaps he was accurate when

he stated that his feelings of rage towards his abusive father would have served him well

on the playing field.

Mark: Did you play sports?

Hank: No, and I wanted to. I think you take a kid that was raised like I was, not

raised, but ended up like I was, with that much anger in him would make a hell of

a ballplayer. (chuckles)

Mark: What kept you from doing sports?

Hank: My dad. He didn't want to pay for it. He wanted the money to drink and

play pool. So that is another way he ruined school for me. He hated sports, my

brother didn't like sports. I loved sports when I was a kid.

Mark: What sport would you have liked to play?

Hank: Football, receiver. (chuckle)

Prevented from pursuing athletics, Hank instead established a reputation for violence and

rebellion in school. Doing so was seen as offering more power than that available to the

"blacks and heads," groups Hank identified as occupying the lowest rungs, but less than

the athletes who "ruled the school." Over time, Hank worked to develop the reputation of

a fighter to compensate for what he identified as his vulnerabilities, characteristics that

could have framed him as non-hegemonic in his school. These characteristics included

his small stature, his poverty, and his lack of a supportive home environment. Hank

repeatedly referred to fighting as the means by which he tried to compensate for these

disadvantages. As he explained why he fought, Hank's intensity and emotion were

apparent. He clenched his fists, and his voice rose. He stood up and paced the small room where the interview took place.

> I hated [loud, pacing the room] life, and I was getting to the point where I didn't care how small I was, I knew I could pick something up and hurt somebody, you know you get enough anger in you and just bring it on. What more can you do to me? Kind of sounds like you're in prison. The more that happened to me and the more I went through, the more bolder I got 'til you just don't care.   The little guy, he got beat so much, he just don't care no more. You can't beat him and hurt him no more, all you can do is just fuel his rage. That is where the size don't matter coming in. [Calmer] So maybe that is a little bit of respect I got.

Born of desperation, Hank's adoption of a violent, rebellious identity performance served as a means of establishing a more dominant position in school, which in turn garnered a small portion of respect from his peers.

Though their circumstances were far different, Joe's and Hank's rebellious identities were performative in nature and used by both men to position themselves as more dominant once the elite athletic route became unavailable. Drawing upon the hegemonic qualities of independence and toughness allowed Joe and Hank access to some measure of masculine power.

Rebels Who Participated in School Activities

*"I **did** enjoy the A's and B's; I'll have to say that"*

Much like the elite athletes who attempted to limit displays of rebellion, rebels who participated in the institutionally encouraged aspects of school hid or re-interpreted

their participation in order to allow them to maintain their rebel identity. According to Joe, his rebellious identity in school demanded that he "do the opposite of what those in authority wanted"; this framework clashed with his desire to be a good student and to please his parents with his academic performance. Joe remembers the pride he felt when grades would be released and he could show his parents his grade card.

> I could proudly walk home with my grade card and show it to my folks with the "A's" and "B's" and be pretty proud of it, and they were pretty proud of it; they were very supportive. I *did* enjoy the "A's" and "B's"; I'll have to say that.

In this context, the performative aspect of the rebel identity is made clear. Within the setting of school, Joe hid his academic achievements in order to accommodate the demands of the rebel identity he had adopted. Joe notes that if he had been "too obvious" about his good grades and studiousness he would have risked compromising his rebel identity, and so he made sure that his public displays of identity reinforced his status as a rebel.

> I'd do things like, every once in a while I would sneak booze into my high school and have it in my locker and between classes I would take a drink. I'd make sure that it was observed by classmates. I would smoke in the halls, when you weren't supposed to smoke in the school grounds.

As noted by Butler (1990), performance is a public act, and it was necessary for Joe to publicize his rebellion through displays of smoking or bringing alcohol to school at least enough to compensate for his studiousness, which is not part of the rebel identity. As Joe put it, he needed "a little bit of a reputation of fearlessness" to position himself as a dangerous and hegemonic male. Joe described some of the complexity that can be

involved in identity performance, especially when the individual occupies two incompatible subject positions. Joe remembered an assignment for art class that required the class to go outside to draw pictures of trees and shrubs. Joe's identity as a rebel demanded that he subvert the assignment to some extent, yet desire for good grades demanded that he not subvert it too drastically or fail to hand in his work. Joe's solution allowed him to accommodate both sides.

> I remember one time that we, for example, I'm in art class and we were told that we were going to get to go outside and pictures of trees and shrubs and things like that, so a friend and I the night before went and got some beer and found a stash for it on the school grounds, in fact it was in a shrub [laughs], and when, when we went outside we went behind the shrub and sat there and drank beer and painted a couple of pictures and went back inside and turned our artwork in and just joked about it and had a real good time.

By joking about his drinking during class, Joe worked to publicize his rebel identity. Joe made sure that the fact that he completed the assignment as ordered was rendered inconsequential as he carefully concealed it from his peers behind the much more outrageous act of drinking during class.

Joe's public identity performance was constructed around rebellion against authority, a position that allowed him to draw upon hegemonic masculine power in school. This position, however, limited his agency; he could not also succeed as a student without compromising his rebel identity. Joe was therefore careful to hide or limit awareness of his academic prowess. Acts such as completing the art assignment while sneaking alcohol into school work as tactics, as a covert and temporary resistance to the

limitations of the rebel identity position. Through tactics, which involved keeping his

academic pursuits hidden behind larger performative displays supportive of the

disciplinary requirements of rebellion, Joe in a small way circumvented the institutional

discourse of rebellion to which he was bound by his identity, which limited his ability to

accommodate his desire for the good grades that would please himself and his parents.

Those males occupying hegemonic positions in school serve as gatekeepers to

others seeking access to the same hegemonic positions and work to render hegemonic

positions more rather than less exclusive. Because of this, hegemonic identities are

constructed around a variety of qualifications. For the hegemonic position of elite athlete,

for instance, characteristics such as wealth, parental support, and race are considered

along with athletic skill, and they can prevent certain athletes from assuming the

hegemonic position of "athlete."

Unlike Joe, who felt that he lacked the talent to pursue athletics, Greg described

himself as a natural athlete, as "the fastest runner in school." Greg participated in

football, but because of his negative home environment chose not to pursue many of the

other performative aspects of the athletic male identity that were required for full

integration into that group. Greg's participation in football, then, ultimately served as

ancillary to his primary identity as a member of the "grease monkeys," a group focused

on vocational skills, rejection of the dominant, wealthy students perceived as "owning the

school," and a capacity for violence. Like Joe, who hid his academic pursuits behind

displays of drinking and smoking that identified him as a rebel, Greg was careful to frame

his involvement in athletics as peripheral to his identity, making sure that his loyalty to

his group was foregrounded. Greg did this by limiting the time and scope of his

interaction with athletes, which served as a de facto rejection of the institutional values of the school while reinforcing his "grease monkey" identity:

Greg: Maybe "grease monkeys," I guess might be a name they had for guys like us. These were any of the guys who were really interested in cars and auto-shop.

Mark: What else did you do?

Greg: I played football all along, but I didn't fit in with all jocks because I didn't want to go for what they were doing. I just wasn't with their clique, I guess. I didn't fit in. Most of them were rich kids. Really rich and uppity, drove brand new cars, their mommy and daddy probably had a Cadillac they were picking them up in. You pretty much had to hang out with them and party with them, and I just wasn't into what they were doing. That was part of the problem they had with me was because I wouldn't drink with them. I thought, well, you know, you all do your thing and I'll do my thing. We'll come out here and play some ball, and I'll go home, and you guys go get drunk or whatever.

The combination of low socio-economic status and abusive/absentee parents prevented Greg from performing the identity required for membership in the elite athletic group and worked largely to place him in the rebel group, since knowledge of his violent home life and poverty preceded his entrance into secondary school. By limiting his performance of athletic identity to playing football, and by not participating in the secondary requirements for inclusion in that group, Greg was still able to establish a measure of association with a dominant form of masculinity while not jeopardizing his membership in his own less hegemonic group. External pressure on Greg to maintain discrete group

identity boundaries ensured that he did not stray too far, and besides, Greg's loyalty to his own group is quite evident:

> Mark: The auto shop guys, what were they like?

> Greg: They were really down to earth kind of people, really. All open, honest, didn't bother nobody unless they were bothered first, didn't go around with a chip on their shoulder. Didn't really bother nobody, didn't like the jocks, though they sure weren't scared of them either. They [auto-shop guys] really didn't like the idea I played football, but, oh well, I didn't hang out with them after football, so it didn't matter.

The hegemonic aspects of masculinity that Greg's group drew on for power revolved around physical labor, possession of a skill, and capacity for violence. As such, Greg was not willing to concede any of these qualities to the hegemonic group above him, noting, for example, that the athletes were picked up in their parents' luxury cars while his group built their own cars, and that the athletes had "everything handed to them in school" while the guys who took shop "work their butts off in there." When he states that the grease monkeys "sure weren't afraid of them [the jocks], either" Greg underscores the hegemonic capacity for violence of his crowd by acknowledging the toughness of the athletic males while emphasizing that his group was just as tough, and not afraid. In the area where their hegemony overlapped, violence, Greg is careful not to belittle the quality that his group shares with the athletes.

Both pro-institution and rebellious males organized their identity performances around their primary group affiliations, limiting actions that might identify them with other groups. As discussed more fully in Chapter 6, males in school are encouraged to

occupy a single identity position. For the pro-institution males, occasional, limited displays of rebellion away from the institutional gaze of the school offered additional opportunities for masculine hegemonic display. For rebels, pro-institutional actions allowed them greater individual latitude while, if performed properly, not compromising their primary identity.

Identity of Absence: Males Without Identities

"They were the folks like me who didn't fall into any category…
We were the lowest group, I guess."

Unlike those adopting the pro-institution and rebel masculine identities discussed above, males in school who fail to construct identities around hegemonic masculine forms often feel as if they lack an identity altogether. Respondents who described themselves as lacking an identity or as not included in hegemonic groups were aware of the characteristics of hegemonic masculine identity constructions available in their school and felt that their identities were largely framed in terms of this lack of hegemonic characteristics. Even though Jacob described himself as terribly shy and did not recall paying attention to the ways in which males were organized in his school, he did remember the two primary, hegemonic constructions of masculinity performed in school:

> I know that there were the preppies, the jocks. The athletes. But in my mind the athletes were for the most part fit in with the preppie kids. It was very clear if you belonged to that group. We called them hoods, maybe, those [other] guys? I know they were some of those people who would make my life hell.

Several non-hegemonic males who participated in this research described identity roles around which high school hegemonic masculinity was organized, and they felt that their own identities were largely framed in terms of their lack of hegemonic characteristics.

When asked about his identity in school, Jacob framed it in terms of the absence of characteristics, placing himself in a group of males distinct only in lacking hegemonic traits. Jacob, for example, felt his masculinity was defined by others and based on his refusal or inability to perform hegemonic masculine identity practices - a process of emasculation that he believed led to much of the bullying he endured.

> Certain people singling me out, maybe not exactly singling *me* out, but certain people [like me] who didn't draw a lot of attention to themselves who were lower profile, who didn't grab the spotlight, and these other people made my life miserable and I can name their names, too…It couldn't have been class based because these were lower class kids and if anything I was a slightly different class, higher maybe. They were the folks like me who didn't fall into any category…we were the lowest group, I guess.

Because males in school draw upon hegemonic forms for power, being identified as completely lacking in hegemonic characteristics renders males powerless within masculine hierarchies. Positioned at the bottom, and unable to draw upon masculine power, non-hegemonic males are often used as safe targets for other males wishing to make public displays of hegemonic violence. Even as an adult, Jacob is angry at the hegemonic males who "made my life miserable" in school and struggles to understand the forces that framed him as lacking. After noting that his group "didn't grab the spotlight," he considered and rejected a class-based hierarchy before finally returning to the lack of hegemonic traits as the primary marker for males like himself. Jacob later described himself as still frustrated that he is "terrible at confrontation" as an adult,

suggesting that the forms of hegemonic masculinity in school remain in place in the adult world.

Jack, also a "nobody" for several years in high school, identified two dominant masculine identity types in his school as well: the elite, pro-institution role populated by "jocks and cowboys" and the hegemonic rebel position known in his school as "stoners," which he described as "the guys who fucked around with everything." Jack was able to articulate two hegemonic masculine identities in his school and actually joined the cowboy group during his senior year yet described himself as an underclassman as a member of the "nobodies," noting, "I felt like I was a nobody. I didn't have a letter jacket or anything." Jack, like Jacob, described his own identity group in terms of the absence of hegemonic traits.

Students who did not occupy the "nobody" position were, however, aware of its existence. Paul, whose status as a member of a prominent, wealthy family was not quite enough to overcome his lack of athletic ability, shyness, and other non-hegemonic traits in positioning him as hegemonic, also identified a group of males in terms of their lack of hegemonic traits, noting that their lack of a strong identity rendered them somewhat invisible in school.

> There were a lot of guys who just were everyday real people who tended to get overlooked a lot because they weren't the bad behavior people, so to speak, and they weren't the quote [makes quotation sign with hands] popular people, and because they didn't fit into one of those two categories they got overlooked a lot.

Many males who perform non-hegemonic identities in school are framed by their lack of hegemony, rather than by their more positive but less publicized traits. This framing

works as one of the mechanisms by which hegemony maintains its power in school, as non-hegemonic masculinities go unrecognized and non-hegemonic males are positioned as powerless and lacking identities from which they can draw social power. Males in this group form their identities under a disciplinary system that does not favor them. As such, they fall into de Certeau's (1984) definition of consumers, and as long as they maintain non-hegemonic identities their methods of resistance involves tactics.

Males who are identified as non-hegemonic are often moved to the margins of school, and there they are framed as lacking hegemonic traits more than possessing non-hegemonic ones. Among this group, responses to thisoppression seem to take two forms. Non-hegemonic males can move to position themselves more hegemonically, to transform themselves by pursuing identities within hegemonic forms. Males can alternatively work to resist hegemony and score temporary victories over hegemonic systems through the use of tactics.

Entering the "Upper Set": Becoming Hegemonic

"By the time I was a senior, I felt like I kind of owned the school a little bit."

Up to now, identity positions have been described as largely static or consistent. This is not always the case. Non-hegemonic males who choose to pursue hegemonic identity performances are sometimes able to re-frame their identities and gain some measure of masculine power. Several of the men who were interviewed remember making conscious decisions to change their images, to begin acting in ways that corresponded more with hegemonic masculinity. Interestingly, this move often

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corresponded with their senior year in school. Perhaps the absence of older and more hegemonic males opened the door for these transformations.

Darren's transformation between his junior and senior year was perceived as based on losing weight, dressing more stylishly, and becoming more aggressive in pursuing social contacts. He described himself prior to his senior year in mostly disparaging terms.

I would describe myself as a geek. I definitely was a geek from the 7th through 10th grade. I think I kind of came out of that by 12th grade. I didn't know how to dress, but I didn't know I didn't know. (Laughs) I was just kind of out there. I had my mind on other things.

One of Darren's concerns that he struggled with as a student was his sexuality. As a gay male in an Evangelical Christian school, Darren was required to conceal his sexuality or risk severe consequences. By the time he reached his senior year, Darren had become adept at performing a straight male identity.

I'm gay and I was not out obviously in high school. That would have been very, very bad in a private Christian school. In fact, I didn't start coming out until I was definitely an adult. I knew that my ability to be interested in and stay interested in girls was just not there. Being able to date a homecoming queen was not even in my realm of possibilities. However, in my senior year of high school I did date a girl, and she was actually a cheerleader.

Darren not only dated an elite female, a marker of male hegemony in schools, but during the summer before his senior year lost weight and bought a new, more stylish wardrobe. During his senior year, Darren assumed a more hegemonic position in school on the basis

of this performance, observing that "by the time I was a senior, I felt like I was a popular kid. I felt like I kind of owned the school a little bit". By successfully creating and performing a masculine identity suitable for a small Christian school, Darren transformed his high school experiences.

Males can also receive "outside help" in assuming a more hegemonic position. Like Darren, Jack was able to change from being a "nobody" as an underclassman to a much more hegemonic position his senior year. Jack moved to the town where he attended high school as a freshman and remembers feeling powerless for several years, describing it as "one of the worst times of my life." For Jack, the increased status he eventually attained was at least partially due to actions on the part of his father. Jack's description of his senior year transformation suggests a much less planned transformation than that described by Darren. Unlike Darren, Jack wasn't initially sure exactly what caused his increased hegemonic status. After some reflection, he speculated that his working on his father's ranch with many of the elite males from school might have helped him make the transition, since the cowboy identity was hegemonic in his school.

> I lived on a big ranch, and I worked with the guys that worked for my dad. I got to be pretty good friends with them, so I kind of got to taste a little bit of popularity in school. The main kids knew me then, and by 12th grade I started asking the pretty girls out, and they started saying "yes."

Establishing, with the help of his father, this connection with hegemonic males improved his standing to the point that he felt able to begin dating elite females. Even though his refusal to drink socially limited his hegemonic power, his senior year performance of

certain aspects of hegemony elevated him out of the "nobody" class he occupied as an undergraduate.

Non-hegemonic males like Darren and Jack, who are able to incorporate aspects of hegemonic behavior into their identity performances, seem to be able to improve their standing in school to some extent, even if they do not adopt the entire set of hegemonic practices. The aspects of this process related to agency and mobility are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6.

Marginalized Males and the Use of Tactics to Resist Hegemony

"I knew exactly what she meant and it really bothered me that she would say that, especially in front of people."

While males who are marginalized can seek to adopt hegemonic practices in order to gain power, they can also seek to oppose what they see as the unjust nature of hegemonic power relations. One component of hegemonic masculinity is that it works to maintain its hegemony through disciplinary practices. As argued by de Certeau (1984), since oppressed individuals are positioned as consumers trapped within a disciplinary system that they neither produce nor control, their resistances must be tactical to succeed. Acts of resistance, then, performed by non-hegemonic males and intended to counteract the effects of hegemony, are often hidden in order to avoid a disciplinary correction on the part of those in power. De Certeau (1984) notes that tactical victories are by definition limited in scope and can be as minor as a non-hegemonic individual avoiding public displays that support hegemonic values. On the upper end of the scale, however, Lankshear and Knobel (2002) suggest that tactics could temporarily and within narrowly

defined spaces overthrow hegemonic values and power relations, creating a space for non-hegemonic masculine practices such as empathy and equity. However, once tactical resistances are revealed to or exposed by producers of hegemonic systems they are quickly silenced or transformed to reflect the desires of the producers (de Certeau, 1984).

Some forms of resistance are only known to the individual enacting them. Paul described himself as being keenly aware of and offended by the violent and oppressive aspects of hegemonic masculinity performance in his school and recalled resisting it through a variety of tactical responses. Paul indicated that he knew that dress was a marker of identity in school and that there were rules for dress commensurate with affiliation with masculine hegemonic groups, yet described himself as refusing to wear the "Cole-Haans, the Polos and all that clotheshorse stuff the jocks wore" that could have helped him move in from the fringes of the elite group of males, noting that it was "probably an act of protest on my part, even if nobody else knew it as such." When viewed as a form of tactics, dressing in generic clothing allowed him to use his body to score a personal victory over some of the identity practices in his school that he found objectionable, as Paul was able to successfully and consciously resist pressure to adopt hegemonic practices even though the clothing styles worn by hegemonic males were readily available to him.

A more overt tactical strategy for Paul involved assisting other students he recognized as marginal. As he described it, the uneven distribution of power and privilege among groups was a negative consequence of high school culture. Rather than affirming his status through negative behavior towards marginalized students, Paul worked to assist them, to bridge that separation rather than enforce it.

Paul: The absolute worst thing in my mind was someone who fell on the absolute

fringes who was sitting alone at lunch or who was waiting at home to go

somewhere because the Mom was drunk or something like that, I had this, it really

ripped at me you know, so my personality was to make sure those guys were OK,

to go and sit with them and make sure they weren't alone.

Mark: Did that cost you socially?

Paul: Yeah, but that I didn't care about. Um, at least to the best of my ability I

didn't care about it.

Acts of resistance like Paul's, where the agent compromised his own power and

hegemony as a form of social protest, were only rarely encountered during these

interviews.

Unlike his clothing choices (not noticed by other students), certain tactical

resistances Paul undertook were exposed, which as noted by de Certeau, (1984) increases

the chance of prompting disciplinary action from produces of power. Paul recalls one

incident that occurred on the bus going to school where his tactical resistance was

exposed. During the trip Paul, who was seen as a fringe member of the elite group of

students, chose to sit with students who were known as low-status "drug-users" and

"thugs." This act was consistent with Paul's stated desire to bridge gaps rather than

enforce them and similar tactically to wearing generic clothing and sitting with

marginalized students in the lunchroom, yet this tactical display was made public, and as

is often the case with tactical responses that do not remain covert, the tactical display was

restricted and disciplined. In the face of public scrutiny, under the lens of the disciplinary

gaze of a more powerful student, Paul chose to accede to the status quo and limit his protest:

> Paul: I was the type of person who always wanted to get to know all sorts of people, and so I would hang out with *other* people. I actually got the comment "What are you hanging around with him for?"
>
> Mark: Why were you hanging around with him?
>
> Paul: Umm…they were, the comment came when I was on the bus, when I went into the bus to sit down, they were the friendliest people on the bus and the most interesting people on the bus, and the girl who made the comment was, uh, not exactly someone I wanted to hang around with…nice enough, friendly, but, uh, a little too stuck on herself, filled with the whole idea, the *upper set* [with intensity].
>
> Mark: Was sitting with that person on the bus an act of resistance on your part?
>
> Paul: Reflecting on it now, I really think that it was.

Paul's tactical resistances were controlled when those who enforced hegemonic disciplines at his school became aware of his actions. de Certeau (1984) argues that tactical forms of resistance are doomed to fail when they, through exposure, turn into confrontations with producers of these disciplines. Paul's response on the bus illustrates how tactical resistances that do not remain covert can be violently re-channeled by those in power.

> My best recollection is that I said something awkward, with a little bit of a stutter, I don't know what I would have said, maybe something about "there is nowhere else to sit," which I would have beat myself up later for saying such a horrible thing, or something along the lines "Oh, I'm fine" or maybe I said "Oh I don't

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mind." I probably didn't say what I should have said and what I most probably felt,

which was "Shut up, there are good people here." I probably didn't have the guts

to say that at the time, so I probably would have, God, some sort of mumbled, have

stuttered, half apologetic (sic) response, or maybe I even changed seats. God.

When Paul utilized tactics in a context that allowed him to escape direct confrontation

with the producers of discipline he was successful, scoring temporary wins over the

hegemonic structures that displeased him. One result of his confrontation on the bus was

an entrenchment of power relations in his school; once Paul's resistance was revealed and

he was confronted, the elite student's power was re-affirmed, the marginalized students

were publicly identified as undesirable, and Paul was left stammering in the middle,

included in the higher social group only to the extent that he was willing to obey existing

hierarchies of power.

Hierarchies were also present within localized sub-groups in the school, which

allowed certain males the opportunity to reframe power relations within a limited space

in ways that resisted the oppressive masculine hegemonic practices employed by the

school as a whole. Late in his interview Jacob, who had earlier described himself as non-

hegemonic and "the lowest of the low,", detailed his involvement with the school drama

program and how it offered a localized and limited frame that to some extent escaped the

disciplinary gaze of hegemony. Within that limited space Jacob emerged as a leader, a

fine actor who was regularly cast as the lead in school plays. According to Jacob, being

successful in drama did not offer sufficient institutional or social leverage to change

overall power relations within the school. As he noted, "I don't think a drama student

could move easily from one group to another, or [even] socialize with all groups." In

other words, since drama was considered non-hegemonic, what happened in drama was more or less ignored by the rest of the school.

Within the drama group, however, power relations existed. Jacob, who acted the male lead in several of his school plays, assumed a privileged position and was often given the first chance to read or select parts in performances. Jacob's utilization of this power when confronted by a lower status male reflects his dismay over the bullying by the hegemonic males in his school that he experienced on a regular basis. Jacob described using his status as a dominant male in the drama group to resist reification of the hegemonic power relations of the school at large. When a lower status male objected to the way in which power was distributed within the group, Jacob, like Paul, worked to bridge gaps rather than enforce them, using his localized position to disperse his power and status.

> I remember we were in drama class, and we were working on the play *Heaven Can Wait*. The drama teacher let us put a cast together, or maybe he put us in groups, but I remember one kid who physically wasn't great looking or popular or anything even in drama terms, but we were trying to line up the parts and I was gravitating toward the lead part in that play and he put the brakes on right away. He said, "Look, you always get these kinds of parts. Let's just try something different. Let me do it." I remember thinking that made a hell of a lot of sense. I felt a little bit embarrassed and sad that he had to point that out. That was a cool thing that happened. He was the lead in that. So I guess I can't say I did what the people in higher groups did to me. When I became popular [in the drama group], I was more self-conscious of what it meant to be on the bottom rung. I can't say

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that I acted badly toward people who weren't as popular in that group. I think I

looked out for them.

It seems clear that Jacob could have easily used his local privilege to deny the less

attractive, less popular male the part in the play and in doing so displayed and enhanced

his own power at the expense of the weaker male. The tactical element of this scene is

underscored by Jacob's comment that he did not do "what the people in higher groups did

to me." In this local space, which according to Jacob did not even allow for access to the

more hegemonic structures of the school and so was rendered somewhat covert from the

start, Jacob used his limited power to resist the larger, school-wide hegemonic traits of

violence and dominance. Within this limited space, a non-hegemonic male temporarily

overthrew the oppression of male hegemonic practices in favor of equity.

Conclusion

Daniel, one of the elite, pro-institution males who participated in this research,

described identity as the most important component of high school, equating a firmly

established hegemonic identity with survival and the lack of one to "walking around with

a target on your back." For many of the males I interviewed, masculine high school

identity was framed so strongly around the two hegemonic poles mentioned above that

other less hegemonic forms of masculinity were largely ignored or either constructed in

terms of their lack of hegemonic characteristics or viewed as a pretense for violence.

However, localized tactical responses that resisted hegemony were undertaken, and even

occasionally succeeded in temporarily limiting the power of hegemony in the schools.

Connell (1995) argues that hegemonic masculinity is an idealized construction that males can draw on to increase power. In this chapter I identified three major groupings of masculine identity in school, two that are hegemonic and one all-inclusive group that is not. However, males in each of these positions do not perfectly fit the identities by which they are known, and can often find these framings restrictive. De Certeau (1984) notes that individuals who are limited within systems tend to resist those systems. In various ways, males within each of the three groups I identified attempted to resist the meanings attached to their identity positions. Some of the males worked to expand their power and increase their hegemony while others work in more subtle ways to resist hegemonic practice.

CHAPTER 5

USES AND MEANINGS OF VIOLENCE IN MASCULINE

IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

Introduction

This chapter explores the utility of violence in masculine identity performance as

well as the ongoing individual relationships males have with violence in school. For the

purposes of this study I have defined violence broadly to indicate a utilization of power,

described by Weber (1962) as "that opportunity existing within a social relationship

which permits one to carry out one's own will even against resistance and regardless of

the basis on which this opportunity rests" (p. 117). While this definition is not consistent

with the narrow but more widely used definitions of violence as harmful acts of force, the

definition I have chosen accurately captures the broad applications of domination and

power I observed in these interviews. In this chapter, I first examine the hegemonic

qualities of masculine violence and some of the ways in which violence is endowed with

iconic status within schools. I then turn to an analysis of the ways in which violence

flows through students and faculty in school, and then, finally, I examine individual acts

of violence and aggression in school and the way the significance of these acts is

dependent on the subject position of the individual. Throughout the chapter, I form

interpretations based on respondents' varied perspectives and arrange them in such a way

as to construct a framework for explaining the role of violence in masculine identity formation.

As discussed in Chapter 4, male identities in school are constructed around the possession or lack of hegemonic characteristics. My respondents perceived one of these characteristics, violence, as a critical aspect of male identity performance in all groups, but in their view violence only enhances status when it is used successfully to dominate other males. In other words, according to the men I interviewed, displays of aggression or threats of violence are made meaningful when they are used as levers; the performance is less significant than the flow of power through the groups or individuals involved in the situation. It is my interpretation that males who are identified in school as non-violent are aware of and disciplined by existing social orders based on a perceived lack of capacity for violence. Non-violent males possess an awareness of hegemonic males' perceived capacity for violence and often enter violent encounters with a belief in their inadequacy. Their awareness increases the likelihood that males who are positioned as non-violent will respond to challenges by submitting to the power of more hegemonic males. This ordering process based on masculine violence is often a useful tool for adults in school seeking to enforce other disciplinary practices. As discussed in Chapter 4, the most hegemonic males in school are usually elite athletes participating in football or basketball. In a cooperative agreement, elite males are supported by the school, which celebrates their status and privileges them through rules and discipline. In return, male athletes are expected to use their power as violent, hegemonic males to support the institutional desires of the school, through violent and non-violent means. School administrators, who are often male and former coaches, work through a variety of

methods to support this disciplinary process, including empowering male athletes and

marginalizing other less hegemonic males. Memories of violence, the way it was

employed by participants as well as the way it was inflicted upon them, are pervasive in

the reflections on school provided by the participants in this research. How males utilize

or are dominated by violence in school serves as a major criterion of masculine identity

performance and power.

Violence and the capacity for violence are major components of theoretical

constructions of hegemonic masculinity. Kimmel (2001) identifies the close relationship

between violence and masculinity in observing that "Violence is often the single most

evident marker of manhood" (p. 278). Connell (2001) defines patriarchy and the

subordination of femininity as a violent act, suggesting, "A structure of inequality on this

scale, involving a massive dispossession of social resources, is hard to imagine without

violence" (p. 43). In Connell's view, the qualities of idealized maleness serve to reinforce

patriarchy and revolve around violence and the capacity for violence. The cultural power

of patriarchal violence is reflected in individual masculine identity performances, which

often center on violence and the capacity for violence as a means of enhancing power.

Masculine identities in schools are also formed around violence, as males draw upon

hegemonic power by demonstrating their capacity for violence and their physical

superiority over others.

For those males who neither initiated violence nor reciprocated when violence

was used against them, their encounters with violence in school served as a constant

reminder that they did not possess a critical aspect of male identity. These males looked

back on their lack of violence with regret; several noted that if they could go back and

change one part of their high school identities they would have been more violent and that by doing so believed they would have transformed their school experiences for the better.

In terms of hegemonic masculine identity performance, according to my respondents, it is not enough to be violent; in order to create positive experiences males have to be violent and victorious. Because winning is a necessary component of hegemonic displays of violence, males have to be careful in choosing their battles by initiating violence against males considered less powerful or only responding to challenges with violence in situations where they feel they are likely to win. Males are thus constantly sorting and being sorted along lines of violent power in school based on their perceived capacity for violence and ability to win violent encounters. In positive or negative fashion, depending on the situation and the relative status of those involved, males who demonstrate a capacity for violence and fearlessness are remembered as most influential and masculine among the participants, and violence is remembered as a primary means by which masculinity is judged.

The Violent Male as Hegemonic Icon

"I have never seen him lose. I suspect as much as anything as a young man, I wanted to be like Sonny Martin."

For males in school, the meaning of violence seems to hinge on its outcome. Respondents who remembered violent behavior as a positive aspect of school were usually those who initiated the violence, successfully handled challenges by defeating an opponent, or to a lesser extent associated with males who successfully employed

violence. Joe vividly recalls the admiration he felt for Sonny Martin, who as a classmate of his during high school in the early 1950's was untouchable in a fight. "What made him the leader", Joe said, "was his strength. He fought golden gloves and was fearless." In describing his friend, Joe identified a masculine ideal as the possession of great physical power as well as skill in a violent sport. Golden gloves, a youth boxing program, allowed Sonny Martin the opportunity to display his strength and dominance in a tightly controlled setting bounded by rules of behavior. Joe's description of hegemonic masculinity seems, at this point, to correspond to the elite, pro-institution form of masculine hegemony occupied by certain athletes in school. Joe's next words, identifying himself as lacking Sonny's hegemonic power, indicate his feeling that he does not match up to the hegemonic standard he sees embodied in his friend. "I already told you I was not fearless, I was kind of chicken. But Sonny had everything going for him that I wish I had going for me." Males are often sorted in school by the presence or lack of hegemonic traits. In this case, Joe's lesser capacity for violence placed him in a subordinate position. Finally, Joe shifts the frame back to Sonny Martin, describing him in iconic and hypermasculine terms as a hegemonic ideal:

> He was not afraid to take two or three on at a time, and I have seen him do it.
> And I have seen him win! In fact, I have never seen him lose. I suspect as much
> as anything as a young man, I wanted to be like Sonny Martin.

Sonny Martin's masculinity takes on an iconic quality in these last sentences, as Joe describes him single-handedly defeating multiple opponents and never losing. Even though Joe is recalling actual events, there is a certain mythological quality to the hypermasculine performance Joe describes. "As much as anything as a young man," Joe

yearned for the hegemonic power associated with frequent and successful employment of violence embodied in his friend. Joe's desire to emulate Sonny Martin speaks to the hegemonic power of violence within school. Sonny was the "leader" of Joe's group of friends, which meant that associating with Sonny conferred real benefits to Joe in terms of establishing and maintaining power over other groups and individuals. Joe's position as a less aggressive male in school relative to Sonny's violence, and the consequent benefits Joe received from his association with Sonny, made Sonny's violence a positive force in Joe's life. Being in the same group with Sonny Martin aided Joe in the sorting process that occurs along the lines of male violence, framing his group and to a certain extent himself as "dangerous" to other individuals and groups who would seek to use violence against them, and therefore as more powerful.

Faculty Endorsement of Hegemonic Violence

Faculty and administrators, who used or withheld their power as a means of sorting males in school, were described as aiding masculine identity formation through hegemonic violence. During the interviews, various techniques were described as being used by adults in school as a means of privileging elite, pro-institution males, including ignoring violence against non-hegemonic or rebellious males, demanding and encouraging disciplinary and violent action by elite pro-institution males, and even engaging in physical violence with rebellious students. In this way institutional power was brought to bear on student masculine identity formation. In doing so, the power of hegemonic violence was channeled in ways that furthered the disciplinary aims of the school, while violence in many other cases seems to have been largely ignored.

As Viewed by Low-Status Males

"I don't have any recollection of teachers acknowledging that kind of brutality, or of going out of the way to help me."

According to the non-hegemonic males in this research, violence is a covert act, something that occurs away from the disciplinary gaze of the institutional forces in the school. To many of these students, school faculty members are seen as endorsing violence by their refusal to intervene on a victim's behalf. Jacob, who was bullied throughout his school years, remembered teachers and administrators as refusing to see or acknowledge violence.

> Regarding the bullies. I don't ever recall teachers being mindful of it or addressing it. I don't have any recollection of teachers acknowledging that kind of brutality, or of going out of the way to help me or anyone like me and surely they had to see it.

Jacob, a non-hegemonic male, recalls that the teachers in his school were at best not aware and at worst indifferent to the bullying he encountered, and he places some of the blame for his unhappiness in school on their failure to intervene on his behalf. As described by Jacob, a low-profile male who did not participate in athletics, students who were not seen as useful in furthering the institutional aims of the school did not warrant adult attention or intervention on their behalf. Joe, who was known as a rebel in school but found violence unnerving, notes that for some students going to the teachers as a means of avoiding violence in school was not an option anyway:

In regard to facing up to bullies, I was always afraid that one of us was going to get hurt really bad. I always remember thinking, "What if I hit him in his eye and blind him? What if I break his nose? What kind of trouble am I going to be in?" But in high school you don't call the cops or go to your teacher. You gotta work your way out of it as best you know how.

Based on the responses of my participants, many non-hegemonic male students perceive adults as being unavailable or unwilling to help them navigate violent encounters and feel that going to a teacher as a means of escaping peer violence will be construed as a non-masculine act and a sign of weakness. Non-hegemonic students like Jacob, who seek intervention from teachers in matters of school bullying and violence, are often framed as weak or feminine and targeted further, which in Jacob's case left him in the position of wishing for teacher intervention but unable to risk seeking out teachers' help. Rebels also perceived teacher intervention as unavailable, since reporting violence to teachers would conflict with the rebel identity students like Joe work to construct and position those students as less hegemonic. In various ways, non-elite males in school are disciplined against seeking help from institutional authority in negotiating violence, isolating them within the school and rendering them vulnerable to violence from more hegemonic males.

When Violence Takes Over

In some of the schools described in these interviews, violence is a tool that, when correctly utilized by the institution, works to further institutional aims. In these schools faculty representatives endorse certain acts of violence, often covertly, as a means of maintaining discipline and supporting existing hierarchies. Elite students, favored within

the institution, are able to draw on their affiliation with the schools to maintain personal and institutional power in ways that do not expose the extent of their institutional support to lower status students. For this system to function, however, the institutional discourse of violence must remain at least somewhat covert and under the control of the institution and its representatives. One respondent, Hank, describes a school situation in which the institution is largely unable to control the flow of violence within the school. The extreme violence Hank describes exposes self-serving and discriminatory actions on the part of the faculty, and to some extent strips institutional representatives of their power:

> I remember in Southville School, I saw Blacks come in a classroom drag the teacher out, and beat the heck out of him. And the law showed up and took the Blacks to jail. One day I was walking up to the school, and there was probably 15 or 20 Blacks chasing one Black kid. The schoolteachers seen the kid running up the steps to the big doors, and instead of opening the doors to let him in, they barricaded the doors. That was one of the reasons I quit [school]. When the teachers are afraid to do anything but call the law, that pretty much tells who ever wants to cause trouble they can do it.

In this setting, faculty members are, somewhat ironically, forced through violence into positions similar to those described by Jacob and other low-status males. Confronted with violence and unable to control it, a teacher is pulled from class and assaulted. Instead of attempting to confront the perpetrators or control the situation, the faculty turns to the institutional power of the police for aid in restoring control, and the students are consequently removed from school. That school as an institution often does not make itself available as a resource to students like Jacob, while not hesitating to turn to

authorities when it is threatened itself, speaks to the underlying motives of control that inform school agendas. In other words, schools were described as favoring and seeking to protect its own power by allowing acts of violence to occur that privilege the institution while limiting those that do not. Even within Hank's school, where the faculty itself was victimized by violence it was unable to control and sought help from institutional authority, the school "barricaded the doors" against a single individual fleeing a violent mob, refusing to support a victim of violence when given the opportunity to do so. Finally, though it is outside the scope of this paper, the raced nature of Hank's responses speak to the complicated and multiple aspects of identity construction. Hank's response illustrates the way that individual components of identity construction, in this case along the lines of race, gender and wealth, flow through each situation as it emerges and is made meaningful by the individual. This process will be discussed more fully in Chapter6.

As Viewed by High Status Males

"If you see a football player in a fight with someone else you are right there helping out. There wasn't no written rule anywhere, that's just what you did, you know?"

The previous section offers a view of schools from the eyes of low-status males. For that group, schools are violent places where bullies pick on non-elite males, while teachers choose to ignore these violent acts, or perhaps are not aware that they are taking place. Males in school who occupy the top rungs of status and masculinity possess a different understanding of the relationship between student violence and faculty. In school, high status males are often athletes who engage in violent sports, and their performances on the athletic field allow them to draw upon the hegemonic trait of

violence in the form of athletics. However, elite males also employ violence in the schools to reinforce the institutional disciplines that maintain broader scenarios of privilege and oppression. For instance, hegemonic, pro-institution males described receiving approval from teachers and administrators when caught fighting students viewed as troublemakers. In this way, elite males' identities and the institutional discourse of masculinity merged around the discourses of violence and power. As perceived by the hegemonic, pro-institution males who participated in this research, faculty tended to condone and even endorse student violence as a form of disciplinary practice when used by high status males against members of lower status groups.

Daniel's observations of the makeup of his school's faculty resembled most of the participants' reflections, in that the administrators were also coaches, and the positive relationship forged between coaches and elite athletes carried over into the academic and social aspects of the school. Daniel identified male athletes as "the face of the school," meaning athletes are framed in school as embodied ideals of student behavior and masculinity, and as such receive special privileges with teachers and public displays of respect from other students, while students considered falling short of the ideal were subject to disciplinary action. As Daniel observed:

> You never saw athletes getting picked on by anyone, but the hippies, for instance, people were always talking about them and picking on them because they were always outside the norm for that school.

In this quote Daniel comes close to conflating ideal with norm. Positioning hegemonic masculinity as a norm strengthens the power of hegemony, as it is simultaneously positioned as something to which males aspire and a centered norm that renders other

behaviors as perverse. Because they were considered hegemonic in school, male athletes occupied positions of privilege as masculine ideals, positions of strength acknowledged by both adults and other students. As such, they were expected by faculty members to utilize violence to enforce the institutional hierarchies of power that privileged them. Daniel's description of his peer group of male athletes as the "guys with the big head, pretty confident walking around, never got into trouble, and if he did get into trouble it was kind of swept under the carpet, very minimum type of punishment," underscores both the privilege and the responsibility placed upon the elite students in his school as these males perform identities that draw power from and reflect the institutional power of the school. Daniel went on to explain the reciprocal nature of this relationship, describing actions that male athletes took in order to maintain control and discipline for the school faculty. Within the classroom environment, elite males were expected to assist the teacher in classroom discipline:

> This guy, the quarterback, or the star running back, or something like that, is pretty much sitting in the middle of the classroom, his attitude would be one where if there is guys messing around, horsing behind him, he would turn around and tell them to knock it off, that type of guy. He'd be the one that is neatly dressed, who knows pretty much the answers, but not the one always trying to give the answers, so that means he would be turning in his homework, he would be, um, very attentive, teacher would never have any problems with him out of class, teacher would call on him to help out if she ever needed help.

The gendered aspect of the identity performance described by Daniel is quite evident here. The athlete embodies several components of hegemonic masculinity in school; he is

powerful, helpful, able to use his power to control other students who seek to defy classroom discipline, and in doing so protects the weaker (female or feminized male) teacher. Ordering other students to "knock it off" is a violent act that is carefully coordinated to fall within the limits of approved classroom behavior. The power behind the threat, however, comes from the potential for violence that this elite student carries with him, as well as the institutional discipline he is working to enforce.

Outside of class or when more overt challenges to existing power structures were encountered, efforts to perpetuate institutional control took on less subtle forms than those mentioned by Daniel above. In these cases, power structures are often maintained through physical violence or the direct threat of physical violence. As one mechanism by which power relationships were maintained, violence flowed through and informed the actions of male faculty and students as they worked to police student behavior in the schools. One of the administrators in Daniel's school was known to physically fight students who rebelled in order to maintain institutional discipline and reinforce existing power relations.

> You know, we had a Dean of Men, and instead of going to the Principal you went to the Dean of Men, and he was a coach, too! He would always handle the rebel kids, and everyone was scared of him because he would literally fight some of those guys. They would be back in his office and they would fight, and he would say, "Hey you can do what you want, and call your Mommy but you are not going to come up here and act bad." And so people were like literally scared of him, but then there was this group of guys who always tried to challenge him.

The plausibility of an administrator actually engaging in fistfights with students is open to question, but whether or not he did, an administrator known for "handling the rebel kids," perhaps violently, makes a clear statement regarding the institutional desires of the school. The head of discipline in Daniel's school was a coach, a figure sympathetic to elite athletes who was perceived by students as occupying that position for the purpose of producing discipline in the school and controlling those who rebelled against it. His position as an administrator, a coach, and an enemy of the rebels clearly stated to the students in Daniel's school that the school was organized in a way that favored athletes, and his reputation for fighting rebels served as an endorsement of violence as a means of maintaining power relations within the school.

Similar to and perhaps empowered by administrators like the one described by Daniel, male athletes were described as embodying the institutional discourses of the school and using violence to maintain power relations preferential to the dominant forces in the school. As described by the participants, violence was used both to protect the status of the male athlete and to reify the marginalization of males who rebelled against the school itself. Because they performed identities based upon recognition as "the face of the school," part of male athletes' identity performance positioned them as representatives of the school and enforcers of its unequal distribution of power. Daniel described those males who were unhappy with school and the way power and privilege were distributed there as frequently challenging athletes.

> Oh you know, those we call the head bangers, the rock and roll, people, just
>
> people who would try to test us. The way we would look at it is that they were
>
> just jealous of us guys who got all the attention, and they would say, "Who do you

think you guys are? You are not all that bad!" They would just try to test you, and

those would be the ones who they would get in fights with, all the time.

The similarities between Daniel's description here and the dialogue attributed to the Dean of Men makes the shared aspect of their disciplinary practices even more clear. As Daniel observed, the elite athletes were hegemonic and thus "got all the attention" in school. Connell (1987) notes that hegemonic status is regularly contested, in this case by less hegemonic males seeking to challenge elite student privilege. These regular challenges demanded a soldier-like willingness on the part of the elite males to engage in violence instantly and without question in support of fellow athletes:

When a friend got in a fight it became a free-for-all, I would jump in and help

beat the crap out of the other guys because it was just like that's what you did,

you know, and it wasn't like a rule that someone had to tell you; that's just what

you did. If you see a football player in a fight with someone else you are right

there helping out. I don't know, there wasn't no written rule anywhere; that's just

what you did, you know?

One of the stated rules of elite male identity performance was a willingness to engage in violence at a moment's notice and in unquestioned support of fellow athletes. Violence is one mechanism by which status is determined and privilege maintained, both in the hallways and, it seems, in the Administrator's office. Daniel's observation regarding violence, that "it wasn't like a rule that someone had to tell you, that's just what you did," is an example of Butler's (1990) process of hegemonic performances "congealing" over time, rendering them both automatic and unavailable for critique.

While the Dean of Men in Daniel's school was known to engage in violence with rebellious students, the principal of the school worked in a more covert fashion to support violence used by elite students to maintain discipline. The tacit approval given by Daniel's principal to athletes who fought with rebels also speaks to the way in which elite male identities can be framed around violence and the institutional desires of school. During one conversation, Daniel described what happened to male athletes who got into fights in school.

> It would happen a lot, and like I said nine times out of ten the football players wouldn't even get in trouble for it, especially if he tells the Principal "Hey, I am minding my own business and this guy comes up and is acting bad, and picking a fight with me." And the Principal would say, "Well, that's understandable for you to do that," because it happened all the time.

In this context, violence that serves the purposes of the institution is viewed by faculty members as both ordinary and appropriate. It happens regularly and is dismissed as "understandable", with the result being the entrenchment of institutional framings of male identity. However, it also seems apparent that once the elite student is able to frame a violent encounter in this context it is rendered palatable to the adults in charge. Daniel's wording makes it clear that the explanation for the behavior involved strategy in that the athlete was more likely to escape trouble if he explained his violent behavior in a context that seemed to reinforce existing hierarchies. The ability to frame institutional discourse creates cover for any number of violent and oppressive acts on the part of the more powerful students and limits the recourse available to the less privileged, less hegemonic ones. The benefits of privilege, then, extend beyond those even unofficially endorsed by

the institutional representatives of the school, and they are predicated on the ability to dominate other students, usually with violence.

Individuals, Masculine Power, and Violence

In one-on-one confrontations in school, violence was seen as conveying power to males who utilize it successfully and disciplining those who do not. For many males in school, their relationship with violence is a primary means by which their high school experiences are defined. Violence is a key component of masculinity that conveys power but does not always mirror the social status of the person committing the violence. In other words, regardless of status, all males who successfully draw upon violence enhance their power to some extent. The males in this study occupied a variety of social positions within school, yet they are similar in their descriptions of the utility of male violence, when used successfully, as a means of increasing masculine status in school.

Gaining Masculine Power Through Violence

"It would have gotten me total respect, you know like in prison; you have to beat someone up your first day."

In school, successful use of violence was described as positioning the individual as closer to the hegemonic ideal and thus as deserving of respect. Because winning violent encounters is the only way to make them beneficial, males often work to choose the time, place, and intensity of their violent acts in taking into account the stakes involved and their likelihood for success.

Jack described himself as "not there" in terms of status at the time of the incident

mentioned below, noting that he was not a member of the most popular group. During

this conversation he described a confrontation at a football game in which he was able to

successfully use the threat of violence to dominate a situation, but he acknowledges that

if he had actually become violent and attacked his antagonist his reputation in school

would have been made:

> It was in the bleachers at a football game. I was sitting by Janet. And the guy
>
> behind us was just obnoxious. Anyway this guy was awful and had this big Coke,
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> and I felt this waterfall of coke just go down my shoulder. It pissed me off. I
>
> looked back at him, and he didn't say he was sorry or anything. I am a pretty
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> passive guy, very passive; I haven't been in a fight since grade school. But
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> something just snapped inside of me, and I turned around, like he just slapped my
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> Mom, and I just gave him the "I'm going to kick your ass and spoon feed it to
>
> you" kind of look. He left me alone for the rest of the night. I kinda felt like I won
>
> the stare down on that deal.

Jack had identified himself as a "pretty passive guy," who often felt uncomfortable with

violence. As a non-hegemonic male, Jack was not expected to retaliate to indignities such

as being doused with a Coke at a football game. At this game, however, the stakes were

higher because Jack was in the presence of his girlfriend, Janet, "the first girl I ever asked

out." To not respond to this challenge in this presence of his girlfriend would risk framing

him as non-masculine in the eyes of a desirable female at a time when he was just

beginning to explore relationships with women. By presenting himself as immediately

willing to engage in violence, Jack was able to establish dominance over another male

and was consequently left unbothered for the rest of the night. Because Jack "won" this encounter, because he offered a clearly violent challenge that his antagonist did not accept, Jack enhanced his power and for that night reframed his masculine identity as more hegemonic. When asked if he was satisfied with his response to the encounter in the stands, Jack, whose parents were teachers in his school, equivocated between the official anti-violence narrative he had been taught and the local, informal knowledge he had learned that violence offered great benefits to those willing to use it:

> No, but in a way, yes. I have always been taught not to be a troublemaker, that it wouldn't get me anywhere, but I really wish I would have grabbed the guy by the collar and thrown him down the stairs and beat the living shit out of him. If I had done that, it would have instantly boosted my status. Everyone would have said, "Who in the hell is that beating the hell out of that guy?" It would have gotten me total respect; you know like in prison, you have to beat someone up your first day.

According to Jack, if he had become physically violent and attacked his adversary, his status as a male in school would have been enhanced even more than it was in the stare down that actually occurred. The level of violence in his description of his ideal response moves into the realm of the hypermasculine, where in response to a relatively small provocation from another male, Jack "beats the living shit out of him." This suggests that Jack's ideal response focuses more on boosting Jack's masculine status than responding to a particular action, one that he wasn't even sure was intended to dominate him. Jack's actual and ideal responses illustrate the gap between hegemonic ideals and individual masculine identity. Within the frame of idealized hegemonic masculinity, a totally violent

response would, in his opinion, "have gotten [him] total respect" and "instantly boosted [his] status" while not being practical in the actual situation.

Males who navigated school as members of low-status social groups were also able to draw on masculine violence performances for power, even while some qualities of masculinity that corresponded more strongly to social status indicators remained beyond their reach. Greg's home life positioned him in several ways as non-hegemonic; his abusive, alcoholic father had a poor reputation in town and refused to allow Greg to play school sports or participate in many school activities. Within a limited space and context Greg was, however, able to draw upon violence as a means of performing the identity of a powerful masculine figure, which gained him a measure of respect among his peers:

> When I was 13 years old, there was a new kid moved to school, and he was gonna try to be the bully of the class, and me and my brother just kind of got tired of all the bigger kids picking on the little kids, so we got him. We got him in the bathroom. We got his respect, I guess. We just beat him up a little bit. We didn't hurt him or nothin', kid stuff. And we kind of got his respect, and we didn't have no problems after that in school. Everyone knew what we could do.

Keeping in mind that the successful use of violence depends on establishing power over others helps make the particulars of Greg's actions in this situation more understandable. Greg carefully chose the target, context and location for this violence in order to maximize his likelihood of success. In choosing a "new kid" as a target for a display of hegemonic masculinity, Greg was able to avoid attacking a student who had established identity within a group. Doing so decreased the odds of intervention or retaliation by other students. In addition to selecting a student who was unlikely to be affiliated with a

group, Greg was careful to bring his own group with him, further ensuring his success as he and his brother attacked the new kid together. Finally, as a non-hegemonic male, Greg could not expect the faculty to support his acts of violence, which led Greg to attack the kid "in the bathroom," away from adults. That the confrontation was stacked in Greg's favor (a fact notably left unremarked in his recollection of the event) was less important than the results. Greg's successful utilization of violence meant that his status as a hegemonic male went up as he "got some respect" from his peers. In terms of masculine identity performance and hegemonic power, concepts of fairness can take a back seat to results, which further benefit those individuals who can draw upon membership in groups, or support from adults during violent encounters. In this way violence in school often works in the favor of the more established and powerful males.

Conclusion

As seen by the participants in this research, masculine identity formation and performance in terms of violence is dependent on status. The ability to "take two or three on at a time," to be always unafraid and prepared for combat, are idealized qualities for males in school. Like Joe, who contrasted his friend's fearlessness with his own feelings of cowardice, many of the men who participated in this research identified themselves and evaluated their school experiences in terms of the extent to which they were known as violent and aggressive. Males who occupied high status position in school perceived violence as a tool that could be used by students and faculty to enforce existing power relations. The males in this study who felt that violence negatively compromised their experiences in schools also believed that teachers to some extent were responsible, even

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if they did not perceive teachers' failures to prevent violence as intentional. For the lower status males mentioned above (who were more likely to identity themselves as victims of masculine violence), teachers were seen as doing little to counteract violence or to protect vulnerable students. For these males, faculty members were not available as resources to help them navigate violence in the schools. In the perceptions of all respondents, violence is a pervasive and omnipresent component of masculine identity.

CHAPTER 6

REFLECTION, MAINTENANCE AND AGENCY AMONG ADULT MALES:

WHAT THEY CHANGE, WHAT THEY KEEP, AND WHAT THEY KNOW

Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapters, males in school are sorted along lines of

hegemony and marginalization, and their experiences in school are often predicated on

their identity positions in masculine hierarchies of power. The males in this study who

were able to draw on masculine power to construct identities that reflected social and

institutional ideals viewed school as a place of opportunity where teachers and

administrators work to assist students and peers who do not celebrate their achievements

at least respect their power. On the other hand, the males in school who occupied non-

hegemonic identity positions experienced school in much less favorable terms. For these

males, school seemed to work against them, limiting their opportunities as teachers,

administrators, and peers judged them as lacking critical masculine qualities and denied

them the opportunities made available to more privileged males.

Based on the responses of the males who participated in this research, the

characteristics of hegemonic masculinity do not change greatly between school age and

adulthood. Though awareness of social and cultural values tends to increase over time,

the patriarchal framework of hegemonic masculinity by which males are judged in school

remains in force in adulthood. As adults, the males in this study indicated a greater awareness of the workings of masculinity. However, the tendency among adult males to position themselves within patriarchy in order to draw upon its power remains in effect. As adults, the men in this research are in many respects navigating masculinity in ways that resemble their school experiences, including judging themselves by their proximity to hegemonic characteristics such as violence and aggression. In that sense, these men are not reflecting back upon the uses and definitions of masculine identity and power as they experienced it in the past as much as narrating an ongoing relationship with masculinity that dates back to their time in school. They tend to leave uninterrogated structures and characteristics that worked in their favor, while expressing dissatisfaction with frameworks that did not favor them, as well as dissatisfaction with their actions within those frameworks. When it occurred at all among the men in this study, revised reflections tended to focus on individual failures to establish a dominant male identity in school rather than any larger critique of violent, hegemonic values. When an awareness of the unjust aspects of masculine privilege was gained as an adult, the response tended more towards resignation than resistance. The relatively few males in this study who revised their attitudes regarding masculinity and privilege did so in a limited fashion that maintained hegemonic values. Some males who were positioned as non-hegemonic in high school narrated their high school experiences in ways that moved them closer to hegemony, and some males who performed hegemonic identities in school articulated an awareness of some of the inequities inherent in patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity while remaining resigned to its continuing power. For these men, the patriarchal form of masculinity constructed and performed in school remains a standard by which they judge

themselves as adult men. In this chapter, I explore the various understandings of personal

power and agency possessed by males in different identity positions, the changes that

occur in this awareness as they become adults, and then the ways in which adult males

who were non-hegemonic in school use tactics to reframe their school identity

performances as more powerful and masculine.

Across the board, participants in this study recall as quite limited their ability as

high school students to see many of the ways that culture and power work in the

construction of school, even while their personal relation with these forces seemed clear.

As Foley (1990) observed, kids in school walk a middle line between reproduction and

resistance of hegemonic cultural values while for the most part possessing only a vague

awareness of cultural and societal forces. Male students often are unaware of the broad

ways in which society works to privilege and oppress, although they are able to gain

some awareness when directly confronted with these issues when interacting with males

who occupy other identity positions. Understandings of the power relations between

individual agency and school discourses of discipline varied widely depending mostly on

the individual's hegemonic status within school. This in turn led to different

understandings of school and adult society, as well as varied masculine identity

performances among these men as adults.

Hegemonic Males, Agency and Reflection

"Anything I got it's because of what I earned or what I did, good or bad."

While similar in describing their limited awareness as students of larger social and institutional forces, the men I interviewed varied widely when estimating the power and availability of agency in school. Several participants, such as Guru and Daniel, perceived high school students as possessing a great deal of agency. Both Guru and Daniel had a good time in school; they were athletes, active in student leadership, and were generally admired by their peers and teachers as hegemonic males. When asked to reflect on their high school experiences, both articulated a masculine belief that they were in control of their environment and thus agents of their success. Furthermore, they believed that similar success was available to any male who was willing to take control of his life. Guru described himself in high school primarily in terms of the school-sponsored activities he was involved with, including varsity athletics, student government and school fine arts performances. In doing so, he underscored the importance of individual power, creating a version of school that is both democratic and individualistic, where success or failure is predicated on the personal choices made by each student:

> I think our school was really, really accessible, but then it comes down to more of a choice. We were a public school, so we didn't go out and look for football players, so then it becomes a choice of whether you want to do it or don't want to do it. There are so many things and which ones you take advantage of are up to you.

Guru went on to identify success as predicated on more than participation in school activities, framing it also as a result of internal goodness:

> But it [his reputation in school] never made any difference between who I was, you know, I thought I am a nice guy, I don't do anything wrong, I'm not mean, I

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conducted myself well, so any additional respect I get it's because of me, not

because of…I sucked as a quarterback, so it's not that I was [a] great football

player. I wasn't that good or whatever, so I always looked more at myself,

anything I got it's because of what I earned or what I did, good or bad.

By placing responsibility for his success on making choices that are available to all

students and on his moral and ethical treatment of others, Guru is able to avoid

interrogating the social structures that privileged him. Noting that he did not excel at

quarterback, that school was "really accessible," and that it all "came down to personal

choice," allowed him to conceal many of the social and cultural forces that privileged

him as a hegemonic male. Guru explained his masculine status in terms of choices. Doing

so allowed him to conceal the benefits he gained as a hegemonic male through broader

social forces in favor of a democratized construction of school that leaves privilege open

to all who would just choose a similar path of social participation and kind and

responsible behavior. In Guru's framing, race, wealth, gender, sexuality, physical

attractiveness, and family background are minimally important determiners of identity

position. For Guru, identity is constructed largely as a result of choices freely made and

reflects the overall moral and ethical makeup of the individual. The ignorance/denial of

networks of power described by Foley (1990) and articulated by Guru in this study

underscores some of the mechanisms by which males are able to maintain privilege. By

framing male privilege and status within the democratic realm of personal choice and

goodness, elite males are able to move discourse away from the unjust and arbitrary

aspects of male privilege and towards the "bootstraps" narrative of radical individualism.

As a white male long accustomed to the identity performance requirements for

hegemonic males ("I have been doing all this stuff since the second grade"), the source of the "bootstraps" by which males can become successful in Guru's narrative were naturalized and justified, focusing on qualities such as inherent goodness rather than, say, whiteness or even excellence in varsity athletics.

While maintaining the radical individual narrative in his account of high school, Daniel positions privilege as less of a natural byproduct of goodness than Guru. Daniel, who, like Guru, occupied a hegemonic, pro-institution position when he was a student, also foregrounded the idea of privilege being primarily dependent on individual effort and choice. Perhaps because his race and family poverty did not prepare him for hegemony in school, Daniel remembered acting consciously to increase his masculine status in school through constructing a hegemonic identity. During one interview, Daniel described making the decision to become an athlete in eighth grade when he saw athletes leaving school to attend games. Daniel's decision to pursue athletics was a calculated decision made with an awareness of the benefits that would follow:

> I can remember in eighth grade I wanted to run track; what really made me want to do this was when they had a football game or a track meet they would come over the loudspeaker and say, "If you are on JV, or Varsity, and playing football, please excuse those players for tonight's football game," and those guys would be able to get up and leave the classroom! So it was, like, OK, so if you are like this nerd and you are in class, and all of a sudden four of five guys are able to just get up and walk out of the classroom, you are like, "Man, so wow, that was pretty cool; you know, being a little kid looking at that it was, like, you want to be a part of that. So I chose to.

From his position as a poor, minority non-athlete observing the privileges conferred on hegemonic males, the mechanism by which masculine power could be accessed seemed to Daniel to hinge on activities. Students who went out for football and track were allowed special privileges in school, and Daniel began to construct an identity that reflected athletics and immersion in school activities. By the time he entered high school, Daniel was well established as an athlete and able to reap benefits as a hegemonic male.

> It was the same in high school, too, because of those pep rallies and being out on the gym floor; the football team is just lined up there and all the students are in the crowd just yelling; they introduce you and you go out to the middle of the floor, and you got the band performing. And then at the end of school, 6th period, if it was a home game, the band would come and all the football players would go and get behind that band and go through the halls, and the band would be playing and kids would run out of their classrooms, you know. Then we would like march across the street to the field house to get ready, so it was like a big thing. It was a big ordeal. For me in high school, it was like prime time, it was good, it was good.

Guru and Daniel, who approached standards of hegemonic masculinity in their high schools, minimized the effects of external social forces in their descriptions, choosing instead to attribute their successes to the results of their actions and to depict themselves as agents of their success.

As adults, Daniel and Guru possess idealized visions of their high school experiences that to a certain extent do not reflect their opinions of the adult world. Daniel described high school as "the best time of my life" because of the almost limitless freedom he experienced there, freedom that did not continue into adult life. As an adult,

Daniel continues to demonstrate at least some of the identity performances of elite, hegemonic males that he constructed in school, noting that being ready at all times to engage in violence in support of friends is "still a fine thing," while also observing that life becomes much harder after graduation. Guru also identified differences between high school and adult life, noting that in many ways life after school is less democratic and ideal. He uses a metaphor of doors closing to describe the opportunities no longer available to many males after graduation:

> So a lot of kids would graduate and couldn't go to college, these black and Mexican kids, and they would just go out into the world and doors would close on them. They would find a job and that would be their life. Our high school was really accessible, but after you graduate, you were just another number. In a high school with 1200 people, you could navigate that, but afterwards you were just one in a million, and you had to have something behind you, like a superior education, or test results, or charisma, or athletic ability.

Unlike his description of "floating" through high school, Guru has identified the requirements for success in the adult world as involving a great deal of work. Unlike high school, which Guru sees as depending largely on an inherent moral and ethical makeup to determine status and privilege, in the adult world Guru sees factors like race sorting males, with limited chances for black and Hispanic males to find success. The requirements for success in the adult world described by Guru resemble Daniel's description of the requirement for success in high school, perhaps because each of them at the time occupied similar subject positions relative to hegemony. Even though they started from different positions, with Daniel initially lacking a hegemonic masculine

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identity and Guru already there, both males credit themselves as agents of their success in high school.

Somewhat Hegemonic Males, Agency, and Reflection

"As I look back, I understand things now, like how fake everything is in high school."

Unlike the hegemonic males' responses, participants who during high school occupied liminal positions that straddled the borders of hegemony recalled agency in school as limited, especially once identity was firmly established. Uniform, disciplined performances were perceived as critical components of masculine identity in high school, and as the more marginalized males in the study observed, once identity was established within a certain group, it was difficult to break out of it. As Joe remembers it, "I think getting from one group to another was difficult once you kind of carved out your territory; that was where you stayed as far as I can recall." Students who occupied liminal positions in terms of masculine identity were observed closely until they were defined as occupying a specific masculine position. Vern, whose masculine identity was not completely set when he entered high school due to his status as a varsity basketball player and conflicting identity performance as an anti-school rebel, recalls the sorting procedure that occurs around masculine identity and the permanence of that identity once established. Vern described an initial, short-lived process of negotiation between the individual and the larger cultural structure that concluded with his occupying a less hegemonic position. As Vern makes clear, males who attempt to occupy hegemonic positions in school are required to construct and perform their identities in ways both

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obvious and subtle, and agency and institutional forces are both in play during this process:

The basketball group, I fit in there only because I could play basketball. Maybe I would have been more accepted, but I don't know if that's true or not. I would have to put in more effort, which I didn't do. If you were a basketball player like me, who hangs in there, plays a few minutes a game, and you want to hang out with the in crowd, there is going to be some effort required on your part. Social skills effort, hanging out with people, having meaningless conversations about "Did you hear what Betty Lou was doing?" I walked out of that group, but it's also easy to get yourself locked out of that group by not participating. If you choose to not participate for any length of time then you become something else.

For Vern, who briefly occupied a marginally hegemonic position, school experiences are determined by external forces being brought to bear on the individual working in concert with individual agency. Vern could have occupied a more hegemonically masculine position in school if he had been willing to accommodate the social requirements for inclusion in that group or if he had been more proficient in athletics.

Like Vern, Jack described an experience of being sorted into identity groups and of being positioned outside of hegemony when he failed to perform a secondary aspect of hegemonic masculinity in his school. Jack attended a rural school that idealized farming and ranching and constructed hegemonic masculinity around the concept of "cowboy."

Jack's identity as a "cowboy," along with athletics the dominant hegemonic masculine identity position in his school, was much stronger than Vern's hegemonic identity of "athlete." Because he lived on a ranch and his father was the school

agriculture teacher, Jack was strongly positioned to occupy a hegemonic masculine position in school. After initially being recruited by the cowboys, Jack refused to participate in social drinking, a required identity performance for cowboys in his school. This caused him to be rejected by the group and his identity to be temporarily reframed away from hegemonic privilege. However, Jack's authenticity as a cowboy working on his family's ranch was powerful enough to allow him to ultimately escape the drinking requirements for the hegemonic cowboy group and occupy a hegemonic position.

> They were trying to recruit me into the cowboy clique, and they said hey let's go. I said okay, I'd like to do that. We got in the truck and they started passing around the Budweiser and Coors Light. I said actually, I do mind, and they never came around ever again. They didn't even bother. I was on the "Do not call" list.

As a sophomore and new to the school, Jack was recruited into the hegemonic group based on his cowboy credentials. His initial refusal to perform all the requirements for identity within this group caused him to be expelled. By his junior year, however, with his father established as the agricultural education teacher in the school and males from school being hired to work on the family ranch, Jack's position as a cowboy was strong enough that he was not required to adhere as strictly to other performance requirements. Without becoming a drinker, Jack eventually joined the hegemonic cowboy group at his school:

> I lived on a big ranch and I worked with the guys that worked for my dad. I got to be pretty good friends with them, so I kind of got to taste a little bit of popularity in school. The main kids knew me then, and by 12th grade I started asking the pretty girls out, and they started saying "yes".

Males who find themselves on the fringes of hegemony are subject to greater disciplinary demands than those who construct and occupy more hegemonic positions. Vern's position as a basketball player who sat on the bench was not sufficiently hegemonic to allow him to defy the ancillary social performance requirements for the elite athlete identity. When he refused to participate in group activities, Vern was effectively excluded from the central hegemonic identity position of athlete at his school, and he was ultimately labeled as "one of the weirdo's, the nobodies," even though he continued to play basketball, the most critical aspect of male hegemonic identity, throughout high school. On the other hand, Jack's living and working on a ranch with a father who taught agricultural education at his high school was ultimately sufficient for his inclusion in the hegemonic "cowboy" group. When Jack's father hired several students who occupied hegemonic positions in school to work with Jack on the family ranch, Jack was afforded the opportunity to display competence and power in a setting highly valued within the school. Jack's performance in the stronger ranching and working aspect of the cowboy identity was sufficient to overcome his refusal to participate in the less important aspect, drinking alcohol.

Criteria for identification with hegemonic groups were strictly disciplined across a number of performance requirements to limit access to a select few. Willingness to adapt to the requirements of hegemonic masculine identity was a component for inclusion in the hegemonic groups, as was affirmation from the members of those groups. However, the more powerful the performance of hegemonic masculinity in certain critical areas, the more latitude was offered to males to deviate from certain secondary aspects. By hearing the experiences of males who occupy less hegemonic positions in school, it becomes

easier to understand the ways in which hegemonic males come to see their positions in school as natural and themselves as agents of their success; for strongly hegemonic males, many (but not all) of the disciplinary requirements of hegemonic identity are not enforced, creating a vision of school that is in their eyes open and accommodating.

Vern and Jack's adult understanding of school reflects their experiences as liminal figures who occupied more or less hegemonic positions at various times in high school. Males who occupy the borders of hegemonic identity positions see the social forces that construct hegemony as kinetic; their movement in relation to hegemony provides them an understanding of the subjective aspects of identity and the ways in which the performance rules for identity positions flex to accommodate the strength of the individual's hegemonic identity. Where both hegemonic and non-hegemonic males tend to view school as constructed through a concrete and unchanging framework of subject positions and cultural values, males who occupy liminal positions tend to view school and identity in more of a performative light. Both Vern and Jack emphasize the "fake" aspects of high school as standing out in their memories. They both see hegemonic identity positions as available for all males, but also as requiring a constructed performance that does not reflect reality. Vern observes that "If you really want to be around all the cool people in school, you can," but also notes that entering that group necessitates insincere identity performances. Similarly, as an adult Jack believes that any student could gain admission to any group in school as long as superficial markers of that position, such as language and clothing choices, were correctly employed. The subjective nature of masculine identity construction strongly influences Jack's memories of school,

and he described his adult understanding of school in terms of its fictional qualities, and he sees the adult world as a continuation of high school:

> As I look back, I understand things now, like how fake everything is in high school. Someone told me once that high school is just a small example of how the world works. Have you ever heard that? Like you are going to have cliques and different social statuses. Underneath everything, you could take one kid out and turn him into something else, like that TV show "*Made.*" You could switch those roles around, put different clothes on everyone and give them the jargon, and they would just fit right in. I can see that clearly now and my life would have been easier if I had known that. I used to think there was no way I could break into those other circles, and now I know that is totally not true.

Males who occupy liminal positions in school describe a tension between individual agency and institutional power that reveals the subjective nature of identity, and they often look back upon these experiences with disdain.

Non-hegemonic Males, Agency and Reflection

"It's anger not over what was done to me but what I failed to do in response. That is what gets me."

As might be expected, most of the males who described themselves as occupying non-hegemonic positions in high school look back on school with feelings of powerlessness and regret. Jacob, who identified himself as a target for bullies and as a member of a group defined as largely lacking an identity in school, "the lowest of the low," found even the interview process to be uncomfortable. For Jacob, high school was

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best left unremembered, and he let me know early on that I was "making [him] relive a lot of painful things." Non-hegemonic males described feeling dominated by external forces in school. During reflection, however, Jacob and other respondents who remembered feeling dominated or trapped in school exhibited a tendency to reframe their experiences over the course of their recollections.

Agency, defined by Bilton et al. (2002) as "the capacity to influence events and behave independently of the confining restraints of society" (p. 16), was perceived as practically non-existent in high school among the non-hegemonic males, who used words like "impossible" in describing what it might have taken for them to move into more hegemonic masculine identity positions within the school. One of the reasons that agency was seen as limited involves the ways in which power was used to oppress non-hegemonic males. Males who occupy less hegemonic masculine positions are typically dominated when they interact with more hegemonic males, which serves as a constant reminder of their low status. This domination took many forms, including but not limited to physical intimidation, ridicule, and violence. Several respondents noted that they, as males occupying lower rungs of masculinity, often did not initiate this contact. Jacob and Hank recall situations where more hegemonic males used violence against them as a type of policing action, a means of re-enforcing existing hierarchies. Jacob describes one instance where violence was initiated against him "out of the blue", and because of his lower position in the school-wide hierarchy of masculinity he felt powerless to respond. (A male who occupied an even more hegemonic position, however, eventually controlled the perpetrator):

Jacob: One of the kids in the black group was in this drama class. He had basically a weapon, a wire or bullwhip or something (laughs). I was taking to a super, super popular kid, Doug Bryce, seems like he was in drama, and he was able to date the really popular girls, and everybody loved him. Anyway, this black kid, his name was Ike. Doug Bryce and I were taking, and this kid came up and was standing above us just kind of walking around. Doug and I were seated, and Ike was taking this wire and whipping it back and forth closer and closer to us and finally was hitting us and it was a very threatening deal. Doug Bryce said something to him finally like, "Quit it, Fucker!" I was really impressed that he was able to say that, because what was going on was threatening and obnoxious and needed to be stopped and Doug Bryce put a stop to it. He was that cool.

Mark: If Doug Bryce hadn't been there what would have happened?

Jacob: He would have flogged me to death and I wouldn't be here today.

In the complex sequence Jacob described, those who occupied more powerful identity positions in the school controlled the less hegemonic males. From his vantage point, Jacob remembers feeling powerless to control or escape Ike's hostile and threatening actions, which indicates Jacob's belief that if *he* had told Ike to "Quit it, fucker," (instead of the hegemonic Doug Bryce) the result might have been far less positive for him. As Jacob said, even jokingly, if Doug Bryce had not been there Ike would have beat him to death. Clearly, Doug Bryce's ability to control Ike's aggression emphasized his position as a hegemonic male. Additionally, Jacob's powerlessness to stop Ike's assault identifies Ike as more powerful than Jacob. Finally, the public display of power by Doug reinforces his hegemonic identity relative to Jacob, who is left with the knowledge that his only way

out of the situation safely is through the intervention of a more hegemonic male, especially when considering the unwillingness of teachers to intervene in these types of situations, as discussed in Chapter 5. Jacob knew that if he challenged Ike, he would be forced into a fight, which he believed he would lose. Similarly, if he chose to challenge or threaten Doug's hegemonic position (perhaps by ordering Ike to desist instead of waiting for Doug to do so), he would risk losing whatever "police protection" hegemonic males offered to other students, or even precipitate disciplinary procedures by the more hegemonic Doug, which might include something as simple as his not getting involved and leaving Jacob to fend for himself. As Jacob reflects on experiences such as these, he feels that his agency in school was extremely limited.

In addition to the actions of more dominant males working to maintain the social order, situations were also described where lower status males would attempt to join higher status groups. These attempts were rebuffed in a variety of manners. That lower status males were not welcome in higher status groups was conveyed in a variety of ways, as described by Paul, a non-hegemonic male.

> [I remember the] lack of invitations to parties, conversations in the back of the classroom that I would try to participate in and would get snickers or something patronizing, which would cause me to move on. Lunch room of course. There would be no room for me at the lunch table. You walk to a lunch table and get a scowl. There was one guy who always wanted to be in the "in" group, and he mostly was, and one of the things he would do would be to give a scowl to someone who was trying to get in, kind of a "go away" type thing. So I would just go away.

Paul, as a non-aggressive, non-athletic male, lacked hegemonic masculine qualities necessary for inclusion into this group. His technique of merely approaching this group, of offering himself as a companion, was met with ridicule and a threat of violence, which served as an effective reminder of what he perceived as a lack of agency. In order to be accepted within this group, Paul would have had to alter his identity performance to more closely match hegemonic values in his school, an act that other hegemonic males might have opposed in any case out of reluctance to share power. This act was simply beyond him at the time. The power and allure of hegemonic identity positions is made clear in Paul's desire to approach hegemony, especially when considering Paul's relatively keen awareness of and resistance to the violence perpetrated by the most hegemonic males in his school.

Of all the participants, Paul articulated the greatest social awareness as a student. In describing the situation detailed in chapter 4, when an elite student derided him for sitting with the wrong group of people, Paul articulated a high level of awareness of the social forces at play.

> Mark: Reflecting back, were you conscious at the time of why the girl on the bus said that and what saying that meant?
>
> Paul: I knew exactly what she meant and it really bothered me that she would say that, especially in front of people. What she was really saying, she was making a judgment that people who don't dress as well or keep themselves as well, she associated that with people who weren't a part of her group, and people who didn't act right all the time.

Awareness, however, did not translate into agency, as Paul ultimately acceded to the demands of the elite student who was working to maintain existing power structures. Agency for Paul was limited to tactical actions that did not offer lasting effects. Also, many of the mechanisms by which inequities were maintained remained largely invisible to Paul while he was a student. For instance, though Paul was aware that he was passed over for leadership positions, he was not aware that it was the way that power was constructed and utilized in school that positioned him as an unsuitable candidate for these positions. For Paul, the favoritism that ensured that athletes were offered leadership positions was seen as a natural extension of being an athlete in a school administered by coaches, a component of identity he did not possess:

> Well, the principal was an ex-coach. A lot of the teachers were coaches or ex-coaches or married or had been married to coaches. When special things came along, when special activities or leadership things came along, they would go first to the cheerleaders or the jocks, you know, that was how it was done, none of us knew. It was like I felt it on a personal level, but not really on an institutional level.

Possessing a limited awareness of a system constrains an individual caught within that system. What did Paul not know at the time was the capriciousness of the selection system for leadership opportunities. When asked twenty years later to describe the extent to which the school itself worked to create and maintain hierarchies, Paul described how he learned only after graduation that school as a system worked on individuals in multiple and oppressive ways, while noting that his understanding of this concept had been quite limited at the time:

It was not until I went to college that I realized that other people got involved with

leadership stuff, that you could be involved in leadership stuff and not fall within

one of those categories. Uh, I think that there was just a big effort to perpetuate

that framework. So, I viewed that as, "ah-ha!" this was a formal thing.

Once Paul came to understand the way in which school systems work to group students

in order to privilege or marginalize them, his strong sense of social justice emerged,

causing him to re-examine many of his school experiences. The realization that school

was institutionally unfair left him angry.

[With intensity] They weren't ever planning a big event around the guys who

were hanging around the area where they smoked cigarettes outside the locker

room. No one ever went and asked them "What do you want to do?" There were

only a few country songs played at our prom, and there were a huge contingent of

people who just loved honky-tonks. No one really cared about that. So it's, uh,

very self-perpetuating!

As an adult, Paul continues to be aware of and dissatisfied with the inequities in

the way individuals are sorted in school, noting that his wife often "catches me scowling"

at people he perceives as "upper crust." His dissatisfaction does not translate into agency,

however. Paul feels that little has changed in school, that his son is going through "a lot

of the same experiences" he did, and that he is powerless to prevent it.

I don't think much has changed from then to now, either in school or in my own

mind. I knew at the time there were racists in that school, I knew my black friends

were given trouble. I knew at the time that people who other people thought

smoked pot were treated like shit. I knew at the time that athletes were favored by

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the faculty and staff. I knew at the time that there was absolutely nothing I could

do about it.

Males who occupy non-hegemonic positions in school often look back on their

experiences and feel that they were powerless, and they remain dissatisfied with both the

way school is constructed and their individual identity performances, even as adults.

Joe, who though non-hegemonic in school was able to develop something of a

reputation as a rebel, identified one aspect of hegemonic masculine performance as

centered around access to desirable females. Joe went on to note that his dating one of

these girls was never considered as a possibility. As Joe, a rebel, said, "Back when it was

happening it never occurred to me that anyone in that [elite female] class would date a

non-athlete or guy like me. It just didn't seem possible." In his interview Jacob, who also

occupies a non-hegemonic position, makes a similar claim.

[I was attracted to] one or two girls, which just seemed totally unreasonable,

beyond the realm of possibility, because they weren't in my group. I was

comparing myself to the people they were going out with.

As he spoke, Jacob came to the realization that he was not actually comparing himself to

the hegemonic boys these girls were dating as much as he was comparing himself to the

hegemonic ideal he assumed they demanded. It is in scenarios like these where the

internalization of oppression is made clear; the elite girls Jacob desired are just as

hierarchized as the boys, so the desirability of girls is almost entirely socially constructed.

As such, they are objectified as markers of status to be "obtained" by males. Jacob,

knowing this and knowing that he did not possess a hegemonic identity in school, desired

them and the power they represented at the same time he was aware that "obtaining" one of these girls was impossible.

> Actually it wasn't that so much; I wasn't even around them enough to see who they were or weren't dating. Apart from what you saw in the halls or whatever. It was just in my mind; I knew that I wasn't part of that group.

In this instance, Jacob has internalized his lack of power to the extent that it is self-maintaining. Jacob knows he is not a hegemonic male and knows what his role is as a non-hegemonic male. Because he has internalized his non-hegemonic status, he creates his own discipline that prevents him from challenging his less powerful position. This internal discipline works in tandem with the external discipline mentioned earlier to "fix" power structures in place (Foucault, 1980) and prevent act of agency by oppressed males.

Males who remember occupying non-hegemonic identity positions, and as a result being positioned as less powerful in school, tend to look back on their experiences with regret and wish they had constructed more hegemonic identities in school, especially in terms of violence and aggression. As adults, these males often remain uncomfortable with hegemonic performances of masculinity and feel threatened by confrontation or judge themselves as lacking in comparison to males who perform more hegemonic identities. In this way, males who in school were judged as lacking many of the qualities of hegemony continue to judge themselves based on the violent and aggressive standards of masculinity they encountered in school. While many of these males expressed as adults a belief that better, less violent forms of masculinity should be available to males as an acceptable part of male identity, they also continued to affirm the utility of hegemonic performances of violence and aggression in establishing male status and power and in

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doing so offer from a marginalized position the tacit endorsements of male hegemonic values of violence and aggression noted by Connell (1987).

Sixty-nine-year-old Joe, who described himself as "chicken" as a student and noted that he "was never an aggressive person," was "unnerved" by violence and felt that bullies in school "had his number" and "knew that they could scare me". As a result of his distaste for and lack of success with violence during his school years, Joe felt that his power as a male was diminished; one of his primary reasons for joining the military after graduation was to increase his comfort with and capacity for violence, to "show them [the males in his school] that I am a man." When reflecting on his experiences with violence in school, Joe expressed regret that he hadn't been more willing to respond to challenges more aggressively. Joe remembered one encounter in particular where he was cowed by a bully, and he felt that a more violent response would have been both appropriate and profitable.

> I wish now I had just said if he wants to fight, we'll fight. I don't think anything
> terrible was going to happen to either one of us except a little blood. I wish I had
> done it. It would have solved a lot of problems for me.

By fighting back, Joe feels he could have established himself as more hegemonic and masculine in school without any major harm occurring. During the encounter, Joe tried to appease his adversary, to "get him to like me." As a result, Joe was bullied even more. Non-violent responses to displays of masculine power, such as the negotiation and appeasement attempted by Joe, serve only to position males who employ them as less masculine and offer little in terms of usefulness to males in school, further limiting their perceived agency.

As an adult, Joe is still uncomfortable with violence and aggression and feels that a better way of being a man than one centered on these qualities has to exist, stating that "I'm not sure to this day as a grown man that I want to fight on the street, I think there has to be a better way." However, Joe continues to equate idealized masculinity with violence and aggression, noting the need for these traits in the workforce and expressing his admiration for more aggressive males:

> In the industrial world I worked in, you come in and are dumped into the pot. It's just a matter of how aggressive you are willing to be and how much you want to reach that upper group… Sonny Martin was an action type guy, and I admired that. He later became an executive VP of a large manufacturing company. He was aggressive. I missed that in my life. He had something.

The man Joe admires as an adult is, or course, the same Sonny Martin Joe described earlier who as a schoolboy fought two opponents at once and never lost.

Joe's description of the "industrial world" evokes a place just as centered on aggression as the school Joe described, a place where hypermasculine figures such as Sonny Martin are rewarded and admired for their aggression. Joe, who as an adult remains uncomfortable with violence, expresses his belief that there has to be a "better way" for males to behave. In his descriptions of admired forms of masculinity, he continues to emphasize hegemonic qualities of violence and aggression, and he continues to regard himself unfavorably in comparison to more violent and hegemonic males. Compared to his friend Sonny, who was "an action guy" and "aggressive," Joe judges himself lacking, and feels he is "missing" something. The focus on violence as a quality

of hegemonic maleness remains in effect beyond school, even for males who have suffered within this framework of masculinity.

At 38, Jacob's most powerful regrets regarding school also center on his perceived failure to be more violent and aggressive. During our discussions, Jacob recounted several tales of being bullied and feeling too intimidated to fight back. He remembered violence as a powerful aspect of identity performance that sorted the males in his school, conferring privilege on those willing to use it and emasculating those who did not. Those who were less inclined towards physical violence and therefore categorized as less masculine, were often seen as targets, their bodies used by more hegemonic males as spaces on which to perform violent identities.

> From one year to the next, I can tell you who the highlight bully from one year to the next was. There are a million examples, but in gym class in 8th or 9th grade-- you are making me relive a lot of painful things-- a kid named Ray Richards threw a basketball in my face once. I was looking away. I was furious, and I picked up the ball and cocked my arm back to throw it at him, and he said you better think twice about that, and I thought twice about it and didn't throw it. Oh man! Many regrets.

The speed at which this encounter takes place speaks to the way males in school are immersed in discourses of violence, as well as the extent to which they understand and accede to the hierarchies that exist based on male capacity for violence. Upon being struck with the ball, Jacob immediately formed a violent response, threatening Ray with a violent retaliation. Ray's response, also immediate, drew upon his power as a violent, hegemonic male in a confrontation with a less hegemonic adversary. By telling him to

"think about it," Ray forced Jacob to acknowledge their unequal subject positions. Jacob

thought about it and desisted, acknowledging the right of Ray as a more powerful and

violent male to be violent towards him. This scenario was repeated throughout Jacob's

school years, as he was unable to escape the framework of violence that constructs

maleness. While violence was not the only aspect of hegemonic masculinity in play in his

school, it was the primary aspect that Jacob was familiar with and the one he understood

most intimately, since he remembers having little contact with hegemonic males apart

from violent ones. Consequently, other methods of performing and maintaining male

status did not stand out in Jacob's memory, enough so that he was largely unable to

articulate the mechanisms by which they were employed. When asked to reflect on his

high school experience, Jacob's first commented on his dissatisfaction with the violence

he encountered there, "Immediately, it was not a good experience. My immediate

recollection is that it was unpleasant, filled with bullies. Not a good experience, at all."

Much like Joe, as an adult Jacob yearns for a "better way" of being masculine

than through violence and yet is unable to identify a framing of masculinity that would

tolerate non-violent behavior. As a result, Jacob continues to excoriate himself for his

past and present discomfort with violent confrontations. When asked if he would change

any aspect of his school experiences, Jacob followed Joe in focusing on his failure to

utilize masculine violence. In fact, Jacob has retained his feelings of victimization and

self-incrimination for not fighting back:

> It was just that I was bad at confrontation, much to my horror, still am to this day.
>
> These are things I feel bad about. You know those things you dwell on in your
>
> mind, where you feel all the same feelings you felt then? The bad things that

happened to me in high school can bring up all the horror and anxiety and anger,

mostly anger when I think it now. Probably more anger than I felt at the time

because it is the kind of anger that is directed at the self and it is all over not

having reacted appropriately, not being more aggressive. It's anger not over what

was done to me but what I failed to do in response. That is what gets me.

Jacob, who was marginalized in school because of his lack of facility with violence,

wishes he would have been more aggressive in school, and he wishes he were more

aggressive as an adult. He does not separate masculinity from violence, and he is unable

to conceive of alternatives to school as a space where violence is a hegemonic aspect of

masculinity. Jacob expresses fears that his sons are going to re-live his unhappy

experiences as an oppressed and marginalized male in school because of his lack of

violence and aggression. "Since I've had kids I worry what they might have to go

through. I am trying to teach them to stand up to people more."

In general, males with less hegemonic identities were aware of the areas where

they did not achieve hegemonic ideals, and this lack tended to define their school

experiences. In light of this, many non-hegemonic males tend to view their situations as

negative and largely beyond their control. As adults, they tend to express dissatisfaction

with the value placed on hegemonic masculinity and express desires for frameworks that

accept alternative forms of masculine identity while continuing to work within the

framework of violence and aggression.

Tactical Revisions of School Identity Performances

"It was probably more my fault now that I think about it."

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One surprising development was the tendency among non-hegemonic males to shift their framing of agency in high school during the course of the interview. In doing so, they were perhaps to some extent able to reclaim control of those experiences, to establish an understanding of an unsatisfactory experience that allowed them to move closer to a hegemonic masculine performance. Connell (1995) notes that the qualities required to "be a man" mandate that men be strong, unemotional, heterosexual, in control and aggressive. For the less violent, less hegemonic men in this study, high school was originally viewed as a place where they were neither aggressive nor in control but instead dominated by their inability to meet the demands of hegemonic masculine identity. During the interview, these men utilized tactics when they changed their perceptions of agency available in school; the reframing did not directly challenge hegemonic structures although it offered them a chance during the interview to break from recounting their negative experiences and to claim an aspect of masculine control.

Jacob began his interview stating that his memories of high school centered on the more hegemonic males who made his life miserable and kept him on the margins in school. When asked to describe his status in school, Jacob, who had earlier identified himself as a victim who was rendered powerless by other males, revised his position to present himself as having been at least somewhat in control all along:

I can't quite decide if it was my fault or their fault. It was really probably more my fault now that I think about it. I don't know why. It was probably just my personality, being more withdrawn and shy.

In this response, Jacob subtly moves his experiences more into his locus of control in a way that does not directly challenge hegemonic values. By doing so, he was able to claim a more masculine identity within the localized space of the interview.

Other respondents changed their reflection regarding access to hegemonic females. Early in the interview Joe stated that it never occurred to him while in school that the possibility existed for establishing a more hegemonic male identity by gaining access to elite females. While he was making that assessment, he revised it, following his earlier statement with an observation that to some extent he was in control all along: "The separation existed. Back when it was happening, it never occurred to me that anyone in that class would date a non-athlete or ordinary guy. It just didn't seem possible. Now, looking back, I think it was a self-imposed separation." By making the separation self-imposed, Joe is able to reclaim a measure of agency in his recollection of school.

Reasons for not participating in leadership activities was also revised. Stan felt that the primary obstacles to his achieving hegemonic masculinity involved limited access to school leadership positions as well as (like most of the males in the study) opportunities with elite females. Like Jacob and Joe, during reflection he changed his framing of his school experiences to include a greater sense of agency.

> Whether or not I could have run and achieved class president or something, I just don't know, and I would never have attempted to date someone I thought was above me and I think the head cheerleader or some beautiful girl would have been in my estimation above me, and I would never have gone after them. But it was more of a self-evaluation than a group status thing now that I think about it.

Stan's statement that his position depended more on individual decisions than external forces is reminiscent of the observations made by hegemonic males earlier in the chapter. By making this statement, Stan is tactically claiming a bit of hegemonic masculinity and positioning himself as slightly more powerful.

Non-hegemonic males who change their reflections in order to identify themselves as agents in high school are using tactics; these revisions are covert in the sense that as adults they are no longer subject to the disciplinary gaze of school, and by reframing their memories they are able to score a temporary victory over the aspects of school that they considered emasculating.

CHAPTER 7

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

My desire when I undertook this study was to better understand schooling's

effects on masculine identity formation. Throughout my research, I sought to answer

questions regarding males' relationship with both the institutional power of school and

the patriarchal power of hegemonic masculinity. I set out to explore the forms of

resistance adopted by males in school, their understandings of these resistances at the

time, and how that understanding and awareness changed as they moved into adulthood. I

was not interested in using this research to construct any grand theory or as a means of

establishing an essential maleness. Instead, I wanted to communicate the participants'

experiences and reflections through my own interpretive framework and to bring them to

the attention of those interested in education and/or gender issues.

This study, then, was designed to further the understanding of masculine identity

formation and maintenance by examining the role schooling plays in masculine identity

formation through the recollections of adult males, the ways males voice their

experiences with institutional power in school, and the form and intensity of males'

resistance to the hegemonic discourses that permeate schools. The need for studies like

this one that explore the ways in which masculine identity formation occurs in school

becomes apparent when placed in the context of the toll enacted upon male students who

encounter the oppressive and limiting aspects of hegemonic masculinity. Because damage is being done, because non-hegemonic and feminized males are being bullied and hegemonic males are being encouraged in school to act violently, because it underscores the multiplicity of ways in which gender is performed and the relatively limited way gender is framed in schools, and because violence is revealed as pervasive in schools and not just limited to low-income or troublemaking students, studies like this one deserve consideration.

Hegemonic Masculinity in a Red State

Pro-feminist theorists argue that there are numerous forms of masculinity constructed and performed in schools (Butler, 1990; Connell, 2000; Ferguson, 2000; Foley, 1990; Sears, 1991; Whitehead & Barrett, 2001), and that of the masculinities that are performed in school, some forms will be hegemonic over others (Connell 2001; 2000; 1987). The participants in this research project, men between the ages of 28 and 69 who attended school in or around Tulsa, Oklahoma, identified numerous masculine identities in their schools, and they subsequently sorted these masculinities into hegemonic and non-hegemonic categories. The men who participated in this project described two types of hegemonic masculinity. The first was a pro-institution form. Males who occupied hegemonic, pro-institution positions in school were seen as representatives of the school and were expected to support the school agendas in exchange for privilege. Athletes were consistently identified as occupying elite, pro-institution positions in school. However, certain other identities occasionally occupied a hegemonic position along with the athlete form. Respondents who attended rural schools with agricultural education programs also identified "cowboys" as an elite pro-institution male identity position. One respondent

who attended a private Christian school identified membership in Evangelical Christian churches as a criterion for hegemonic masculinity.

The second masculine identity position respondents recalled as hegemonic centered on rebellion against or independence from school agendas. Respondents identified several activities and characteristics of males who fit these criteria, including participation in certain school curricula such as vocational education, recreational activities such as drug use or listening to heavy metal music, and geographic location during school hours such as "in the parking lot" or "in the back of the bus." The rebel masculine identity position occupied a slightly less privileged position (in the social milieu of school) than that of the hegemonic, pro-institution male.

Participants categorically identified masculine identity constructions in school other than the two hegemonic identities noted above by their distance from hegemony, even when these performances shared little else in common. Included in this grouping were band and drama members, drug users, honor students, males who did not drive cars to school, males who ate in the cafeteria, and males new to school. Males who occupied these positions in school, as well as males who occupied hegemonic positions identified this group and placed it at the bottom of the masculine hierarchy in their schools. Men said this group lacked identity, which seemingly prevented the men in this category from drawing upon the power of an identity position within the school.

Tactics, and Why This Research Leaves Me Hopeful

Tactics, as employed in school by the males who participated in this research, took on three distinct forms. I have labeled the first type "power tactics." The elite, pro-institution males described in Chapter 4 and in the preceding paragraph utilized this type

of tactics. While these males occupy hegemonic positions within the school, their actions in school are limited by their tacit agreement to not oppose the institution that supports them. Because of this agreement, alternative, slightly less hegemonic practices that center on rebellion are not available for these males in the school setting. These males, seeking access to hegemonic power in all its forms, develop rebellious personas that they keep hidden from faculty and administrators by only performing these identities away from the context of school. Doing so allows them to draw upon the power of the rebel identity position while not directly defying school mandates. Daniel and Guru, who performed elite, pro-institution identities in school, articulated the need among elite males to develop a rebellious identity away from school that serves to bulwark their pro-institution identity that they perform while in school.

I have named the second type "resistance tactics." These tactics are utilized to resist hegemony in order to create more just and equitable spaces in school. These are the types of tactics I envisioned when I set up this research and the form that most closely follows de Certeau's (1984) descriptions. Males who utilize this form often occupy non-hegemonic positions in school, and they act in covert fashion to redress some of the oppressive and marginalizing elements of school. Jacob's giving up the lead in the school play or Paul's sitting with the marginalized students on the bus are examples of resistance tactics uncovered by this research.

I have labeled the third type of tactics that I uncovered during this research "reflection tactics," and it occurs among adult males who occupied non-hegemonic positions as they reflect on their school experiences. As described in Chapter 6, these non-hegemonic males initially minimized their agency in school, while focusing on the ways in which they were moved to the margins by forces outside their control. During the

course of reflection, however, these males tended to reposition themselves as more powerful agents in school. They did not modify their positions within the various hierarchies in school but merely placed more of the responsibility for their position on themselves. Reflection tactics speak to the power of discourse as well as the continuing influence school experiences exert on adult males. When describing their school experiences, the non-hegemonic participants were asked to identify their status in school, an act that could be considered emasculating. By positioning their student selves as stronger agents they are able to claim a slightly more hegemonic position.

Resistance as a means of pursuing social justice was described by only a few males in this study. Respondents who acknowledged the unfair aspects of hegemony and articulated a desire for equity and social justice seemed to possess this characteristic as both students and adults.

Agency and Reflection, and Why This Research

Leaves Me Less Hopeful

Adult males' articulation of their experiences with institutional power in school and the extent to which they were able to act as agents within this framework depends on their position in school. The males in this study who occupied the top rungs in terms of status and power viewed themselves as agents of their success. Non-hegemonic males, on the other hand, tended to see themselves as less powerful agents, identifying external forces that marginalized them. While I hoped that the adult males in this study would have gained a greater understanding of the patriarchal and oppressive elements of hegemonic masculine identity after leaving school, and seeing this would begin working to resist it, it did not turn out to be so. While most of the males did follow Foley (1990) in

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articulating a limited awareness of institutional forces as students, and furthermore claimed a greater understanding of those forces as adults, they did not follow Butler (1990) and Applebaum (2004) in using their awareness to find ways to contest patriarchy. Rather than distancing themselves from or attempting to subvert hegemonic masculine identity positions, the males in this study instead continue to work to position themselves closer to the hegemonic ideal, and reflect on their school experiences wishing they had drawn more strongly on patriarchy as a means of increasing their power while in school. Jack, who noted that what stood out for him as he reflected on his high school experiences was how arbitrary and "fake" identity roles were, also looked back with regret that he did not go ahead and assault the boy who spilled a drink on him at a football game. Joe, who was intimidated by violence as a student and as an adult thinks "there has to be a better way," continues to admire males who are aggressive and competitive, and he judges himself as lacking in comparison.

While the males in this study claimed a better understanding of the institutional forces in school as adults, they also worked to increase their hegemonic power. Those who occupied hegemonic positions in school tend to maintain many of their values and beliefs as adults, while less hegemonic males tend to position themselves as more hegemonic. The focus, even among males who occupied a variety of positions in school, continues to be on the enhancement of personal power and the proximity to hegemony.

Violence as a Critical Aspect of Male Identity Construction

Both those who perceive masculinity as constructed (Butler, 1990; Connell, 1987; Mac an Ghaill, 1994) and those who perceive it as essential (Ghiglieri, 2000; Gray, 1992) are quick to note the extent to which violence informs masculine identity performances.

Indeed, the participants in this research viewed violence or a perceived capacity for violence as a primary means by which males are sorted in school. They also viewed violence as a tool that can be used to improve masculine status in school. Finally, males who felt themselves victimized by violence in school looked back on their schooling experiences with regret and wished that they had acted more violently. These findings reflect Corrigan's (1988) autobiographical account of masculinity in British schools, where faculty adopted a militaristic stance towards students, and multiple forms of legitimized violence were inflicted upon the younger students by upperclassmen. Corrigan remembers the faculty in his school endorsing certain acts of violence, such as the prefects punishing undergraduates, while ignoring or tacitly endorsing others that better reflect the institutional desires of those who run the school. In these respects, my data works as an extension of Corrigan's. The hegemonic males who participated in my study recalled times when they were not punished for fighting if they explained that their opponents were rebellious or lower-status males. Conversely, non-hegemonic, lower status males felt as if teachers ignored the acts of violence against them, and they wondered why adults in the school did not protect them. The anguish and anger Corrigan expresses as he reflects on his school experiences echo those of several of the non-hegemonic respondents to this research.

Two elements emerged from my data that add to Corrigan's framing of masculinity and school. The first involves the ways privileged, hegemonic males are understood. Corrigan frames hegemonic males through the lens of his own experiences with them. As such, they are portrayed as largely one-dimensional inflictors of violence upon less hegemonic males like Corrigan. Because my participants included males who were both violent and hegemonic in school, I was able to delve into the experiences of

these males more deeply than Corrigan in ways that resemble those articulated by Connell (2000; 1987) and Mac an Ghaill (1994). As stated in Chapter four of this dissertation, males who occupy hegemonic identity positions do not perfectly fit those identities. Some of the hegemonic males who participated in this research worked to resist the limiting aspects of hegemonic identity construction by making good grades or developing a rebellious identity away from school. These acts of resistance separate the males in this study from those in Corrigan's.

The second noteworthy difference involves Corrigan's discussion on the effects of schooling on adult males. My participants echo Corrigan in that schooling is for non-hegemonic males a violent and normalizing experience that fosters bitterness and regret rather than liberation. Corrigan articulates a desire for revenge against the school system on the part of these males that is shared by this non-hegemonic researcher and many of the non-hegemonic males I interviewed. However, rather than desiring to destroy or eradicate school as described by Corrigan, my respondents largely desired to avenge themselves on the school system by becoming more hegemonic. Among my participants, discontent with the violence encountered at school turned to reproduction as they continued to position themselves along lines of hegemonic masculinity. I will discuss what these findings have meant to me later in this chapter.

Implications for Teacher Education and Faculty in Schools

As described by my participants, one of the organizational themes of school involves the privileging and glorification of certain hegemonic forms of masculinity at the expense of those occupying less hegemonic positions. Elite, pro-institution males support their schools by maintaining discipline and are in turn supported by the schools,

which offer opportunities for public displays of status and approbation. This network of support extends from the subconscious to the very margins of official discourse, with some teachers being described as unaware that non-hegemonic males were being persecuted and other teachers, especially coaches and administrators, described as privately approving acts of violence by hegemonic males. The framework supporting the glorification of hegemonic masculinity is very broad and powerful within schools, and faculty in general need to be made more aware that privileging certain limited forms of masculinity is a damaging and oppressive practice to the majority of males within a school. There are also specific implications that while beneficial to all adults working within schools, might be especially applicable to those occupying certain positions.

As described by Connell (2000) and Pollack (1999) and echoed by the men in this study, coaches (and coaches who become administrators) tend to both model and privilege violent, pro-institution masculine identity performances in school. While coaches and future coaches could only benefit from learning some of the ways that non-hegemonic students are damaged within patriarchal and hegemonic framings, it is my contention that the culture surrounding athletics is so entrenched in violence and hegemony that legislative and institutional policy might prove more efficacious than education in reducing inequity. Small measures, such as instituting a "no-cut" or "all-play" policy within a school could prove beneficial, as would larger initiatives, such as the elimination of varsity athletics within a school or district, or a strict "no-violence" policy that applies to all students in all situations. Unfortunately, I see initiatives such as these as both limited in their efficacy and as standing little chance of being enacted, considering the powerful ways in which athletes and coaches are currently glorified for their performances of masculine violence.

Teachers and counselors who do not overtly participate in the idealizing of male hegemonic violence as it played out in the schools were described as unaware of male violence or alternatively as passive recipients of disciplinary support from male students. These teachers would also benefit from an increased focus on masculinity and patriarchy in teacher education and teacher development programs, and they need to begin to interrogate their actions and the general school environment more rigorously. Teachers can clearly position themselves as advocates for and protectors of victims of violence by initiating contact with those victimized students who currently see teachers as unavailable or uninformed as well as by making themselves more visible and proactive in the school environment. Teachers who benefit from disciplinary actions of hegemonic male students in their classrooms need to work to interrogate these experiences with all the students involved, to uncover the multiple meanings embodied in these acts in ways that empower all involved. When hegemonic males silence non-hegemonic males in a classroom in "support" of a teacher, that teacher can choose to accept that support and in so doing offer tacit approval of hegemonic acts of discipline and control, or that teacher can use this event as an entry point into an interrogation of the power relations that exist in this classroom. Both choices are risky, and in any case, teachers would be well served to reflect upon the works of Hytten and Warren (2003) and Thompson (2003) to make sure that they avoid reifying patriarchy as they attempt to address it.

Fixes and Renovations

As with any project that is limited in time and scope, I am left with the knowledge that more could have been done (and that what was done could have been improved) if there had been more time. If I spent another year to complete my studies, for instance, I

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could enlarge my sample population or conduct further rounds of interviews based upon the findings in Chapters 4 through 6. However, these "fixes and renovations" are not opportunities forever lost and offer some intriguing future research possibilities, and it is in this sense that I visit them now. One possible avenue for future research, and the one that seems most obvious to me, is the exploration of geographic location in the production of hegemonic masculinity in school, which would parallel Connell's (1998) call for an exploration of global masculinities. This study was conducted in a conservative and evangelical Christian area of the United States. In the 2004 Senatorial Election, Oklahoma convincingly elected a candidate who had called NBC's airing of the movie *Schindler's List* "irresponsible sexual behavior" and claimed that lesbianism was running rampant in elementary schools in the Southeastern part of the state. In terms of religious identity, Tulsa is the headquarters of many evangelical Christian ministries, including those of Oral Roberts, Kenneth Hagin, and until recently Robert Tilton. Oklahomans tend to take their conservative politics and their Christianity very seriously. It would be very interesting to repeat this project in more liberal or more secular environments to better understand some of the ways that ideology and religion have informed the masculine identity development of the men in this study.

I also found it interesting that the two respondents who identified their schools as being least violent and discriminatory in terms of masculine identity were the two who attended non-traditional schools. Darren, who attended a private evangelical Christian school, described males in his school as being able to move among groups most easily and violence as less of an issue than in public schools. Stan, who attended a restricted-enrollment public magnet school, also articulated a relatively open and equitable environment and a concurrent absence of violence in his school. It is possible that one

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element that contributed to the lack of violence in both schools was their emphasis on matters that did not involve athletics; in these two cases, religion and academics, respectively. Other settings, including secular private schools, alternative schools and home school were not represented among my participants. Research that focuses on masculine identity as it takes place in alternative school settings would be very worthwhile as a way to identify best practices and to help researchers and educators understand what can be done in public schools to minimize violence.

Another avenue of research that might extend and improve on this study would involve interviewing and observing other members of schools, including coaches, administrators, male and female teachers, and female students. The ways in which members of these groups see themselves and their relationship with masculine identity construction would provide an intriguing additional perspective on the ways in which the males in this study framed hegemonic masculinity and identity construction. For example, elite female students in the school were described as status symbols of hegemonic power by many of the men in this study. Exploring the extent to which females are aware of this while in school and as adults and the ways in which they resist or utilize this framing would be fascinating, as would learning about masculine identity formation through the eyes of faculty members.

As a pro-feminist, I would like to have pursued a more thorough analysis of the role of misogyny in the construction of hegemonic masculinity. Whitehead and Barrett (2001) and Connell (2000) have argued that the subordination and oppression of the feminine is always concurrent with the construction and performance of hegemonic masculinity. Even though relationships with females was not a focus of this study and I have only limited data about it, I was struck by the way the research participants

objectified women as status symbols, or as possessions that must be obtained in order to establish hegemonic masculine status and am left wondering how they would have responded to a female interviewer.

Finally, given more time, I would revisit my pilot study and conduct additional interviews with men who are less than a year removed from graduation. I would conduct this research with an eye to understanding the ways in which conceptions of identity positions change over time. The males in the pilot study identified a wider variety of identity positions for males than the adults did, and they were less likely to frame all males in terms of possession or lack of hegemonic attributes. Research in this vein might help me understand why males in school articulate as available a greater number of masculine identity positions. Causes could include the lack of a developed understanding of cultural forces that sort males articulated by research like Foley's (1990). A weaker understanding of the cultural and institutional power of hegemony would likely cause males to attach less significance to hegemonic masculinity as a standard of judgment. It is also possible that the narrative of radical individualism also described by Foley (1990) is more prominent among males in school, and overt statements that indicate inequity would run counter to the language of total individual agency and personal responsibility needed to maintain the discourse of radical individualism. Of course, there are also understandings that would only emerge during the research process.

Because of the qualitative nature of this dissertation, many of its results were unexpected and only emerged during the course of the research. Of these unexpected and emergent themes the most significant and surprising to me was what I have labeled reflective tactics, described above as the act by non-hegemonic males to reclaim agency when describing their school experiences. This switch from object to subject happened so

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quickly during interviews and was stated in such an off-hand manner, that it was not until I began reading the completed transcripts that I became aware of it. As I reflect upon this study, I feel that it is possible that the setting contributed to this move to reclaim agency, since the respondents were being asked to describe emasculating experiences in the presence of another male, which could be understood as yet another emasculating experience. I would like to explore this aspect further, perhaps by varying the form of data collection by substituting journaling for face-to-face interviews. Doing so might offer more space for males to interrogate their own masculinity than was afforded in one-on-one interviews. I would also be interested in learning more about reflection tactics and whether they tend to remain in place once uttered, and if subsequent reflections upon school incorporate this new sense of agency. Further research might explore the ways that this reframing through reflection tactics might affect male perceptions of their school experiences; in other words, once they identify themselves as having been in control, do memories of school become less oppressive? Finally, I would like to observe this phenomenon among non-hegemonic males who became teachers. While reflective tactics serve to empower the individual who is reflecting, they also emulate the narrative of radical individualism that permeates our schools and that renders many critiques of unjust and oppressive institutional policy intractable. Stopping one source of the narrative of radical individualism in schools might create space for a more general resistance to it. In any case, if a better understanding of the ways in which the narrative of radical individualism is maintained could be achieved, teacher education programs could work to find ways to effectively teach against it.

I was also caught off guard by the way in which non-hegemonic males were described as lacking an identity altogether. While research has indicated the tendency to

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feminize non-hegemonic males (Connell, 2000; Pollack 1999), the act and significance of erasing the identity of non-hegemonic males needs to be explored further. I am interested in gaining a better understanding of the literature that explores the similarities and differences between being labeled as feminine and as being seen as possessing no identity at all, and the consequences of each.

Two additional observations regarding this research merit discussion and further study, and they both are trade-offs of focusing intently on the formation of gender identity. First, while this paper is focused on masculinity and male identity development, other meaningful aspects of identity involving markers such as race and class did emerge during the course of this project. For instance, males who occupied low socio-economic positions in school tended to view hegemonic identity as both highly performative and based on wealth, while participants who occupied higher economic positions tended to downplay the effects of wealth on hegemony. Wealth, then, was used as a means of portraying males who occupied hegemonic positions as undeserving, of having inherited their status. Intriguing issues of race also emerged during the research project. African-Americans were portrayed as violent outsiders in school by both Guru and Hank, who in many ways occupied the far ends of the spectrum in terms of economic and hegemonic status. Also, Daniel, an elite, pro-institution male and the sole African-American respondent, described being denied access to a class, which runs counter to the cooperative relationship observed between elite males and the school. Daniel struggled to make sense of his rejection, in light of his position within the school. Clearly, It is impossible to separate gender from other identity markers such as class and gender, and projects such as this one must be written with awareness that the entire picture can never be captured.

Finally, I leave this project with a new understanding of just how difficult it can be to maintain a subjectivist epistemology during research. As I revisit the interview transcripts I notice that my respondents frame their experiences and the conceptions of school in binaries as they work to convey their experiences to their audience. On one level, then, these interviews tell a story of their forming their subjectivity right there in front of me, which speaks to Butler's (1990) assertion that gender is performed in the moment. In that sense these results are ambiguous. If I could somehow observe these men in school, however, I would gain no greater sense of their "essential" maleness. What I would observe would be another ephemeral performance of gender, and no more or less true than the storied recounted in their interviews. At the same time, I felt an obligation, as a graduate student writing a dissertation, to discover some truth in order to validate my research, Even though my claimed epistemological stance refuted the idea of value-free findings, I struggled with my desire to present my findings with certainty and authority and had to revisit my writing several times to temper my claims, In many ways, then, both the participants and the author of this research tended towards objectivist framings, which leads me to include here a final reminder that this writing is subjective and the claims made in this paper are local.

In the Mirror

I feel fortunate to have been able to choose a topic for this research that is reflective of a desire that I have held for years to understand many of my own experiences. Even as pressure mounted and deadlines loomed, my enthusiasm for the subject matter never flagged. One question worth addressing is why, then, did I find myself in many ways disappointed with the results of this study? The answer lies in my

own desires and the ways in which I am also a subject in this research project. While I had hoped that the males in this study (including myself) would have gained a greater understanding of the patriarchal and oppressive elements of hegemonic masculine identity after leaving school, and seeing this would work to resist it, it did not turn out to be the case. While males did seem to develop a greater awareness of hegemonic masculinity and patriarchy as adults, these males did not as a rule adopt pro-feminist attitudes in order to address this issue. Instead they continue to work to position themselves closer to the hegemonic ideal and reflect on their school experiences wishing they had drawn more strongly on patriarchy as a means of increasing their power while in school. This research compels me to examine and re-examine my actions and attitudes, to try to learn the extent to which my self-identifying as pro-feminist might be indicative of the tendency among educators to place themselves outside of oppressive institutional structures (Hytten & Warren, 2003; Thompson, 2003), in this case patriarchy. That I hoped to find a way outside of patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity now seems foolish; certainly my readings of Butler (1990) and Applebaum (2004) should have alerted me to the ways in which culture is inescapable. Also, my desire to frame this project as provoking social justice now seems at the end to have been more reflexive and less thoughtful. Addressing issues of race, Applebaum (2004) notes that one of the basic assumptions in the field of social justice has been that whites' resistance to racism is predicated on white individuals gaining an awareness of the hidden ways in which racism supports them. One way in which whites can use race to their advantage is through the process of centering whiteness and othering everything else. Both Guru and Hank, who in many ways occupied the far ends of the spectrum in terms of economic and hegemonic status, portrayed African-Americans as violent outsiders in school. Also, Daniel, an elite,

pro-institution male and the sole African-American respondent, described being denied

access to a class, which runs counter to the cooperative relationship observed between

elite males and the school. Though Daniel struggled to make sense of his rejection in

light of his position within the school, he did finally wonder if he was rejected because he

was not white.. Clearly, then, it is impossible to separate gender from other identity

markers such as class and gender, and projects such as this one must be written with

awareness that the entire picture can never be captured and that my own racism will

inform my work. Though this dissertation focused on gender issues rather than race, I

shared the belief articulated by Applebaum (2004) that awareness was the first step

towards resistance. One of my hopes for this project was that by examining past

experiences in school, the males in this study (including myself) might begin to see some

of the hidden ways in which hegemonic masculinity worked to privilege more hegemonic

students and oppress those who were less hegemonic. In so doing, I hoped we might

begin to work towards a rethinking of many of the patriarchal practices in schools.

Applebaum (2004) notes that sometimes acts intended to raise awareness of

complicity in hopes of fostering moral agency can actually work to "camouflage the very

complicity that needs to be exposed" (p. 61). In some ways this research has done just

that. Many of the males (again, including myself) who occupied non-hegemonic positions

in school were able to look back upon their experiences as adults and perceive the ways

in which cultural constructions of hegemonic masculinity worked against them. Instead

of adopting positions that worked to resist hegemonic practices, the males I interviewed

sought to position themselves closer to it. In other words, while the knowledge and

awareness of patriarchy was present among these males, the will to resist it was not.

Applebaum (2004) contends that it is only through "an appeal to the moral agency of

those privileged by hegemonic systems that critical consciousness of their positionality can arise" (p. 68). The appeal in this research was to reflect upon and re-examine school experiences. Because this research lacked a specific moral component, it is perhaps not surprising that acts of moral resistance did not emerge. What follows these findings is the necessary examination of my own morality and an interrogation of my own status as complicit in patriarchy. Perhaps this research served no better purpose than to remind me that any belief that my ideologies somehow position me as, to borrow from Thompson's (2003) work in race, a "good" male, needs to be interrogated continually lest it comes to rest on the patriarchy it claims to oppose.

Final Thoughts

Qualitative poststructuralist research frees the researcher from having to generate grand theory or single answers to research questions, allowing her to focus instead on hearing and understanding the local knowledge of research participants. The reflexive nature of this research clearly defines the limitations of claims of authority and truth (Foucault 1977, 1980; Weiner, 1984). In this dissertation, I am part of the context I am trying to understand, and I have from the beginning used this project as a means of examining my own life and roles as a husband, father, and member of society. When I began this project, I had hoped to learn about ways in which males transcended the unjust and limiting aspects of masculinity. What I found, instead, is that males who seek to work towards social justice are able to resist rather than escape hegemonic masculinity, while working in other ways, sometimes subconsciously, to maintain existing constructions. That we as males cannot escape patriarchy is a painful, yet worthwhile lesson, and prods

me to be vigilant in examining my own conduct in the various identity roles I undertake

as a male in society.

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Informed Consent Form

In order to gain a better understanding of males' experiences with and recollections of schooling, I am conducting interviews of adult males currently living in Oklahoma. I am interested in learning about your experiences, about what stood out, and what was meaningful to you. I am a doctoral student in the College of Education at Oklahoma State University, and this research is being conducted as part of my dissertation requirements at OSU.

For this research I am conducting individual interviews with adult participants. The data gathering will consist of an initial interview and a follow-up interview. The estimated time required for participation is 1 to 2 hours, divided evenly between the two interviews. During the interview, we will take notes and audiotape in order to help with later analysis. After notes are transcribed from the tape-recorded interviews, the tapes will be erased.

All information that you provide will be kept confidential. In the written research findings, you will be given a fictitious name to protect your identity. Data from this study, including interviews, audiotapes and student documents will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's home and computer files will be password protected. Upon completion of the study written documents will be shredded, audiotapes erased and computer files deleted. Results from this study may be presented at dissertations, professional meetings or in publications. Your anonymity, however, will be preserved.

If you choose to participate in the study, you are free to withdraw at any time. You may also decline to participate. You will not be penalized for withdrawing or declining.

For information on subjects' rights, contact Dr. Carol Olson, IRB Chair, Oklahoma State University, 415 Whitehurst Hall, 405-744-1676

If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact me or my advisor, Dr. Pamela Fry, directly. Please keep the attached copy of this letter for future reference.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and support.

Sincerely,

(405) 744-7605   Dr. Pamela Fry (405) 744-3373
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Please indicated whether or not you wish to participate in this project by checking a statement below and signing your name. Please sign both copies of this consent form. Keep one, and return one to me.

_____ I wish to participate in this research, have read the consent form, and agree to be audio taped.

_____ I wish to participate in this research have read the consent form, but I do not agree to be audio taped.

I hereby agree to participate in the above-described research. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

_____   _____
              (Signature)   (Date)

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1) **What is your age?**
2) **When did you graduate High School?**
3) **Describe your hometown.**
4) **Describe your family (money, jobs, education).**
5) **What comes to mind when you think of your time in school?**
6) **In general, was high school a positive or negative experience, and what made it this way for you?**
7) **Describe the different social groups in your school.**
8) **How would you describe your social status?**
9) **What activities (clubs, sports, social groups) were you affiliated with in school?**
10) **Describe the students who participated in these activities.**
11) **Describe how well you "fit" in with these groups.**
12) **To what extent was it possible to belong to different groups or activities at the same time?**
13) **To what extent did the schools help create or maintain these different groups?**
14) **Tell me about a time (event, experience, situation) in school in which you felt awkward or out of place.**
15) **How did you respond to these situations?**
15) **Think about the characteristics that would have made a boy most popular in the schools you attended. Describe these characteristics.**
16) **In what ways do you feel you did and /or did not measure up to these ideals?**
17) **Describe how you came to know that in your school you were in a certain social class and not in others?**
18) **Please describe for me situations in school where you wish you had acted more aggressively.**
19) **How did you respond to these situations?**
20) **Looking back, how do you wish you had responded?**
21) **How has your perception of your schooling changed from then to now?**
22) **How important were your high school experiences to you? What makes you feel this way?**
23) **What is your current job and what is your highest level of education?**

APPENDIX C

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER

Oklahoma State University
Institutional Review Board

Protocol Expires: 2/9/2005

Date: Tuesday, February 10, 2004　　　　IRB Application No ED0478

Proposal Title:　The Intersection of Morality and Masculinity

Principal
Investigator(s):

Mark Malaby　　　　　　　　　　Michael Gunzenhauser
280 Willard　　　　　　　　　　　204 Willard
Stillwater, OK 74078　　　　　　　Stillwater, OK 74078

Reviewed and
Processed as:　　Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved
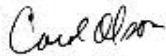

Dear PI :

Your IRB application referenced above has been approved for one calendar year. Please make note of the expiration date indicated above. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact me in 415 Whitehurst (phone; 405-744-5700, colson@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,

Carol Olson, Chair
Institutional Review Board

VITA

Mark Malaby

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: MASCULINE IDENTITY FORMATION DURING AND AFTER SCHOOL

Major Field: Education

Biographical:

    Personal Data: Born in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, On January 23, 1966, the son of Robert and Sherrilyn Malaby.

    Education: Graduated from Bartlesville High School in Bartlesville, Oklahoma in May 1984; received Bachelor of Science degree in Secondary Education in 1989. Received a Master of Science degree with a major in English Education from Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma in May, 1996. Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree with a major in Curriculum Studies and Social Foundations of Education at Oklahoma State University in July, 2005.

    Experience: Employed by Cascia Hall School in Tulsa Oklahoma as a high school English Teacher from 1990-2000. Employed by Oklahoma State University as a Graduate Associate 2001-2005.

    Professional Memberships: American Educational Studies Association, American Educational Research Association, American Association of Teaching and Curriculum.

Name: Mark Malaby   Date of Degree: July, 2005

Institution: Oklahoma State University   Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: MASCULINE IDENTITY FORMATION DURING
                         AND AFTER SCHOOL

Pages in Study: 177   Candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Major Field: Education

Scope and Method of Study: The purpose of this study was to explore masculine identity
       formation in school with a goal of learning more about the forms of tactical
       resistance adopted by males to the limiting aspects of hegemonic identity
       construction. Also explored were the meanings males gave to their resistances to
       hegemony both at the time they occurred and as they moved into adulthood.
       Participants in the study consisted of adult males who attended school in the
       Southwest United States. In-depth interviews were conducted with eleven males
       who occupied a variety of masculine and socio-economic positions while in
       school.

Findings and Conclusions: Hegemonic masculinity was found to be organized around
       two primary constructions framed by support or rejection of the institution   of
       school. Males who occupied non-hegemonic positions were described as lacking
       identity altogether. Violence was reported as a primary means by which males   in
       school are sorted, and violence was described as legitimized by the school   as   a
       means of maintaining institutional discipline. The forms of resistance adopted   by
       participants in this research while in school took on two primary forms   as   well.
       Some males utilized tactical resistance to masculine identity constructions   as   a
       means of gaining power, while others used tactics to work towards social justice.
       The non-hegemonic respondents used a third type of tactics during the research
       interviews that involved reframing themselves as stronger agents in school. As a
       result of this reframing non-hegemonic males positioned their student identities as
       more hegemonic.

Advisor's Approval:_____ Michael Gunzenhauser_____