Men Learning to be Primary School Teachers

Susan May Smedley

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Institute of Education, University of London

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made,
the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

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Abstract

Few men choose to become primary school teachers. Those who do move into a world often thought of as feminised and contend with a publicly-voiced rhetoric which simultaneously idealises and demonises them. It has not been the norm for women to research men. I am setting out from a different place as a woman and former primary school teacher writing about men doing women's work in what can be seen as a man's world.

The problem I am tackling is embedded in two questions. First, how do men student teachers negotiate the assumptions made about them as men and teachers of young children? Second, what theoretical perspectives are necessary for me to write about individual men students' complex relations with being a teacher?

I turn a spotlight on men student primary school teachers and, working with data from interviews with eleven men, shed light on them as gendered individuals challenged by the task of learning to be teachers. The text I construct enacts their and my moves to establish a voice amidst a complex criss-cross of discursive positions. Individual men have an evolving and often contradictory relation to teaching, which they seldom articulate. There should be space for them to reflect critically on their professional identities.

The ambivalence, emotional investment and paradox in the men's narratives cannot be understood without recourse to their and my developing understandings of masculinity and difference, learnt through language which can maintain or challenge inequalities and which interrelates with social and cultural contexts which have histories.

2

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

Part I INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1: Forming my questions

Setting out from a different place

> I suppose the male/female thing is another thing that would put men off. They would see it as a very feminine, very feminised thing primary teaching. ... Well, I think there should be much more of a balance of more male teachers and something that is also talked about is the feminisation of primary teaching. It's very much dominated by women. There is a separate culture which the boys then rebel against. (Dean)

What does learning to be a primary school teacher mean for Dean? Why does he talk about "the male/female thing" and about primary schooling as a "separate culture"? How does he come to talk about a need for more men teachers? These are my initial questions when I encounter Dean's talk, transcribed here. To tackle them, I am faced immediately with other knotty questions: how am I, as a woman and former primary school teacher and tutor in Initial Teacher Education (ITE), to write about Dean's perspective without pathologising or idealising men as teachers? What theories and approaches will help me to think critically and sensitively about Dean learning to be a primary school teacher?

By choosing to become a primary school teacher, a profession typically associated with women, Dean becomes an example of something; he is in the spotlight. His masculinity is noticed by him and by others in ways he may have not experienced before. What was once normalised into invisibility has been made visible.

Dean is thinking about his move into a world of work which he believes other men perceive as a woman's world and a feminised culture. Dichotomies between masculinity and femininity pervade popular rhetoric about men and women teachers. They work to position Dean as an outsider in a workplace "very much dominated by women", and as an ideal teacher necessary for "a balance", particularly for boys. What Dean says, is produced through this contradictory situation and his experience of change. Dean is working to form a coherent, new identity as a teacher in relation to official and popular accounts about primary school teachers. One such

account explains women's so-called domination of the teaching profession as the result of women's natural propensities and personal choices. From that perspective, it would be difficult to read Dean's career move other than as the story of a man trying to enter an unproblematically and naturally female culture, where men have no say. This produces Dean as an object of pity or admiration, an oversimplification which creates a polarity that hides subtlety, difference and wider power relations. Thinking about Dean's position as interrelated with social, cultural and historical contexts understood through language disrupts that account. Dean is enacting a justification of his identity as a teacher of young children in the light of his understanding of masculinity and of the culture of primary schooling. He must negotiate conflicting discourses about men as teachers of young children, for example assumptions that he is privileged in terms of career progression *and* assumptions that he will challenge masculine stereotypes. Thinking historically changes the story too. Just prior to 1870 and the expansion of elementary schooling in England there were roughly equal numbers of men and women teachers. The increasing number of women who became teachers in the late 19th century was a far from simply natural move. Women's employment as teachers was controlled and regulated by the policies of governments intent on a cheap, readily-available teaching-force. Teaching young children is not and has not been always or straightforwardly women's domain. Men's and women's relation to teaching as work has a history which has implications for how contemporary men's relation to primary school teaching might be understood.

Dean (a pseudonym) is one of eleven men student primary school teachers I interviewed. He reflects on his identity as a man student primary school teacher, something which he has probably had few other opportunities to do. And during the course of this research my gendered professional identity has been thrown into sharp relief too. Dean's understanding of his move into the culture of primary school teaching is constituted by, and works to maintain and to challenge, assumptions about masculinity, femininity and teacherliness, worked out through language. There is a reciprocity between *my* interests, identity and reading of Dean's narrative, and *his* reading of his professional identity, my purposes and the interview context. Thinking about this short excerpt from one of my research

interviews takes me straight to what will be central themes in this thesis: difference, identity, language, and contemporary, historical and autobiographical contexts.

Men student primary school teachers have been ignored, homogenised and objectified as heroes, wimps or villains. It is all too easy for women to react to what seem to be commonalities among men teachers of young children. I am aware of the ease with which a light-hearted derision of men's incompetence emerges or a resigned acceptance of men's advantages. And it is not a response restricted to women. A brief anecdote illustrates a problem that has bothered me for a long time. I attended a seminar in which a woman presented a paper about men early-years teachers. The speaker shared data from her interviews with the men. The academics who made up the audience, women and men, laughed, together and in the same places. The data were not literally funny. The laughter worked to acknowledge the objectification of the men and to create a shared bond amongst those who became spectators of the less ordinary: men who teach young children, and a woman researching men. There were no dire consequences and the paper was taken seriously. But that fleeting response of laughter acts as a warning, showing how readily we can resort to a 'a free-masonry' (Carter, cited in Miller, 1986, p. 249) which can gloss over individual difference, perhaps conceal awkwardness and bolster alliances.

It is more usual in the world of work for masculinity to operate as a reference point to which women will be compared. The axis shifts in the primary classroom. To say that men and women swap places would miss the complexity completely. As teachers of young children, men are contenders, sometimes very successful ones, in a woman's culture; they are not always already players in the classroom. Other sub-texts, such as men as potential headteachers, men as potential paedophiles, criss-cross the men's place in the classroom. And then there is women's particular relation to work, professionalism and power which complicates things still further:

> They [women] have learned to see female power as men have
> seen it: as subversive, dangerous, even monstrous, and they

have found that what began as a retreat into domesticity, into the control of space and time and sustenance in the home, becomes a rationale for their exclusion from the world outside and the world of men. (Miller, 1986, p. 251)

Primary school teaching has long occupied an ambiguous position between the worlds of professionalism and work, on the one hand, and domesticity and home, on the other. Men who choose to become primary school teachers join a domain of work which is women's in problematic ways, and is a domain contextualised within a wider world which is men's, also, I think, problematically.

My decision to focus on men raises questions. Contradictions are inscribed in my striving for a coherent professional identity as a primary school teacher, an ITE tutor and a woman writing about men. I am aware that some feminists may disapprove of my focus on men, may even be hostile, seeing a feminist perspective as incompatible with researching men. Some men may feel threatened by the idea of my study, others may welcome its focus, seeing it as 'men's turn now'. Women writing about men is not a new phenomenon, but still brings with it a sense of the tables being turned. I have experienced ambivalence as a woman researching men. This is not simply the hesitation of one gender researching another, for the opposite - men researching women - has happened for some time and does not seem to have caused self-doubt for men. Research has traditionally focused on men's questions about women.

Here, the boot is on the other foot though that analogy cannot convey the contradictions I observe and experience. The men I spoke to are outsiders: part of a numerical minority, students, inexperienced, many are young, few come from professional backgrounds; they are my research objects, and popular assumptions question their atypical career choice, their general ability and their sexuality. I am an insider: a tutor, have worked for many years as a primary school teacher, have set the research agenda, am older than many of the men, am middle class, and coincide with a traditional image of 'primary school teacher'. On the other hand, the men are insiders: in demand as teachers, potentially have career advantages, know they are of interest, and the mature men have publicly-valued experience in the world of work. And, I am an outsider: a woman teacher, as such, associated with the failures of feminisation, interested in gender, a

topic often derided. In the context of a woman writing about men student primary school teachers there is no obvious, fixed insider and outsider, norm and other.

My position as a woman writing about men student primary school teachers adds to an already complex social relation between researcher and researched. Men student teachers are struggling to be 'not women' (in order to be accepted as 'real' men) and working to emulate and ally with women (to be accepted into the culture of primary school teachers). The data I have will show the men's contradictory positions as objects of both suspicion and awe.

Women are practised in their awareness of gender in ways that many men are not. It is women who are seen, by both men and women, in relation to men; women who are praised for being as good as men. It has been men who give or withhold permission, or validate what counts as knowledge. It is seldom necessary for men to consider the consequences of their gender. My focus on men learning to become primary school teachers takes me to a place where I can turn the spotlight on gender and men. Men student primary school teachers are in a numerical minority in what is perceived as a woman's culture; coupled with the context of the research interview, they are in a place where they will notice their masculinity too. The men are on the margins. They are defined as a group, as not women. They have a particular relation with the culture they are learning to participate in and contribute to shaping, as they struggle to construct their professional identities.

In deciding to write about men student primary school teachers, I am setting out from a different place. A place where, at first glance, women are the norm and men are not, where men can learn to see themselves as gendered and I can learn to see them in new ways too. And as a woman researching men I set out from a different place too, a place where another norm is subverted. This double-edged disruption has much to teach me about perspectives, hierarchies, entitlement and the defining and maintaining of cultures.

Dilemmas

The problem I am tackling is embedded in two related questions. First, how do men student teachers negotiate the assumptions made about them as

11

men and teachers of young children? I developed an awareness of the assumptions made about men as teachers of young children alongside an established interest in women primary school teachers' professional identities. Incidental comments and observations fed into my thinking. One man student had been told by a five-year-old pupil, 'Miss, you're a man.' Another wrote in his school experience review, 'I've given up trying to get the children to call me Mister.' I began to notice and to think about gender, men and learning to be a student primary school teacher. For me, work and research have been interrelated.

As teachers of young children, men experience contradiction and paradox. The dilemmas they face in constructing professional identities are produced through their understandings of masculinity, which change and develop over time, in different contexts and in relation to assumptions about men as workers and as authority-figures, fatherhood, families, children and the purposes of state schooling.

Men are invested with the potential to be successful teachers and headteachers, the salvation of state schooling in the face of feminisation and the soft child-centredness of schooling by women; men are natural, ideal teachers by dint of their intellect, professionalism, authority and rigour. This scenario equates the feminine with that which is lacking and the masculine with that which is desirable. But being a man and a teacher of young children signifies in starkly contradictory ways. Simultaneously, men are unsuited to teaching because it is work naturally suited to women's maternalism, patience, tolerance and gentleness. Myths of heterosexual masculinity bestow men with confidence, ambition and institutional advantage *and* awkwardness, discomfort and the embarrassment of privilege. Men student teachers are uneasy in the face of these assumptions and the feminist gaze. I am part of their dilemma and they are part of mine. The contradictions continue. Men teachers will work as upholders of middle-class values, irrespective of their own social class or that of their pupils. Men are 'naturally' better with boys for being dynamic, heterosexual father-figures, and, in parallel opposition, men teachers are a danger to boys for being potentially effeminate or homosexual, a danger to boys and girls as potentially predatory paedophiles. In sum, men teachers are idealised as 'real men', and demonised for *not* being 'real men'. They are constituted as ideal teachers *and* as objects of ridicule, suspicion and

12

terror.

The concept of masculinity is continually negotiated by individuals in institutions such as schools and universities. There is a popular nostalgia for bygone images of men teachers in public independent schools: scholars, men in control, physically active, upholders of traditional masculine values. Yet a contemporary reflection on the history of public independent schooling might well disapprove of some men teachers' homo-erotic fantasies about their boy pupils and the harsh physical punishments meted out to them. The introduction of state schooling in 1870 in England and the demand for more schoolteachers resulted in the employment of significantly cheaper women teachers. Hand-in-hand with that state-driven and economic need came discourses which enact and seem to explain a natural difference in women's and men's relation to being a teacher.

My second question is this: what theoretical perspectives are necessary for me to write about individual men students' complex relations with being teachers? The problem I am faced with is working out a theoretical approach that can accommodate individual difference, ambivalence and contradiction enacted in language, that can take account of the particularity and history of primary school culture and teaching as work, and that allows me to acknowledge my involvement as integral to the research process. If I am to theorise the detail of individual men's understanding and their developing and changing, contextualised sense of self as primary school teachers, then I will need to construct an approach that is social, cultural, historical and autobiographical, and that anchors individuals in contexts where they play out their intentions and understandings through language.

The answers to my questions about men's relation to primary school teaching will be full of twists and turns: a woman writing about men doing women's work in a man's world. For while men student teachers individually may grapple with negative assumptions about their sexuality, as men they are actively recruited and assumed to be effective teachers, especially for boys. In addition, a historical legacy positions men comfortably as professionals within primary state education, natural teachers by dint of their intellect and authority. And although schools are

seen, popularly and negatively, as feminised, schools as state institutions are seen as masculinised. There has always been a 'make-do-and-mend' approach to the state education of young children in this country, with its roots in the patchy and basic schooling offered to working-class children in the late 19th century. This sits uneasily with the current government's emphasis on the importance of schooling and of teachers, and official accounts of what is involved in becoming a teacher.

Chapter 2: The backdrop

Persistent interests and shifting terrain

This study has evolved from my personal and professional concerns. I have worked for 20 years in London as a primary school teacher and as a tutor in ITE. Throughout that time, I have pursued my interests in gender and teachers' professionalism and thought about the assumptions, paradoxes and challenges that beginning teachers face. Now, I want to examine those less tangible but I think important aspects of the process of becoming a primary school teacher and ask how 'student primary school teacher' is understood. To help me to problematise an otherwise familiar question I began thinking about what happens if the student teacher happens to be a man. What is involved when men students go about constructing their professional identities as teachers of young children? To explore those questions I interviewed eleven men student primary school teachers at the institution in Outer London where I worked in the mid-1990s, asking them about their career choice and their understanding of what being a teacher of young children entails.

The terrain has shifted for me since then. I am now the mother of a son and have taken a break from full-time, paid employment to look after him. My father, who spent his working-life as a secondary school teacher, has died. I point out my position as a teacher, mother and daughter, not to categorise myself, but to allude to my shifting perspectives in a changing context. What I still choose to refer to, at times, as Initial Teacher *Education*, is officially Initial Teacher *Training*. In the worlds of primary schooling and ITE the official language is increasingly of targets, standards and efficiency, despite a change of government from Conservative to Labour in 1997. Professional Standards now set out what trainee teachers must know, understand and be able to do to gain Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). Providers of Initial Teacher Training (ITT) must comply with Requirements which set out what they must do (TTA, 2002a). Men teachers are in demand: in 2003 the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) launched a 'nationwide 'man hunt' to find men who might take up primary school teaching' (TTA , 2003a). And men are objects of suspicion, as the title of this newspaper article shows: 'A male teacher risks being branded a big girl's blouse or a kiddy-fiddler' ' (Odone, 2003). In a decade when a male

school caretaker abducted, sexually abused and murdered two young girls, issues of male sexuality, being a man and a teacher of young children signify in complex, deeply emotional and contradictory ways. Men, who in 2003 constituted 37% of headteachers, 24.6% of deputies and 11.9% of classteachers in nursery and primary schools in England (DfES, 2005, see Appendix 1, p. 254) have become a visible minority.

These changes tie in with wider social, economic, cultural and political developments. In the academic world, second-wave feminism, which had forced gender issues and women into the limelight, prepared the ground for *men* to be noticed as gendered beings. In the popular press, feminism, feminisation and women (working-women, single mothers and women teachers) have been blamed for a crisis in masculinity, boys' underachievement and 'the collapse of the traditional family' (Doughty, 2004, p. 39). In the broadsheets, journalists have drawn attention to issues of equality in changing patterns of employment. In 2003, for the first time, more women than men became barristers (Berlins, 2004, p. 16), but an 'old boys' network' continues to exclude women from the culture of professional working life (Frith, 2004, p. 12). A decline in manufacturing industries in England has changed working-class boys' expectations of employment. Politicians look to education to provide the skilled, adaptable workforce which will enable the nation to compete in a globalised market, in a world which has been changed by shocking terrorist attacks, the horrors of war and of natural disasters.

My interest in student teachers' struggles for their professional identities persists, but the ways teachers, men and masculinity can be and are understood are not fixed but constantly changing: parameters have shifted during the course of this research.

Starting points
This study, a coming-together of my long-established preoccupation with primary school teachers, gender and identity, is underpinned by my perspective on the contemporary, changing social and academic world in which I play a part, and by history. My purposes are driven by personal and professional concerns. How do men learn an 'I' that is 'student primary school teacher'. What stories seem easy for them to tell? What are their frames of understanding? How do they negotiate the contradictions they

16

encounter and the ambiguities they feel? My research is inward-looking, rooted in contexts within which I work and live. And it is outward-looking, with clear intentions to contribute to theoretical understandings and pedagogical approaches. It is about theorising experiences and developing understanding, with a view to constructing new ways of thinking about and working with individuals who are learning to become teachers.

I start from an understanding that it is through language that individuals come to know themselves and enact their relations with others and their social worlds. Language is not simply representative. I take language to be shot through with individual intentions, anchored in specific social and cultural contexts, which have histories. Individuals learn gender through ongoing interactions in localities such as school, university and the family. Identity does not pre-exist, awaiting expression. It follows that an individual's gendered identity is never finally established, not fixed once-and-for-all. On the contrary, gendered identities are constantly produced and maintained, and can change over time and in different settings. Individuals work to construct coherent identities, in relation to complex networks of sometimes opposing discourses. Men student teachers, for example, are faced with discourses about masculinity which simultaneously position them as ideal *and* unnatural teachers. Individuals can experience feelings of anxiety and conflict, as well as feelings of satisfaction and comfort. Discourses shape and produce, rather than reveal or express, individual subjectivities. Discourses about masculinity and teachers are often contradictory, and carry traditions, power relations, values, expectations, fears and desires.

What is at stake? Outcomes are dependent on how problems are framed and by whom, in whose interests. I am not about to present an argument for or against men teachers, which topical rhetoric might push me towards doing. I return to my two central questions about men student primary school teachers. How do men student teachers negotiate the assumptions made about them as men and teachers of young children? What theoretical perspectives are necessary for me to write about individual men students' complex relations with being a teacher? Other questions follow: who can be a primary school teacher? Who can tell whose stories? Who belongs and who must ask to belong? How does gender work to produce a

complicated intersection of inclusions and exclusions? There are pedagogical implications about working with difference, and helping beginning teachers notice and challenge limiting accounts of what it means to be a teacher. My task is to think and write about the students I have talked with as individuals with specific gendered identities, as men who, at a certain point in their lives, in the 1990s, were learning to be teachers in an institution which is itself part of a wider community.

Part II READING ABOUT MEN TEACHERS

At the outset of this study in the mid-1990s little had been written about men as student teachers or teachers of young children in a contemporary context. As a research topic men teachers were just beginning to be noticed in England. For example, Christine Skelton's research into men teachers, careers and masculinities (Skelton,1991, 1994). Men's gender was not always problematised, as in Mary-Lyn Jones's study based on research in a Welsh Local Education Authority (M. Jones, 1990) and John Johnston, Eamonn McKeown and Alex McEwen's research in Northern Ireland (Johnston *et al.*, 1999). Elsewhere, in the 1980s and 1990s research into men teachers and men childcare workers was starting to be published, for example, in the USA (Allan, 1993), Australia (Bailey, 1983), Canada (Coulter and McNay, 1993) and in Scandinavia (Jensen, 1996).

From my perspective in England, that move from absence to presence in the literature can be partly understood as a chronological shift from the invisibility to the visibility of men as gendered, a movement which has been taking place alongside my own research, and of which my research is a part. (See Appendix 2, p. 255, for a grid mapping out this shift, as background to Chapters 3 and 4. The categories and timings are not intended to be treated rigidly.). Women writing from a feminist perspective in the 1970s and 1980s highlighted gender in accounts of women teachers' professional lives (see Griffin and Lees, 1997). At that time, gender meant women, not men. The study of men and masculinities was made possible by the development of post-second wave feminist thinking. However, by no means all of the attention paid to men teachers in recent years has considered gender or been pro-feminist. Indeed some, for example psychotherapist Steven Biddulph's (Biddulph, 1997), in spite of the author's claims, has been hostile to it .

Men primary school students and teachers have often not attracted notice or have been understood through conventional stereotypes. Popular psychology, for example, which takes masculinity to be a set of fixed personality traits, makes men teachers into saviours of boy pupils' so-called 'real' masculinity. Such an approach will not help me to explain the uncertainty expressed in comments like this one from one of the students in my data, Max:

I don't really know how I'm supposed to be as a male. ... We don't get separate lessons because we're men. I don't know, it's very difficult. (Max)

My reading of the literature, and in many cases it is rereadings of texts I first read to explore questions about gender and *women* teachers, is made now with specific new questions in mind: how are men teachers constructed in these accounts? What understanding of 'man student primary school teacher' might a reader produce? I find that men student primary school teachers have been made invisible, treated as an undifferentiated group, labelled negatively *and* positively as not-women, and constructed as victims whose 'natural' masculinity is being repressed by women.

Chapter 3: Men as teachers in the literature: some problems

The invisibility of men teachers

Men teachers are only mentioned in passing in research into primary school teaching written by men in the 1970s in England (R. King, 1978) and by women (Lightfoot, 1976; Yardley, 1971). Those writers related gender to women teachers' specific roles and personality traits. Three detailed observations of teachers' working lives, although written by men, do not shed light on my questions about men teachers' experiences. A. S. Neill wrote about his teaching experiences at the progressive school, Summerhill (Neill, 1944). Michael Armstrong wrote a diary of observations of a primary school class taught by a male teacher, Stephen Rowland (Armstrong, 1980), and Andrew Pollard wrote a sociological study of primary school life (Pollard, 1985). None of these men draws attention to himself as a man or to men teachers.

Jonny Zucker and David Parker, newly-qualified primary school teachers in the 1990s, do not consider gender in their light-hearted book about teacher training and teaching (Zucker and Parker, 1999). This may not be surprising given that, even then, men were generally not obliged to think about gender in the ways that women were. The authors interview four 'leading figures in the educational world' of that time (*ibid.,* Introduction, no page number): Tim Brighouse (Chief Education Officer for Birmingham Local Education Authority), Doug McAvoy (General Secretary of the National Union of Teachers), Chris Woodhead (Chief Inspector at Ofsted) and Nigel de Gruchy (General Secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers) - all men. In spite of popular assumptions of feminisation, primary state education can be seen as a man's world, but this is unsaid and leaves my questions unasked and unanswered. How might this hierarchy of men look to men student teachers? Would it confirm their career choice and inspire ambition or pass unnoticed?

Many women writers, feminists, sociologists and practitioners who reflect on gender and teachers focus on the working lives of women (Delamont 1987; Joyce, 1987; Weiler 1988; Biklen, 1995; Acker, 1999; Duncan, 2002). Some trace the history of women's experiences as teachers; men teachers are not their particular focus (Widdowson, 1980, 1986; Purvis, 1981, 1995; Miller, 1996; Edwards, 2001). Anti-sexist and

gender awareness work in teacher training, and research into inequalities experienced by women students and girl pupils, written by women in the late 1980s and early 1990s, barely mentions men (Mardle and Walker,1980; Spender and Sarah, 1982; Everley, 1985; Skelton, 1987; Leonard, 1989; Skelton and Hanson, 1989; Thompson, 1989; Coffey and Acker 1991; Sikes, 1991).

Men teachers do feature in studies of women teachers' careers by feminists, sociologists and teachers (Aspinwall and Drummond,1989; Skelton, 1989; Evetts, 1990; Acker, 1992). A persistent theme in the literature is that men primary school teachers are at an advantage in terms of career progression. Statistics show that between 1997 and 2003 the number of men becoming headteachers in Nursery and Primary Schools has fallen (DfES, 2005, see Appendix 1, p. 254). However, although there are fewer men than women headteachers of Nursery and Primary schools, those men headteachers represent a higher *proportion* of all men teachers (DfES, 2005, see Appendix 3, p. 256). Of 26,200 men teachers in 2003, 6,200 are headteachers. Of 141,000 women teachers 10,600 are headteachers. Approximating from the statistics, one in four men teachers is a headteacher and one in thirteen women teachers is a headteacher.

Mary-Lyn Jones's research in Wales looked into men and women teachers' attitudes to promotion, but Jones does not question assumptions relating to masculinity (M. Jones, 1990). Writing in the USA in the 1970s, Dan Lortie concludes that men elementary teachers have little interest in their job and hope to be principals in five years time (Lortie, 1975, see pp. 94-95). There is some evidence that men plan their teaching careers strategically in ways that few women seem to (Powney *et al.*, 2003). The concept of career is shaped by a male-oriented model of continuous upward movement. There are arguments for a different conceptualising of career itself (Biklen, 1985) in recognition of the multiple ways it is experienced by women and by men. None of these studies examines how men make their decisions to enter teaching, nor how the men themselves work with assumptions that they will be advantaged simply for being men. These are the areas I want to address.

R. J. Campbell, an empirical researcher working in the field of primary teaching (Campbell, 1996; Campbell and Neill, 1994) does not acknowledge the gendered contradictions inherent in primary school

teachers' work in his overview of educational reform and primary teachers' work (Campbell, 1996). No mention is made of men teachers apart from a valid point about the need to change the distribution of power in primary schools, where often the headteacher is male and most of the rest of the staff female. I recognise Campbell's description of the burdensome teaching-practice files student teachers must keep. He describes primary school culture as one in which overwork and conscientiousness are valued, creating a condescending caricature: the virtuous teacher is one who has all her lesson-forecasts prepared and who 'changes her displays almost as frequently as her underwear' (*ibid.,* p. 19). Campbell goes on to refer to earlier research in which he was involved, which identified 'overconscientious' and 'sane' teachers (Evans, Campbell, Neill and Packwood, 1994, cited in Campbell, 1996, p. 20). Campbell presents these two positions as ones which teachers may need to choose between. The two teachers mentioned are women, though Campbell does not dwell on this as significant. Tricia 'gives in' to the demands of a heavy workload; Christine 'decided to limit her impulse to overwork' (Campbell, 1996, pp. 20-21). Campbell makes an important point about the need to make teaching a manageable task. What I am interested in here, though, is the gendered assumption that seems to underpin Campbell's comments: that women have a natural tendency to work too hard and one aspect of a feminine culture is a resigned acceptance of overwork. Women teachers' professional identities are oversimplified and detached from the social contexts in which they are formed. Men teachers are not subject to scrutiny here, but what if they had been? Perhaps *their* relation to the feminised culture described, would be understood through discourses of acceptable masculine rebelliousness, just as in the early 20th century, men student teachers' unruly behaviour was taken for granted as masculine common sense.

Teaching as work signifies through different discourses for women and for men. The *Plowden Report* of 1967 provides an official version of that difference: women are natural teachers, whereas the 97 men amongst 33,000 teachers are praised for being brave (Department of Education and Science, The *Plowden Report,* 1967, cited in H. Burgess, 1989, p. 85). The complexity of women's position as teachers of young children has been noted, though not resolved. There have been critical responses to popular

discourses which construct women teachers as 'mothers', not intellectual workers: natural, caring teachers with enduring commitment by dint of the biological potential of 'woman' and heterosexual femininity (Steedman, 1985; Burgess and Carter, 1992; Sikes,1997). Teaching, caring and women's work have been researched widely (Grumet, 1988; Nias, 1981, 1989; Noddings, 1991, 1992; Acker, 1995; Vogt, 2002). Madeleine R. Grumet and Nell Noddings in particular celebrate qualities traditionally associated with femininity, though the lower status of care and nurture, constructed in opposition to traditional masculine qualities of competitiveness and leadership, for example, remains (Grumet, 1988; Noddings, 1991, 1992). Jennifer Nias acknowledges that 'men become just as attached to their pupils as women do' (Nias, 1981, p. 4), but her purpose was not to investigate men teachers' understanding or interpretation of that attachment in the primary classroom.

Assumptions that women teachers are 'natural' carers of children in a quasi-domestic world, are set in opposition to assumptions that men are powerful figures of discipline and leaders in a public sphere of work. One orthodoxy identified in the literature equates 'charismatic leadership' with men (Whitehead, 2002, p. 129) and associates leadership with 'macho' masculinity (Coleman, 2003) or a heroic management style (Collinson and Hearn, 2000). Men teachers' relation with discourses of leadership is not always problematised (see, for example, Hayes and Hegarty, 2002; Crawford, 2004) and this can perpetuate the generalisation that men are natural leaders, *and* perpetuate a generalisation that women's view of men teachers is that they are both culpable and unfairly advantaged, simply for being men. That sort of reading is too rough and ready and sets up fixed dichotomies. In contrast, I will look closely at the meanings and assertions behind the men's talk and reflect on the contexts and purposes that produce that talk. Terry, a student teacher I interviewed, insists he is confident about his ability to work with children. He makes this assertion in the face of colliding discourses which polarise femininity and masculinity, separating him from care and commitment on the one hand, and allying him with 'normal' authoritative detachment on the other.

Writing men as victims
Bestselling author, Australian psychotherapist Steve Biddulph, has written

two books, *Raising Boys* (1994) and *Manhood* (1997), which, alongside others in the men's movement genre, have had an impact on popular discourses about gender (Kimmel, 1995; Mills, 1997, 2003). The publication of *Iron John: A Book About Men*, written in 1990 by Robert Bly, launched the men's movement in America, and was followed by numerous others (see Mills, 2003). The men's movement is in part a reaction to feminist challenges to the privileged position of heterosexual masculinity. One of the arguments of the men's movement is that boys and men have been alienated and victimised and that this has been brought about by women, specifically feminists, and the feminisation of schooling. These ideas are underpinned by a view of gender as unchanging, inbuilt and universal, characteristic of an essential self. If the rhetoric asserts that boys are victims of feminisation, then women teachers become the problem and men teachers the solution. This argument, based on a fixed binary opposition between men and women, does not help to explain my data and the men student teachers' negotiation of a woman's world of work, given, in addition, a professional responsibility to take equal opportunities issues seriously.

Biddulph describes boys and men as living in 'an anti-male era' (Biddulph, 1997, p. 61). He argues that aggression on the part of men derives from being misunderstood by women (Biddulph, 1994). Biddulph insists that mothers should have a limited role in parenting sons who are at present 'underfathered' (*ibid.*, p. 144) and he calls for more men teachers for boys. Biddulph is not concerned with the kinds of contradictions and challenges that my data will show men student teachers face.

Biddulph makes assumptions about men's attitudes to career progression: 'Today many male teachers can be more interested in the career track than the genuine needs of children.' (*ibid.*, p. 147). Biddulph's generalisations mask the ambivalence about career progression, the commitment to teaching and the numerous concerns that the men I interview express. His proposal that men teachers need training in how to meet boys' 'father-hunger' (*loc. cit.*) is based on assumptions about men's inability to demonstrate care. My data will show that men's inability may not be the issue: narrow definitions of masculinity, which include assumptions about the potential for child abuse, make the men teachers' articulation and

practical expression of care for young children difficult.

In spite of Biddulph's negativity about women's abilities, feminism and feminisation, he claims that his books are not anti-women. He insists that 'boys are hurting too' (Biddulph, 1997, p. vi). Biddulph criticises feminism for assuming that men are 'having a good time!' (Biddulph, 1994, p. 23). He has a point: not all men live out an aggressive and competitive version of heterosexual masculinity (Connell, 1997a). But Biddulph constructs all men as victims and does not consider the shifting power relations between men and women and amongst men, which take place in specific contexts. He does not take account of the multiplicity of men's and women's experiences according to social class, cultural background, sexuality. His argument encourages men and boys to look inwards and to see themselves as disadvantaged. This detracts from moves to challenge inequality, a task in which more men teachers could participate (see Mills, 2000).

I do not share Biddulph's perspective, but I do acknowledge that boys and men are facing social and economic change, such as shifts in employment opportunities and security, which have been tracked by numerous academics (Kenway, 1995; Salisbury and Jackson, 1996; Beynon, 2002; Haywood and Mac An Ghaill, 2003). Biddulph is not concerned with differences between men; he overlooks the diversity of perspectives and experiences that my data will illustrate. In an interview with a journalist writing for *The Times*, Biddulph claims that some of the negativity and generalisations in his book, *Manhood*, are there because 'you have to get people's attention somehow' (Biddulph, quoted in Gornall, 2004). But Biddulph's position is underpinned by generalisations and an acceptance of 'an inbuilt gender difference' (Biddulph, 1997, p. 41), which he sees as the product of hormonal and genetic differences (*ibid.*, p. 62).

Using biology to explain men's lives

Biological explanations of gender difference characterise much of the publicly-expressed, popular rhetoric about men. Their common-sense stance assumes masculinity and femininity are innate, coherent and neat categories (Kimmel, 2000). 'Natural' differences between men and women are based on a norm of heterosexuality (Epstein and Johnson, 1994). Biological essentialism, which encompasses gender difference based on

brain structure and function, and the role of testosterone, has been criticised by academics (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998; Sapolsky, 2000; Skelton, 2001a). Anne and Bill Moir, in their book *Why Men Don't Iron,* use biology and psychology to argue that men and women have different brain structures which determine different responses and behaviours (Moir and Moir, 1998). The move they make, one that I question, is from a biological difference between men and women, to a cultural difference determining how all men and women can and should lead their lives. Authoritative claims that sex differences can be explained by science seem reassuring as they may be used to reinforce a status quo. This is problematic. I want to resist assumptions that are inscribed in generalised understandings of men and women and the ways difference is interpreted and used. Biological differences between men and women are not as categorical as they might seem, a point argued persuasively by Bronwyn Davies, in her research into preschool children and gender (Davies, 1989). Treating masculinity as a solely biological, fixed category which determines men's thinking, behaviour, and, more often than not, superiority to women, will not help me to think about the complexity and contradictions in the men's developing understanding of masculinity in the new context of being student primary school teachers.

A particular difficulty is that biological arguments can be used to justify inequalities and work against change. Discourses which rest on assumptions that boys are unruly and men are authority figures give rise to and seem to explain calls for men teachers to control boys' disruptive behaviour. Initiatives to counter boys' underachievement involve bringing men into school, for example, to talk about their jobs and to act as reading role models for boys (Weir, 2004, p. 10). The 'Reading Champions' scheme, which ran for the first time in 2000, honours men and boys who have inspired other men and boys to enjoy reading. In 2003, England football captain David Beckham congratulated the Reading Champions via a pre-recorded film, wishing them luck in getting more boys reading (DfES Press Notice, 2003). Such moves are underscored by essentialist, biological theories which assert that men, simply by being men, will be able to influence and motivate boys in ways that women teachers cannot, perhaps even must not. These arguments undermine women teachers and silence girls' needs, concerns which feminist and pro-feminist

27

academics have expressed (Skelton, 2001a; Mills, 2003). Diana Leonard, a feminist and sociologist in women's studies, cautiously welcomes pro-feminist men's research in masculinity, but is highly critical of reactionary, anti-feminist perspectives, such as those of the men's movement, which are depoliticising (Leonard, 2001, see pp. 188-189). Biological theories detract attention from the learning and change that human beings are capable of; this oversimplifies gender and reinvents, but does not disturb, the normalising of heterosexual masculinity and does not challenge inequality.

Sex-role theories propose that individual men and women learn masculinity and femininity passively through socialisation. For instance, in the 1980s a case study of preservice elementary teachers in the USA described a 'socializing process' which left men as oppressed as women (Goodman, 1987, see p. 37). The three portrayals of men teachers Jesse Goodman constructs from his data demonstrate the different ways the men relate to feminist concerns, but Goodman does not acknowledge the men's agency as they construct their professional identities. Sex-role theories cannot account for an individual's resistance to specific versions of masculinity or femininity, nor for men and women learning about gender through their interactions with both men and women. Sex-role theories have been comprehensively criticised for polarising men and women and rendering sexuality, social class and ethnicity invisible (Carrigan *et al.*, 1987; Connell, 1995; Salisbury and Jackson, 1996; Redman and Mac An Ghaill, 1997; Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2003).

The rhetoric of the men's movement, and sex-role and socialisation theories are echoed in Kevan Bleach's action research on secondary-school boys' underachievement, which makes calls for more men primary school teachers (Bleach, 1998). He claims that women teachers are not to blame for boys' poor performance and that not all men teachers would make good role models. In spite of these caveats Bleach's argument remains embedded in the very perspective he claims to reject. He laments the virtual absence of men from primary schools, as even 'able women teachers' will not all be able to relate adequately to boys (*ibid.*, pp. 9-10). He asserts that boys lack male role models at home as more women are instigating divorces and 'relegating the divorced father to the role of occasional caller and playfellow' (*ibid.*, p. 9). Bleach polarises men and

women, positions boys and men as victims of women's successes and interests, and men teachers as the solution. He suggests teachers work in boy-friendly ways, but this detracts from the possibility of questioning and challenging fixed masculine norms. Studies, such as Bleach's, (Noble, 1998, is another example) which move, perhaps too hastily, to practical suggestions, are understandable in their motivation, but not what I am looking for.

Difference as different categories

Academics in Canada and the USA have written about men teachers of young children. One study, by Kelvin Seifert, an educational psychologist, examines what inhibits men from teaching young children, highlighting differences between women's and men's early childhood biographies (Seifert, 1988). According to Seifert, gender roles learnt in childhood focus on care and parenthood for girls, and for boys on power and achievement. But learning gender is an ongoing process and is more subtle and less fixed than Seifert acknowledges. My wanting to disrupt entrenched assumptions about men teachers is not compatible with Seifert's position that the differences between male and female biographies socialise women into, and men away from, early education. On the contrary, my data will show that some of the men had spent time with young children, and one student, Daniel, had wanted to be a teacher of young children from an early age. I accept that stories of long-standing commitment to teaching young children are easier for women to recount: I needed to do little to justify my decision to become a primary school teacher. Men have a different relation to discourses of teacherliness, families and work. Reading my data, I get a sense of the range of feelings the men express about their decision to teach young children and about the sort of relationships they think they should establish with their pupils.

Another study, based on statistical evidence collected from two elementary schools in Illinois, considers men teachers' influence on children's stereotyping of teacher competence (Mancus, 1992). The author found that the presence of men teachers did not alter the pupils' view that teaching is a female career, but the underlying gendered assumptions which I think are at work, are beyond the remit of Dianne Sirna Mancus's study.

Both Seifert (1988) and Mancus (1992) set men and women in opposition to each other, something I want to avoid. Susan M. Brookhart and William E. Loadman, reporting on two studies of male elementary preservice and inservice teachers in the USA, categorise men and women teachers, but do not use gender as an analytical tool or consider the detail of the teachers' perceptions (Brookhart and Loadman, 1996). Similarly, some studies of men teachers based on statistical surveys and questionnaires comment on gender differences, role models and the status of elementary teaching, without problematising constructions of masculinity or teacherliness (Gamble and Wilkins, 1997; Montecinos and Nielsen, 1997; Klecker and Loadman, 1999). These authors want to encourage men to become teachers, and think that men are being deterred, a message reflected on the American website, *Men Teach Children Grow*. Such a position is deceptively straightforward and does not take account of the complex, contextualised relations between being a man and being a student primary school teacher. When 'men' operates as a category, treated unproblematically, individual difference is obscured. These accounts cannot explain how masculinity signifies in different ways in different contexts and in relation to social class and age, for example, nor how a sense of self is learnt in relation to others.

Constructing men teachers as the solution

Popular rhetoric identifies feminisation as a root cause of boys' underachievement and a crisis in masculinity, and asserts that there are too many women teachers and too few men. Stereotypically feminine characteristics, such as caring, facilitating and niceness are pathologised. Similar storylines shape many articles in the tabloid press and official pronouncements about the need for more men teachers. Such rhetoric constructs feminisation as problematic, whether on the grounds of being effeminate, bad for boys, unrepresentative or a threat to men, and at the same time positions women as the natural teachers of young children. Feminist accounts of feminisation, in contrast, tell of the tensions and inequalities women experience as teachers (Steedman, 1985; Delamont, 1987; Miller, 1992, 1996; Skelton, 2002b). In my data, some men speak of a need for 'balance' in numbers of men and women teachers; others question the covert blame placed on women teachers by overt calls for

more men. Questions remain, and I think they are important ones. Whose interests are served when feminisation is perceived in these ways? Who is excluded and whose positions are protected and validated?

For all the attention paid to feminisation, primary school culture is not straightforwardly feminised. Christine Skelton, a former primary school teacher, who, from a feminist perspective, has researched and written widely about boys, men teachers and primary schooling, argues that if primary schools were 'truly feminised' there would be more observable feminine teaching and management styles in practice (Skelton, 2002b, p. 88). Hers is an important counterpoint to assertions that the feminine dominates primary schooling. She sees a mismatch between primary school culture, which is perceived as feminised, and the reality of a 're-masculinised' primary school culture. I see it more as confirmation that publicly-expressed discourses about teachers and primary schooling have a complicated relation with the material conditions in a school. Discourses of feminisation persist in the face of discourses of masculinisation; each simultaneously affirms the other and the power relations and hierarchy between them. Feminisation and masculinisation are discursively produced frames of meaning in which primary school culture is embroiled, and which contribute to the ways men student teachers can be understood and can understand themselves.

Others have turned their attention to the masculinisation, or re-masculinisation, of the teaching profession (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2001; Mahony and Hextall, 2000; Mahony *et al.*, 2004). Government education policy prioritises the entrepreneurial and competitive spirit, coupled with emphasis on 'hard masculine' administrative functions such as accounting over 'soft feminine' ones, such as profiling (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2001, p. 28). There are different strands to masculinising teaching: for example, at a policy level there have been campaigns to recruit more men teachers and an emphasis on hierarchies, targets and performance-related pay; in terms of teaching styles, more didactic, management-oriented approaches have been promoted. Masculinisation does not necessarily make life easy for men learning to become teachers, any more than feminisation makes life easy for women.

Masculinisation creates frameworks of understanding of being a teacher and a man. Natural wit (not training) and skills in discipline and

sport become inscribed in teacherliness for men. Heterosexual masculinity operates as if institutionalised (Epstein *et al.*, 2003) and normalises competition, bravado and strength. Terry Lovell, writing about literary culture, observes a hierarchy of classed masculinity, which can shed light on men student teachers' understandings of masculinity. She describes the expectation that men must be neither too heterosexual (uncivilised working-class man) nor insufficiently heterosexual (effeminate or a homosexual aristocrat); middle-class masculinity comes to represent a norm (Lovell, 1987). The point is not whether individual teachers directly match these images or not. It is rather that student teachers will produce their understanding of their professional selves in a dialogic relation with such established discourses.

Primary school culture is perceived as feminised, not just in terms of the staff who teach in the schools, but as signifying a devalued and increasingly monitored world of work, subject to increasing levels of surveillance and accountability, which become a reinterpretation of professionalism (Mahony and Hextall, 2000). To summarise a complex publicly-expressed discourse: feminisation is bad. Women teachers are held responsible for boys' underachievement, lax discipline and effeminacy; one response in schools, the media and at policy level, is to construct masculinisation and more men teachers as the route to educational success. To raise standards of teaching and, ultimately, as is the government's intention, to be globally competitive economically, a shift from the feminine to the masculine becomes construed as necessary.

The writings of numerous practitioners in ITE and those concerned with the recruitment and careers of men teachers may have raised men's profile, but they do comparatively little to explore my questions (Freidus, 1992; Wood and Hoag,1993; Emery, 1997; Fraser and Yeoman, 1999; Johnston *et al.*, 1999; Foster and Newman, 2003; D. Jones, 2003; Mulholland and Hansen, 2003). The authors look for practical solutions to what they identify as problems and side-step masculinity as constitutive of the complexity of men teachers' position in a feminised culture. For example, Deborah Jones's research into the qualities that women primary school teachers want in men teachers does not interrogate the women's constructions of acceptable heterosexual masculinity (D. Jones, 2003).

Martin Ashley and John Lee's book about women teaching boys has

something to say about men teachers in its examination of teachers as carers, and primary school boys' feelings about teachers and school (Ashley and Lee, 2003). The authors are teacher trainers and their writing shows awareness of gender and of their position as professionally-involved men. However, their viewpoint and their questions are different from mine. Ashley and Lee want more men teachers 'to reflect a satisfactory model of society, for boys *and* girls.' (*ibid.,* p. 131). Their italicising indicates that they are mindful of possible feminist criticisms (that a focus on boys disadvantages girls). Based on an observation that men teachers can display what are assumed to be feminine qualities (e.g. nurturing) and drawing on attachment theory, Ashley and Lee conclude that whether a teacher is a man or a woman is not significant. They stress teacher competence, and support this with reference to data from boy pupils, who say that the sex of their teacher does not matter. Ashley and Lee argue that because gendered stereotypes do not fit with their observations of teachers' behaviours, gender is not an important issue.

In contrast to Ashley and Lee's position, I do not think that gendered discourses (which construct stereotypes) describe, or fail to describe, men's and women's behaviours. Discourses are active, not reflective. By this I mean that discourses of masculinity produce, maintain and emphasise difference and power relations. They do not simply represent and convey pre-existing differences. They form and re-form webs of possible meanings, in specific contexts of time and place, with which individuals actively interact, perpetuating or challenging discursively-produced understandings. Some discourses of being a man and a primary school teacher are readily heard, while others struggle for space amidst other unwelcoming, alienating discourses.

Tor Foster and Elizabeth Newman's research is motivated by a desire to recruit more men into primary school teaching. The scheme they devise seems common sense. They provide male mentors for men interested in becoming teachers, based on a principle of matching gender, age and interests between the men and their mentors (Foster and Newman, 2003). The authors aim to challenge stereotypes and that is commendable, but their premise, that professional and cultural identities are learnt by matching like with like, is limiting. Michael Annan, a black primary school teacher, writes about his work as a teacher of reading

(Annan, 1993). Annan notes that all of his teaching practices were in white women's classrooms. He came to understand himself as a teacher in this context and in a social relation with white women teachers.

In these accounts it seems incontrovertible that too few men teachers is a problem, yet 'a problem is always a problem for someone or other.' (Harding, 1987, p. 6). And when men are treated as a commodity in demand, individual difference is neglected. And to assume that masculinity is learnt by men only from other men, is underpinned by a view of learning as direct modelling, and that cannot allow for the learning about masculinity which men do in communication with women, nor allow for masculinity signifying differently in different contexts. I understand masculinity as constituted through discourses which are produced by individuals, women and men, of specific social classes, sexualities and cultural backgrounds, in contemporary institutions such as schools, universities and families, which have histories. It is an active and ongoing process of acceptance and resistance, as individuals come to understand themselves in complex relations with others.

This chapter shows that men primary school students and teachers have been absent from many mainstream accounts of primary school teaching. Men student primary school teachers have been overlooked, mentioned in passing, dismissed as privileged, odd or a threat, referred to as an homogenous group, as victims or saviours. If I am to examine the detail and difference of individual men students' views of themselves as teachers of young children, and to suggest ways of helping them to conceptualise their work, I will need to do more than simply counter absence, assumptions and generalisation by adding the men's voices and their stories to the debate. My task will involve paying attention to individual differences and exploring 'discursive fictions' (Walkerdine, 1998, p. 67) and the men student teachers' negotiation of them. I find I will need to draw on literature across a range of disciplines and topics.

Chapter 4: Perspectives on men teachers

As little exists specifically about men student primary school teachers and much of that does little to answer my questions, I turn to a wide range of literature to seek insights to help me to think about men students' relation to primary school teaching and to me. Recent research into men primary school student teachers and teachers, some of which is informed by feminism, allows for understandings of men as gendered and sexualised individuals, though there is an absence of accounts which consider men's narratives as produced in a dialogic relation to their social, cultural and historical contexts and as repeatedly enacting the men's professional identities.

I define the relevant body of research as including a range of disciplines and topics taking in sociology, cultural studies, psychoanalytic perspectives, and accounts of men as minorities in the workplace, as childcare workers, and as teachers and student teachers across the school age-range. I have read studies of men teachers by and for practitioners, feminist accounts of men teachers' work and teacher training, and also explored research into masculinity and sexuality. One assumption associates men teachers with sexual abuse of children and this has led me to review studies in this complex area. I have considered working-class identities and research into older students. Fictional teachers in novels and film have proved to be significant, as there I have found expression, in different ways, of the centrality of teachers' cultural identities, how gender and class underpin daily interactions in the classroom and the emotional investments in being a teacher. And I make use of studies of children's literature and literacy for insights into gendered readings.

Looking closely at men teachers

Christine Skelton's recent research raises questions about men primary school teachers as role models and about constructions of masculinity (Skelton, 2001a, 2002a, 2003). Her work is informed by feminism, and by a theoretical perspective that pays attention to gendered power relations. She has also, with colleagues, undertaken a national study of primary Postgraduate teacher training and presents statistical and interview data, in particular considering the men's attitudes towards traditional images of

masculinity (Skelton, 2003; see also Carrington, 2002). Skelton uses data from an ethnographic study of one primary school to show how men primary school teachers construct themselves as 'properly masculine' (Skelton, 2001a, p. 117). Although she is critically aware of her own perspective as a feminist and former primary school teacher, my research differs from hers in its emphasis on the dialogic relation between myself and the men student teachers I interview.

Mary Thornton, ITE tutor, researcher, and former primary school teacher, provides detailed information about the career patterns, subject responsibilities and promotion of men and women primary school teachers. Her research provides an important overview and analysis of the context within which men student teachers work (Thornton, 1999a, 1999b, 2001; Thornton and Bricheno, 2000; Thornton and Reid, 2001; Bricheno and Thornton, 2002; Thornton et al., 2002). The men's concerns, such as standing out and being noticed in ITE classes (Thornton, 2001) and issues relating to physical contact with children in the classroom (Thornton, 1999b) are ones which the students I spoke with also discussed and felt strongly about. Mary Thornton and Pat Bricheno found that men commented on power and status issues more frequently than women (Thornton and Bricheno, 2000). The authors describe the men in their research who do not perceive headship as a logical progression, as 'less conventional men' (ibid., p. 199). Understandings of masculinity and what it means to be a man frame the men's comments and also the authors' interpretations of them.

Elizabeth Burn, a feminist, working-class, former primary school teacher, now working in ITE, writes about men student primary school teachers' and early years teachers' perspectives (Burn,1998, 2005). She talked with Greg, the only black student in his year group, and from a working-class background. Greg was, he believed, stereotyped as ' "just a flash black guy" ' (Burn, 1998, p. 13). Burn's approach is to listen to what she sees as the silenced voices of men students and to highlight and challenge the inequalities that the students face based on gender, race, social class and poverty.

Voice can be conceptualised as representation, being heard not silenced, feeling empowered to speak, and this does have relevance for men students. Yet there is a different understanding of voice and

subjectivity, articulated by Deborah P. Britzman, from a feminist and psychoanalytic perspective (Britzman, 2003). Britzman captures the complex relation between language, understanding and identity which I think is central. Her understanding of voice helps me to interpret my data. Her interest is in 'the underside of teaching' (*ibid.,* p. 25), the contradictory mixture of hopes and anxieties that students confront and enact as they come to know themselves as teachers. According to Britzman, individual students work to construct their identities as teachers (her study is of high school teachers in Canada) by testing out narratives of learning to teach, which may or may not seem satisfactory. As students learn to be teachers, they actively narrate their identities. Britzman expresses a complex idea succinctly: 'One of the surprises of narrative is that it crafts the thing it must presuppose.' (*ibid.,* p. 20). What I take from this for my study is a sense that the stories students tell about themselves as teachers do not simply recount experiences, but constitute what counts as experience and shape their identities as teachers. Language, understanding, context and the individual are interrelated. Individuals construct their professional identities through narrative:

> The struggle for voice is a struggle for narrative, not authenticity
> or adaptation into a pre-existing identity. (Britzman, 2003, p. 22)

Individuals do not have an already-formed identity awaiting additional 'teacher' features to be gained through experience. Voice, like language itself, is not simply representative; voice is an 'existential dilemma' (*ibid.,* p. 18) constitutive of thought and understanding, a process which involves subconscious fears, emotions and desires interacting with, and often conflicting with, institutional discourses about teaching, which in my data relate to authority, relationships, control, gender, sexuality and culture. My study can also be seen as creating a narrative, constructing a text which aims to examine the students' narratives and enacting my moves to establish my voice, amidst shifting and often clashing discursive positions.

Neither Britzman nor the psychosocial perspective provided by Dennis Atkinson (Atkinson, 2004) pay particular attention to gender and sexuality in the formation of teacher identity . Britzman describes cultural myths that shape student high school teachers' understanding, for

example, the discourse of the 'rugged individual', which positions a teacher as successful if they can single-handedly overcome any challenges that teaching throws at them, and a failure if they collaborate or negotiate (*ibid.*, p. 235). This discourse resonates with some of the TTA's language, which represents the official voice of teachers. The consequence is that individual teachers are endowed with 'undue power and undue culpability' (*loc. cit.*). Britzman does not consider the genderedness of the idea of the 'rugged individual', but there are connections with discourses which normalise heterosexual masculinity. Dennis Atkinson rejects the idea of pre-existing rational subjectivity and argues that individuals come into being as secondary school teachers through 'imaginary identifications' or desires to be a particular kind of teacher (Atkinson, 2004, p. 384). Atkinson insists on the centrality of the unconscious and the imaginary (fantasy, desire) in the formation of teacher identity, a theoretical position not easy to adopt amidst skills-based, technique-oriented ITT programmes. Yet it is a helpful approach, allowing for contradiction, ambivalence and change to be acknowledged. Psychoanalytic perspectives emphasise the active and subconscious part individuals play in negotiating and renegotiating their identities in different social contexts (Hollway, 1989; Henriques *et al.,* 1998; Walkerdine, 1998). What I take from that theoretical approach for my research is a focus on men student teachers' agency and intentions, as they imagine themselves as teachers, in the light of their developing understandings of masculinity.

Men on the margins in the workplace

American academic and sociologist Paul Sargent sets out to counter the myth that childcare and education are women's work (Sargent, 2000, 2001, 2005). He argues that it is the 'structural impediments' (Sargent, 2000, p. 430) of the sexual division of labour in the classroom, for example rules about touch, and being a male role model, that deter men from becoming teachers. He highlights individual men's feelings of fear and anger. The effect of focusing predominantly on workplace culture here is to produce men as disadvantaged, which could detract from the task of challenging the negativity associated with feminisation. And without a historical perspective and a sense of change, it can seem as if teaching young children is and has always been unproblematically women's work, into which men as

individuals endeavour to find an entry. Sargent wants to represent the 'real lived experiences' of men teachers (Sargent, 2001, p. 136). I see a need to stand back from men's narratives of being teachers and read them as texts in their social, cultural and historical contexts. Then I will be able to notice the men's intentions as mediated (rather than represented) through language and consider the work individual men do, sometimes paradoxically, to maintain the discourses that position them. Theories which accommodate difference, and acknowledge the history and diversity of men's perspectives and their relation to specific versions of heterosexual masculinity, will enable me to question, rather than simply restate, how being a man and being a student primary school teacher is and can be read.

Women as minorities in the workplace have been the subject of many research studies (Spencer and Podmore, 1987; Devine, 1993; Allmendinger and Hackman, 1995; Walsh, 2001), but it would be a mistake to assume that the experience of being a minority in the workplace will be the same for men as it is for women (Kaupinnen Toropainen and Lammi, 1993; Williams, 1993, 1995, 2000). Sociologist Cynthia Cockburn's research into the gendering of jobs describes the difference between men and women as minorities (Cockburn, 1988). Men suffer from 'status tremble' (*ibid.,* p. 33) if they find themselves in a woman's workplace. They do not want to become honorary women in the way women moving into men's work might become honorary men. Men's response is either to move out of that workplace as quickly as possible, or redefine the work to explain their presence. Calls for more men teachers specifically to teach boy pupils can be seen as a move to redefine teaching as men's work. Christine Williams' sociological study of men moving into non-traditional jobs includes elementary school teachers and highlights an active encounter between the men's aspirations and anxieties as workers, and the institutional workplace. She describes this as a 'dynamic interplay' through which men continually construct masculinity as different from and in opposition to femininity (Williams, 1995, p. 183).

Sociological studies of men as minorities in the contemporary workplace raise questions about equality and privilege. In terms of career advancement, men are on 'the glass escalator' (Williams, 2000). Workplace hierarchies based on gender will not automatically be

challenged by the integration of men. The sexual division of paid work can be seen as having horizontal components: women do different jobs from men, and vertical components: women work in the lower levels in the occupational hierarchy (Hakim, 1979). Such an analysis could be applied to primary teaching and headships. Men nurses work in a context where the overall pattern is of women engaged in practical tasks on lower pay, and men employed at a managerial level. Studies of men who become nurses consider assumptions about men and leadership (Floge and Merrill, 1986) and heterosexual men's awareness of their sexuality (Isaacs and Poole, 1996). Men who work as secretaries may face initial discrimination, but are soon treated favourably (Pringle, 1988), progressing quickly up the career ladder. Men working as striptease artists may commandeer the language of sex equality (that women should be able to watch striptease too) to justify their work, but they do not subvert the established gender order. On the contrary the male strippers preserve a sense of power (Tewksbury, 1993). Their choice of atypical work does not encourage them to challenge normative assumptions about heterosexual masculinity; instead it becomes a site where they constitute themselves as powerful.

These sociological studies of men as members of a minority group in the workplace direct attention to structural difference in employment and to men's potential advantage. Those are important considerations, but they do less to address an individual's experience of difference. What is it like for a man to be written about and understood like this? Specifically, how might men student teachers handle being perceived as on 'the glass escalator'? What happens to their sense of self as a teacher in this context? Donny, one of the students I interview, speaks about the possibility of becoming a headteacher, "Fortunately or unfortunately we've got more chance being blokes." (Donny). Donny has to negotiate conflicting discourses about masculinity which bestow advantage and guilt on him. Having made an atypical career choice to become a primary school teacher, Donny now has a complicated relation with discourses of equality, in spite of straightforwardly-stated, official requirements that he should challenge stereotypes on the one hand, and persistent assumptions that he will welcome expectations that he will soon become a headteacher, on the other. The contradiction and conflict behind his words cannot be fully understood solely through accounts which concentrate only on workplace

cultures and structures.

Men childcare workers

In England, men make up approximately 2 per cent of those working in childcare services. Of those taking Foundation Modern Apprenticeships in childcare, 3 per cent are men (Equal Opportunities Commission, 2004, p. 2). ('Childcare services' covers 'the range of services providing care and education for children under compulsory school age and care and recreation for school-aged children.', Moss, 1996b, p. 5). There are various targets and recruitment initiatives in place to increase the proportion of men working in childcare services (L. Miller *et al.*, 2004). Accounts by or about practitioners in childcare settings focus on involving men as workers with young children and on issues such as discrimination (Chandler, 1990; Dodd, 1995; Roberts, 1996). Others discuss men childcare workers' specific contributions (Bailey, 1983; Clyde, 1989; Coombs, 1991; Moss, 1996a; C. Cameron, 1997). Tim Coombs reflects on men teachers' contributions in Steiner kindergartens (Coombs, 1991). All are sympathetic to men who choose to work with young children and all promote men's involvement with young children. They challenge stereotypes, but do not dwell on the intractability of cultural myths and men's own role in sustaining them.

There have been concerted attempts to recruit more men into caring for pre-school children in this country (Equal Opportunities Commission, 2004) and elsewhere. In Denmark the head of a pre-school teacher training college advertised not just for men, but for 'Real Men' (Kruse, 1996, p. 438) and sport was offered as an incentive (Ærø, 1998, p. 204). One expectation is that men childcare workers will provide a 'counterculture' (Jensen, 1996, p. 26) that will improve communication in staff rooms. These moves strengthen the position of heterosexual masculinity as superior to other versions of masculinity and to femininity, something I want to make visible and to challenge.

Penn and McQuail's Department for Education and Employment-funded research explores the gendered nature of childcare (Penn and McQuail, 1997). Their report highlights gender in childcare workplaces and outlines policy and training suggestions. Their data, like mine, show men discussing their career choice and the expectations others have of them.

41

Penn and McQuail seem less concerned with exploring individual students' perspectives and their investments in certain discourses. The authors do not link the image of masculinity that they describe with assumptions about heterosexual masculinity which I think underpin some of their data and which I consider central to analysing my own data.

Research in Finland into men working as pre-school teachers (and also men working as hairdressers) explores the men's constructions of masculinity and considers how they sometimes emphasise their similarities with women and at other times stress their difference (Nordberg, 2002). Jennifer Sumsion's case-study work on male early childhood workers in Australia analyses individual students' narratives in relation to masculinity and explores how the men make sense of their professional experiences (Sumsion, 1999, 2000a, 2000b). She focuses on the stranglehold of hegemonic masculinity: a student might intend to counter stereotypes, but simultaneously rely on them to justify his particular contribution as a childcare worker. Sumsion notes the need for students to contextualise their personal experiences in wider social and political contexts (Sumsion, 1999), and highlights rewards, risks and tensions for men students in early-years contexts (Sumsion, 2000). I will add to Sumsion's reading of context to include emphasis on the reciprocity between the students and myself in the research interview, and also to include history. I will read my data as language operating in social, cultural and historical contexts where individuals, in intentional communication, enact and negotiate their complex relations with official and publicly-voiced assumptions about men teachers.

Claire Cameron, Peter Moss and Charlie Owen, researchers at the Thomas Coram Institute, London, note an absence of a discourse of gender in the context of childcare work (C. Cameron *et al.*, 1999) which has meant that men's experiences as workers in childcare have barely been articulated. Cameron *et al.*'s research carefully problematises the notion of role models, and the assumption that individual men can represent the category 'men' and compensate for absent fathers or challenge stereotypes. The authors note the contradictions inherent in men's position in childcare, where they are 'sidelined' and 'glorified' (*ibid.,* p. 8). They provide a helpful analysis of men as workers 'on the margins of institutional life - the man worker as Other' (*ibid.,* p. xi) and of the 'risk

discourse' (*ibid.,* p. 153) which associates men with child sexual abuse. These analyses help me to read my own data, though there is little in their study on sexuality and assumptions about heterosexual masculinity. The authors point out that none of their respondents mentioned their sexual identity (*ibid.,* p. 169), and that applies also to my data, but, unlike Cameron *et al.,* my response is to read my data for the investments in heterosexual masculinity they carry, albeit not explicitly, and for the complex separations from paedophilia, from homosexual masculinity and from femininity that the men work to establish.

Men teachers as a risk to pupils

Child sexual abuse is a complex topic. It is acknowledged as a serious social issue (Maher, 1987; David, 1993; Frosh, 1994), with potentially 'devastating effects' (West, 2000, p. 511). While questions regarding sexual abuse in schools should be given attention, there is a danger in oversimplifying or even pathologizing all sexuality, love, bodily functions and touching (Mitchell and Weber, 1997, see p. 146). In spite of Freud's research into infant sexuality in the early 1900s the idea of childhood sexual innocence is fiercely maintained (Epstein *et al.,* 2003). The media offer pictures of men described as 'predatory' (Millward, 2004, p. 2). A huge and hideous gap is constructed between them and us, the readers. Taboos, fears, fantasies and contradiction surrounding sexuality complicate our thinking. My purpose is not to examine the origins or consequences of child sexual abuse. The questions I have are about the men student teachers' understanding of their professional selves in the light of discourses which position them as a threat to children, and implicitly, sometimes explicitly, question whether they should work with young children at all. How might I understand men as teachers on reading the existing literature about men teachers and risk?

Very few men primary teachers have been convicted of sexually abusing pupils (Skelton, 2001a), but narratives of childhood vulnerability and the predatory adult male persist, one reinforcing the other (Silin, 1997). A stereotype of the male teacher as potential paedophile is pervasive. It is noted in studies in England (Thornton, 1999b), Northern Ireland (Johnston *et al.,* 1999), Canada (Coulter and McNay ,1993), America (Goodman and Kelly, 1988; DeCorse and Vogtle, 1997; R. Johnson, 1997), and New

Zealand (A. Jones, 2003). There are national variations: such a discourse would be 'incomprehensible' in Denmark (Jensen, 1996, p. 23) where a legal paedophile association exists, and in Norway potential abuse of children by male workers is not a central concern (Sataøen, 1998).

The discourse of risk associated with men has been discussed and problematised (Saraga, 1994; Owen et al., 1998; West, 2000; Skelton, 2001a; Piper and Smith, 2003). Much of the literature concentrates on regulations, screening, the legalities of child protection and appropriate behaviour for adults working with young children (Brown and Schonveld, 1994; Goodyear, 1994; Lindon, 1998). One practical guide on child protection proposes codes of conduct about physical contact with children which should apply equally to men and to women (Lindon, 1998, see pp. 152-153). Does this dodge the issues relating to masculinity? Although it is not exclusively men who abuse children (Young, 1993; Owen et al., 1998), anxieties about physical contact with children and fear of accusations of sexual abuse are associated with men, not women (Frosh, 1994; Silin, 1997; Bateman, 1998; Skelton, 2001a).

An introductory text for primary school teachers, written by a man, Dominic Wyse, lecturer in ITE and former primary school teacher, seems to play down the issue of men and physical contact with children (Wyse, 2002). Teacher training courses address child sexual abuse and sexuality only briefly (David, 1993; Skelton, 2001a). Government policy concentrates on procedures and infrastructures and does not consider the complexity of professional identity and pedagogy (DfES, 2004). Following the conviction of a school caretaker for the murder of two schoolgirls, an independent public inquiry made recommendations about strategies for handling allegations of sexual abuse, improvements to training and recruitment, and a central system of registration to determine suitability for working with children (The Bichard Inquiry Report, 2004). A complicated picture of men as teachers emerges where 'risk' for men is constant and defining, where sexuality is taboo, and is a matter of regulation and procedures. It would be difficult to do more than repeat and recount men's reactions to what are often high-profile assumptions of risk, without locating the discourse of risk in wider, and what are often paradoxical, contexts.

James R. Kincaid, a Professor of English in California, does not write about men teachers, but his perspective on child sexual abuse is

relevant here (Kincaid, 1998). Kincaid explores the social and cultural context of what he sees as America's preoccupation with child sexual abuse, perpetuated through a 'cultural narrative' (*ibid.*, p. 33) which focuses on 'isolated horrors' of abuse (*ibid.*, p. 13). According to Kincaid, the irony is that narratives which sexualise young children are produced concurrently with narratives which work to deny children's sexuality. My data will show that men student primary school teachers face similarly contradictory narratives which focus on and deny their sexuality.

Joseph Tobin and Richard Johnson are early-childhood teachers and academics working in America. Tobin describes men teachers being watched and treated with suspicion; he writes of the difficulty of talking about the ordinariness of children's sexuality and teachers' enjoyment of children (Tobin, 1997). Johnson resists an emphasis on fear and regulation associated with physical contact with young children (R. Johnson, 1997). Each is trying to make spaces to talk about teachers' gendered and sexualised identities in cultural contexts which militate against them.

Men are constituted as ideal teachers and as objects of suspicion; added to that contradiction is a paradox at the heart of the relation between men student teachers and the risk discourse. The paradox is not an idle one, as research in Australia and New Zealand demonstrates (A. Jones, 2001, 2003; McWilliam and Jones, 2005). Alison Jones's argument about the training of pleasure focuses on male teachers and Santa Clauses. Jones considers how these groups of men, who have close contact with children and embody ideals of masculinity, must learn to understand themselves as constituting a risk, in order to go on to learn legitimate ways to be masculine with children (A. Jones, 2001). Jones also writes about men and women student teachers and physical contact with young pupils, and finds that students are involved in 'identity formation in an age of anxiety' (*ibid.*, p. 181). The women and men (Jones does not focus on gendered differences) ironically perpetuate and resist discourses of risk. They learn a sense of self as potentially dangerous to children *and* work to separate themselves from that position. Paradox and individual's active engagement will be important, as I grapple with the complexity of the men students' position and insist on the possibility of change.

Masculinities

Masculinity has not long been a subject for study. Feminism stimulated research into gender and women, but until the late 1980s men's identities remained unexplored in relation to gender. For example, as Christine Skelton points out, Paul Willis's famous sociological study of boys in secondary school, published in 1977, did not consider gender (Skelton, 2001b, p. 168). Now, both women and men study masculinity, and the men I interview have moved into a culture which prompts *them* to consider masculinity too. Popular contemporary debates about men and masculinity may arise from genuine concerns, but they are often fraught with generalisations, essentialism, homophobia and anti-feminism. What can I learn from contemporary studies of masculinity to help me to think about men student teachers' experiences of masculinity, at a time when their gendered identities are being made visible in new ways?

Bob Connell, a former secondary school teacher, has published widely on schooling and the production of masculinity (Connell, 1987, 1989, 1995, 1997a, 1997b, 2000). His argument is important for my research as he considers the interrelationship between masculinities and institutions (in my study, teacher training colleges/universities and primary schools are the relevant institutions) in ways which accommodate 'rival versions of masculinity' (Connell, 1989, p. 295). He suggests four groupings of masculinities, which he sees as fluid: hegemonic, by which Connell means dominant in status and rewards; subordinate, e.g. gay masculinity, which is repressed and stigmatised; marginalised, which is positioning in relation to social class and ethnicity; and complicit masculinity, which retains distance from hegemonic masculinity, but benefits from it (Connell, 1995). The idea of 'complicit masculinity' resonates with the men student teachers' ambivalence about the privileges ascribed to heterosexual masculinity which I find in my data.

In introducing the concept of 'hegemonic masculinity' Connell transfers the use of Antonio Gramsci's notion of hegemony and social class to the context of gender (Connell, 1987). He sees 'hegemonic masculinity' and 'emphasized femininity' as powerful, but always contested, public ideologies in Western culture. He makes visible a dominant version of masculinity which operates as and defines what is 'normal' masculinity, what Christine Skelton has called 'the public face of

male power' (Skelton, 2001b, p. 172). Connell insists that positions of power are continually asserted and protected. The production of gender as the active policing of boundaries is a metaphor that has been usefully employed by many (Thorne, 1993; Epstein and Johnson, 1994; Haywood and Mc An Ghaill, 1996; McLaren, 1997; Steinberg *et al.*, 1997; Wedgwood, 1997) and one which can shed light on the work men students do to produce themselves as 'real' teachers and 'real' men.

Chris Haywood and Máirtín Mac an Ghaill provide a sociological perspective on the creation of gendered identities at school (Haywood and Mac An Ghaill, 1996, 2003). They describe schools as 'masculinity making devices' (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2003, p. 79) located inextricably within social contexts such as the family and the labour market. I want to hold on to the idea of masculinity as a production and keep alongside that the importance of relationships and of power: different masculinities 'have differential access to power' (Haywood and Mac An Ghaill, 1996, p. 51). Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, reflecting in 2003 on Mac an Ghaill's earlier research in secondary schools (Mac An Ghaill, 1994), refer to 'an upwardly-mobile, business-like masculinity' (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2003, p. 64). This ties in with contemporary, publicly-expressed ideals of primary school teachers, for example, valorising efficiency, management, skills, fast-pace pedagogy and targets, over and in place of relationships, negotiation, reflection, equality and community.

I can draw on Peter Redman and Máirtín Mac An Ghaill's analysis of Peter Redman's autobiographical account of his grammar school history teacher (Redman and Mac An Ghaill, 1997). The text on the surface is not about sexuality, but the authors argue that it 'indexes a series of negotiations between the cultural, social and psychic realms, negotiations which 'speak' heterosexuality, although often in coded or indirect ways' (*ibid.,* p. 164). Their 'critical reading' (*ibid.*, p. 167) teaches me to notice and problematise, rather than assume, heterosexual masculinity. Redman and Mac An Ghaill's approach can inform my reading of my data, in particular Michael and Daniel's conversation, in which they play out their understanding of themselves as heterosexual men without directly mentioning their sexuality.

Peter Redman's analysis of pupils' sexual cultures examines a point of transition: from primary to secondary school (Redman, 1996). Redman

sees the pupils as involved in dynamic engagements with discourses, social relations and the context of schooling, through 'social negotiations and unconscious identifications' (*ibid.*, p. 178). Redman's social, cultural and psychoanalytic argument makes the case that sexual identity is neither a biological given, nor established in childhood, but is the result of dynamic, ongoing interactions between the unconscious and various social dimensions, such as available discourses, social relations and the immediate social and cultural environment. From his argument, I take an emphasis on schools as significant cultural sites where sexual identity is actively learnt. Although Redman's focus is pupils, his work can contribute to my analysis. Men student teachers are at a point of transition too, as they work their way into higher education and the professional world of primary school teachers.

Understandings of masculinity are not free-floating. Feminist and pro-feminist research into boys in school examines how masculinities are produced in educational establishments (Kenway, 1995, 1996; Salisbury and Jackson,1996; Daly, 1999; Lingard and Douglas, 1999; Raphael Reed, 1999; Skelton, 2001a, 2001b). Lynn Raphael Reed's approach draws on the work of Michel Foucault and takes discourse and power as central to understanding masculinity and schooling. She considers how one woman secondary school teacher acts out her understanding of masculinity and femininity and constructs her gendered identity through interactions with boy and girl pupils (Raphael Reed, 1999). Raphael Reed considers the unconscious processes at work and this enables her to explore discourses relating to masculinity and femininity and their interactions with teachers' gendered and sexualised identities. Her analysis emphasises gender as relational, and power, not as a commodity won or lost, but as contextualised and constantly contested.

The weight of research into the gendered and sexualised culture of the primary school pays attention to pupils', rather than teachers', masculinity and heterosexuality (Thorne, 1993; Francis, 1997, 1998a, 1998b; Renold, 2000; Skelton, 2001a, 2002a; Redman *et al.*, 2002; Warren, 2003a, 2003b; Kehily, 2004; Swain, 2004a). In spite of their focus on pupils, I am interested in some of the discussions in this body of research. Barrie Thorne, researching in the USA, observes boys treating girls as carriers of 'germs' in their playground games. Thorne sees this as an enacting of

wider patterns of gendered inequality (Thorne, 1993). Christine Skelton's ethnographic study investigates girl pupils' responses to men teachers. She shows how the men teachers produce and enjoy a powerful position of heterosexual masculinity in relation to both boy and girl pupils by employing discourses relating to football, heterosexual relationships (e.g. flirting) and the ridiculing of 'gender' (Skelton, 2001a, 2002a). Femininity is maintained as inferior and separate. Mary Jane Kehily's research highlights the conflict between an official school discourse of the sexually innocent primary school child, and pupils' own performances of sex-gender identities (Kehily, 2004). She writes of a fantasy space of erotic attachment between a male teacher and a female pupil. The male teacher helps the female pupil with her work and she enjoys the attention. This produces 'a mutually affirming dynamic that encourages her to perform in this subject [mathematics]' (*ibid.*, p. 68). Kehily's research helps us to think about gendered and sexualised relations in the classroom from the pupils' perspectives. Sexuality is infrequently discussed in relation to teachers' gendered identities (Mitchell and Weber, 1997; Epstein and Sears, 1999). Writing about university teaching, Alison Jones describes placing pedagogy and sexuality in a positive relation as 'speak[ing] the unspeakable' (A. Jones, 1996, p. 103). What might it mean to a man student teacher to negotiate the sort of classroom 'dynamic' Kehily describes and to articulate and acknowledge himself and his pupils as gendered and sexualised?

Heterosexuality operates as if invisible and incontrovertible and has not been the focus of research in the way homosexuality has been (Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 1994). The 'presumption of heterosexuality' (Epstein and Sears, 1999, p. 35) shapes men teachers' perspectives on their sexuality. Heterosexual teachers are not used to being defined in terms of their sexuality (Mitchell and Weber, 1997). Many men are unfamiliar with thinking of themselves as gendered at all. Men have not been obliged to think about gender and their sexuality as women have. Inequalities experienced by many women have encouraged political awareness and moves for change, whereas for men 'preoccupation with (rather than resistance to) conventional standards of 'masculinity' remains the norm' (Thomas, 1990, p. 152).

Men teachers can assert heterosexual masculinity as resistance to femininity, the effeminate and homosexuality and to ally themselves with

assumed links between masculinity and effective discipline (Francis and Skelton, 2001). Kathy Roulston and Martin Mills observe men teachers of music discussing heavy-metal music and sport to emphasise their heterosexual masculinity, to separate themselves from homosexuality and the feminine, and to bond with their boy pupils (Roulston and Mills, 2000). Men teachers in primary and secondary schools have been observed adopting homophobic and misogynist discourses in constructing their heterosexual masculine identities (Francis and Skelton, 2001). A terror of homosexual masculinity and a myth that gay men will corrupt and molest children are prevailing fears (Silin, 1997; Kelley, 1998; J. R. King, 2000). Homosexuality and femininity are positioned as 'other' and inferior to heterosexual masculinity: Debbie Epstein talks of the defences that individuals build up against contamination by the dual others of girls/women and non-macho boys/men (Epstein, 2001). The picture becomes all the more complex for men who are negotiating the demands of ITE and expectations about equality, tolerance and diversity, at the same time as working to understand themselves as men and as teachers of young children.

Anoop Nayak and Mary Jane Kehily's ethnographic study of young men's homophobia tackles the processes which produce marginal identities (Nayak and Kehily, 1996). The men Nayak and Kehily interview engage in homophobic practices, as they strive for stable heterosexual masculine identities. I have not found, in my data, the vehemently-expressed homophobia that Nayak and Kehily observe in secondary schools, and which Wayne Martino finds in secondary schools in Australia (Martino, 1997), although there is evidence of widespread homophobia in higher education (Brown, 2003; Epstein *et al.*, 2003; Nixon and Givens, 2004). In my data, the men assert heterosexual masculinity, and, directly at times, but mostly indirectly, articulate an undertow of unease in relation to homosexuality.

Silence, prejudice and ignorance characterise the institutional context that one group of lesbian, gay and bisexual student teachers face (Nixon and Givens, 2004). David Nixon and Nick Givens describe the dominant heterosexual culture of one higher education institution which imposes an identity on the trainee secondary and primary teachers they interviewed. The students' resistance was small-scale, but, the authors

argue, significant. The interviewees' willingness to participate in the research and to talk frankly about their sexuality, sometimes with humour, formed part of that resistance. Nixon and Givens are shocked to have exposed a culture of silence that marginalizes a group of students in a 'liberal academic community at the start of the twenty-first century' (ibid., p. 233). Their research illustrates the apparently incorrigible normalisation of heterosexuality and its production and maintenance through institutionalised discourses.

James R. King and Jonathan G. Silin, gay teachers and academics in the USA, explain that gay teachers fear disclosure and job loss (J. R. King, 1997, 2000; Silin, 1997). They monitor their behaviour in the elementary classroom to hide their sexual orientation: theirs and others' understanding of homosexuality operates as a means of control and regulation. Silin traces the development of the homo/heterosexual dichotomy and the homophobic stereotypes that operate as 'critical preservers of the social fabric' of the family (Silin, 1997, p. 220). Normality is produced and strengthened through constructions of the abnormal; homosexuality is criminalized and feminized, and homosexual men produced as objects of disdain and fear. Assumptions of homosexuality mean that men teachers are inserted into discourses which threaten them with ridicule, contempt and accusation; the men's responses are then constructed as denial, defence or admission. Thinking about what is the norm and what is other in the context of being a woman researching men student primary school teachers can help to throw into sharp relief the men's complex relation to teaching and to me.

Debbie Epstein's study of primary school children's understanding of gender and sexuality charts how their gay male teacher, Mr Stuart, 'came out' to the class (Epstein, 1999). The 'mythology of happy heterosexuality' (ibid., p. 39) was being played out, but Mr Stuart offered an alternative, a different way to be a man and a teacher, which Epstein argues goes some way to subverting dominant heterosexual gender relations. The pupils denied their teacher was homosexual, rather as pre-school children reading feminist fairy tales reconstructed the tales' endings to satisfy traditional, heterosexual expectations (Davies, 1989). The children in Mr. Stuart's class did not readily accept an alternative narrative, but some of the boys 'momentarily inhabited this alternative world-view and thus created,

for themselves, the possibility of inhabiting it again in the future' (Epstein, 1999, p. 39).

I accept, as Epstein has shown, that for individuals to learn and to change their 'world-view' is challenging. There may be consequences for the teachers who try to bring about such changes: men teachers who encourage their pupils to question dominant constructions of masculinity are all the more likely to have their own sexuality questioned (Martino, 2001). Robert, a pre-service kindergarten teacher, wears a 'fuzzy pink mohair sweater' (Mitchell and Weber, 1997, p. 138) and thinks people will assume he is gay, which he says he is not. Clothing can operate as and produce an embodiment of specific understandings of masculinity (Kamler, 1997; Swain, 2003). Robert's 'sartorial subversion' (Mitchell and Weber, 1997, p. 139) provokes discussion with his peers about gender and sexuality. Robert's choice of clothing can be read as his own attempt to disrupt assumed norms and create space for alternative versions of masculinity for men teachers.

Men who become teachers and who take a job which history and tradition have established as feminized and good for women, will have to contend with assumptions about their masculinity. In constructing their professional identities the men work to perform a masculine self, which is shaped by and does the work to produce the privileges and dangers associated with being a man and a teacher. Without an understanding of masculinity as relational, learnt as an ongoing and exacting process and enacted in language anchored to specific contexts in the course of everyday life, I can make little headway in understanding the intentions, investments and power relations that operate beyond the surface features of individual men's narratives.

Writing about working-class identities

The existence of social class has been denied in party-political discourses which present the fantasy of a classless society (Mahony and Zmroczek, 1997). Middle-class culture has been hidden by being normalised into 'the class that is invisible to itself' (Hey, 1997, p. 142). And working-class culture is stereotyped as inferior and lacking or as 'the salt-of-the-earth'. Valerie Walkerdine, a post-structuralist, feminist academic, and her colleagues' psychosocial study of working-class girls and their futures,

explains that, in spite of huge social and economic changes, social class inequalities persist and interact with constructions of masculinity and femininity (Walkerdine *et al.*, 2001). They discuss changing patterns in employment and identify stark inequalities: the rise in the communications and service sectors, the loss of job security for many and the emergence of a 'new elite in the financial and multinational sectors' who are mostly men (*ibid.*, p. 7). In the face of these changes, many men find they have to reinvent themselves 'to produce for themselves a marketable (feminised) image' (*ibid.*, p. 10). The idea of 'reinvention' takes into account agency, change and contemporary contexts and can shed light on the process men students engage in as they move into a culture constituted as feminised and middle class.

Reading the work of feminist academics from working-class backgrounds I can think about individuals' experiences of 'being' working-class. These writers challenge the common-sense view that individuals willingly leave their pasts behind to move up the social ladder (Hey, 1997; Maguire, 1997; Mahony and Zmroczek, 1997; Reay, 1997; Skeggs, 1997; Burn, 2001; Plummer, 2000). Gillian Plummer writes of the dilemma of retaining her working-class identity as she moves into an academic research community (Plummer, 2000). For working-class students a transition from working-class to middle-class culture would entail constructing oneself as 'profoundly different' from one's family and friends (Lucey, 2001, p. 186). Becoming a teacher is covertly constructed through official discourses as a means to better oneself and become middle class; a 'secret promise' that the limits of class can be overcome (Maguire, 1997, p. 97). Understanding individuals' moves into the teaching profession and academia as a straightforward 'step up' ignores the emotional investments in contemporary, working-class identities that these women describe, often in a cutting and intense style, and their feelings of contradiction, ambivalence and separation as they rework and learn a new sense of self.

Research into boys and young men, social class and education describes the tensions they can experience as they shape their identities (Warren, 1997; Reay, 2002; Nayak, 2003). Others have considered working-class students' entry into higher education (Archer, *et al.*, 2001; Santoro and Allard, 2003). Two further examples illustrate individuals' commitment to working-class identity, as opposed to the assumed desire to leave it

behind. Claudia Mitchell and Sandra Weber offer the example of Shannon, an experienced high school teacher, taking a stand to express her working-class identity through her choice of clothing (Mitchell and Weber, 1997) and Lyn Tett describes working-class higher education students insisting on being part of their working-class communities (Tett, 2000).

Meg Maguire, an ITE lecturer and former primary school teacher from a working-class background, brings to life the story of a secondary school, working-class, trainee teacher, Karen (Maguire, 1999). I want to hold on to the tensions in social class relations that Maguire highlights, as I reflect on Terry's entry into primary school teaching. Terry, a working-class man in my data, speaks of aspects of his identity with some bravado. I can place the challenges facing Karen, as Meg Maguire sees them, alongside Terry's negotiation of his working-class identity. Terry's career move is unlikely to be a straightforward one into a middle-class culture. I will also need to think about my middle-class gaze on Terry's working-class identity.

Even a brief look at the history of access and entitlement to schooling and the work of teaching shows how gender and social class have been used to produce inclusions and exclusions: the marriage bar was raised and lowered, regulating women's access to teaching as work; teacher training might have been welcomed by working-class women and men who had no alternative ways to further their education, but it was considered inferior. Tensions between middle-class, masculinised universities and working-class, feminised teacher-training colleges, also articulated along the opposing lines of academic and vocational pursuits, echo even today. Social class has long had a particular and difficult relation with state schooling and teacher training. Becoming a teacher may have implied entry into the middle classes, but it was partial and paradoxical: being an elementary teacher involved mostly working-class teachers in teaching middle-class values to their poor, working-class pupils. History shows that contemporary tensions and inequalities are long-standing, as well as highlighting the complicated way that being working class articulates with being a teacher and how this poses questions about acceptability, and the living of difference.

Being understood as older
My own experiences have highlighted age as a gendered feature shaping

identity. When I became a tutor in ITE in my thirties I was positioned as young, in touch with the students and straight from the classroom. My age was a feature in my moves to create a new identity as an ITE tutor. When I became a mother for the first time, in my forties, although this is by no means exceptional, I was positioned as older and my age shaped my understanding of myself, and others of me, as a mother. The majority of men who begin work as nursery or primary school teachers are under 25 years-old (DfES, 2005, see Appendix 4, p. 257). What might be the significance of age for men student primary school teachers? Some research into mature students' experiences creates an unhelpful polarity between men and women, for example as played out in domestic responsibilities (Maynard and Pearsall, 1999). Others study mature women in ITE and concentrate on strategies for surviving the demands of the course (Duncan, 1999).

In the world of work, being older signifies in contradictory ways, making individuals both desirable and undesirable as employees. Mature student teachers are actively recruited, yet there is evidence that other students, tutors and teachers patronise and ostracise them (Quintrell and Maguire, 2000). I was struck by the comment of one second-career teacher in research carried out in America (Powers, 2002). Frank W. Powers quotes the words of a teacher, Kurt, as he tells his principal he is struggling, ' "I'm drowning. ... Now I'm a 45-year-old man saying this to a 40-year-old woman. A man who's been in business for 25-plus years and a corporate executive" ' (Kurt, quoted in Powers, 2002, p. 311). Ageist stereotypes about mature men and women intersect with gendered assumptions about the value of the understandings that older men and women might bring with them and contribute. It is also the case that many young students bring with them the maturity of perspective and experience that is assumed to accompany older age (Thornton, 2001).

As I reflect on the mature students' decisions to enter teaching I will think about the tension between the pragmatics of training for employment, and the enriching experience of education, topics which Barbara Merrill's research addresses in relation to mature women students at university (Merrill, 1999). That tension ties in with long-established debates about how students should be taught to be teachers and with a frequently debated notion that a clear polarity exists between theory and practice.

Similar tensions and unease have been observed in research into adults' expectations on returning to formal education to learn numeracy (Swain, 2004b). The idea of 'self-transformation' in an individual's life course (Britton and Baxter, 1999, p. 188) is a helpful one. The change and social mobility involved in becoming a mature student acts 'as a trigger for the re-examination of masculinity' (ibid., p. 189). Change and students' reconsideration of what masculinity means to them will be important themes for me as I read my data.

Fictional teachers and gendered readings

I have turned to fictional teachers to find perspectives which convey the way gendered identities are played out in the classroom. In popular culture in general, men, boys and masculinity have become a familiar genre, for example, in novels such as *About A Boy* by Nick Hornby (1998), and *Man and Boy* by Tony Parsons (2000), and in films such as *The Full Monty* (1997) and *Billy Elliot* (2000). Where fictional teachers and schools feature in film it is most often men teachers teaching older pupils and succeeding against the odds, for example, *To Sir With Love* (1967) and *Dead Poets Society* (1989). Men working with young children is seldom a theme. One recent film, *Daddy Day Care* (2003), tells the story of two inept fathers setting up and running a pre-school day care centre. Another film, *Kindergarten Cop* (1990), is, unusually, about a male elementary teacher. Canadian university academics and former school teachers Sandra Weber and Claudia Mitchell adopt a cultural studies approach to interrogate the fictional teacher Mr Kimble in this film (Weber and Mitchell, 1995). Their main focus is women elementary teachers in popular culture, but it is their close reading of Mr. Kimble in the role of elementary school teacher, which I will make use of in relation to my own data. Mr Kimble is played by Arnold Schwarzenegger, at the time known as a bodybuilder, former Mr. Universe and the lead in films such as *Conan the Barbarian* (1982) and *The Terminator* (1984) (and in 2003 elected governor of the State of California, USA). Schwarzenegger's identity and past roles are significant: they contribute to the ways the fictitious Mr. Kimble disrupts traditional readings of 'primary school teacher'.

In the film, Mr. Kimble, an undercover police officer, has to take on the role of an elementary school teacher in order to try to solve a drug-

related crime: a kindergarten-age child will lead Mr. Kimble to the mother who is the drug dealer's wife. The plan had been for Mr. Kimble's co-worker, a woman, to take on the role, but at the last moment she falls ill and Mr. Kimble must take her place. Prior to his stint as an elementary school teacher, the film shows Mr. Kimble's intolerance of children and sets him up as a highly unsuitable candidate for a teaching job. In the classroom, at first, this physically imposing man is ineffective: the children run amok. Soon, however, Mr. Kimble establishes his authority, shouting orders at the children and marching them around the class as if they were in 'a 1950s boot camp' (Weber and Mitchell, 1995, p. 98). The humour rests on Mr. Kimble disrupting well-established expectations of what teachers of young children are like and should do. But the humour does not result in embarrassment for Mr Kimble, the teacher. Far from it:

> He is not feminized; and hence not ridiculous, just entertaining, even heroic. Mr. Kimble reconciles the contradiction of doing 'women's work' and being a 'real' man his way, with whistle blowing and police school drills. (Weber and Mitchell, 1995, p. 108)

He is powerful, tough, famous, intolerant, impatient and unqualified for the job. His talent and strength are the features that help him to succeed with the children. The scenes are entertaining, but Mr. Kimble is not mocked because he does not become feminised. His masculinity and his separation from the feminine culture of primary schooling are accentuated and become the reason for his success in the kindergarten class. His pedagogical approach of teacher domination, non-negotiation and strict routines to be adhered to unquestioningly by children, comes over as very effective. His teaching style is in opposition to child-centred methods associated with a feminised culture, and leads to a display of his masculinity, which the viewer is encouraged to see as successful. His approach is lauded by other teachers and he is even offered the principalship of the school. The joke is at the expense of the feminised culture. Weber and Mitchell's analysis of this fictional teacher shows how the film produces and plays on a conflict between femininity and masculinity, between traditional expectations about teachers and the presence and understanding of one particular teacher. In the film, Mr.

Kimble handles the contradiction to his advantage. As spectators, we are invited to see the humour of deriding the feminine. Mr. Kimble is not a figure of fun as a man in a woman's culture. On the contrary, he beats women at their (our) own game. I can think about how dislocation is experienced and understood by individual men student teachers in my data. Terry reinvents the home-corner as a workshop, effectively masculinising this aspect of the primary classroom. In contrast, Dean's arrival in the classroom is met with laughter from the women class teachers, amused by the mismatch between their expectations and the arrival of a mature, man student primary school teacher.

Weber and Mitchell's analysis highlights some slippery, gendered assumptions which position men as potentially successful teachers by dint of their energy, spontaneity and action; and women teachers as relative failures for taking it all too seriously, working hard and following the rules. Understandings of success are inscribed in discourses of heterosexual masculinity. Weber and Mitchell's analysis, and Rebecca Priegert Coulter and Margaret McNay's study of seven men elementary teachers also in Canada (Coulter and McNay, 1993), show men's active production of masculinity and alert me to a contradiction which I think is central: men may disrupt *and* reinforce existing constructions of masculinity and power relations as they become primary school teachers.

Consider two other fictional teachers, Ursula Brangwen and Mr. Harby, created in 1915 in *The Rainbow* by D. H. Lawrence, who worked briefly as an elementary school teacher himself. In this novel, in the chapter entitled, 'The Man's World' we read about Ursula's first experiences as an elementary school teacher and her stressful entry into that man's world of paid employment. For Ursula, teaching represents a means of escape from domesticity, an opportunity to further her education and to become financially independent. Lawrence gives Ursula naively idealistic aspirations as a teacher:

> She would make everything personal and vivid, she would give
> herself, she would give, give, give all her great stores of wealth
> to her children, she would make them *so* happy, and they
> would prefer her to any teacher on the face of the earth.
> (Lawrence, 1915, p. 341)

As she sets off on her first day to teach at Brinsley Street School, there is a sense of impending anxiety and excitement, as Ursula tries to fit in amongst others on the tram on their way to work. When she meets the teachers and sees her classroom, the school seems like a 'prison', both 'fascinating and horrible' (*ibid.*, p. 346). Lawrence describes Ursula's despair and misplaced altruism on her first day as a teacher:

> She winced, feeling she had been a fool in her anticipations. She had brought her feelings and her generosity to where neither generosity nor emotion were wanted. And already she felt rebuffed, troubled by the new atmosphere, out of place. (*ibid.*, p. 347)

Lawrence's depiction of Ursula's move into teaching is a powerful narration of conflicting interpretations of teachers' work. Through the eyes of the young woman Ursula, Lawrence describes the hopes and emotional self-doubts that becoming a teacher can involve. The chapter is underscored by complicated tensions between approaches to teaching attributed as feminine and masculine, in particular approaches to discipline.

Lawrence describes Mr. Harby, the elementary school headmaster, as 'so strong, and so male, with his black brows and clear forehead, the heavy jaw, the big, overhanging moustache: such a man, with strength and male power' (*ibid.*, p. 360). Mr Harby is a powerful, feared authority figure. Ursula sees an incongruity between Mr Harby the man and Mr Harby the teacher, 'imprisoned in a task too small and petty for him' (*ibid.*, p. 360). Ursula is a beginner, full of aspirations to earn her living and teach the working-class children so that they would 'blossom like little weeds' (*ibid.*, p. 341). She struggles to discipline her pupils and is tortured by Mr Harby's contempt for her teaching efforts and his uninvited interventions in her class. I recognise Ursula's feelings of frustration, portrayed vividly by Lawrence. She tries to manage the boy pupils in her class, who treat her with disdain. Ursula loathes the physical violence Mr Harby employs to discipline the pupils, yet comes to see the 'ghastly necessity' of becoming 'an instrument' (*ibid.*, p. 356) with the sole purpose of controlling the pupils *en masse* and imparting knowledge to them. Lawrence describes Ursula's utter despair and sense of failure, when she resorts to beating a disruptive boy pupil:

> Something went click in Ursula's soul. Her face and eyes set,
> she went through the class, straight. The boy cowered before
> her glowering, fixed eyes. But she advanced on him, seized
> him by the arm, and dragged him from his seat. He clung to
> the form. It was the battle between him and her. Her instinct
> had suddenly become calm and quick. ...
> She knew if she let go the boy would dash to the door. Already
> he had run home once out of her class. So she snatched her
> cane from the desk, and brought it down on him. He was
> writhing and kicking. ... In horror lest he should overcome her,
> and yet at the heart quite calm, she brought down the cane
> again and again. (*ibid.,* p. 370)

After the incident, Ursula is trembling violently, upset, strange and fearful. And Mr. Harby will not help her, hating her as a 'stuck-up, insolent high-school miss with her independence' (*ibid.*, p. 376).

What bearing does Lawrence's fictional account have on my analysis? Lawrence's writing about Ursula, a young *woman* teacher, and her struggles with the masculine culture of the elementary school where she works, raises questions for me about her identity as a worker and about her femininity. This emotionally-charged extract is a recognition of the ambiguities that can surround thinking about women as workers, and the tensions and complicated, gendered relations that exist between teachers and their pupils. Lawrence's description of Ursula's emotionally fraught journey as an inexperienced teacher can be read as a working through of Lawrence's own experiences as a teacher: a working-class boy making a transition into a middle-class, female culture of elementary schooling. In a letter written by Lawrence to a woman teacher colleague, he expresses his own difficulties with the authority expected of a teacher:

> I was never born to command. So the lads and I have a fight,
> and I have a fight with my nature, and I am always vanquished.
> I have been setting my foot down - nothing in the world is so
> hard for me as to be firm, hard, stern. I can be cruel, but not
> stern. ... Think of a quivering greyhound set to mind a herd of
> pigs and you see me teaching; forgive the flattering
> comparison. I suppose it will put grit into me, but it is painful.
> (D. H. Lawrence in correspondence to Blanche Jennings, 26
> October 1908, cited in Moore, 1962, p. 31)

Lawrence became an imaginative teacher, in spite of the constant challenges involved in disciplining the pupils (Worthen, 1991) and was not unhappy teaching, though his purpose was to write (Chambers, 1935). His sense of dislocation as an educated working-class man, and his thinking about the changing social and economic relations between men and women are expressed through his writing.

This fictional account, shaped by Lawrence's own understanding of what it means to be a teacher, conveys the centrality of gender and social class to individuals' identities and perspectives. It helps me to keep hold of the importance of teachers' emotional investments in their work and their professional identities. I also have in mind the conforming to or transgressing of masculine and feminine stereotypes. Routine violence has been seen by secondary school teachers as central to constructions of the male teacher, whilst women teachers have been perceived as soft and incapable (Beynon, 1989). Lawrence captures the difficult, sometimes painful, challenge of being a teacher and shows how this articulates with gender and social class, in the midst of conflicting versions of what being a teacher might offer and involve.

Staying with fiction, I can make use of Perry Nodelman's study of masculinity in fiction for children (Nodelman, 2002). Nodelman's use of 'gender-switching' (ibid., p. 10), that is analysing texts having changed the gender of characters in the story, reveals frames of reference which are taken for granted and hard to change. For example, being obedient is constructed as a natural female trait, whereas for boys the same behaviour would be seen to require effort and a suppression of natural mischievousness. What strikes me in Nodelman's argument is that underlying, value-laden understandings are enacted through language and produce difference through everyday readings and judgements of men's and women's behaviours and practices. Nodelman points out that the process of challenging the convention of heterosexual masculinity is complex. Literature which offers versions of non-traditional masculinity may just be setting up different polarities. Feminist academic and former primary school teacher, Bronwyn Davies's research in Australia on pre-school children and gender shows how children read non-sexist fairy tales and go on to interpret them through conventional, heterosexist frames (Davies, 1989). Davies' more recent work with primary-school-age children

61

tells of children's critical reading and writing, which can enable individuals to notice and challenge assumptions, and to learn to understand difference (Davies, 2003). Nodelman's and Davies's research offers explanations of individuals' understanding of themselves and others that are rooted in language that produces difference and can make that difference seem natural, as well as, importantly, allowing for the taken for granted to be challenged and changed.

The changing nature of the literature that I have surveyed in Chapters 3 and 4 can be seen as a transition (as I have said a far-from complete or definitive one) from little or no concern about the gender of teachers, to an active interest in the experiences of women, and then to a more recent focus on men as gendered. This chronology mirrors the context of the development of my own awareness of gender and men which I will describe more fully later: working as a teacher in the 1980s, I had not connected assumptions made about me as a primary school teacher with assumptions made about me as a woman. An introduction to literature informed by feminism enabled me to examine my gendered, professional identity. Now, I am working to problematise gender in relation to men student primary school teachers.

I have shown that mainstream accounts of primary school teachers have rendered men teachers invisible or the object of generalisation and suspicion. Where men teachers did appear in passing, they were dismissed as strange or unfairly advantaged. Some writers sidestep thinking about men teachers as gendered and sexualised individuals, with specific cultural backgrounds. Men teachers' sexuality has become a matter of regulations and procedures in the classroom, covertly referred to in relation to assumptions about child sexual abuse and detached from understandings of masculinities as constructed historically and in context. Others still have wanted to say 'What about the men teachers?' and tell a story of men as victims, straightforwardly marginalised as teachers, at the same time as idealising and homogenising the special contributions 'men' might make as teachers. I have read about men's lives as determined by their biological make-up, and about men as a category of 'not women', stereotyped as the solution to the problem of feminisation. I have encountered men teachers of young children constructed as unchanging

representatives of 'men' detached from time, place and culture. In the light of this literature, it would be easy to construct 'men teachers' as a cohesive, easily-defined group, and to stand in judgement on them or, on the other hand, to take their side, try to speak for them or add their stories to existing accounts.

I have not found research of men student primary school teachers which acknowledges and tackles the complexity of the dilemma of being a woman writing about men student teachers. In existing literature, I cannot find explanations of men students' complex relation to primary school teaching which make space for thinking critically and with tolerance about that relation as a social and cultural process, enacted in language which is anchored in contexts and in history and which works to construct individuals' understandings of gender, difference and professional identity.

Individual men teachers' gendered identities do feature in accounts informed by feminism which problematise masculinity and show power relations at work in specific contexts. Some sociological studies offer interpretations of men teachers in the social world of work and explanations of how masculinities are learnt in educational institutions. Post-structuralist and psychoanalytic approaches produce identity as multiple, and power as contested, not a fixed commodity. Cultural studies, fictional teachers and studies of children's literature that take gendered reading as central can all contribute to constructing the theoretical perspective I need. None of these theories alone can build a contextualised and rich-enough picture of men's complex relation with primary school teaching. I will need to bring together diverse studies which explore identity, difference, language, and contemporary, historical and autobiographical contexts if I am to write an account of men learning to be primary school teachers which disrupts stereotypes, unsettles assumptions and also acknowledges the complex relation between the students and myself.

Part III ANALYTIC FRAMEWORK AND THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Chapter Five: Forms of analysis

If I am to write about men students' complex relation with teaching, then I must make them visible as gendered individuals learning to be teachers at a certain point in time in a specific culture. And if I am to acknowledge that I am implicated in the men's construction of their narratives, then I need ways to make myself visible in the text too. The forms of analysis which frame my approach fall into four interrelated sections: Gendered identity; Difference: the 'gaze' and the 'other'; Discourse and language; Contextualised, critical reading and writing.

Gendered identity

Two examples from my data, which I will work with in more detail in the chapters which follow, illustrate how an individual's sense of self is context specific; individuals are read differently through different discourses in different settings. Max, for instance, describes a male friend who works as a headteacher:

> Yeah, the funny thing is that I've seen him take assembly, you know, several hundreds of children at one time and control them all very well, and I've also seen him at home with his two children and he is absolutely hopeless with two small girls pre-school age, hopeless. (Max)

Masculinity can signify authority at school and can be read as acceptable incompetence in a domestic setting.

When Donny is treated, in his words, rather like a "sugar-daddy" by six-year-old girl pupils, heterosexuality is foregrounded, cutting across discourses which constitute teachers and classrooms as asexual, and young pupils as naive and innocent. Thinking about these examples emphasises that power and a coherent sense of self are not fixed commodities.

Valerie Walkerdine's analysis of a now oft-quoted dialogue between two nursery-age boys and their female teacher, Miss Baxter, makes the same point (Walkerdine, 1998, pp. 63-64). Miss Baxter's authority as

constituted in her identity as 'teacher', clashes with and is undermined by the young boys who take up a powerful position by saying, for example, 'Miss Baxter, knickers, show your knickers.', and 'Take all your clothes off, your bra off.' (*ibid.,* p. 63). The boys position Miss Baxter as a powerless, sexualised woman. According to Walkerdine, who has worked as a primary school teacher herself, Miss Baxter's justification for allowing the boys to talk in this way hinges on her understanding of the naturalness of male sexuality. Miss Baxter is entangled in, and in Walkerdine's analysis, colludes with, discourses which assert that boys must be allowed to express their natural sexuality, so she reads their actions as normal behaviour which must not be repressed.

Within this frame of reference it is difficult not to blame Miss Baxter and, indeed, the vast majority of the numerous students I have discussed this extract with, did so. Walkerdine is right to complicate how we might think about women teachers' authority in the classroom. I hope that shedding light on men student teachers' ambivalence in relation to the assumptions made about them as authority figures and thinking about what seems to be at stake for them, will help me to write about individual men students with a sensitivity, tolerance and optimism which I find it hard to read into Walkerdine's writing about women primary school teachers.

The process by which individuals take up certain subject positions has been called 'investment' (Hollway, 1998), 'negotiation' (Mac An Ghaill, 1996), 'invitation' (McLaren, 1997) and, by French philosopher Louis Althusser, 'interpellation' (see Henriques *et al.,* 1998; Epstein and Seers, 1999). What I take from these terms is the sense of an encounter, where individuals adopt and maintain, or resist and challenge, possible versions of their identities. Such encounters can create feelings of ambivalence, splits in identity or moments of satisfaction, 'a sense of euphoria - the outcome of feeling whole' (Hey, 1997, p. 144).

In Judith Butler's words, 'gender attributes are ... not expressive, but performative' (Butler, 1990, p. 141). A coherent, gendered identity

> produces as its effect the illusion of a prior and volitional subject. In this sense, gender is not a performance that a prior subject elects to do, but gender is performative in the sense that it constitutes as an effect the very subject it appears to express. (Butler, 1997, p. 309)

There is no true gendered self awaiting enactment, so, it follows, there can be no 'real or distorted acts of gender' (*loc. cit.*) and no 'true' masculinity. 'Normal' gender is produced through the construction of 'abnormal' gender. Butler's analysis challenges the idea that culture and discourse '*mire*' the subject, and that identity is determined by discourse. This 'forecloses the possibility of agency' (Butler, 1990, p. 143). Instead, Butler writes of the 'injunction' to be a given gender (*ibid.,* p. 145). I can think about the specific injunctions made of the men student teachers, for example to be a good teacher, to be a student, to be a 'proper' man, to be a caring man. The students work with or subvert those injunctions and in so doing, in Butler's terms, repeatedly create an identity they may appear to be expressing from within.

Humanist notions of a fixed, coherent self cannot help me to understand the complicated processes that the men students engage with and have been rejected by numerous academics (Weedon, 1987; Davies, 1993; Kehily, 1995: Francis, 2000; Britzman, 2003). Similarly unhelpful are assumptions of the intractability of male-female dualism in human identity, a polarity specifically challenged by Bronwyn Davies (Davies, 1989; 2003). Faced with a criss-cross of often contradictory discourses, individuals continually strive to construct their identities. In self-narration a teller simultaneously creates and presents a sense of self (Kehily, 1995). Creating a sense of self is not a smooth, linear progression towards a complete, and then static, unitary subjectivity; it is ongoing through a person's life and characterised by change.

Difference: the 'gaze' and the 'other'

Women have been constructed as 'other' more frequently than men. Woman is a negative in relation to man; woman is marked out by her sex and by her child-bearing potential. In spite of a growing body of research into men as gendered individuals, 'gender' is still more readily associated with women. In the words of French feminist, novelist and philosopher, Simone de Beauvoir, writing in the late 1940s, women are compelled to reflect on their gender in ways that men are not:

> A man would never set out to write a book on the peculiar situation of the human male. ... A man never begins by

66

presenting himself as an individual of a certain sex; it goes
without saying that he is a man. (de Beauvoir, 1949, p. 15)

There is a clear asymmetry of power and entitlement, not two equal parts of
a unified whole, because

humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but
as relative to him. ... He is the Subject, he is the Absolute - she
is the Other. (de Beauvoir, 1949, p. 16)

Difference between men and women becomes not about ways of being,
but about 'humanness' (Paetcher, 1998, p. 9).

Feminist film-studies scholar, Laura Mulvey writes of women as
sexual objects in film connoting 'to-be-looked-at-ness' (Mulvey, 1989a, p.
19). The image of woman is displayed for the 'gaze' of men, 'the active
controllers of the look' (*ibid.,* p. 21). Film has the ability to create and control
the gaze, and the one gazing is a 'he'. In a later article Mulvey specifies that
the male spectator she refers to is a masculinised position, rather than
necessarily a male viewer (Mulvey, 1989b). A female viewer who takes on
that masculinised position may experience alienation or may identify with a
male hero; in either case hers is a position in which sexual difference
suggests restlessness and dislocation.

The gaze and the other have roots in psychoanalysis, a theoretical
approach introduced by Sigmund Freud. Using and reworking the theories
of Freud and of structural linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, French
psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan writes of the concept of the 'mirror stage' as
the point at which an infant recognises 'his own image in a mirror' and
begins to learn 'the formation of the I' (Lacan, 1977, p. 1). Lacan's complex
and abstract theorising has been both used and criticised by feminist
writers (Miller, 1990). Mine is not a psychoanalytic study, but I can make use
of the idea of the gaze and the other, as they offer one way of thinking about
the reciprocity between the men students and myself, and how those
interactions work to construct individuals' gendered identities, which are
themselves relational, contextualised, and enact difference. I need social,
cultural and historical explanations, not a psychoanalytic approach alone, to
account for the inequalities and difference in entitlement and power that are
experienced with ambivalence by individual men student teachers.

I invert and complicate the idea of the male gaze on the female and

the woman as other: the men student primary school teachers I interview are subject to my female gaze; they are other in a culture described as feminized. They handle that gaze. And the men are spectators. They gaze back at women teachers and at me. For instance, Michael says he is of "the old-school, brought up by my mother who's not one of these liberated types". This suggests that his reading of my position is that I represent something approximating to liberal feminism. Michael is, perhaps, trying to subvert my female gaze: what he sees as my hope or expectation that as a man who has chosen to be a primary school teacher, he will be pro-feminist (see Chapter 8). Terry, talking about his ability in technology and mathematics, says, "I'm not blowing my own trumpet. It's just, you know, I am reasonably confident there.". Terry's modesty can be read as a, possibly pragmatic, response to my female gaze: what he might expect to be my disapproval of a stereotypically boastful male image (see Chapter 7). The 'fantasied other' and the ' "un"ordinary' (Plummer, 2000, p. 48) are not straightforward, separate categories, but offer ways of thinking about difference and perspectives. The idea of 'gendered spectatorship' (MacKinnon, 2003, p. 28) can focus my attention on the men's intentions and my place in the men's narratives.

Those who are gazed upon can be objectified as strange, a homogenous group, uncomplicated, pathologised. Usually it is women who are objectified and understood as in a negative relation to work and professionalism, as other to men's entitlement and ordinariness as workers and professionals. The effect of gazing on those who gaze is to maintain them as superior, positioned centrally not marginally in relation to the dominant culture (Plummer, 2000). Difference is not an abstract theoretical idea; it will be important to hold on to 'the variable moral and political weight, and the different dynamics, of difference'. (Ransom, 1993, p. 144). I have been mindful of this in my own writing, though as I have already discussed, positions of centrality and marginality between me and the men student teachers are complicated.

Generalisations about women can, if simply mapped onto men, result in men teachers being understood as lacking (e.g. they may not show long-standing commitment to teaching as women are assumed to do) or ideal (e.g. effective disciplinarians, something women are assumed not to be). I can think about men's objectification and consider how they

might be perceived as lacking, as a negative to the assumed positive of the 'natural' female teacher of young children. The gaze is not all negatively experienced for men, as, at the same time, the gaze idealises them and valorises their assumed qualities as men. Objectified as other in this way, whether positively or negatively, men teachers seem to have no individuality, no subtlety, complexity and context. They seem to be all-too-easy to understand.

The writings of Valerie Walkerdine (1985) and Carolyn Steedman (1986) make visible and challenge the objectification of working-class women. These authors show, in different ways, that the gaze works to confirm the inferiority of those defined as other; it is a learnt social position. In her autobiographical account of growing up in the 1950s, Valerie Walkerdine writes of an experience later in the 1970s, when her middle-class friends show their fascination with gazing at the working class. Walkerdine, in retrospect, sees that those friends wanted to know 'what it was like to *be* like that, the fantasised Other' (Walkerdine, 1985, p. 65). In *Landscape for a Good Woman* Carolyn Steedman upsets any impulse the reader might have to read her story as representative of others' stories. Her narrative is an act of defiance, resisting the simplicity which conventions of working-class autobiography might seem to force onto her, such as romanticised poverty. What I learn from reading these autobiographies is that writers must work to avoid the easy generalisation and simplification of individuals' lives, even their own. The men student teachers I have interviewed have a contradictory relation to primary school culture: they are strangers and heroes as teachers of young children, *and* they are in a central relation with powerful positions in the culture, as (as far as I am aware) heterosexual men.

I will keep a sense of ordinariness in mind, rather than constructing an other as a special group, to be admired or pitied. Ironically, research can disempower those who are its subjects, in spite of intentions to the contrary. Robin Usher and David Scott see this as a persistent concern for researchers, as 'the researched are always objectified (and hence deprived of a voice) whatever the emancipatory intentions of the researcher.' (Usher and Scott, 1996, p. 177). It may not be possible to eliminate the inevitability of 'textual appropriation' (Opie, 1992, p. 53), but I can counter this potential difficulty by adopting a reflexive, empathetic

approach and paying attention to the detail, context and investments of individual perspectives. The relation between the researcher and the researched can involve negotiation, collusion, resistance, agreement and conflict, as power relations are played out through language. I will maintain a questioning stance. I do not intend to appropriate the men's stories and criticise them. I want to adopt sensitive, critical ways to understand the data and to make a commitment to respect the data, not to trivialise them.

Discourse and language

To explore individual men students' complex relation with being a teacher I can also make use of the concept of discourse. From the writings of French philosopher and historian, Michel Foucault, I can see how that which is taken for granted as natural and normal can be seen as historically produced through discourses (Foucault, 1990). Discourses are maintained by individuals in specific contexts and are further legitimated through texts in the public domain (e.g. the media, popular psychology) and through the ideology and practices in schools and ITE institutions. From this position, I can ask how contemporary 'truths' about men student teachers have been produced and have come to seem incontrovertible. What I take from Foucault is a sense of power as relational, context-specific and exercised through language. Individuals have shifting relations with institutional authority. This insight informs my reading of conflict and ambivalence in the men's identities and focuses attention on the intricate, contradictory web of meanings and power relations which position them. Foucault claims that:

> Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it. (Foucault, 1990, p. 101)

Discourses which constitute the fears and fantasies of and about men teachers (good disciplinarians, potential headteachers and simultaneously unsuited to work with children, and potential paedophiles), whilst no doubt perpetuating the idealising and demonising of men teachers, also in theory, in Foucault's words, make possible 'the formation of a "reverse" discourse' (*loc. cit.*).

There are complicated tensions between feminist motivations (for example, to understand and explain sameness and difference between

70

women, and individual women's different relations to power) and Foucault's theoretical perspective (Ransom, 1993; Miller, 1986, 1990). For my part, Foucault's theoretical perspective allows for individual men to be constituted as powerful or powerless in different discursive contexts and in relation to different people (remember Max's friend at the beginning of this chapter). But Foucault's abstract theorising is not grounded in the accounts of actual individual men and their perceptions of the shifting power relations they experience. Thinking about discourse alone will not enable me to examine how individuals in specific social and cultural contexts work to make sense of those contexts and come to know themselves as individuals within them. To do this I need a view of language as contextualised and always intentional and relational.

I understand discourse as shaping (rather than revealing) identity. Discourses construct and maintain 'natural' gender differences. They do not represent and explain them (D. Cameron, 1997). They carry traditions, power relations, values, expectations, fears and desires. There is a dialogic relation, rather than a polarity, between the individual and the social. Language carries the intentions of individuals, intentions which are themselves socially constructed, regulated and maintained (T. Burgess, 1984). Discourse offers a way of thinking about the parameters of how teachers are understood and how individual teachers can understand their professional identities. Discourses frame discussions and explanations; they structure what seems to be sayable and unsayable.

The power of a discourse lies in its apparent common sense, its status as incontestable. Appeals to tradition and well-established assumptions such as masculine authority, operate as 'familiar justificatory strategies', legitimising the positions and perspectives of some and marginalising others (Harding, 1987, p. 3). I can ask how individual men students' stories serve as justifications, accusations or exclusions. Familiar discourses forge patterns of thinking and opinion that can work to silence other possibilities (May, 1997). Possibilities are mapped out through 'narrative conventions' (Britzman, 2003, p. 11) and can try to pull me in, for example, to blaming men, idealising men, feeling sorry for men, seeing men as marginalised. To avoid sliding into these narrative conventions, I will make these discourses, and individuals' use of them, visible.

Identity is learnt through language. Individuals do not straightforwardly draw on a script, but learn through meaningful communication with others. To analyse the struggle to construct a professional identity as teacher I need to bring together theories about language, difference, agency and history, so turn to the writings of two Russian theorists, Lev Vygotsky (1978, 1986) and Mikhail Bakhtin (1986). Vygotsky and Bakhtin consider the dialogic relation between the individual and the social world. 'Each utterance is filled with echoes and reverberations of other utterances' (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 91). There is a 'ceaseless struggle' for meaning (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 132) engaged in by individuals with a social and cultural past, present and future. Context is integral to identity, not an external force operating on it. From this theoretical position comes my refusal to see gender or social class as peripheral and external to identity.

Jane Miller's reading of Vygotsky's work connects Vygotsky's theoretical approach to the learning of self:

> Such a theory - developed in opposition to behaviourist explanations of learning and to structuralist theories of mind and language - makes learning, and particularly the learning of self, a process of strenuous and intention-directed activity, mediated by language and performed always within specific social and cultural relations. So that the learning of 'I' ... has always entailed the learning of 'not I' ... And it follows from this that the learning of identity is also the learning of 'the other' and the 'not self' as well. (Miller, 1990, pp. 126-127)

Vygotsky tackles the highly complex interrelation of thought and language and provides an understanding of individuals' ever-present intentions in language use, of utterances as inextricably entwined with social relations and context. He shows that meanings, including learning a sense of self, are constructed in purposeful interactions with others.

Contextualised, critical reading and writing

Teachers at work in classrooms are not in a vacuum and the contexts within which they work are not separate, external sites. The interrelation of the individual and the social helps to explain the persistence of cultural myths about teachers. Discourses of teacher education that position,

silence and manoeuvre student teachers are central to Deborah Britzman's psychoanalytic examination of what it means to be a teacher (Britzman, 2003). Her intention is not to narrate students' real stories, but 'to trace the invention of the student teacher' (*ibid.*, p. 247). I take this to mean exploring how certain positions are discursively produced, which in my research might be 'men as ideal teachers', or 'men as potential sexual perverts', rather than simply presenting those discourses and the men students' versions of them and responses to them. Language operates in specific contexts, it is not a neutral representation, but is 'ideological and conscriptive' (*ibid.*, p. 237).

Britzman insists on the centrality of a dynamic interaction between teachers as individuals and the 'history, mythology, and discourses of the institutions framing their work' *(ibid.,* p. 26):

> Teaching is fundamentally a dialogic relation, characterized by mutual dependency, social interaction and engagement, and attention to the multiple exigencies of the unknown and the unknowable. ... Once student teachers are severed from the social context of teaching, the compulsion is to reproduce rather than transform their institutional biography. The values embedded in the institutional biography become sedimented, and serve as the foundation for an uneasy acceptance of cultural myths that legitimize and render as natural hierarchical views of authority, knowledge, and power. (Britzman, 2003, p. 236)

Taking a dialogic perspective on learning to teach enables Britzman to consider how student teachers' choices, intentions and understanding of themselves as teachers shape and are shaped by 'difference, history, point of view, and the polyphony of voices possessed by those immediately involved and borrowed from those who become present through language' (*ibid.,* p. 237). Britzman's emphasis on the dialogic, shifts the focus from conversation to the 'conditions of its production' (p. 237). She illustrates how success and failure are constructed, how students' fears and desires are created and how normative versions of the complex context of teacher education produce and structure students' understandings of themselves as teachers.

Bronwyn Davies's analysis of young children's readings of romantic texts concludes that readers need to 'learn how to write and speak new

worlds into existence' (Davies, 1993, p. 148) and the same could be said of teachers. If the ideological becomes accepted as natural, then success or failure is judged in accordance with those apparent norms. Davies argues for critical readings to challenge and break through these constructed norms. The children in Davies' study learn about the 'constitutive and coercive force of the discourses to which they have access' (*ibid.,* p. 169) and begin to resist maintaining the illusion of the coherent self and the dualism of masculinity and femininity. Examining identity formation and the work individuals do to become gendered shows 'I' is not a separate, closed position, but is socially and culturally embedded (Davies, 2003).

Although from different starting points, Deborah Britzman and Bronwyn Davies both place context and language at the heart of their analyses. They emphasise that language enacts and produces learning; what is spoken is not a simple outpouring or delivery of what is in an individual's mind. Understanding language in this way casts a different light on the blame and judgement of others. Individuals are not passive victims though, and, like Britzman and Davies, I want to allow for an individual's agency and the possibility of change.

Historicising my questions and the men students' narratives can lead me to different and sometimes richer understandings. A historical perspective can add depth to contemporary views of the tensions and contradictions which men teachers experience and can unsettle taken-for-granted myths and assumptions. Tracing the development and change of concepts such as masculinity complicates how it can be seen today. The employment of men and women as teachers over time has not been the result of a natural development; tracking employment patterns reveals moves by governments and teaching unions produced by and working to maintain unequal relations to work and professional life for men and women. Without history, and I mean gendered histories about individual men and women teachers working in specific contexts, it would be easy for individuals, myself included, to make a depoliticising, accepting analysis of what it means to be a teacher, which could promote confusion, blame, isolation and stasis, as opposed to understanding, tolerance, connection with others and an openness to the possibility of change.

Context is also personal. I am inextricably involved in this research, as reader and writer. I am a reader of the men's readings of what it means

to be a man and a primary school student teacher. I make my presence as writer clear by writing in the first person. This flies in the face of a long-established tradition in academic writing, which dictates that the author remains invisible. In that academic style the writer uses the passive voice and avoids 'lapses' into the realms of opinion. Feminist academics have challenged academic writing that conceals the agency of the writer, insisting instead that authors who generate texts should be present in them and should declare their perspectives (D. Cameron, 1992; Miller, 1995; Weiler, 2001). Bronwyn Davies uses autobiographical stories to ensure she is visible as author and to show how she has come to see the world in certain ways. Autobiographical stories, she argues, are written as 'evidence of the cultural detail through which we are each spoken/written into existence' (Davies, 2003, p. 178). I will write about the texts the men have created with a consciousness of my position as one 'produced out of storylines and ideas of my culture and time' (*loc. cit.*).

I articulate my investments in this research by providing autobiographical information and acknowledging the diversity of perspectives that individuals operate from, whether they are explicit or concealed. Writing about the data is the outcome of multi-layered interactions: I am interpreting the men's interpretations, creating a text by responding, in language shaped by social and cultural contexts and by history, to the discursively produced storylines of the men. My analysis can be seen as a narrative, creating a text about the students' narratives, and working to construct my voice within it. Writing in the first person fits in with my wanting to be present in this text as an individual with interests and intentions and situated in a specific time and place.

Chapter 6: Research, researcher and researched

Research perspective

Research is not simply a set of procedures to be carried out by lone researchers: it is a 'social practice' (Scott and Usher, 1999, p. 2). I want to give due weight to underlying principles, in addition to explaining my choice of research methods.

It is helpful to have in mind four distinct but related dimensions of the research process: methods (techniques, such as interviews), methodology (theoretical and conceptual framework), epistemology (how individuals know reality, how knowledge is constructed) and ontology (ideas about the nature of reality) (Harding, 1987; Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; Stanley and Wise, 1990). My perspective, which can be mapped across these four dimensions, is based on my wanting rich data, is informed by a feminist approach which takes gender seriously and is sceptical about universal 'truths', and is underpinned by an understanding that individuals, in a dialogic relation with social and cultural contexts and discourses, enact and construct their gendered identities through language.

I do not approach research as an attempt to reveal the world as it really is, in my case telling the men students' real stories. Truth is not lying in wait for discovery; knowledge is mediated, interpreted and constructed, so research does not merely represent or uncover knowledge. Research is a creative process, like writing and like reading. Thinking about research in these ways acknowledges its generative and imaginative aspects. The data that I will present in the chapters which follow (transcribed extracts from interviews I carried out with men student teachers) are fact, as accurate written versions of the men's talk. At the same time they are fictions, in that they are the men's interpretations, their creations of their identities and worlds made into texts by me. Research is carried out from a perspective and I see it as important to declare my perspective and work to reveal and challenge assumptions and others' claims to objectivity. I examine the discursive production of the men students' stories; and the text I produce is *my* discursive production of *their* discursive productions of their worlds. That double hermeneutic frame characterises the nature of the data and my re-presentation and analysis of them.

There are different ways of conceptualising a researcher's own

place in, and relationship to, the research process. For example, a positivist approach would see personal perspectives as a danger, a disease that might contaminate the data. From a positivist viewpoint, a world exists independently of the individuals who inhabit it; facts are revealed by research which marches steadily on in a linear progression. Positivist research claims to work with untainted data which can be analysed neutrally, faithfully represented and repeated and unproblematically extrapolated from. The quality of research in a positivist paradigm hinges on generalisability, replicability and freedom from bias. Those criteria assume and valorise objectivity and separate the individual from social and cultural contexts, and opinion or personal beliefs from knowledge, creating polarities where I see relationships.

Producing the data

My decision to carry out interviews, and the ways I have interpreted that research method, are framed by my understanding of research. I wanted detailed data from individual men. The interviews were the culmination of working with other modes of data collection, which helped me to refine my focus and work my way into the topic.

Prior to conducting the interviews, and working with a colleague, I sent a questionnaire to all the Year 1 primary undergraduate student teachers at the institution where we worked, a total of 334 students: 42 men and 292 women. At this time I had not finally decided to study men students. The questionnaire was intended as an initial trawl for areas of potential research interest and asked questions about the students' decision to teach, their experience and what they thought were the strengths of successful teachers. There was a tick-the-box format and space for brief written comments (see Appendix 5, pp. 258-259, for an example of Questionnaire 1, completed). 31 men and 240 women responded. As I reviewed this data, I felt I was in a familiar world: 251 students (11 men and 240 women) identified 'caring' as a significant strength for teachers and 134 students (14 men and 120 women) identified 'patience'. Repeated themes in the written comments were 'enjoying working with children' and teaching as 'rewarding' work. These responses and comments reflect well-established discourses, in part foregrounded as a result of the tick-the-box format.

77

I wanted a fresh focus for my interest in gender and student teachers. I was becoming increasingly interested in the ways men student teachers related to primary school culture. The initial questionnaire was followed with a more openly-structured questionnaire about students' reasons for choosing teaching, positive and negative experiences at college or in school, and students' strengths as teachers. The questionnaire was sent to the men student teachers in each of the four year groups of the primary undergraduate ITE course, 80 men in total, in May 1994. It was exploratory in purpose, the intention being to gather some data that would stimulate my thinking further. Sixteen completed forms were received (see Appendix 6, p. 260, for an example of a Questionnaire 2, completed).

Reviewing this data written by men students I was struck by some of their comments. Here are some examples, which I paraphrase. One man writes that he is never apprehensive, always confident; another that he feels uncomfortable during college discussions on "women's issues" which to him seem to feature in almost every module. I read of one man's discomfort, when faced with "aggressive feminism", another expresses a feeling that white middle-class males are picked on. One man was made to feel unwelcome when a lecturer said, "That's all, ladies" at the end of a teaching session. Being a lone male in the school staffroom embarrassed one man. Another is worried that giving a child a pat on the head could be taken the wrong way. I was beginning to get a sense of the range and complexity of the feelings and perspectives of the men student primary school teachers.

Interviewing men students would enable me to notice difference and investigate individuals' constructions of their professional identities, as well as reflecting on themes of commonality. Interviews offer opportunities for personal stories to be told. Each man has time and space to talk, and interviews provide the flexibility to pursue specific trains of thought. Loosely-structured interviews, also called 'depth interviews' (Hakim, 2000, p. 35) and 'semi-structured interviews' (Scott and Usher, 1999, p. 110), allow interviewees to guide the conversation and pursue themes and topics of importance to them. The interviews were the context for the creation of the data: they also actively encouraged the men to reflect on their professional identities as men, which is otherwise seldom, if ever, discussed, as they

learn to be teachers.

Working with a colleague who was also interested in gender and men student teachers I wrote to all the men students on the undergraduate ITE programme, 80 students in a total of approximately 1,000 across the four-year course, telling them we were interested in their views, as men, about learning to be teachers. Sixteen students responded, expressing a general interest in the research. These men came to a group discussion, the first of a series of conversations which took place between June and December 1994. Eleven men, all of whom I was acquainted with, agreed to be interviewed and this occurred between 1994 and 1997.

My professional responsibility at this time was, in particular, with Year 1 student primary school teachers. Alongside the interviews, in the early stages, I wanted to examine some more detailed data about students' perceptions of 'teacherliness' and teacher identity. I asked the students to write about their memories of teachers, from their own schooling or from more recent work-experience in schools, and to comment on what sort of teacher they want to be. A form outlining this guidance was given to first year student primary school teachers in the Autumn semester, 1995. 119 students, that is 10 men and 109 women, responded from a total of 387 students (see Appendix 7, p. 261, for an example of a student's autobiographical writing). I collected this data from men and women, as I was considering whether research on men should include comparative material from women. I rejected this option. I had concerns about slipping into polarities between women and men which would mask difference and could detract from paying attention to the detail of and differences between the individual men's perspectives.

My intention with this written data at this point was to glean examples, identify themes and concerns, rather than to analyse the data systematically. Reading the responses from the ten men students, I noticed the central importance they placed on relationships between teachers and pupils and the intensity of their memories of their own schooling. One student relished a memory of colluding with the teacher to carry out a trick on the class; another remembered hating school and being ridiculed by his teachers. The men's aspirations as teachers centred round being liked, making learning enjoyable, showing patience and understanding. These themes and concerns amongst beginning teachers

are not surprises to me. What is of interest is the impression I gleaned from the data of individual men at a point of transition, facing new expectations and relationships, coupled, ambiguously, with a familiarity that stems from their own experiences as pupils. The men's accounts reassured me that the men would produce plentiful, detailed, thought-provoking data. My reading of this written data helped to shape my focus in the interviews, feeding into my thinking as I talked with the men student teachers.

I interviewed nine students with my colleague, and two students myself. Seven interviews were with individual students; four students were interviewed in pairs (with a friend or someone they knew by sight), in both cases with the students' agreement. I interviewed four students a second time, at their request, as they said they had more to tell me. Each interview was about one hour in length and was tape-recorded. I made it clear to the men involved that pseudonyms or first names would be used (their choice), to preserve their anonymity when writing about the data. This resulted in the following eleven names: Terry, Michael, Daniel, Max, Dean, Donny, Jerry, Peter, Gavin, Steven and Jim.

All of the students I interviewed were white Anglo-Saxon men. Statistically this is unsurprising, as ethnic minority students represent a small proportion of student primary school teachers: minority ethnic students represented 7 per cent of all new primary trainees in England, 2002/2003 (TTA, 2005). Yet there is diversity in social class, age, fatherhood and family background, and previous employment amongst the men interviewed. Of the eleven students interviewed, ten are from non-professional middle-class backgrounds and one identifies himself as working class; six are mature students making a career change; four are fathers. I do not claim the group as a representative sample on the basis of which to make generalisations about all men student primary school teachers. And neither are these eleven men completely atypical. Patterns in the data which reflect those in existing literature will suggest that their concerns are widely held. My intention is to work closely with selected extracts from the data, in ways which are trustworthy and transparent (Knight, 2002), to illuminate the processes at work as these men construct their professional identities.

The interviews took place in my office. The use of the tape-recorder

contributes to the formality of the research interview, but concerns about the intrusiveness of recording seemed unfounded. At the start of the interviews, I explained the research to the students, reiterating my interests and purposes and told the students that the interviews would be taped and transcribed, so that I could refer to direct quotations from them. To encourage the students to begin to talk I asked them to tell the story of how they decided to become primary teachers, or, if their final teaching assessment had been completed, I asked them about their experiences in school (I did not want the interview to become confused with or seem like an assessment tutorial). The interviews were loosely framed by a list of questions, which I would use as prompts, if necessary. The questions reflect my professional interest in the men students' understandings of themselves as teachers, in their experience of primary ITE and in their perspective on the research itself. The questions were intended to encourage the men to talk and describe their experiences. They focus on issues which emerged in earlier questionnaires and which feature in the rhetoric and literature about men teachers: careers, being in a minority group and understandings of masculinity:

> What reactions do you get when you tell people you are training
> to be a primary school teacher?
> Is it natural for women to be teachers of young children?
> How do you see your future career in teaching developing?
> If you are in groups in college where you are the only man, how
> do you feel?
> Why are you interested in taking part in this research?
> Do you think you are a 'new man'?

Introducing the terms 'natural' and 'new man' could be read as biased or loaded. The reason for devising the questions was to elicit the men's responses to popular discourses about men and teachers and find out how they negotiate them and learn their professional identities in relation to them. The questions, in the event, were seldom asked, as the topics they covered arose without prompting in the research interviews.

Data I had collected previously, suggested that the men would have plenty to say and, for the most part, this was so. I have a sense of responsibility towards the students and the data, more so because I know the students and the contexts within which they are working.

'My method was to have no method' (Jackson, 1979, p. 79). This is how Brian Jackson describes his approach in his well-known research study of six children starting school. He takes a different approach from the almost-beyond-question mass surveys of his day. Jackson wants closeness, 'Not the measurable, the texture' (*loc. cit.*). I recognise this aspiration: paying attention to the measurable can lead to findings that are reductive. Jackson describes his research model as 'classical ornithology' (*loc. cit.*). For me this suggests careful, patient observation and attention to detail and specifics. The value of his approach was his attempt to give the data space and avoid swamping them with others' theories, but Jackson's metaphor does not recognise the construction of understandings through language, nor the significant relation between the researcher and researched, to which I want to pay attention.

Research relationships and ethical issues

There is a network of intersecting relations between myself and the students in the interview context. These relations form part of the character of this research and also raise ethical issues. As I write about the data, I want to avoid setting up a polarity between researcher and researched. I do not intend to appropriate the men's stories, so that I can comment on them. Instead, I will make critical readings of the data and think about the assumptions and discourses that produce the men's understandings of their professional identities. The detail and difference the data demonstrate work against tendencies to treat men as members of a homogenous group simply deserving of pity or praise.

A male friend who knew of my research topic asked jokingly, 'Met any nice male students lately?'. His question hints at the complexity of my position. He reads 'woman researching men' as unusual and worthy of comment and this is compounded by an assumption of heterosexual attraction between women and men. Interviewing men student teachers means I constitute them as the object of my professional gaze. By inviting the men to be interviewed I draw attention to the men as a group, which may both flatter and threaten them, given the public discourses about men teachers as potential headteachers *and* objects of suspicion. Simultaneously, I am in a position of authority as a former primary school teacher and as a tutor in their teacher-training institution. I am asking them

82

questions about gender which is usually taken to be a woman's topic. Prior to the research discussions and interviews, the men may not have thought very much about gender in relation to themselves or may have considered it irrelevant.

I am a woman interviewing men. I need their stories if I am to make a reading of their interpretations of what it means to be a man and a student primary school teacher. Women who research men invert a long-standing tradition of male researchers marking out the category 'woman' for study (Coates, 2003), yet at the same time, women can be accused of neglecting the inequalities that still confront women and girls (Skelton, 1998). In addition, women researching men might anticipate being asked whether researching men can be a feminist project (Layland, 1990). And in the midst of popular discourses about masculinity, women might be swept into rhetoric asserting that men are a newly disadvantaged group and warrant study. I have to make my way through these entangled discourses as I establish my voice, as a woman making use of feminist perspectives to research gender and men.

The eleven men interviewed volunteered to participate in the research. Why? One said he was "curious" about the research topic; another said he came out of courtesy and others came because they were keen for more men to be encouraged into primary teaching. It might be that the men who chose to be involved did so because they were confident about their professional identities as men teachers, their masculinity and sexuality. It is possible that some of the men felt obliged to volunteer as they knew me as a tutor or may have perceived it as advantageous to be involved.

The complicated relations between me and the students, researcher and researched, are integral to the production of the data and have a bearing on the ways I work with them. In the interviews, there were occasions when the students were slow to talk, when I sensed that they were wary, or apologising for their opinions, and others when they seemed to hijack the conversation. On the back of one of the openly-structured questionnaires, which were to be anonymous, one student had written, 'In case you haven't guessed who the 44 year-old male student is ...' and then given his name. This student subverted the research procedure. These were the ways the men responded to the social and cultural context

of the research interview and constitute an element of it rather than a problem that might invalidate the evidence. As I read Terry's narratives, for instance, I will reflect on his contextualised intentions and his use of particular discourses to construct versions of himself as teacher, in the light of what I think he thinks I expect of him. My analysis will accommodate this reciprocity and interrelatedness, my interpretation of the men's interpretations, and my interpretation of the men's interpretations of me. The nature of my research (woman tutor researching men students, insider-research) throws into sharp relief the significance of the relations between researcher and researched, and the context-specific nature of data. Research involves people, and creates a site of negotiation and conflict, in which balances of power are established, maintained and challenged. I do not see research as a neutral, detached enterprise, although the extent and the nature of the involvement between the researcher and the researched will vary from one research project to another.

As researcher and tutor I have a responsibility to be alert to and counter biases on my part that might arise from the students' involvement in the research. Two of the students were in my teaching group on their primary ITE programme; the others either knew me by sight or had taken individual modules taught by me during their course. Prior to the interviews, I had supervised two of the men in school. Did this make me too involved to be an effective researcher? Would detachment make the research 'better'? Only if I accept the argument that my position as an involved professional has no place in research, because it would contaminate the interviews and their interpretation. I do not think it is possible for a researcher completely to set aside their assumptions, understandings, and perspectives prior to or during the research process. To claim to do so can conceal taken-for-granted positions and disguise them as objective or incontrovertible. My position as researcher is as an interested and involved professional, quite a different view from what has been described as 'the mythology of "hygienic research" ' (Stanley and Wise, 1993, p. 114), in which the researcher is present but entirely separate from the research process. I am present in this text, and this research is part of a wider social, cultural and professional context.

Some researchers, women and men, work to establish friendly

relationships with their interviewees. Feminist sociologist, Ann Oakley, developed close friendships with the women she interviewed (Oakley, 1981). Máirtín Mac An Ghaill, when researching young, black, male and female students, worked to break down potential barriers between teacher/researcher and student by developing informal contacts and socialising with the students, talking, eating, dancing and listening to music with them (Mac An Ghaill, 1991). Such informality between me, a woman, and a group of men students could have been read differently: a frame of heterosexual assumptions could position me as flirtatious, even foolhardy in this context (see Lee, 1997). I was acquainted with the men, but not working closely with them; neither was I trying to foster sociability between us, although I may have adopted a specific position in the interviews.

In the face-to-face interviews the men's reading of my position could have constituted me as the classic 'attentive listener' (Ozga and Gewirtz, 1994, p. 132). And I was, perhaps, actively involved in creating and projecting this version of myself as researcher. Jenny Ozga and Sharon Gewirtz allowed themselves to be 'patronised' (ibid., p. 132) by the retired education policy-makers they interviewed, because it helped them to gain access and information. Like Ozga and Gewirtz, I may have 'select[ed] a useful presentation of self' (ibid., p. 133) to oil the wheels of the research interview, to put the men at their ease and to play down the inevitable hierarchy of what I saw, nevertheless, as an informal tutor-student relationship. The word 'data' has scientific credentials which suggest detachment, objectivity and straightforward truth. I conceptualise data with other priorities in mind. The data I will present were not pre-existing, awaiting discovery. They have been created through interactions between myself and the men students in the specific context of the research interview, which is itself a manifestation of wider social relations between women and men, tutors and students.

Working in the same field as the interviewees enhanced my ability to listen to and empathise with the men (Knight, 2002). I was familiar with the primary ITE contexts within which the men were working. On a practical note, I knew how busy they were and when might be good times to arrange interviews. On the other hand, my approach and my position as an involved researcher could be criticised for lacking objectivity or for over-familiarity

with the context. I accept that my involvement is a characteristic of this research and has a bearing on it. It would be fair to say that the gaze that I am able to cast on the men student teachers is constructed through my own professional background; an 'outsider' might see things differently.

It is difficult to imagine possibilities and interpretations beyond those framed by what is familiar. Two experiences come to mind. First, somewhat accidentally, some time ago, I found myself at a management conference attended almost exclusively by men secondary school teachers. This helped me, in startling ways, to see myself as others see me. I found myself repeatedly having to counter assumptions about women primary school teachers. Second, studying for a Masters degree in Education in the early 1990s alongside professionals who work in different teaching contexts, from nurseries through to universities, forced traditions and long-held expectations into the open, as well as shedding light on shared concerns. I mention these autobiographical moments as they illustrate the significance of context and surprise in learning. I will return to these ideas when I consider pedagogical implications for primary ITE.

No research approach is neutral (Walsh, 2001) and neither a researcher's involvement nor their detachment guarantees validity (Hammersley, 1993). All data and research accounts should be read in the light of their being produced through social practices that take place in specific contexts (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983), not only insider accounts such as mine. Being acquainted with the students emphasised for me that the men were at a significant point of transition in their lives as they worked to embark on their teaching careers. I had a working-relationship with them, and found it, in the main, easy to engage with them and their ideas, feelings and experiences as student teachers.

One male work-colleague told me that aspects of this study could be too controversial and advised me to choose a different topic. He was, I think, referring to assumptions made about men's sexuality and the sexual abuse of children. I do not see these issues only as topics awaiting introduction in the interviews. I see them as already-present, even if unspoken, discourses shaping the research interviews, as was my presence as a woman and tutor. I want the men to talk in detail about themselves and I want to protect their interests. In the interviews, I ask the

students questions about being men and teachers, with a view to enabling them to determine how they talk about sexuality and risk. These are sensitive subjects: they could involve potential costs or unwelcome consequences to the participants (Lee and Renzetti, 1993). Individuals might disclose information in a research interview which they do not want to be identified with publicly. Others who have researched teachers' sexuality point out the fear of disclosure that gay men and women teachers often feel (J. R. King, 1997, 2000; Silin, 1997). The men's interpretation of the interview context and their handling of the research topic are features which have a bearing on the stories they choose to tell. How might I respond if a student expressed views that were, for example, homophobic or deemed perverted? In all research there are questions of confidentiality and anonymity for the researched, and responsibility and intent for the researcher. Where issues of gender and sexuality are being discussed by future teachers, who will be in loco parentis, and who have a professional duty to foster equality of opportunity, they take on added weight and importance. The nature of the responsibility is particular, because of my position as a tutor in the same teacher training establishment, but the ethical dilemma would not be removed had I interviewed students from another institution. With hindsight I can say that no comments of serious concern were directly made by the students; the men's reading of the interview context and topic and their relation to it and to being teachers probably precluded it anyway. Some of the students expressed stereotypical assumptions and, later, I will reflect on what they said and on the ways I think similar comments might be handled in the university classroom.

When Christine Skelton talked with men teachers about physical contact with pupils (Skelton, 1991, 1994), there were quite unexpected outcomes after the research had been reported. In 1995, one of Skelton's interviewees was sentenced to imprisonment for indecently assaulting young boys. Nothing had been said in the research interviews to suggest this man was abusing children (see Sikes, 2000). Pat Sikes felt that she too had been deliberately misled by an interviewee, when involved in life history research into parenthood and teachers' professional perceptions. Sikes discusses possible reasons for the interviewees' 'lies' in her own and Skelton's research: refusing to take part in research could be

construed as suspect; the collaborative atmosphere of interviews could make colluding in a particular identity construction easy (Sikes, 2000). From Sikes's reflections on the revelations about her and Skelton's interviewees, I take a sense of research as temporal and transient, open to different readings at different points in time. My reading of the data I have can only be contextualised interpretations and my writing a pinning-down of my thinking at a specific time.

Specific research methods do not guarantee ethical research. I find it useful to think of ethics not as technical procedures, but as principles. Wendy Hollway and Tony Jefferson have paid careful attention to ethical issues in their research into fear of crime (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000). They identify honesty, sympathy and respect as central principles. Reading Hollway and Jefferson's text, I take honesty to mean working with the data in an open, enquiring way. Sympathy involves avoiding judgements which alienate the interviewees and position them as 'other'. Respect means listening and paying attention to interviewees (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000, pp. 100-102). In the interviews and in handling and analysing the data, I work from a basis of respect, not in a hierarchical sense, but respect in the sense of listening to and taking people seriously (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000). Mindful of my position as an involved professional I have taken care to adopt principles of integrity and reflexivity. Ethical and epistemological issues are related: each has a bearing on the interests and treatment of the research participants (Stanley and Wise, 1993). Research is always about and imbued with values. My intention is to notice embedded assumptions and perspectives and to reflect on the ways they have contributed to the production of the data I have. Reflexivity about my role as researcher helps me to understand the interactions and power relations involved in carrying out research (Scott and Usher, 1999; Delamont, 2002). The data, and the text that I am creating based upon them, are embedded within social contexts and practices.

Handling the data

From the interviews, I have approximately twelve hours of tape-recorded conversations. Transcribing the interviews created fifty-five pages of spoken words. The data represent an accurate record of the students' comments on the occasion of the interviews, but I will not treat the data as a simple

repository of the truth. The data, talk captured and presented as written text, must be considered in the context of their formation.

My approach has been methodical: I have read and reread the data many times. My approach is both speculative and reflexive, systematic and rigorous (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). During my first readings, I was getting to know the scope of the data, looking for patterns and shared concerns expressed by the men. I identified broad themes, adopting, in general, a 'grounded theory' approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), in which the coding of the data is an ongoing process alongside data collection, analysis and the generating of theories. This approach allows for, even welcomes, shifts in focus as research progresses. I have adopted a reflexive position: I recognise that analysis is a creative process and that other readers might have made different decisions. Mine is one reasoned and justifiable re-presentation of the data. I organised the data into meaningful units in thematic categories and in relation to individuals' contributions. This aspect of the analysis is an inductive, data-led activity (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996), also informed by my knowledge of existing literature and popular discourses about men teachers. Data collection, sorting, analysis and writing have been interrelated, cyclical processes for me. Reading through the data, I looked for common themes and then noted all references to them. I then searched for related ideas or feelings, either expressed directly or through suggestion. I paid attention to what was not said, silences and gaps. I noted ambiguity, contradictions and backtracking. Categories took shape and were refined through this process.

The categories created during the repeated readings of the data form an organising framework for me to handle and then select from the data as a whole. The groupings reflect significant topics in the data: deciding to be a teacher; family; careers; teaching as work; discipline and domesticity in the classroom; sexuality and child sexual abuse; the primary ITE course. I initially organised my analysis around these themes, but soon realised that this alone would not coincide with my commitment to think about the detail of individual students' narratives. In response, I planned to focus on one student, Terry, and on one conversation of particular interest, between Michael and Daniel, in addition to working with themed extracts from the men students' stories.

89

To work with manageable quantities of data, I had to make selections. Where I have edited these extracts this is indicated (...). I chose extracts from the data for several different reasons. I wanted to convey common themes and concerns without unnecessary repetition, as well as points of conflict and uncertainty. I have worked to show diversity and commonality. Also, I have included extracts that struck me as significant because they were emotionally charged in some way, for example where a student laughed, hesitated, seemed embarrassed or expressed his views forcefully. I mention this in the data, where relevant, and also add words of explanation or brief comments for clarification, in square brackets, i.e. [ ] .

I am aware that others create typologies of men teachers from their data (Goodman, 1987; Mac An Ghaill, 1994). Mac an Ghaill devises three male secondary school teacher styles: The Professionals, whose mode of masculinity emphasised authority, discipline and control; The Old Collectivists, whose masculinity was shaped by their responsibilities in school for special needs and pastoral care and who supported anti-sexist initiatives; and The New Entrepreneurs, for whom masculinity hinged on ambition and welcoming government initiatives that, for example, increase teacher accountability (Mac an Ghaill, 1994, pp. 19-21). His research highlights a complex relation between identity, ideology and masculinity in the face of change. Mac an Ghaill acknowledges that identifying 'types' can be problematic and insists that the categories are unstable, not fixed. However, typologies and hierarchies of masculinities can seem to suggest that individuals are allocated to a category, and that, once learnt, gender identity is static (see Skelton, 2001b, p. 174). I have decided not to construct typologies of men student teachers: to do so would detract from the significance of context and run the risk of overriding difference and any sense of ambiguity or change.

My decision to sort the data through my own critical readings, rather than via computer software rests on my understanding of the data as texts, and of language as not simply a literal representation of thought, but as imbued with social relations and values, intentions and investments. Words may seem to tumble from an individual with ease, but the work they do is complex. Individuals may talk about specific topics or leave things unsaid, for many and different reasons. My reading and rereading of the data meant I got to know them well and this helped me to work on my

analysis, see connections and make comparisons as I went about investigating the ways individuals work to position themselves through and in relation to specific discourses.

I have organised the data and selected extracts from them, based on my critical, interested readings. Some researchers are concerned with the veracity of what is remembered (Foddy, 1993; Baddeley, 1979) and others with the evolution of a true self (Abbs, 1974). I understand the men's narratives as constructions of self, past, present and future. Memory is selective and creates and recreates the past; events are given form and purpose in relation to contemporary and past concerns. Students' narratives of their teaching experiences are not straightforward accounts of past events, but make those experiences into something with meaning.

There are no graphs and definitive data categories in this study. Presenting research findings in these ways has a place and claims status in the academic world through association with order, rationality and reliability, but those methods would not help me to present my findings about an individual's making of meaning and the dimensions of a culture. They would not reflect the research processes or what I think can be learnt from the evidence I have. Writing about data will involve me in a process of giving shape, order and coherence to the men's narratives and my reading of them. I accommodate, rather than override, difference, similarity, ambiguity and emotions.

Some of the students' views may be representative of a wider group, but I am not driven by a need to generalise. Claims for generalisability can be made only tentatively from this data. And these should be made with caution and coupled with a commitment to retaining a sense of the importance of individual differences. The driving force for me is working to understand the gendered identities of individual men student primary school teachers. The men students' stories enable me to explore how they negotiate a culture which is familiar (they have all been to primary school) and, at the same time, unfamiliar to them as teachers entering a so-called feminised world of work.

As I read and analyse the data I have selected, I will think about the assumptions that underpin the students' perceptions. I will read the students' readings of learning to be primary school teachers and think

about the ways the individual interacts with the social. Reading the texts I can consider inclusion and exclusion. Which viewpoints in public discourses have the students taken to be common sense? What meanings are they investing in and what are they resisting or ambivalent towards? Do the men see themselves as part of the culture of primary schooling or observers on the outside?

I am positioned in particular ways in relation to these texts. My background as a primary teacher and my work in primary ITE make me an interested and informed reader, an insider. As a woman I am an insider, assumed to be a natural teacher of young children. Yet as a woman primary school teacher I am inserted into discourses which hold me responsible for a feminized culture in schools and confront me with calls for more men teachers to put things right. Reading my data and writing about the men are processes framed by my professional and personal perspectives. Reading and writing enact my constructing a place and an identity, at a specific moment in history, amidst conflicting, interrelated discourses, in relation to which the men student teachers are also actively negotiating their gendered professional identities.

As I examine how men learn their gendered identities as student primary school teachers, I will take the learning of gender and identity as ongoing, purposeful, contextualised processes, mediated by language. I can think about the men student teachers' interactions with discourses, such as those which protect the boundaries and privileges of heterosexual masculinity. I approach my analysis of the data with identity, difference, language and context at the forefront of my mind; contradiction and ambivalence permeate those themes.

Part IV TURNING A SPOTLIGHT ON
MEN STUDENT PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Reading and rereading the data, I have been struck by the constant work the men do to make sense of their feelings and experiences as beginning teachers. I have been surprised by the conflicting discourses they contend with and the strength of the emotions they express. Their concerns may have been predictable from the literature and publicly-expressed rhetoric, but the inherent paradoxes and the complexities of the men's investments in specific narrative constructions of their professional identities, were less so. I see each man grappling with contemporary discourses about masculinity which position men as desirable, authoritative, successful primary school teachers, the ideal of heterosexual masculinity *and* as completely unsuited to teaching, objects of suspicion, inadequacy and terror: effeminate, homosexual or sexually perverted. Although there are similarities between the men's stories, as I have thought about each man's testimony I have witnessed how generic assumptions about men as primary school teachers mask what I see as each man's individuality and the specificity and complexity of each man's ongoing task to construct a coherent professional identity.

The conversations with the men student teachers arose from my professional interests and involvement as a tutor in primary ITE. In my work I meet few male student teachers, but an interest in gender, and previous work on the place of women as primary teachers, led me to become increasingly interested in the men students' experiences as they learn to be primary teachers. How do they make sense of their moves into the 'feminised' culture of primary schooling within the context of current rhetoric which idealises and demonises men as teachers? And how might I, as a woman and a tutor working with student teachers, find or create a place in that rhetoric for what I know and understand?

In the next three chapters I present and analyse extracts from the data. I begin with one student, Terry, whose narratives raise the central topics which I pursue through my analysis: careers, masculinity, social class and learning to be a teacher. Then I work with a conversation between Michael and Daniel. Finally, I introduce Peter, Gavin, Max, Dean, Donny, Jerry,

Steven and Jim and consider some stories of becoming a teacher from all eleven men. Analysis of the ways the men students construct coherent, satisfactory versions of themselves as teachers raises questions about teaching as work for men, about control and regulation, domesticity, sexuality and the men's experience of being the object of another's gaze. As I encounter the men's narratives I gain a sense of the ambivalence, contradictions and paradoxes that they are experiencing and the accompanying satisfactions and anxieties that they feel.

I will introduce each student briefly during the course of these chapters to provide the reader with background information and my impression of each student. These brief comments are not intended to be fixed descriptions of the men's characters. The descriptions may shape others' readings of the men's narratives, just as my impressions of the men interact with my interpretations of their stories. The thumbnail sketches provide necessary and helpful context, as they point out where each man is in his life (for example, whether teaching represents a career change) and give a sense of how the men's characters come across in the interview context.

Chapter 7: Terry's stories

I find Terry's stories fascinating and have written about them before (Smedley, 1998). They are not to be read as representative; Terry is typical in some respects, unusual in others. Terry is a white, Anglo-Saxon, working-class man in his 40s. He is a third-year undergraduate student teacher, married and with two daughters. Prior to starting his teacher-training he had worked with his father running a construction company. My impression of him was of a confident, talkative, pragmatic character.

Deciding to become a teacher

> Most of my family were gobsmacked really and they know me well enough to know that if I want to do something I can do it and they said, 'I hope you know what you're doing' and then, 'Get on with it'. They're pretty supportive. So that's it really. Most people – I've had some reaction – most people say you're very brave. I don't really see it as brave. It's something I want to do and I'm doing it - not particularly brave. (Terry)

As a man, Terry's decision to become a primary school teacher is atypical; as a working-class man in his 40s even more so. His gender, social class and maturity set him apart from the majority in primary ITE. In this extract Terry plays down his decision to become a teacher at the same time as acknowledging the complete surprise with which his decision was received. He emphasises his position as determined and capable. Other people's suggestion that teaching is a "very brave" choice for Terry, positions him as noble and to be admired: bravery is a classic manly attribute and operates here as resistance to possible assumptions that Terry's decision to be a teacher of young children is a negative one, the result of a lack of alternatives or ability. Recall the 'brave' men primary school teachers, referred to in the *Plowden Report,* (Department of Education and Science, The *Plowden Report,* 1967, cited in H. Burgess, 1989, p. 85), which I noted earlier (see p. 23). By mentioning and then dismissing people's comments about his bravery, Terry can tap into discourses which bolster him and make him seem special and manly *and* avoid accusations (which he might anticipate from me) of revelling in undeserved admiration. Terry shows some modesty and makes his

decision to become a primary school teacher seem a little more ordinary.

Terry had worked in the building trade for about 18 years and was running a company with his father. His work involved physical labour: traditional, acceptable work for a working-class man. Now Terry is "really just fed up" with the administrative and physical demands of the job. Terry is emphatic that he had not wanted to become a teacher when he left secondary school, "absolutely not". During the interview he mentions fatherhood: he finds that he can "get on pretty well with kids". He cites fatherhood and his experiences as a Scout group leader as influencing his decision to become a teacher. His motivation is towards a new job and career. A lot is at stake in a career change for Terry.

Terry's decision to become a teacher does not rest on a family history of education and schooling:

> Because my father was in the building industry it was the last place he wanted me to be ... I was encouraged to get educated, but never actually took it. (Terry)

He does not talk about loving school or mention teachers whom he admires or wishes to emulate. His story is not one of a long-standing commitment to teaching.

I chose to become a teacher after I had been to university. I could easily see myself in the job. I may have been sketchily aware of it, but history, traditions, literature and statistics were all on my side. Women's motivation to teach young children is constructed around ideas of lifelong vocation, care and love of children. It would be easy, in the light of prevailing discourses about women's long-standing commitment as a revered trait for intending primary school teachers, for Terry's perspective to be construed as a lack and pathologised. Some generalisations and common-sense expectations about who might make a good teacher of young children have been based on discourses relating to being a woman, heterosexual femininity and motherhood. Becoming a teacher is not an unproblematic move for women, but the transition into primary school teaching for Terry hinges on a different yet related set of ideas and assumptions. Men's motivation is constructed around advantageous career prospects, having business skills to offer or around negative assumptions about intellectual inadequacy, or sexually perverted interests

in children.

Opportunity and obligation

> On inquiring about it, I found that I needed a degree to actually teach, there was no other way of teaching ... to get a wage I could live on ... It was a bit of a strange thing for me, because I come from a very working-class background and where I come from, the society I come from, nobody ever went to college, it was the exception ... so I dug out what qualifications I'd got and found out what else I needed, went out and got them and wound up here really. (Terry)

Terry continues his matter-of-fact approach in discussing his move into higher education. His working-class background does not bother him. He does not come across as a modest character, but, for all his confidence, he says later that he was surprised when he passed a mathematics assessment, having failed it twice. He thinks that he is fulfilling the stereotypical assumption that as a man he will be good at technology and mathematics:

> I think people - I don't know, it's difficult to say whether they expect more from me. They expect me to be good at technology, they expect me to be good at maths, then I *am*. So, I'm not blowing my own trumpet. It's just, you know, I am reasonably confident there. (Terry)

Terry might read this as a potentially awkward position in the context of a research interview with me about gender. His caveat that he is " not blowing his own trumpet" and his use of the word "reasonably" suggest an attempt to block any response I might make that he seems conceited or cocky. Terry's comments pose questions about learning gender and learning social class. Terry's decision marks a big change in his own life and that of his family. He acknowledges this and approaches it with pragmatism.

Terry goes on to describe his background as "very working-class". I want to resist slipping Terry's story into narrative conventions which construct the working-classes as a group to be simultaneously admired, idealised, derided and blamed. I want to examine the complexity of his position and his moves into teaching, his understanding of which is constructed out of the 'fantasies and fictions which have been made to

operate as fact' (Walkerdine, 1998, p. 28).

Reading Meg Maguire's account of Karen, a mature, working-class woman student teacher, helps me to think about Terry (Maguire, 1999). Maguire analyses Karen's experiences on teaching practice in an all-boys secondary school which has a middle-class ethos. Karen feels strongly that she does not fit in. She insists on maintaining her working-class identity, refuses to change her accent and challenges what she sees as injustices in the school. Maguire describes Karen as excluded, mistrusted, barely tolerated and thought to be best-suited to teaching working-class boys. She uses Karen's story to demonstrate the ways history and culture shape the process of becoming a teacher. The process of 'gentrification' (*ibid.,* p. 13) of trainee teachers in the past, and contemporary trends of selection, choice and marketization, construct the idea of the desirable and the less desirable teacher (*ibid.,* p. 14). This specific context shapes the contradictions Karen experiences as she learns to be a teacher.

Both Karen and Terry seem to demonstrate bravado in response to being positioned as 'other' in the culture. Terry does not slip in to primary school teaching unnoticed. In contrast to Karen, though, Terry is able to deploy discourses which constitute his working-class background and prior experience as an advantage. For Terry being working class can mean he is identified with a social group respected for its aspirations through education, the 'working-class-boy-made-good'. Terry may be read as a 'fantasised Other' (Walkerdine, 1985, p. 65), a lucky man who is going to 'make it' out of his inferior social class. Such a romanticised reading of his experiences may draw him in: it has some positive connotations and offers feelings of success, but at the same time it is clearly predicated on bestowing on the working-classes a 'psychological simplicity' (Steedman, 1986, p. 7) and an underlying view of working-class identity as inferior, something to be left behind, escaped from, and that reading of his position Terry might well wish to reject.

Joyce, a fictional character in Tessa Hadley's novel, *Everything Will Be All Right,* comes from a working-class background (Hadley, 2004). I can place Joyce's thoughts alongside the narratives of Terry. Hadley's story traces one family's life from the 1950s to the present and is of interest to me for one of its underlying themes of education and schooling and for the ways gender and social class underpin the perceptions and behaviours of

the characters. Joyce's Aunt Vera, a secondary school teacher, told Joyce stories of her parents' hatred of learning, how her father threw one of her books into the fire and how she had to read in secret at night. Vera had a commitment to learning and to a teaching career as a way out of the tedium of domesticity. Joyce passes her exams and gains a place at Art School. She enters a world that represents, for Joyce, escape, beauty, all things fashionable and desirable. Here, Joyce describes her thoughts during a conversation between men and women students at Art School:

> Joyce could have told everybody that her father had worked as a lowly porter on the railways; but the girls didn't seem quite as keen to own up to their working-class roots. Everyone had their idea of a rough-hewn male hero with cap and muffler and coat collar turned up... but there didn't seem to be any glamorous aura attached to his female equivalent. (Hadley, 2004, pp. 108-109)

There is an awkwardness about this for Joyce. She knows that her working-class background signifies differently from the way it signifies for the men. Hadley has Joyce notice that one man keeps quiet about his middle-class background, while the others are bragging about their working-class roots. The image of the 'rough-hewn male hero' exists for Terry, making it easier for him to identify positively with his class background. His position affords him gains. Moving into the culture of primary schooling, Terry's maturity and his heterosexual masculinity can be made to work to his advantage. Working-class women, on the other hand, are readily pathologised and sexualised (Skeggs, 1997; Walkerdine et al., 2001). Beverley Skeggs, working-class, Marxist feminist academic, explains how she can proudly (though not unproblematically) declare her social class, because she has made economic and cultural middle-class gains through her moves into academia (Skeggs, 1997). Those gains counteract the negativity associated with her social background.

Gender and social class are part of and have an impact upon individual student teachers' sense of self and others' perceptions of them. Terry's working-class background did not leave him with the feelings of doubt and insecurity described by working-class feminist academics. Terry is able to construct a confident and valued identity as a student primary school teacher. Even so, Terry's position is not a straightforwardly

unproblematic one.

What does primary teaching offer Terry and what he is expected to offer as a teacher? There can be awkwardness in discussing the deeply entrenched divisions of social class, but Terry readily refers to one distinct aspect of his background, namely his spoken language. Terry raises the subject confidently:

> I'm sure there are stereotypes, but I'm not sure that I'm going to conform to them. I don't speak Standard English as most of the other teachers I know do. I try, but I don't actually speak it all the time, especially when I actually start working. Once my mind is focused, I'm communicating with children, especially when they talk with the same accent as I do. I find I could revert back to normal talking, which is not very tidy . My standard of English, it gets me by . (Terry)

His reference to his "standard of English" and "normal talking" illustrate the values he understands to be invested in different ways of speaking. Terry is talking about accent and dialect, and his are from South East London. Current trainee teacher requirements state that entrants must be 'able to communicate clearly and accurately in spoken and written Standard English' (TTA, 2002a, p. 14, R1.6). Here is a norm against which students will be measured. The insistence on *spoken* standard English for all trainee teachers is strengthened by popular discourses which legitimise fears of the unruly behaviour and ignorance of those who say 'it ain't' or 'we was', and the superiority and culture of those who speak 'properly'. Such requirements were not officially documented when I trained as a teacher in the 1980s. Coming from a middle-class family in West Sussex, my relation to Standard English is unlike Terry's. His accent and dialect mark him out, while mine are so normalised that when I have asked student teachers about my accent, they say I do not have one.

Terry's move into teaching involves a cultural shift which opens up the possibilities of conflict and poses questions about acceptability. Terry may be moving up in terms of social class, but the shift could be an uneasy one. I can place Terry's position alongside the experiences of the Victorian rural police force (Steedman, 1984) and working-class girls at elementary teacher training college (Widdowson, 1980). Some working-class Victorian policemen found themselves policing those from their own social

background and were ridiculed for that. They earned their place by being working-class, but then had to wield authority and guard middle-class values in their daily work (Steedman, 1984). The working-class girls who gained a higher education, of sorts, by attending teacher training college and later becoming elementary teachers also found themselves in a contradictory position in relation to social class. They learnt to conduct themselves in appropriately moral and respectable ways at college, but were not fully accepted as middle class. As elementary schoolteachers they taught middle-class values to working-class children, a contradictory position, as they had been working-class children themselves (Widdowson, 1980).

What are Terry's experiences, as he negotiates a place in a culture which seems to value his 'down-to-earth' common sense *and* split being a working-class man from being positively associated with schooling and being a primary school teacher? I can make use here of the work of women academics from working-class backgrounds to help me to answer this question and to analyse Terry's transition into teaching (Walkerdine, 1990; Hey, 1997). The emotional intensity of their reflections is striking. Valerie Hey uses her experiences as a woman academic with a Northern accent to explore subjectivity and social class. She describes the split between readings of a Northern, working-class identity and those of middle-class academia. There are constant negotiations and conscious translations as she works to find her voice(s) as an educated woman. This living of difference is central to Hey's understanding of subjectivity, and it hinges not just on diversity but on power and inequalities. She puts it like this, 'It is the role of our affective and psychic stakes in difference which indicates that letting go of these affinities is neither definitive nor unproblematic.' (Hey, 1997, p. 144). I am particularly fascinated by Hey's perspective on the hold of certain social and cultural dimensions of individuals' identities. She writes of 'the 'under the skin' sense of an intractable (working-class) class identity' (*ibid.*, p. 143) and describes herself as 'saturated both by its legacy and its appeals' (*ibid.,* p. 144). What is under Terry's skin?

Terry experiences a complete change to his working life, moving from the building trade to primary ITE. He is confronted with a work context which retains a public image as feminised, at times infantilised and middle

class. He moves from practical, skills-based work to intellectual work, albeit frequently derided for its low status as such. In response he must re-imagine himself as a man and a teacher. When Terry talks about his South London accent he emphasises his ability to tune in with his pupils. His relatively late entry into higher education and teaching can then be read as a practical, wise decision. My own role in Terry's construction of his identity must also be considered. Terry volunteered to be involved in the research, but my interest in his perspective as a mature, working-class man will have heightened his existing awareness of the specificity of his position in primary ITE and encouraged him to consider and construct satisfactory narratives of his identity as a man and a teacher.

Compare Terry's position with Valerie Walkerdine's sense of inadequacy: her desire to move into the academic world coupled with always feeling that she will be 'found out' to be just a working-class girl and a primary teacher. Walkerdine writes of the 'terrifying desire to be somewhere and someone else: the struggle to 'make it'. (Walkerdine, 1990, p. 175). There seemed to be no place for her background and experiences; she did not belong. Later, as a researcher observing a working-class family, the tables were turned: Walkerdine notes the 'sense of surveillance' which regulated what the family she was studying said within her hearing (Walkerdine, 1990). Terry does not give the impression of being reluctant to speak out, but that does not preclude his experiencing a subtle yet firm pressure that discursively produces and regulates what he can say.

Becoming a teacher can be read as moving up socially, but teaching young children is not a high status profession. As a working-class man, Terry's position is complex: advantaged, obligated, marginalised, different. He is neither straightforwardly privileged nor a member of an oppressed minority. Terry experiences dilemmas and satisfactions in crossing and staying within boundaries, as he moves into a culture laden with a gendered history. His gender and class may be real advantages to him, while at odds with one constructed norm of the primary school teacher as female and not conspicuously working-class. Terry reworks the split between being working class, and being a student primary school teacher:

I'm going to have a lot to offer a school. ... When I go for my

interview I'm going to be able to say ... I come from a different world, but I'm bringing a lot of experience from that world into your school. (Terry)

Terry promotes himself as a teacher, making a virtue of his atypical background. He does not expect to feel alienated; far from it. Discourses of working-class masculinity inscribe men with valued potential to control unruly boys and impart a no-nonsense version of heterosexuality to them. An unease may remain, but Terry narrates himself as authoritative and capable as a student teacher, producing a wholeness and sustaining a coherent sense of his professional identity as a working-class man and student primary school teacher.

Stories of a family man

It makes you stand there and say, am I a chauvinist pig? ... My family ... which I am head of really ... I mean, if my wife wants to get fifty quid out the bank, she asks me. What are you asking me for? But she does. ... She was brought up in a world that was different to mine. ... I feel my lifestyle is being looked at critically, not by anyone in particular, but it suggests my lifestyle is all wrong, but then that comes from the family's kind of attitudes anyway. I can't argue with them, a lot of them are justified. (Terry)

I can read Terry's comments as a working-through of the tensions between his understanding of two cultures: his working-class background and the middle-class culture of higher education and ITE. Terry tackles headlong the possibility that my reading of his position is that he is a "chauvinist pig". Terry senses that his way of life can be seen as deficient. His relationship with his wife does not coincide with middle-class versions of a supposed equal footing between husband and wife, and the economic independence of women. Terry declares himself as the head of the family, the breadwinner and controller of the pursestrings. Terry's classed masculinity is defined through what Valerie Walkerdine describes as the 'wardship' of a dependent wife, whose work is confined to the domestic sphere (Walkerdine, 1990, p. 178). Terry's expectation that he must shoulder the responsibility for protecting and providing for his wife and family derives from long-established traditions about working-class fathers. Terry finds

himself in a complicated place. He is caught up in several conflicting discourses which claim to speak for him. As a working-class father he should be the boss in the family, with his wife and children dependent upon him. He refers to the financial hardship caused by being a student:

> It's caused my family some inconvenience over the last three
> years, being skint most of the time. (Terry)

As a student primary school teacher, Terry is expected to challenge stereotypes and promote equality of opportunity. To construct an identity as a successful student Terry also works to demonstrate that he is comfortable within a middle-class, academic culture of university life. In line with assumptions that working-class fathers are powerful in the family, Terry describes himself as the "head" of his family. In almost the same breath, Terry questions his wife's need to ask for money. Terry ends up drawing on and apologising for popular, generalised versions of his identity as a working-class man. Gillian Plummer's research into failing working-class girls sheds light on the family lives of working-class men, their self-esteem and their relation to education (Plummer, 2000). One of the fascinating elements of her work is that it concentrates on family relations, between working-class husbands and wives, fathers and daughters. Expectations that the father will be the provider, strong and capable, collide with job insecurity and a sense of inferiority rooted in being poorly educated. Discourses of masculinity maintain that it is not manly for working-class men to be dependent or emotional. Terry must negotiate these discourses afresh in the institutional context of primary ITE.

The networks within Terry's family are learned relations rather than the simple exercising of power. Negotiated positions are taken up by individuals within a couple, positions which may be rooted in fears as well as ambitions. The expectations made of men in families are rooted in long-established traditions (Hollway, 1989). In the context of primary ITE, with its associated values and traditions of equality (however effectively or ineffectively put into practice), the hierarchy that Terry describes between himself and his wife comes across as outdated and undesirable, even to be treated with disdain and rejected as sexist. Terry describes his outlook and his position in the social world he inhabits. Perhaps what Terry is able to discuss in a research interview context is different from what he feels he

can discuss during the conventional parts of the ITE course, when there might be covert pressure on him to conform to a certain version of middle-class culture.

Terry articulates a feeling of being watched, which can be theorised with reference to Foucault's analysis, in *Discipline and Punish*, of the panopticon as a disciplinary technology. I am making use of social and cultural anthropologist Paul Rabinow's interpretation of Foucault's ideas here (Rabinow, 1984). The panopticon was a model prison advocated by Utilitarian Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and designed to facilitate constant supervision of the inmates. Foucault's interest lies not in the mechanics of this prison, but in

> the theoretical and practical search for such mechanisms, the will, constantly attested, to organize this kind of mechanism. (Foucault, 1980, p. 37, cited in Rabinow, 1984, p. 20)

Foucault argues that the panopticon works effectively even without the presence of the supervisor. The inmates cannot see the supervisor so must behave as if under constant surveillance and therefore learn to control and regulate their *own* behaviour. The panopticon operates as a technology of normalization, which classifies individuals as anomalies and can then subject them to corrective procedures (Rabinow, 1984, p. 21). Primary ITE is a site of production of the 'teacher'. Disciplinary and normalizing technologies create the conditions of Terry's self-regulation and bring into being possible understandings of himself, and others' understanding of him, as a working-class man and beginning teacher. He becomes constituted as an anomaly - his lifestyle is wrong - and corrective measures are to be enacted through teacher training, where he will learn the discourses of the official student teacher. Terry's stories about his family perform his resistance to and ambivalence about those official discourses. He continues:

> See perhaps it's the way I've been brought up I don't see these problems. My own mother taught me how to cook, taught me how to sew, she said you want a bloody shirt then go and iron it yourself, I'm busy and there wasn't no — there were demarcations — the old man always did the decorating and stuff like that. There are social demarcations that everybody's

sort of living with and I was aware of them, but I was also aware that it wasn't exclusive territory. (Terry)

Here Terry seems dismissive of assumptions that gendered expectations might have had an impact on him or curtailed his capabilities. He confirms his position as an independent man, not feminised, in spite of being able to carry out domestic tasks. He recounts his mother swearing, "a bloody shirt", which neatly counters any assumptions that Terry was mollycoddled, when he lived at home.

Terry's atypical career choice introduces dislocations and contradictions for him in relation to gender and social class; he is obliged to think about his family culture in relation to the culture of ITE he is moving into. In Terry's narrative I read pragmatism and a resistance to presumed accusations of inequality. Reflecting on primary ITE courses about equality of opportunity , Terry says:

> I personally don't feel too screwed up about it myself, you know. I'm trying to live in a world that's different to the one I was brought up in. (Terry)

His approach seems strategically humble, perhaps in response to his interpretation of my position: a middle-class feminist, representing the institutionalised context of primary ITE. Terry says, "I am trying very hard to learn to be politically correct" and "I am getting progressively more confused on equal opportunities, I've got to tell you.". It is possible that Terry's way of negotiating the context of the research interview, which is itself a site of the production of his gendered, professional identity, is to go along with the significance that he understands me to place on gender and social justice. He describes himself as willing to learn, but rather baffled. The term, 'politically correct' is itself problematic. It has come to signify a pedantic concern over the use of words or phrases without recourse to the serious debates which raise questions about language, power, authority and cultural sensitivity. The term has been co-opted by individuals who want to make fun of all those who work for equality and social justice. I am not suggesting that is Terry's position, but Terry's use of the term 'politically correct' and his claim to be trying very hard, seems to separate him from discourses of equality which I associate with being a primary school

teacher. He seems to make the point that being politically correct is not his 'natural' perspective. The mild amusement which I sense behind Terry's comments here may arise from a gently dismissive attitude towards what he might characterise as progressive moves to promote equality and accept diversity. There is a parallel with Valerie Walkerdine's analysis of discourses which position working-class men as 'other', and obviously sexist. A liberal, anti-sexist discourse pathologises working-class, macho behaviour as sexist, but is more accepting of middle-class, covert regulation and subordination of women (Walkerdine, 1990). For Terry, there may also be an element of his feeling alienated by discourses which clash with his own perspective on difference. It is also possible that Terry is amused, perplexed or threatened by what he interprets as my over-zealous interest in gender .

Terry talks about gender, feminists and change in relation to his daughters:

> It's the way I bring my kids up. I mean, they all live in a world that is gender-orientated and they can't change it, they can only push the boundaries. I don't want my girls to be set up as raving feminists and find that they've got a problem, because they don't fit in socially or whatever, but I think the revolution for women - my personal view – the revolution for women will be done quietly. It will be done by people just saying 'I can do that' and doing it and I think that's how it will change and it will be done by guys realising that they're not going to get it all their own way. This is a guy that does get a lot of his own way. (Terry)

He emphasises the need for his daughters to be accepted by others. Terry's resistance to the idea of his daughters becoming "raving feminists" suggests opposition to what he perceives will indicate a loss of femininity. The degree of change and disruption to the status quo that Terry thinks is legitimate for his daughters to instigate is specifically measured: they can "push the boundaries". His description of women simply doing things for themselves may seem a positive acknowledgement on Terry's part, but can also be read as depoliticising, an outlook which bestows on women as individuals an ability (or inability) to succeed, irrespective of any wider contextual constraints. Terry also refers to the need for men to accept they must give up some of the advantages that come from their positions as

men. His final comment asserts and confirms a position of power for himself.

A "disgusting accusation"

> As to physical contact with kids it's just down to what society is going to let you do without throwing some kind of disgusting accusation at you. ... I make physical contact with kids ... as much as possible and in as careful a way as I possibly can. I think physical contact is imperative. (Terry)

I could read Terry's narrative about physical contact with children as an obvious one. He wants to prevent any possibility that the contact he makes with young children could be construed as inappropriately sexual; it is logical that he is careful; common sense, though brave, for him to insist on the importance of physical contact. He is being sensible in the face of potential accusations of child sexual abuse. But I want to make another reading of Terry's narrative. It is important to stress that I am not questioning the 'reality' of child sexual abuse and the frequency of its occurrence. My focus is quite different. It is how being a 'good' teacher is constituted for men teachers at a specific point in time, in the light of the ways teacher-child intimacy can be understood (McWilliam, 2001). My questions centre on the work Terry's narrative does. I am guided, in part, by Foucault's approach (Foucault, 1990; Rabinow, 1984) and by others who draw on his work (A. Jones, 2001, 2003; Kehily, 2004). Common-sense readings and generalisations would conceal the specifics of Terry's position and the ways that it is constructed and maintained. Terry is learning to become a teacher at a time when discourses of masculinity paradoxically emphasise both the caring, sensitive, 'new man' *and* the dangerous, perverted, predatory man. Terry has to negotiate prevailing discourses which position him as an ideal and as a threat, as a man teacher of young children.

Terry constructs his professional identity within and through this conflicting network of discourses. Terry insists on making physical contact with children "as much as possible" in the face of discourses which position him as an object of suspicion and which make "disgusting accusations" an ever-present threat. I could read this as Terry throwing

down a gauntlet. But Terry is not simply obeying or disobeying (often covert) rules about contact with children. He is coming to understand himself as teacher by establishing his relation to those rules. Alison Jones's argument about the training of pleasure, male teachers and Santa Clauses is based on her research in New Zealand (A. Jones, 2001). Her work helps me to theorise Terry's entanglement in the discourses which seem to bear down on him. Jones makes use of Foucault's ideas to argue that pleasure may seem to be natural and spontaneous, but can only be experienced through texts and social practices, a process which Jones refers to as 'training' (*ibid.*, p. 115). The men students in her research comply with the spoken and often unspoken 'no-touch' rules about physical contact with children. They enact their relation to the rules and work to construct and regulate themselves as 'good' teachers, as constituted through contemporary discourses. In Jones's terms, the way men teachers experience pleasure is a product of training, within rules which define and mutually affirm good and bad, normal and abnormal. Men learn to experience any child-touch as wrong. Were they to talk of cuddling a child, Jones concludes it would be with guilt, anxiety or defiance. In my data, I can read Terry's insistence on the importance of physical contact with children as an act of defiance. He subjects himself to regulation (being careful), accepting the threat and risk and paradoxically perpetuating the power of that discourse. Simultaneously he deploys another common-sense position, dismissing over-anxiety (through insisting on physical contact). The note of defiance in Terry's insistence on maintaining contact with children is constructed through discursive practices which effectively separate pleasure and contact with children from men teachers' work in classrooms.

How might pleasure be reconnected with understandings of being a teacher and being a man? It is not just a question of replacing one discourse with another. I am looking for positive ways to frame understandings of being with children, that can include, for example, joy. It is not enough for me to simply say that I loved teaching young children, though I do want to insist that being a primary school teacher was for me a fantastic experience: a source of intellectual interest and at times fascinating, enjoyable, hilarious and sad, nerve-wracking, chaotic. I am trying to resist presenting a sentimental view of being a teacher, creating space instead for narratives which can move beyond the all-too familiar

claims that teaching is satisfying, rewarding, challenging. As a language for expressing enjoyment of teaching, these terms, like tired, over-used metaphors, eventually pass by unnoticed. They steer teachers away from the perceived dangers of admitting they care for pupils, which can have specific gendered connotations for men. They step over the significance of relationships between children and their teachers, the kind of communities classrooms might be, who makes the decisions, conversation, acts of kindness and tolerance, which can create connections in a classroom and which I think help pupils and teachers alike, to learn and to change. Discourses which edit out these engagements and relations take no account of the teacher as a complex individual, and flatten the sense teachers can have of their professional identities and work.

Heterosexual masculinity: "quite perfectly clear"

> I don't have any doubts about my sexuality at all, not even remotely. ... I mean it sounds a bit crude really, but I was a builder and you're kind of macho ... I've got a family. ... I'm just a bloke you know and it's just in my head clearly and definitely. There is a set pattern, there's parameters in which I can work as a bloke and still be a civilised human being without questioning that male identity, and going to primary teaching doesn't do that. It doesn't question that identity at all. For me it is absolutely laid down quite perfectly clear and that's it and whatever I did wouldn't question that. (Terry)

Terry asserts his heterosexual masculinity to counter assumptions that as a male primary school teacher he may be homosexual or effeminate. His categorical insistence derives from a desire to understand himself as normal and from fears of being associated with what is constituted as deviant.

So-called female domains of the primary classroom, such as the home-corner, do not jeopardise, or cause Terry to modify, his understanding of himself as a heterosexual man and a teacher:

> It wouldn't bother me one iota setting up a home-corner. It wouldn't cause me any problems at all. I mean I see the kitchen as another workshop. I've designed some wonderful kitchens. ... You know, my wife would love to have a designer-built kitchen and all I designed was workshops. I mean there's

110

no difference to me between a carpenter's workshop and a kitchen workshop, except the furniture. (Terry)

Terry shifts the home-corner into the male world of the carpenter's workshop. He confidently repositions a female domain as a masculine one, resisting the domestic culture. This is a move which echoes Mr Kimble's, in *Kindergarten Cop* (Weber and Mitchell, 1995). Terry, like the fictional Mr Kimble, is not straightforwardly defined by the feminised primary school culture into which he is moving; he has a dialectical relationship with it. Terry reworks the culture on his own masculine terms. He is able to reinvent the home-corner as a workshop, overcoming a potential conflict between doing women's work and being a real man.

There are parallels with Valerie Walkerdine's research which considers how boys in the nursery try to establish discursive practices in which they can be powerful (Walkerdine, 1998). Walkerdine argues that neither boy nor girl pupils are necessarily always powerful or powerless in the classroom: there is a constant struggle between them to play out familiar practices and behaviours which constitute their relative positions. Similarly, I can see Terry's position as a powerless one, when he is positioned through discourses which promote the caring and collaborative aspects of primary teaching (however caring he might be as an individual) or the common-sense expectation that women are the natural teachers of young children. Terry, as a student primary school teacher, can also be positioned as dangerous, through discourses which constitute his masculinity as signifying the potential sexual abuse of young children. In Walkerdine's terms, the primary classroom and culture operate as a site of struggle where boys work to 'redefine the situation as one in which the women and girls are powerless subjects of other discourses.' (*ibid.*, p. 66). I can read Terry's reinvention of the home-corner as a workshop, as the sort of 'redefining' Walkerdine observes. Walkerdine is writing about boy pupils, not men student teachers. The complication that Terry has to manage is the intersecting of discourses relating to gender and equality, which permeate primary ITE. It would be difficult for Terry, as a student primary school teacher, faced with a woman tutor interested in gender, to be seen to be positioning women as powerless. On top of this, there are conflicting discourses within primary culture that position men as powerful

111

and authoritative. Although teaching young children is described as a feminised occupation, there is a masculine, managerialist culture, which constitutes men as natural, dynamic and effective teachers.

By disrupting the traditional female image of a teacher of young children, Terry, like Mr. Kimble, not only avoids being ridiculed, he lays claim to success and being idealised. Mr Kimble's 'authoritarian macho pedagogy' (Weber and Mitchell, 1995, p. 95), his impatience and his physical strength rupture the traditional teacherly image of young children. Mr. Kimble's potential success is confirmed when he is offered a permanent job by the principal, even though he has had no training and is never seen preparing work for the children. Theory is dismissed as irrelevant in the face of this man's charismatic, 'off-the-cuff' teaching performances.

Although Weber and Mitchell do not pursue the point, Mr Kimble's actions construct *heterosexual* masculinity and a denial of particular version of homosexuality. The joke is at the expense of the feminised, and for men potentially feminising, culture of schooling and teacher training. The effect of the joke is constituted through, and does the work to constitute, deeply-entrenched, continually maintained discourses of masculinity and femininity, of sexuality, and of social relations between men and women and boys and girls. These discourses protect hierarchies, sustain inequalities and routinely produce difference. The classroom operates as a site for the production of heterosexual masculinity. Men teachers' performances, accentuated by a context often thought of as feminized, can also work to transform that context. Terry's sexuality, like Mr. Kimble's, protects him from derision; quite the contrary, it allows him to be positioned as talented and successful.

Terry attributes his difference in the context of primary ITE to his masculinity and to his age:

> If you're different, people are going to think about you twice. They're going to look at you twice ... and people like myself are very different in this place: we're male, we're comparatively old and people are going to look at us. (Terry)

It came as no surprise to student teacher Terry that a teacher at his practice

school asked him to take responsibility for the whole class. Terry does not attribute this to his maleness, but to his age alone, dismissing the naivety and idealism of "18-year-old kids". On another occasion, he insists that both age and gender are insignificant:

> It depends on how authoritative you can make yourself seem. If you look like you know what you're doing, if you've got that sort of confidence, then I don't think it matters how old you are or what gender you are. (Terry)

That comment, coupled with the following, shows that Terry places importance on how he chooses to present himself as a teacher:

> If you have a bunch of kids that are going to be a bit volatile, then you're going to walk about a misery all day; that's what I'll have to be. But I'm quite prepared to do a comedian act in order to function properly. I mean you do it with customers as a builder. I'll go in and be whatever they want me to be, whatever is necessary.(Terry)

Terry's idea of being a teacher hinges on aspects of personality which he sees as within an individual's control. Terry's approach is to behave like a successful teacher and there may be practical value in it. Terry invests in this discourse to his advantage to position himself as powerful, as the right personality to rise to the challenge of being a teacher. His robust approach resonates with some of the TTA's rhetoric. Beginning teachers are expected to, 'hit the ground running. From the first day in post, new teachers in England will be better equipped to do the job than ever before.' (Ralph Tabberer, Chief Executive of the TTA, quoted in TTA Press Release, 2002b). This bullish assertion is entangled with specific discourses of success and failure and reminds me of the discourse of the 'rugged individual', (Britzman, 2003, p. 235), which I referred to earlier (see pp. 37-38). That discourse, which in my mind it sits easily with particular narratives of heterosexual masculinity, asserts that individuals are expected to ignore the consequences of social contexts such as gender, or perceive and tackle problems as personal challenges. The effect is to depoliticise the context in which teachers work and to reinvent institutional pressures as individualised ones. It is a discourse which blocks out the shifting, context-specific power relations that are continually negotiated by gendered and

classed teachers and pupils.

It would be easy to characterise Terry as a man who had 'made it' by furthering his education and joining the teaching profession. His working-class background and his masculinity attract particular attention in primary ITE. Terry's presence in the world of higher education does not grant him straightforward membership of middle-class culture; his relation to the culture is complicated. I have chosen to write about Terry in order to think about his understanding of himself as a primary student teacher. In Terry's words, his presence is one which counters established understandings of who student primary school teachers are:

> I've been taken for a School Inspector, for a lurker, an intruder, for a parent, ... the head - all sorts of things. It's other people's expectations, not mine, and ... people say, 'Can I help you?' ... People don't expect someone like me to be a student. (Terry)

I have constructed him as an object of study because his presence in primary ITE is of interest to me. I have taken care to avoid slipping into well-worn, conventional versions of what it might mean to a working-class man to choose to become a primary school teacher. I have tried to keep my eye on the contextualised specificity of Terry's narratives and my reading of them. When Terry talks about his family background he is doing so in the light of his understanding of my reading (positioned as a middle-class woman and primary ITE tutor) of working-class culture. His is not a simple, literal rendition of his experiences and beliefs any more than my writing about Terry is a neutral account.

Chapter 8: Rehearsing difference: Michael and Daniel's conversation

Michael and Daniel are both third-year students, white, Anglo-Saxon and in their early twenties. They come from non-professional, middle-class backgrounds and came into ITE straight from school. In the interview, Michael comes over as rather unsure of his position and does not speak at great length. Daniel presents himself as a capable, experienced student teacher. Their conversation, which is steeped in long-established assumptions about men and women, is of particular interest in the light of their *non*-traditional career choice of primary school teaching. Their perspectives are shaped, in part, by the positive and negative ways each man's decision to teach can be read: Michael made a last-minute choice; Daniel had a long-standing commitment to teaching. They talk about their career choice at another point in the interview (see pp. 130-131).

My reading of Michael and Daniel's conversation highlights their understandings of 'good' men and women teachers, and each student's response to the other's position and mine in the interview context. Michael and Daniel are working out their professional identities, whilst entangled in discourses about men and women as teachers:

> Michael:
> A very different atmosphere I find [with a male teacher]. Yeah, I find that ... It's more a matter of enthusiasm. I don't know how to explain it really.
> Daniel:
> I think it's something like it's less caring in a male classroom. When you've got a female teacher it's a lot more motherly and the work is being produced from the children through this sort of caring social environment, whereas with a male teacher the work is being produced, you know, like a father figure would produce it with a little bit of fear here and there. You know, a little bit of enthusiasm into it. ... Fathers will often get their children to play games and be competitive as well ... The female teacher [I worked with] ... made lots of physical contact, holding hands with the kids in the playground and when they went out on walks and did cross-country she would always be at the back with all the slow coaches walking along with them, holding hands, not really running, whereas the male teacher ... was very isolated from the kids ... He was the one who was running up the front trying to keep up with the fast kids ... That's exactly how it actually appears, whereas ... I'm quite different to

that in the playground. If I'm on playground duty I steer clear of the boys playing with the ball, because I hate football, always did. I'm much happier standing talking to the teacher with all these kids hanging off me.
Michael:
I would be the other way. I would be wanting to get in to play with them or something, instead of fifty girls around me and stuff.
Daniel:
Take the Cubs on nature walks - I'm much happier with the slow ones holding their hands, pointing out things as you go along, than I am trying to keep up with the front ones. You know, trying to keep them in order and trying to calm them down to notice things that are around them.
Michael:
I don't know, there's more. What I found in my first school was that the male teacher who was there used to give the school a buzz, if you know what I mean. He was always in the staffroom cheering everyone up and stuff ... You can hear their voices over the general [background noise] ... Although he wasn't like 'head' he had authority as well. The female teacher I had, any problems she had, she says you go to Mr. such and such.
(Michael and Daniel)

Michael and Daniel's conversation suggests an understanding of masculinity and femininity based on sex roles and socialisation theories. This theoretical position, of which they may or not be consciously aware, reinforces a status quo based on natural personalities and behaviours. Were I to adopt that theoretical perspective, I would understand Michael's and Daniel's positions as immutable. I would read Michael's comments as conforming to the norm, and Daniel's as the comments of a man who accepts the status quo and shows his feminine side. I want to think about the men's perspectives and understanding. My reading will consider the norms that the men work with and against in this conversation. I will move beyond the literal content of their talk to consider the investments the men are making and their intentions. My approach to this particular text is informed by Peter Redman and Máirtín Mac An Ghaill's 'surprising analysis' (Redman and Mac An Ghaill, 1997, p. 164). What the authors call the 'surprise' in their analysis is their claim that a text which does not directly refer to sexuality enacts heterosexual masculinity. The authors reflect on Redman's memories of his secondary school teacher. Redman remembers his teacher as a 'muscular intellectual' (ibid., p. 169), a version

of 'man teacher' which interprets and produces heterosexual masculinity as a position of strength, self-confidence, intellectual power and presence. This discourse creates an intellectual world that Redman, as a pupil, values and perceives as worth joining. Redman finds a way of being masculine that he 'could inhabit with a degree of comfort he did not otherwise feel.' (*ibid.,* p. 168). The idea of 'comfort' is, I think, an important one, as it brings emotional investment into the analysis. Redman and Mac An Ghaill argue that 'muscular intellectualness was not a quality originating in Mr Lefevre [the history teacher] but a discourse - a cultural code' (*ibid.,* p. 170). To put it another way, through discourse individuals can create spaces which they, unconsciously but not involuntarily, might inhabit. Discourses produce desires which individuals work to fulfil or resist. Redman manages his moves into a secondary school culture through discourses which create a version of heterosexual masculinity, 'muscular intellectual', as a position validated in the culture.

Michael and Daniel's conversation does not overtly discuss sexuality, yet I see a driving force behind this conversation as each man's desire to establish his heterosexual masculine professional identity. From my perspective, I read Michael's and Daniel's narratives as produced through discourses which maintain difference. As Michael and Daniel make the move into primary school culture, they are undergoing a cultural shift which has an impact on their sense of self. Part of the shift is experienced by them as being confronted with assumptions not just about 'being a man not a woman', but about their sexuality, assumptions about their position on an imagined continuum of masculinity from aggressive heterosexuality and acceptable heterosexuality, through effeminate heterosexuality to homosexuality. Michael and Daniel are young, single men training to be teachers of young pupils. Their visibility as men amongst women encourages them to think about their place in the culture of primary ITE and primary schooling. The men's presence on the ITE course makes visible their masculinity and their sexuality, yet apart from covert discussion during the research interviews they will probably have little opportunity or encouragement to articulate their thinking about such issues. On the contrary such issues may well be constructed as taboo.

In this analysis, I am making a reading of Daniel's and Michael's reading of a network of intersecting discourses relating to masculinity and

117

femininity in and beyond the research interview and the context of primary ITE. In this conversation, they are working to position themselves satisfactorily in relation to these discourses and in relation to each other and to me. Now, in the text I am creating here, I am working to position myself in relation to Daniel's and Michael's discursive productions of themselves as men teachers.

Daniel weaves a path between conventional assumptions about masculinity and femininity, and what he presents as his personal approach as a man teacher, in which he identifies more closely with the women teachers he has worked alongside. Daniel makes reference to well-established discourses about men and women in families: power and authority through fear reside with the father; caring and sensitive encouragement with the mother. Daniel's description of the differences between classrooms with men and with women teachers rests on his understanding of familiar distinctions made between mothers and fathers, which he maps onto men and women teachers. The 'motherly' teacher that Daniel mentions is inserted into discourses which praise women's natural instincts with children, their patience and selflessness. The 'fatherly' teacher, on the other hand, is understood through discourses which afford men respect for their authority and control of pupils, for their pursuit of games and for their competitiveness. The family is a significant arena for the learning of gendered identities. The parenting practices readily associated with mothers and fathers are so familiar as to seem natural and incontrovertible. Gendered differences between mothers and fathers seem to produce, rather than be an effect of, masculinity and femininity (D. Cameron, 1997).

Daniel is not obliged to accept and employ discourses which relate such understandings of mothers and fathers with those of men and women teachers. It is not inevitable, but neither is it necessarily a conscious, rational choice. Wendy Hollway offers a theoretical solution to such a 'problem of accounts of agency' (Hollway, 1998, p. 238). Hollway asks how it is that individuals take up positions in one discourse rather than another. I can observe from my data that not all men position themselves in the same discourses in the same ways. How am I to understand the stance that Daniel takes in the specific context of a

118

research interview with me? Making use of Hollway's concept of 'investment', I can interrogate the work Daniel does in this conversation in relation to the fulfilment he might experience from adopting, and being seen to adopt, such a position through specific discourses. I see that fulfilment as similar to the 'sense of euphoria' which Valerie Hey described (Hey, 1997, p. 144) which I referred to earlier. The emotional satisfaction and power that Daniel seeks is achieved and maintained through discourses which bring together various coexisting, potentially conflicting, versions of his sense of self as a man and a teacher.

Daniel comes across as at ease with himself as a caring man, dissociating himself from the popular image of sporty man teacher. He constructs this identity by acknowledging and accepting the status quo of the man teacher as an authoritative father-figure. At the same time, he makes moves which position him as what he understands to be acceptably masculine in the primary school culture: appropriately feminised to be constructed as a suitable man to become a primary school teacher, that is, civilised, manly, neither too macho nor too feminised. From this perspective, there are degrees of masculinity, and this suggests that masculinity operates as something quantifiable, with certain amounts deemed suitable in certain contexts.

The man teacher Daniel describes in this conversation is competitive with the pupils and maintains a distance from them. Daniel insists he is not like that. In his own words, "I'm much happier standing talking to the teacher with all these kids hanging off me.". Taking the Cubs on nature walks Daniel is happy to hold hands with children and adopt a gentle approach. Drawing on these two contexts beyond the classroom it is possible for Daniel to constitute himself as a caring man who makes physical contact with children.

As a teacher, Daniel faces conflicting discourses relating to masculinity. One calls for caring men, who will get involved with their children, who are not the old-fashioned father-figures who had very little physical or emotional contact with their offspring. Another discourse insists that men teachers avoid all physical contact with children for fear of accusations of child sexual abuse. Alison Jones pinpoints the paradoxical effect of this particular conflict, which is that traditional, distant masculinity is being reasserted and becoming 'a necessary sign of the ethical teacher'

(A. Jones, 2001, p. 116). The double-bind for men is that 'good' men teachers of young children must both show and not show affection for children by making physical contact with them. Daniel resolves the conflict, on this occasion, by referring to the playground and Cubs. By talking about holding children's hands in these contexts, he separates himself, satisfactorily, from a version of masculinity which defines relations between men teachers and children as devoid of contact or demonstrations of affection.

Daniel claims he does not conform to expected behaviours *and* he accepts them and understands himself in relation to them. Daniel's masculinity does not fit with a football-loving image of heterosexual masculinity, but neither does he fundamentally question the idea of man as authority figure, woman as carer. He crosses a boundary, but accepts and contributes to its existence. And his boundary-crossing is within acceptable limits of feminised heterosexual masculinity for men primary school teachers. What I see at work here is a discourse of the civilising role of the feminine on what can be construed as a potentially uncontrollable heterosexual masculinity. Positioning himself as caring, Daniel could have understood himself, and been understood by others, as feminised. On the other hand, his position can be read as noble. Child-centredness and caring for children can be read as heroic when carried out by an adult male, because he is seen to be foregoing his position of dominance. The same behaviour for women is read as less of a loss, as women are already marginalised (J. R. King, 2000) and for women caring is understood as a natural instinct.

The context of the research interview has a bearing on Daniel's narratives in this conversation. As I have explained, I do not see this as invalidating the data. Neither do I see it as evidence of Daniel disingenuously manipulating his ideas. I do think, however, that Daniel constructs his masculine identity as a student primary school teacher in relation to his reading of the specific and wider context of the interview. He reads the context as one framed by assumptions that men primary teachers are potentially too macho, distant and uncaring and do not take gender issues seriously. He positions himself and works to present himself as a 'good' man teacher in relation to, and by countering, these assumptions.

120

How does Michael construct his professional identity and how does he handle the research interview context? Michael believes that men primary teachers provide something special and worthwhile, as men. Men's voices stand out amongst the general noise of women's voices in the staffroom, drawing attention to the men's physical presence. Men are authority figures and are treated as such by the women teachers. Marginality becomes an advantage. In this narrative, men teachers have something to offer, something exciting and effective. They are dominant characters, not peripheral to staffroom conversation, but outgoing and the central protagonists. The status of heterosexual masculinity is bolstered by what Michael observes as the effectiveness and vitality of the men teachers he knows and admires. The ideal of the charismatic, dynamic man teacher that Michael describes could prove to be a difficult one for him to aspire to. If that ideal were to remain a fixed, unexamined construct for Michael, then I think feelings of inadequacy would be quite likely.

Michael says he would not want "fifty girls" around him. His exaggeration emphasises his feelings; he is adamant that he would rather be playing football with the boys than spending time with girl pupils, talking. Men teachers' assertions of their heterosexuality by identifying with boy pupils through football is a subject on which Christine Skelton has written (Skelton, 2001a). Skelton reflects on the strength of commitment some men show towards football. Publicly affiliating oneself with football is a means of demonstrating heterosexual masculinity. Skelton describes the status and privileges afforded to those boys who are the most capable football players. Football outwardly confirms men's heterosexual masculinity and maintains a separation from the female, the effeminate and the homosexual. Men teachers may coach sport to 'establish their legitimacy' as real men (Allan, 1993, p. 123), reconciling two apparently contradictory positions: man and primary school teacher. Male secondary school teachers have also been found to draw on discourses of football and physical prowess to generate popularity with their pupils, which can reinforce stereotypical versions of heterosexual masculinity (Martino and Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2003). Being associated positively with football not only provides camaraderie between men and many, but not all, boy pupils. Football separates out and subordinates the majority of girl pupils; those girls who do participate are marginalised, in spite of the numbers of

women and girls who play and enjoy football. Relationships between men teachers and boy and girl pupils can be defined, in part, through football.

A 'boys-will-be-boys', fixed-gender-identity perspective would identify football as a welcome outlet for male aggression, competitiveness and energy; Michael's insistence on wanting to play football would be constituted as a normal response for an adult man. I see 'football' in this conversation as an anchor for Michael's heterosexuality in the face of unspoken questions about his masculinity. Discourses of heterosexual masculinity normalise Michael's interest in football and valorise involvement in the sport. Football works as a site for the production of masculinity in the institutional context of the school (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998). It operates as a key signifier of masculinity, and of 'not femininity'. The claims that men and boys playing football can make, for example to time and space in school, help to confirm football and the males who play it, in a superior, powerful, controlling position.

It is unlikely that Michael sees football as related to his understanding of himself as a man. I would not be surprised if Michael perceived football as exercise, pleasure and entertainment, which clearly it can be. My expectation, I realise, is that Michael would dismiss claims that football can work to constitute masculinity as superior to and separate from femininity, and as controlling, competitive and aggressive. This expectation is reinforced by another comment of Michael's, one which I referred to in Chapter 5, in relation to the female gaze. Michael says that he is of "the old-school, brought up by my mother who's not one of these liberated types". The phrase, "these liberated types" neatly conjures up and undermines a host of images and values, including working-women, feminism, equality. I wonder if Michael sees me as liberated. And there is security and tradition on the side of that which is "old-school". It would be easy to label Michael as sexist, and perhaps that is what he thinks I think. Faced with what could be seen as entrenched discourses and fixed positions relating to masculinity, I want to emphasise 'dialogic understanding' (Britzman, 2003, p. 237). Michael's ideas are actively constituted through discourses, shaped by inherited pressures and power relations. Individuals' investments are enacted through language which constructs and maintains or resists discourses. Understanding language as productive, not merely representative, shifts the focus from the face-value of students'

comments to their intentions and investments and the social, cultural and historical circumstances that make certain understandings possible and desirable. For students to understand this dialogic process, and to notice and question prevailing discourses requires a critical awareness rarely prioritised and encouraged in ITE courses.

What is my reading of Michael's understanding of masculinity and himself as a man? He separates himself from the feminine ("instead of fifty girls around me"), a motivation intensified by his move into a work culture associated with women, and emphasises physical presence and popularity ("enthusiasm", "a buzz", "cheering everyone up"). His response enacts a resistance to the version of masculinity portrayed by Daniel and a desire to demonstrate his own gendered identity. In a research interview about gendered professional identities in the context of primary schooling, Michael's conventional version of masculinity can be constituted as less desirable than Daniel's.

One interpretation of the brevity of Michael's contributions to the conversation is that he is enacting a resistance to a sense of surveillance (Walkerdine, 1990). Michael is the object of my feminine gaze. What is my reading of his reading of my position and his relation to it? I am a woman interested in gender, specifically masculinity; I have been involved in primary school education for many years. Michael may not expect his favourable comments about men teachers to be well received by me; he may assume that I disapprove of men teachers, am even hostile towards them. His reading of the culture of primary ITE (which can signify the feminine, a non-competitive masculinity, equality) in the context of this interview may lead him to conclude that his understanding of men and women teachers and his version of masculinity are undesirable or that I might reject them out of hand. Michael's investment is in creating for himself a familiar, stable version of heterosexual masculinity. He positions himself as a man in terms that are meaningful and familiar to him: physical activity, no physical contact with the children, different from women, not effeminate. This version of masculinity can also be read as a separation from Daniel's version, and from homosexual or effeminate heterosexual versions of masculinity. Michael and Daniel construct themselves as teachers in relation to each other in this conversation and this may have led them to polarise and sharpen their positions, making them more obvious.

123

In the research interview, the understandings that each of us has about gender and what it signifies, and our readings of each others' understandings, will structure the narratives the two men construct. The interaction between Michael and Daniel, and my presence and involvement, enact a reciprocity during the interview, which is now overlaid by my current reading of the men's talk as a text.

Michael asserts his masculinity and teacherliness by emphasising his and other men teachers' difference from women teachers. Daniel works to integrate himself into the culture by emphasising the caring aspects of his personality as a teacher. The men talk about gender in ways that work to resolve the contradictions inherent in their position as men and teachers. They want to be perceived by others as 'proper' men, a position they have to assert anew in the context of their move into a work environment understood as feminised. Their positions are complicated. Daniel separates himself from an accepted version of heterosexual masculinity that he and Michael construct in relation to each other. Paradoxically, even though Daniel separates himself from it, he is constituted through it. Michael, in contrast, invests directly in the conventional version of heterosexual masculinity, with vigour. His understanding of teacherly success is inscribed in the dynamic, enthusiastic male teacher and he tries to find a place for himself within that discursive production of 'teacher'.

The students are managing a cultural shift as they learn to become teachers; they actively encounter discourses relating to being a man and being a teacher and work to negotiate what it means to be masculine in relation to these discourses. Common-sense accounts of what it means to be a mother and a father seem to voice pre-existing, natural versions of femininity and masculinity which inform understandings of women and men as teachers. These understandings create taken-for-granted parameters to the ways individuals can see themselves as teachers. As Daniel says, "That's exactly how it actually appears". The students feel they must measure up, conform, fail or resist the norm. An unspoken questioning of heterosexual masculinity leads the men to invest in the security of traditional discourses of heterosexual masculinity and femininity and to assert men's special contributions as primary teachers. These men students are working to understand themselves as teachers and as men;

their constant desire is for stability in a complex, contradictory situation. The subconscious, but not involuntary, imagining of the self is the ongoing work that these men are doing here, as they try to forge a professional identity amidst conflicting discourses. The research interview and its wider context of the culture of primary ITE provides the site for the production of their gendered identities.

Being a man and a good primary school teacher

Michael and Daniel are working to affirm their professional identities as men and teachers, in relation to their understanding of what can constitute a 'good' man primary school teacher and in relation to their readings of others' perceptions of them. Work choices and practices help to define their individuality and identity. Michael and Daniel's sense of their masculine selves is achieved by striving for an ideal of manhood, experienced through the gaze and responses of others.

Michael seems to have in mind a dynamic, active teacher as an ideal; someone who shows enthusiasm and can cheer everyone up. This image contrasts with the passivity and culpability which can be associated with women teachers (Walkerdine, 1998). It also contrasts with the progressive, child-centred 'teacher-as-facilitator'. Michael's understanding of 'good man teacher' masks the ambivalence, contradictions and problems that men might well face. Michael's thinking is shaped by the cultural myth of the hero teacher. Daniel draws on and is drawn into traditional understandings of men and women in families, as well as discourses of the caring man. Mothers are caring and fathers are competitive: for Daniel these are starting points, not constructed meanings which might be questioned, even though his self-perception does not match with the fatherly image he accepts.

Michael and Daniel are confronted by contemporary discourses which constitute good men teachers as lively, inspired, active, competitive and sporty. At the same time, they must negotiate narratives of heterosexual masculinity which call for caring men who are sensitive to young children's needs. It would be reasonable to conclude that Michael and Daniel's own sensitivity to discourses of the caring man teacher are heightened by the context of the research interview and my presence. Reflecting on this intricate network of conflicting, underlying beliefs and

ideals, I understand the students' position as a genuinely complicated one. That is not to say I simply feel sorry for them, but I do want to acknowledge that these two men are complex individuals, each with a history of personal beliefs, some changing and some which may operate as incontrovertible fact. It will not be enough in pedagogy or policy to assume men primary school teachers will be fine, because they naturally command authority and they will be headteachers in no time, or to criticise them for those assumptions. Drawing attention to individual men's stories counters homogenising tendencies which underpin both calls for more men teachers and concerns about their presence in classrooms. Thinking about individual men's relation to the discourses which produce and maintain masculinity in relation to student primary school teachers does more than make a case for remembering that men are primary teachers too. I am arguing that gender, language and identity are intertwined in the process of becoming a teacher. Understandings are framed, and can be constrained or changed, by discourses which produce and maintain possible narratives of the self as teacher. It follows, then, that learning to become a teacher should be about awareness, perspectives, debate and opening up possibilities.

Chapter 9: Some more students' stories

I begin by introducing Max, Dean, Donny, Jerry, Peter, Steven, Jim and Gavin.

Max and Dean are friends, both in their first year of teacher training and mature students, in their thirties. Both are white, Anglo-Saxon and from non-professional, middle-class backgrounds. Max has a son. Max had a City-based career, but moved to Cornwall following his divorce and worked in several temporary jobs prior to taking up teacher training. He comes across as a talkative and sympathetic man. Dean is also a family man. He had worked in computing support work, but his contract came to an end. My impression of Dean is of a reflective and modest man.

Donny and Jerry, first-years, are also friends. They are mature students in their twenties. Both are white, Anglo-Saxon and from non-professional, middle-class backgrounds. Both are married; Jerry has children. Donny had worked in computers in a law-based City firm. He presents himself as a thoughtful man. Jerry had been in the army and talks of this prior experience with pride. He seems confident and ambitious.

Peter is a third-year, mature student in his twenties, a white Anglo-Saxon from a non-professional, middle-class background. He had worked for a large retail company prior to becoming a student teacher. He seems to be a reflective and socially-conscious man.

Steven and Jim are first-years in one of my teaching groups, at the time. Both are white, Anglo-Saxon and from non-professional, middle-class backgrounds. They arrived into primary ITE straight from school. Steven seems keen and animated. Jim comes across as more questioning of his position as student teacher.

Gavin is a second-year student, white Anglo-Saxon and from a non-professional, middle-class background. He came into primary ITE straight from school. He is busily involved in the student life of the university. He comes across as sensible, thoughtful and enthusiastic.

What does deciding to be a teacher mean for these men?

Peter, Jerry, Donny, Max and Dean had all pursued other careers before deciding to become teachers. For them, a degree is a means to an end. They are motivated towards a job and a career. In Max's words:

> I thought I better do something about, you know, the career,
> which is how I suppose most men think ... and so that's how I
> came to be here. (Max)

I do not get a sense of this group of men welcoming higher education for its own sake. Rather they talk of establishing and realising academic potential. Potential is inscribed in masculinity (Walkerdine, 1998; Cohen, 1998), as are notions of male learners as able yet lazy, talented, resistant to rote learning, creative, and of male teachers as authoritative, inspirational, rigorous, intolerant of bureaucratic requirements. Peter and Donny seem to have no qualms about telling me that they did little work at secondary school and finished with few qualifications. Jerry says obtaining a degree is something he should have done when he was younger. He left his job as a Training Manager in the Army after 20 years:

> I came out with qualifications way over the top ... so every job
> that I went for ... I'd got 'no commercial awareness' [sarcastic
> voice]. None of that, even though I'd run a budget of three-and-
> a-half million pounds a year I'd got no commercial awareness.
> ... I couldn't get a job at the standard or the wages that I was
> actually on, so I did part-time jobs and stuff like that. I looked
> into further education and then took the leap and decided to go
> for the four years [i.e. BA (Qualified Teacher Status.)]. (Jerry)

Jerry narrates his self-image as a capable 'man-of-the-world', separating himself from assumptions that teaching is for inexperienced, poorly qualified men. Being a soldier signifies discipline, rigour and heroism, a specific, high-profile and enduring ideal of masculinity (Dawson, 1994). Jerry seems to manage the transition from the masculine military into the primary school culture with relative ease, whereas Oyler et al.'s study in North America of one student elementary teacher formerly with the military, charts numerous difficulties (Oyler et al., 2000).

Changed circumstances provided Max with an opportunity to reshape his life and move into teaching. He had felt constrained by what he describes as:

> The treadmill ... a path that you walk down and you can't really
> get off it. I was going to say when you're a man; I don't know
> how true that is. Well, when you're a man, anyway, you know,

that's what I felt. ... for practical reasons you can't do it. ... I was married and I had a child of my own and so you get - as well as the career side of things, you get the family commitments and you walk further down the path that somehow you've either chosen or has been chosen for you. (Max)

When Max "walked away from City-based careers", divorced, and relocated to Cornwall, the idea of being a teacher "gradually crept up" on him. The point in his life when Max decided to learn to be a teacher contrasts with narratives of life-long commitment to teaching ascribed to women, and in that context, his decision to teach could be construed negatively, though I know of nothing to suggest his decision was taken lightly.

Neither was Peter's move into teaching a straightforward one:

It was a very difficult decision, because I was earning a lot more money than I will probably earn from teaching. I've got a mortgage and, you know, all the benefits that went along with my job ... but I didn't enjoy it ... I could see where my future was going in ten years' time or twenty years' time and I knew that I didn't want to do that. ... A lot of people at work thought I was crazy giving up ... and I think my parents were a bit worried, especially [for] financial reasons, that I was giving it all up and going back [to college]. (Peter)

Peter had been working in the retail industry, and like Max, describes his employment and his career as mapped out ahead of him. The "treadmill" that Max describes seems to offer Peter a destination in 20 years which he is not interested in reaching. One familiar narrative of men and careers is that they intentionally map out their futures and, in contrast with women, narrate their career development as an organised, logical pattern of development and progression (Powney *et al.*, 2003). Max and Peter, however, narrate the inevitability of their careers as a limitation. Max through circumstance and Peter through dissatisfaction, have moved to a career change. Their stories are not ones of far-sighted planning, but of responses to events and feelings. This is a reminder that men make the decision to become teachers at different points in their careers and lives. Discourses which impute to men a casual approach for making a decision later in life, or an understanding of career as mapped out long in advance, do not help me to understand the positions of Max and Peter. The masculine frame of onward and upward career progression is neither

applicable nor helpful to many men or women.

Dean was uncertain about becoming a teacher of young children, but when he had children of his own he decided children are "not so bad after all". Many of the men make connections between their experiences with children and their decision to become teachers. Peter had been involved in youth work through the church; Daniel saw himself as a "surrogate parent" when he took the Cubs pack on weekend trips; becoming a father influenced Dean; Jim and Donny took care of younger siblings.

The TTA is urging 'dads' to bring their 'untapped talents to the classroom' and become teachers (TTA, 2004a). Based on research with graduates who are also fathers, and published by the TTA, the message is that fatherhood has taught these men skills and qualities that primary school teachers need, for example communication, patience and creativity. Mike Watkins, Acting Director of Teacher Supply and Recruitment for the TTA said:

> Attractive pay, benefits and leadership opportunities - and the chance to work with young people - has [sic] attracted ever increasing numbers of men to train as primary teachers in recent years. However, even more men are needed and we are actively encouraging interested fathers with degrees to apply for teacher training places. (Watkins quoted in TTA Press Release, 2004a)

The research and the campaign focuses on graduate fathers, whereas the men I have interviewed are all undergraduates and only four are fathers. However, this official voice of the TTA contributes to discourses that help to form the context within which the men I have spoken to are learning to become teachers.

Daniel, a third year student, says he had wanted to be a teacher since he was a child:

> Back from when I first started going to school I said, 'Oh I want to be a teacher.' ... I got encouragement from my family to do it, because we know quite a few teachers who were in the job. ... I was just into it all the way ... I certainly didn't come into it because there wasn't anything else I wanted to do. You hear that sometimes, 'Oh you're in teaching' [sarcastic voice]. Or 'Well I could get on the course, it was easy to get in. ' (Daniel)

Kelvin L. Seifert argues that girls tune in to the culture of early education more easily than boys. He concludes that being a teacher of young children is firmly constituted as feminine (Seifert, 1988). Christine Skelton suggests that

> female students are more likely to have wanted or assumed they would teach from a young age whilst males make the decision to teach during secondary or, more likely, during their undergraduate years. (Skelton, 1991, p. 282)

Perhaps 'more likely' for female students, but it was the case for Daniel. His commitment to teaching was a long-standing one. Only Michael's decision-making seems openly pragmatic:

> I wanted to do physiotherapy, so teaching was like on the spur of the moment. ... Well I knew with my 'A' level grades I wasn't going to, even if I wanted to I wasn't going to get in, so – there was such strong competition to get in. (Michael)

Steven describes it as "weird" being a man going into primary teaching. Jim discusses his anxiety about his decision to teach 3-8 year-old children. This may be underpinned by Jim thinking that the younger the children, the stronger the assumptions that to teach them is women's work. Max and Gavin speak specifically about a maternal side to primary teaching and Dean thinks that other men would be "put off" by the separate, feminised culture of primary teaching. Primary schools lack competition (Jerry) and "rough and tumble in the playground" (Donny). All understand themselves as outsiders. Yet they are aware they are in demand.

Dean, Michael, Steven, Gavin, Jerry and Donny mention a need for more men teachers and invest in familiar discourses which construct that need for men teachers as natural, for example:

> It just makes sense I think to have more male teachers ... more of a balance ... to make it a bit more equal, I guess. (Dean)

> I don't think a school should have a completely single sexed staff I think that's ... not ideal. (Michael)

A discourse of equality is deployed here at the same time as a discourse

131

which enacts inequality, positions women as lacking and an all-women labour force as undesirable. Only Dean spoke of the possible impact on women teachers of employing more men:

> I think ... some women teachers ... would feel that ... they haven't been good enough, whereas I've come across so many women teachers who have been so good at the schools I've been in and can do what any man teacher can do. ... They may think that it is denigrating them. (Dean)

Dean's awareness is laudable, yet his perspective still suggests that women teachers are to be compared, albeit favourably, to men.

Gavin's stance challenges stereotypical versions of masculinity: he hopes to present himself as a caring man. He thinks this will encourage more boys to consider becoming primary teachers:

> You have to set some kind of example to the children otherwise they don't know what they're going to follow. They see you for a good chunk of their year or couple of years, however long you have them for, so you have to. ... I suppose if they don't see male teachers in this caring nurturing way then perhaps that's why it is - it's why there are no male teachers. Perhaps it's been seen as that for so long, perhaps we need to change all that. That'd be nice, wouldn't it? [laughing] (Gavin)

Gavin shows an awareness of the limitations of assumptions that men are not naturally caring. Yet when he begins to talk about challenging the status quo and changing things, he laughs. I read that laughter as softening his comments, in addition lightening their effect by saying change would be "nice". As a future teacher does Gavin see himself as an agent for change? Is he willing to disrupt stereotypes and question his own complicated association with what often operates as a dominant cultural position? His laughter may signify that he understands change to masculine stereotypes to be improbable, a resigned and amused response which is underpinned by a 'boys-will-be-boys' perspective. My readings of his comments are my own and are speculative. What they do tell me however, is that Gavin is confronting discourses which produce masculinity as 'not caring' and he is working to negotiate his position in relation to them, in the cultural context of primary ITE and a research interview with a woman, a context which is itself permeated with discourses of care, equality, gender and which positions

132

men, both to their advantage and disadvantage, as 'other'.

The influence of men teachers on children is, according to Max, difficult to ascertain:

> Yes I think it must have an effect - you are affected by your teacher fullstop - it's a question of how. It must affect boys and girls that they don't have many of them, don't have male teachers. It must do. The question of how is a bit more difficult. (Max)

Steven thinks about the need for more men from the child's point of view, the implication being that a male teacher will be different, possibly in a way that would worry children:

> Sort of a bit of a mixture really, for the child as well. It's not ... I mean it'd be a lot better for them sort of to have a male teacher as well, that they can experience - I don't know it just doesn't seem there are many about. I think it would help them. Because they're going to have a male teacher when they go to secondary school, so it's going to be a bit of a change for them. ... Such a big jump, they might feel scared at the prospect of a male teacher as well if they've not had one. (Steven)

Max and Jerry are thinking about expectations that men teachers will provide role models:

> You're certainly expected to provide a role model. I am aware that I am trying to, subconsciously, I'm trying to live up to that. How you're supposed to be. (Max)

> They don't want a male teacher, they want a male role model. That's what they're after isn't it? Because of the one-parent families. (Jerry)

For Max, the expectation that he will generally "provide a role model", defines, in an unspecified way, the kind of teacher he should be. Jerry interprets being a role model as being the father that one-parent families lack (the one parent is usually assumed to be the mother). Max and Jerry may not have explicitly considered the assumptions that underpin role model arguments. One assumption is that boys learn gender from men only and as they do so are learning pre-existing, natural ways to be

133

masculine, which are assumed to be heterosexual. It follows in this line of argument that if boys spend too much of their time with women they will fail to learn heterosexual masculinity and instead will become effeminate or homosexual. Such a perspective does not take account of gendered, sexualised identity as relational and learnt through interactions with men and women, through active engagement in ongoing negotiation, struggle, identification and resistance, in specific institutional contexts such as the family and university.

On the subject of whether boys actually benefit from having male teachers Gavin is not sure:

> It's difficult to say whether I would have had more advantages if I'd had more male teachers in my primary years, you don't know do you? (Gavin)

Gavin's uncertainty mirrors the findings of researchers Jere Brophy and Thomas Good in the 1970s who concluded that the presence of men teachers made little difference (Brophy and Good, 1974). More recently, others have raised questions about the effect of male teachers as role models (Coulter and McNay, 1993; Skelton, 2001a). My intention is not to prove or disprove assumptions that men teachers are effective role models. I am interested in the ways the discourse relating to role models interacts with the men students' perceptions of themselves as teachers. Here, Dean comments on his pupils' responses to his presence in the classroom:

> I've sometimes had that [being called 'Miss'] ... When I've been with a group of boys there's been a comment like, yes, 'This is the boys' table' ... to a girl [who] wanted to join the table ... That sort of thing, as though it's all men together. (Dean)

Dean's masculinity seems sometimes overlooked, as his pupils, who presumably have a woman classteacher, out of habit call Dean 'Miss'. On other occasions, though, his masculinity signifies possible camaraderie with boy pupils who define a classroom group as masculine, turning away a girl pupil who wanted to join in. Contexts and intentions shape the ways Dean's masculinity signifies in the classroom.

Both Max and Dean spoke at length about recruiting more men into primary teaching. Their own experiences of deciding to be teachers later in life gave significance to their comments:

> All the best potential teachers are in the situation that I was in before ... they're all on this treadmill. (Max)

> It's difficult to reverse - you can't once you've started working - you can't then say, well you're going to exist on £3,600 p.a. and become a student. How can they do it? The best have been lost – the best men are lost. (Dean)

Both thought that younger men should be recruited, but that there would be problems:

> It's difficult to catch men at an early age, because they don't know what they're doing. (Dean)

> I suppose they'd have left that culture [school] at the age of fifteen or whatever and that was it, goodbye at that point. (Max)

Dean and Max also discuss what kind of man might be suitable for primary teaching. Dean says:

> It's almost a self-selected thing in a way. The people that want to apply to do it will be, in a way, the right people. (Dean)

Max talks about the transferable skills that men might have from previous employment. Dean mentions the importance of being flexible:

> The sort of people you want are the sort of people who will be able to live with ambiguity maybe - be able to be in a situation where maybe they're not one hundred per cent and be told what to do, because I think that's maybe sometimes where people drop out of teaching. They're just kind of unsure. They have got all this work to do ... and they're not sure. (Dean)

He seems to think that many more men would be interested in primary teaching:

> There's also, I feel, a lot of other men out there who may be are in my position of having been unemployed for a while who have not been thinking on those lines, having another career. Primary teaching or teaching as a whole is just closed to them and there may be quite a lot of men among them who would

135

be right, but they're not being reached though, I don't think. (Dean)

Dean's position as a man student primary school teacher in a numerical minority perhaps predisposes him to think about culture and social class. He introduces the subject of Asian men teachers:

> There aren't any Asian men. ... that may be a culture thing ... in my particular school there's a lot of Asian children and I think they could benefit, maybe their preconceptions would be changed if they had an Asian male or even an Asian female teacher. (Dean)

Dean is the only student in the interviews to mention cultural identity. I am not very surprised by this. Anglo-Saxon whiteness in the context of primary schooling in England operates as a norm. Whiteness is unconsciously naturalized (Troyna, 1994). The emphasis in primary ITE is that students are taught about ethnicity and cultural diversity in relation to the pupils they might teach, rather than in relation to themselves and the teaching population. Yet Dean comments on an absence he has noticed and sees as significant. The ethnic background of the pupils in his teaching practice school has helped him to see the whiteness of the teaching staff.

Max and Dean discuss working-class men as potential primary school teachers and Max says, "It's a stretch of the imagination":

> Because when you look at careers or institutions, you have a checklist and you look at teaching and you think, right, you've got to be able to talk properly. You've got to be able to learn and to put that over. You've got to be able to communicate and you perceive it as being a middle-class thing. Part of that perception is that you speak in a certain way and when we considered it we obviously thought, well, yes, I can do that, and I can do that and I can do that and with a bit of training I should be able to do that. (Max)

Dean makes a link between masculinity and social class:

> I think it comes down to how you see yourself as a male. If you are very concerned about being seen as a macho person, then you might be worried about going into primary teaching, but ... [if] you're not too bothered about other people looking, then you'd be able to do it ... When I was younger I wouldn't

136

have done it. I wouldn't have considered it, because I was too worried then about ... it being too much of a feminised thing, primary teaching. And ... I don't know if it's just a stereotype, but maybe with the working-class male you would need to overcome that more. (Dean)

Dean, a mature man from a non-professional middle-class background himself, allies being a young man, and in particular a young, working-class man, with a need to be perceived as 'macho' i.e. heterosexually masculine. There is a hierarchy of classed masculinity underlying Dean's perspective, which resonates with Terry Lovell's description of classed masculinity (Lovell, 1987). Lovell's interpretation of masculinity and acceptability is helpful here. She argues that workers are perceived as 'too masculine', and aristocrats as 'not masculine enough'. It is the bourgeois male who represents 'human normality' (*ibid.,* p. 140). Dean maps a similar hierarchy on to men's suitability to primary school teaching. Lovell also points to the productive and civilising role of femininity in the construction of masculinity, and here is Max explaining his understanding of one of his tasks as a teacher of young children as a civilising one:

As teachers I suppose you look after the nation's morals which is a very middle-class preoccupation, isn't it? (Max)

What does it mean for Max to think of the "nation's morals" as a "middle-class preoccupation"? What might be working-class preoccupations? This is difficult to untangle and my comments are tentative ones. Max's brief comment suggests that teachers represent middle-class culture, irrespective of their own cultural background. Morals, by which I understand behaviours, beliefs and principles, are to be instilled in children and monitored by teachers, and the responsibility for morality is ascribed to and associated with the middle classes. The expectation seems to be that working-class teachers would need to take on middle-class values and morals. Max's comment, like Terry's discussion of his working-class background, which I have already written about, can be linked with the tensions and conflicts experienced by working-class girl pupils that Gillian Plummer describes (Plummer, 2000). Reading Plummer's analysis of autobiographical accounts of women's experiences at school, I understand schools to be operating as strongholds of middle-class culture, monitoring,

dismissing, disapproving of and disregarding working-class girls' presence and efforts. I am not suggesting that Max will behave in this way towards his pupils, but that his comments pose fundamental questions about who the decision-makers are in schools, what cultural backgrounds are assumed as a norm, who teachers are and what values and principles they are expected to represent and promote.

The likelihood of speedy promotion, money and responsibilities were on the men's minds. Peter and Donny both refer to the drop in salary they will experience as teachers. Peter talks about "doing something worthwhile", not just making money. He says this probably sounds "corny", a caveat to what is usually read as a *woman's* reason for becoming a teacher. Donny says:

> It didn't really bother me too much, the money. I knew I'd be on a lower wage ... teaching's what I want to do and I can do it and that's been my philosophy all the way through. (Donny)

Donny's altruistic motives are produced in this narrative as sacrifices, not natural and vocational responsibilities, as they are seen to be for women. His story, whilst not altogether easy to tell, slips in amongst others which praise high-earning men's benevolence in shifting to teaching. Jerry says his motivation to become a teacher was "not a money-driven force", yet money was clearly a concern:

> My wife earns a lot more than I ever will until I become a headmaster. ... I'm not the wage-earner within my family. ... The money aspect does make a difference, so to get any extra money you've got to go up the ladder. ... I should be able to, if I want to, to get to the top of the tree. (Jerry)

This is a well-established, male-oriented interpretation of career progression as upward mobility. Max also thinks that men "expect and are expected to sort of develop their careers, aren't they?" (Max). Jerry states bluntly that men are "on the fast track to higher management in schools because we're authority figures." (Jerry). The idea of career as continuous and progressive is coupled with assumptions about men's speedy promotion to headship. A polarity is created between the 'domesticity' of the classroom where women teach, and 'leadership and power' of school

management largely undertaken by men (Skelton, 1989, p. 81). Peter describes himself as "quite ambitious", though assumptions that he would be a headteacher in a few years are "quite a pressure". Daniel is "irritated" by these assumptions. Gavin insists he will not be "pushy":

> It's not that I'm not terribly ambitious. I wouldn't mind being a deputy head, but it'll just take as long a time as it needs to take. I'm not going to be pushy or say I want to be a head in three years. If it happens it happens. (Gavin)

The caution the men express and their distancing themselves from assumptions of speedy promotion suggest sensitivity to the problems of institutionalised advantage that masculinity bestows on them. This may have been heightened given the research interview context: men student teachers discussing their career possibilities with me, a woman, former primary school teacher, with an interest in gender. Donny and Daniel are facing a dilemma. Donny puts it like this, "Fortunately or unfortunately we've got more chance being blokes." (Donny). And Daniel identifies a conflict, which he calls a "split thought ". Daniel thinks that men teachers should not be treated differently *and* says "I'm a male ... get going and work our way up." (Daniel). On the subject of career opportunities, he says:

> From a professional point of view you've got to say equality of opportunity, women and men the same all the way down the line, from the very top right down to the kids, and then from a selfish point of view, just let that one slip by, you know, that male's moved up the ladder and that female hasn't. (Daniel)

Daniel explicitly articulates a dilemma. Christine Skelton also observes that men teachers both accept and apparently reject the career advantages accrued as a consequence of their maleness. Expecting to succeed at work is not presented as something *they* concur with, but as something external to their own needs and desires (Skelton, 1991, p. 285), in line with the idea of 'complicit masculinity' (Connell, 1995). There are tensions between principles of equality of opportunity and potential career advantage. To challenge the status quo would involve the men in 'the highly undignified task of dismantling their own privileges' (Connell, 1997a, p. 10). Challenging the status quo might involve men in working against their own

interests. The continuing desire for a coherent sense of a professional self is disrupted by conflicting versions of gendered teacherliness: career-oriented, high-earner, future headteacher, and an institutional illusion of equality of opportunity, which problematises masculine advantage.

Age and maturity interact with masculinity and for the mature men student teachers can signify reliability, legitimacy and valued-experience. The school Max was working in was undergoing an Inspection and Max was mistaken for an Ofsted inspector:

> I walked in and ... three hundred heads immediately looked round at me. They'd been [told], 'Be on your best behaviour whenever you see a man. '. (Max)

At school, in this context, maturity and maleness readily signify authority and professionalism. Age operates as a defining feature. As mature students with families, Jerry, Terry, Max and Dean are positioned through discourses which construct their (assumed) heterosexual masculinity as normal, acceptable and unthreatening, and as separated from effeminacy and homosexuality (not masculine enough, not normal) and paedophilia (perverted, predatory male). Jerry, Donny and Peter narrate their maturity as an advantage:

> They [other teachers] talked down to [another man student teacher] because he was young and the girls were talked down to ... As a mature student and as a male as well we're given a lot of respect. (Jerry)

> Because of what we've done before ... we're not wasting time. (Donny)

> They [classteachers] are more curious, because I gave up my job; particularly as I'm older as well, I think they're more curious. I think I'm different... I quite like it, because you get more attention. (Peter)

The men have experience in work that is publicly valued and they separate themselves from the majority of students: women who enter teacher training straight from school (commonly assumed to be naive and intellectually weak), and young men (commonly assumed to lack

commitment to teaching or to be overambitious).

> I suppose we're more of an age with the lecturers as well aren't we? ... That is more of an issue than anything else that I can think of. (Max)

> I think there's a division in our [course] between the mature students and some of the younger students. Mature students tend to be the ones who do most of the talking. ... I think that's the biggest issue of all, actually. I think it's a shame ... I would like to hear more of the views of some of the younger students and I'm sure they've got a lot to say, but they don't say it. [They are] not very willing to say it, in a lot of cases. (Dean)

Max allies himself with the course lecturers and in so doing adopts a powerful position, which also separates him from younger students, mostly women. Max and Dean work to present themselves as confident, but not domineering. They try to negotiate their way through the tension between assumptions that as mature men they will confidently speak out in class, and expectations (driven by the research context and primary school culture) that they are men who have thought about gender issues and do not want to be seen to dominate class discussions and prevent others, mostly women and some younger men, from speaking.

Control

An outward sign of being a successful teacher is the ability to control a class of children: to have the children 'eating out of your hand'. It is this that student teachers, women and men, aspire to from the start of their training. There is admiration for teachers who can quell a class with 'just a look'. All of the men talk about control and authority. And there are anxieties: losing control, being ignored, being 'bailed out' by the classteacher. These feelings are not unwarranted: the practicalities of working in a classroom mean that teachers must have at their disposal the ability to control and regulate the children's behaviour.

I also have in mind the control and regulation of students' understanding of themselves as teachers through discourses of teacher education. For example, Gavin wants to be "caring, nurturing" as well as "presentable ... some kind of authority figure": his perception of himself as a future teacher collides with apparently self-evident 'truths' which he

encounters in primary ITE which prioritise skills, techniques, efficiency and effectiveness. Such truths may silence and dislodge his own aspirations as a teacher. This sense of colliding discourses was observed also by Martin Mills and Donna Satterthwaite in their research into pre-service teachers' perceptions of teaching (Mills and Satterthwaite, 2000). The authors found that students became immersed in educational discourses that transformed their perceptions of what it means to be a 'good' teacher, often leading to an emphasis on skills rather than care.

There are conflicts for Dean too. He is thinking about the correct teacherly relationship to have with pupils. He uses phrases such as "keep your distance", "establish your own presence". He thought that his age would help him to command "instant respect", but found this was not the case. Dean learns that 'real' teachers can reprimand children without being emotionally involved, whereas Dean says he "gets worked up". He articulates the conflict like this:

> I think it's the discipline side of it that is very much a grey area, because you want to ... just be yourself really in the classroom. (Dean)

The shift into the world of teaching inducts Dean into understanding that his personal, involved and emotional perspective on being a teacher should be left behind if he is to become a 'real' teacher. It will involve a change in his understanding of himself and what it means to be a teacher, which he may experience as a loss of identity and of engagement with children.

Max describes his approach as a teacher with a new class, in relation to, and in opposition to, a familiar narrative about establishing control:

> [Every time I start a practice] I think they [the pupils] are going to look on me in this first week and think he's miserable. I'm going to be distant, I'm not going to be approachable, you know, no smile until Christmas sort of thing. I can never keep it up. [laughs] (Max)

Max's laughter and his dismissal of a distant approach with the words "I can never keep it up", interest me. I can interpret his position alongside another gendered understanding of what it means to be a teacher. Ruth

142

Adam, in her novel, *I'm Not Complaining,* written in the 1930s, tells the story of Madge and her life as an elementary school teacher. There is much to learn from this fascinating novel about women's ambivalent relation with teaching as work, about the independence and security of the job coupled with a sense of feeling second-best and almost an embarrassment that women teachers can be made to feel for their professional abilities, and their interest in children's learning. There is one extract from Adam's novel which I want to place alongside Max's laughter and his apologetic tone. Adam has Madge describe an awkwardness she experiences when talking about her work. Madge explains what happens when she is introduced to people for the first time:

> I always try to keep my profession a dark secret, because I know that the minute the word 'teacher' is sounded any slight flicker of interest goes flat out of their eyes and they start muttering painfully that it must be interesting work. Then I can't help pretending feebly that I'm awfully bad at it really, and I can't keep the little ones in order at all - you know, *so* madcap and attractive of me. I don't know why people should think it's so creditable for a teacher to be bad at her job. (Adam, 1938, pp. 333-334)

Madge is cornered by discourses which construct women who work with young children as infantilised themselves, engaged in a world of work which is semi-domestic, unintellectual and feminised. Madge's resistance, which does not seem satisfactory to her, is to present herself as not fitting in with the culture, by claiming she is no good at being a teacher. Madge understands herself as more interesting as a woman if she separates herself from the negativity of discourses of the good woman teacher of young children.

Both Madge and Max are articulating and negotiating gendered expectations and feelings about being teachers. Max is understanding himself as teacher in relation to a cultural myth of men teachers as formal, effective disciplinarians. That myth sits less easily with discourses of care and sensitivity to children's needs which still permeate the culture of primary schooling (albeit against a tide of other values and priorities) and which Max might think I represent. Max's narrative works to confirm his position as acceptably feminised for primary school teaching, in the face of

discourses which position him, as a man, as less approachable. Using humour and modesty, coupled with narratives of heterosexual masculinity and maturity expressed elsewhere, Max invents and imagines an identity as a man student primary school teacher that negotiates discourses relating to masculinity and being a teacher and fits comfortably with his understanding of primary school culture.

Max narrates his experience of his move into teaching:

> I'm actually a sort of beer-swilling, rugby player slob at times myself you know, but that's not right for the classroom. (Max)

Of course, Max is not going to behave like a "slob" in the classroom. Because it seems self-evident I want to stop and think about Max's apparently throwaway comment. What might be Max's subconscious intentions? The 'real' Max is the 'very' heterosexual, laddish Max. A softer, feminised heterosexual masculinity is appropriate for men teachers of young children. He is not simply describing behaviour, but actively conceptualising his identity as teacher. Max is enacting an understanding of himself as teacher. His position is made possible through, and contributes to, networks of contemporary narratives about masculinity and teachers. He asserts a version of heterosexuality and separates himself from homosexuality, effeminacy and femininity. He accepts, participates in and deploys discourses which construct real men as heterosexual, signified through alcohol, sport and being slovenly, and this legitimises his shift to a position of teacher of young children, which signifies as respectable, reliable, presentable and perhaps being a prude, a teacher's pet or a swot.

The gender-switching device used in analysis of children's literature (Nodelman, 2002; Davies, 1989) can be applied to Max's narrative. I can ask how a reader would read Max's comment if it had been spoken by a woman. Would she be read as butch, lesbian, odd? What comment from a woman would mirror Max's subconscious definition of his gendered and professional identity? What assertions would a woman feel compelled to make? It might hinge on tensions between success, authority and femininity. Or a woman's narrative might rest on an established contradiction between physical attractiveness, sexuality and being a

teacher, encapsulated in the title of Weber and Mitchell's research, *'That's funny, you don't look like a teacher!'* (Weber and Mitchell, 1995).

When Max talks of being "a beer-swilling, rugby player slob at times" he is referring to his physicality as a man. One of Max's responses to the ambivalence he feels about being in authority as a teacher is to try to make himself look and sound like a teacher:

> I don't really know how I'm supposed to be as a male. ... We don't get separate lessons because we're men. I don't know, it's very difficult. I'm aware of things like, well, I can have a deep voice and I use that deep voice, when I need to, when I think it's appropriate that they [the pupils] should know that I'm not happy. So that's one very obvious, quite silly thing. I always make a point of wearing a collar and tie when I go to school, because I'm very much aware of the male teachers that I was taught by at that age. And I'd go so far as to say that they are as big an influence on me now as the teachers that I'm in school with. (Max)

Max produces himself as an authoritative teacher through the key signifier of a deep voice. He is dismissive of it, perhaps not wanting to emphasise a potential masculine advantage. The idea of a deep masculine voice of authority sits in opposition to discourses which regard women's voices as shrill or gentle. Some politicians, both women and men, undergo voice-training to lower the pitch of their voices to capitalise on the authority associated with a deep voice. Max also talks of dressing formally, "wearing a collar and tie". Although my focus is the discursive production of gendered identities through language, discursive practices are performed 'through bodies, through ways of moving, dressing and talking, and through bodily dispositions' (Kamler, 1997, p. 373). Bodies can be seen 'collectively and/or individually' (Swain, 2003, p. 300). Through the social practices and expectations of schooling and teacher education, institutions control, regulate and normalise pupils' and students' behaviours, both as individuals and as members of a social group. Max's apparently small gesture of wearing a collar and tie is part of his performance of 'teacher': he makes use of formal attire as an embodiment of teacherliness.

Max retells past and recent memories of men teachers he has worked with. In doing so, he reflects on the identities of those teachers and the possible tensions the men teachers experienced. Max interprets those

tensions as a clash between each man's natural personality and the role they were obliged to adopt in school as teacher. Here, Max is narrating what he remembers of a man teacher from his own schooldays:

> Well, the male teachers were the 'hit-men', as I recall. ... One teacher ... was always the sort that would give you a slap ... and pull your hair ... I often wonder ... was he happy to be following that role? Did he sometimes wake up in the morning and think, I don't really want to do that today; ... I could do with a rest, because I'm fed up with being the one that ... people dislike. ... I wouldn't want to be cast in that role. But it seems to be ... that the 'powers that be' want to put men in that role, don't they? (Max)

This man teacher, in Max's mind, had little choice but to adopt behaviours and practices in school that produce him as one of the "hit-men". The image he constructs is of an individual whose agency is little match for the 'powers that be' (does Max mean the government and policy-makers?) that position him. However, Max does introduce the possibility of change when he asks whether that teacher ever questioned his identity as a teacher. And Max insists he would not want to be obliged to be the disciplinarian, though he understands that assumption can be made of men, in general.

And this is Max's parallel memory of a man teacher he met in school in his first year of primary ITE:

> In my first year ... there was only one other man there [in the school]. ... I felt a bit sorry for him, because he had obviously been assigned or taken it on himself to play the role of the disciplinarian, the classic, the male disciplinarian and it was he that roamed the corridors at lunch time turfing people out. ... Whenever I saw him with children he was always pretty strict with them and on occasions he was very strict ... Is he naturally like that ? ... Perhaps that's OK. But if he's had to assume that .. role, well, that must be quite a lonely position to be in at times. (Max)

I wrote earlier about elementary school teacher Ursula Brangwen who felt compelled to adopt harsh discipline to control her pupils, administering corporal punishment. D. H. Lawrence describes Ursula's frustration and disappointment at having to treat her pupils in that way (Lawrence, 1915). Max's questions and observations resonate with that fictional account, each

evoking some of the uncertainty and conflict which can be part of a teacher's identity as an authority figure.

I can also place Max's recollections alongside the work of historian Philip Gardner (Gardner, 1996). Gardner's oral history research recorded the stories of men and women born between 1888 and 1917 who became teachers. They talked about their experiences as pupils. Their testimonies illustrate the brutality of many men and women elementary teachers around the turn of the 20th century, as well as the more humane approach of other individual teachers. Some pupils were inspired to become teachers by elementary teachers whom they idealised. Others recollect how they overtly resisted unkind and unjust teachers. Others responded by pledging, with determination, to be more sympathetic and understanding teachers themselves. Max's account, and Gardner's oral histories, illustrate how professional identity is learned through resistance, as well as through acceptance. Max voices his resistance to being stereotyped as a disciplinarian. I read his story in the light of assumptions about men teachers of past generations as harsh, intolerant disciplinarians and in a wider, current context of discourses which emphasise pupils' unruliness and feed on fears of teachers' general inability to instil discipline and order.

Jim is ambivalent about his assumed position of authority as teacher:

> At the moment I'm not aiming for teacher-teacher. I'm sort of aiming to be more of a ... trusting friend but an older friend that knows more and slightly better than them and if it comes to me having to tell them something to do then I'd like them to do it, but also I'd like them to come to me - I mean these are five-year-olds we're talking about. (Jim)

The point of transition seems starkly obvious in Jim's comments. Not so long ago he was a pupil himself and now as a first-year student he must assume the role of teacher. Jim says, "When days have been bad and things haven't gone necessarily to plan ... you lose control." It is hard not to read this as an admission of guilt, emphasised by the way Jim backtracks and says quickly, "Well, not lose control, but ... I do have problems sometimes with ... authority, how strict to be and how... loose a rein to let them have.". Jim would not want me, a tutor, to think he had lost control of his pupils. Such a feeling could be an issue beyond the context of the

research interview, too. Assumptions about men students' superior powers of control of children make any statements about difficulties seem like particular admissions of failure. Thinking back to my own teaching practices, a constant theme in my ongoing commentary about my experiences, written about daily, was 'what I would do better next time'. Such rather self-deprecating modesty and belief in a need for self-improvement is no bad thing, but I point it out for its construction through an understanding of femininity. Men students find themselves inserted into discourses of masculinity which interact and sometimes clash with discourses of primary school culture and make some stories of their teaching experiences easier to tell than others. Being a student in another teacher's class complicates the men's position:

> I'm quite conscious ... of being a student teacher and I'm a bit fearful to step on [the classteacher's] toes - or overstep the mark. (Jim)

Student teachers are expected to be learners, mindful of being apprentices in 'real' teachers' classrooms; at the same time they must be authoritative as teachers of pupils.

Steven's recollection of his own male primary school teacher centres on enjoyment and action, "everything seemed like really good fun". Steven's comments map on to discourses which construct that which is ordinarily part of the regular school day as of little interest, even an irrelevance. Amongst the romanticised teachers in popular culture are those who liberate their pupils from the routine school curriculum through innovative teaching (Weber and Mitchell, 1995, p. 88). This version of the idealised teacher is one who is unconventional, spontaneous and dynamic, not bowed down or constrained by bureaucracy and administration. This powerful image of the teacher as one who saves the pupils from boredom and frees them to learn in exciting ways persists, and is even strengthened, in the face of increasingly bureaucratic requirements and directives made to teachers of young children. This picture is not one which can be simply read as the individual teacher's autonomy versus official policy and its representatives, however. There is acceptance and delight in rebellious behaviour on the part of some teachers. Consider this example, reported in *The Education Guardian*, by Polly Curtis:

148

The winner of the Promethean award for headteacher of the year admitted he often suspended normal lessons for a "do-something-different day".
"On Monday, if there's good weather, I will crash the curriculum and we'll have a party," he told the audience. And Charles Clarke and his wife, Carol, chuckled loudly. (Curtis, 2004, p. 6)

Charles Clarke, at the time Education Secretary and therefore a man who can be seen as representative of the official and public face of the teaching profession, laughs at this male headteacher's actions. Later, I will look at men student teachers' pranks at college in the late 19th and early 20th centuries; that historical perspective will illustrate a similar construction of men's resistance to regulations as healthy, masculine common sense.

Steven's narrative of a memory of his first whole-class activity illustrates the challenge he experienced and the emotion he invests in becoming a teacher:

When I did my first class activity, I ... felt like the teacher then. It was a real change. It was quite frightening ... I was the teacher and that did seem really strange. Luckily it went quite well. (Steven)

Steven goes on to tell me that he treated the men who taught him at primary and secondary schools with a lot of respect. It would be a good idea, Steven thinks, to have more men primary school teachers. His perspective is produced through a network of discourses, signalling men as authoritative, advantaged, ambitious, marginalised, special. Suddenly, I sense embarrassment, and Steven laughs, saying, "I suppose that's a bit sexist really." Was that the moment in the conversation when Steven consciously responded to the context of the research interview and to what he read as my position as a woman, a tutor, a primary school teacher, interested in gender and men?

Donny comments on the contrasting approaches to classroom control that he has observed among women teachers:

I've been in classrooms and the woman is usually very direct and forthright, but sometimes you go in and they're ... a mouse in the corner ... but they still control the class ... you don't have to shout or be there with the cane. (Donny)

149

How do I read his intentions here? I think Donny is working to show me that he does not make stereotypical assumptions about women teachers. He describes contrasting images of women as teachers, "forthright" and "mouse" and says that each approach enables the teacher to control the class. These two teacher images contrast with a traditional and enduring one that Donny conjures up and rejects in the final sentence: the shouting teacher with a cane. In spite of trying to counter stereotypes, Donny uses a long-established, stereotypical image of the teacher as a frame of reference. The cane has an almost iconic status, signifying a teacher's harsh authority, the threat or reality of corporal punishment, the ultimate power of the teacher and the submissiveness of the pupils. He is drawing on understandings of 'teacher' which are worked and reworked through popular culture and which become part of a 'cumulative cultural text of teacher' (Weber and Mitchell, 1995, p. 19). The image of teacher that Donny refers to should not be dismissed as merely an outdated caricature. It does not operate as a literal model; its significance lies in its persistence over time and the subtle and complex contribution such images make to discourses about teacherliness which work to produce possible understandings of what it means to be a teacher.

What is formally expected of teachers? The *Professional Standards for Qualified Teacher Status* stipulates that teachers must

> treat pupils consistently, with respect and consideration ...
> demonstrate and promote the positive values, attitudes and
> behaviour that they expect from pupils (TTA, 2002a, p. 6)

and

> set high expectations for pupils' behaviour and establish a
> clear framework for classroom discipline to anticipate and
> manage pupils' behaviour constructively, and promote self-
> control and independence. (*ibid.*, p. 11)

The teacher's position of authority is presented as a combination of skills and personality traits which can be exercised, irrespective of context. For students to gain Qualified Teacher Status they must demonstrate competence in these and other 'Standards'. Assessment criteria which can be shared and discussed by students and tutors are a useful focus, but

150

these formal, discrete statements do little to bring to life the tensions and ambiguities student teachers may experience as authority figures.

Classrooms are places where individuals work to establish positions of control and power, where authority is negotiated and where control is not simply invested in an effective teacher. Teachers are expected to 'take account of the varying interests, experiences and achievements of boys and girls' (TTA, 2002a, p. 12). Such a general statement does not begin to acknowledge the ways teacher/pupil relations are played out in classrooms on a day-to-day basis. The 'Standards', in conjunction with students' own perceptions of effectiveness, and classteachers' and tutors' expectations, militate against students reflectively acknowledging difficulties with discipline in the classroom. This has particular gendered connotations as authority is tied in with in prevailing discourses of heterosexual masculinity. The official discourse edits out the conflicting, shifting, gendered and classed relations that are enacted in the classroom and during ITE.

The ability to control a class is one defining feature of teacherliness and teacher effectiveness. Pedagogic style is significant: a class of silent, seated children signifies a teacher in control; a class of children who are moving about, talking and working on different activities does not. Such contrasting perceptions have their roots in the derision of progressive teaching methods: soft, relaxed, ill-disciplined, female. Traditional methods and whole class teaching, on the other hand, signify rigour, standards, self-discipline, male. There are contradictions here, though, that are revealing. They help to illustrate that the meanings and explanations that exist are determined by current discourses and values, which have developed over time. Consider 'obedience': girls' and women's obedience is read as conformity, passivity and lack of initiative. For boys and men obedience is read as self-restraint, and it is interpreted as an achievement in the face of 'natural tendencies' to rebel, for to work hard and conform would be seen as effeminate. These different readings of male and female must be taken into account when asking questions about boys and girls at school, and when seeking to understand men student teachers' perceptions of control and authority.

151

Negotiating domesticity

Donny is happy to take on "all the little household things" involved in a teacher's work. He describes himself as a "servant" in his relation to the classteacher at the start of his first year, sharpening pencils and carrying out other menial tasks. Donny is confirmed as a junior and as under the direction of the teacher: the social, and unequal, relation between the two is acted out through these practices. His position in the classroom is complicated by being a novice. He is a learner in a context where he must also present himself (as dictated by discourses which create a polarity between pupil and teacher) as 'not a learner', that is, the teacher.

Dean offers to help with some routine tasks on the first day of his teaching practice and explains what happens:

> Both [the women teachers] laughed and I thought ... if I'd been an eighteen-year-old girl, then maybe they would have been able to say, 'Well do this, this and this'. I did actually do a few things ... I think you obviously want to be treated really the same as anybody else. (Dean)

Dean, a mature man, is probably not the student the classteachers expect. The women's laughter asserts their powerful position in the primary school culture, and shows their amusement at the dislocation between the image of a mature man and that of a biddable, young female student teacher. Housekeeping tasks are not assumed to be Dean's territory, and even as a hardworking, thoughtful man, his presence in the classroom 'disturbs and ruptures' as it constitutes a 'counter text' to the image of primary teacher we have come to expect (Weber and Mitchell, 1995, p. 95). Dean recounts that a woman teacher in another school told him there had been "a lot of mediocre men" teachers there. On another occasion, Dean says, when discussing musical instruments at school, a woman teacher asked him, "What do you play - apart from the fool?". Later in the research interview Dean says it would have been useful to be in a class with a man teacher, to see how men approach the "more girlie" things.

There is a complex network of relations between domesticity and primary school teaching. It is not only about the housekeeping aspects of the work (for example, keeping the classroom tidy, organising equipment). It centres on discourses relating to professionalism, work, family, children

and the relationships between women and men (Biklen, 1995). My reading of the men students' comments about domestic tasks is that it exercises their thinking about themselves as men teachers. They are negotiating a web of conflicting narratives: the inexperienced, subservient, student teacher; the helpful, young female; the wordly-wise, authoritative, mature male; the young, ambitious male. I do not suggest these as 'types'. They are patterns of possibilities, which operate as if natural and pre-existing.

As men students learn to be teachers they negotiate discourses which position their difference in contradictory ways. Men are inept, dubious outsiders, in the unfamiliar feminine territory of the classroom where women are in charge. And men are gifted, natural authority figures in a world of work where professionalism, seniority and power are constituted as masculine. Primary school classrooms seem to straddle a professional/domestic dividing line. Failure and success are constituted in other ways for women. Women teachers' shortcomings are produced as emanating from poor intellect and innate mollycoddling of pupils, especially boys. Being a 'born teacher' and a woman centres on effort and nurture. Gemma Berry, winner of the Guardian award for Outstanding New Teacher 2003 was described as an 'instinctive teacher' in an article entitled, 'Born to teach' (Woodward, 2003, p. 5). Her success was constituted through commitment, modesty, hard work and caring for individual children.

In learning to become primary school teachers, men are at a point of transition and change. The men's understanding of themselves collides with contradictory assumptions about how they will be as men teachers. As men learn to become primary school teachers they look for ways to conceptualise their professional identities. The rhetoric can lead men to think they will be unproblematically in charge in the classroom, raise standards of academic achievement and be role models for boys. The men encounter all-too-familiar discourses which assert the dominance of heterosexual masculinity, the abnormality of homosexual masculinity and demonise any understanding of children as sexualised beings. The men student teachers are trying to find a place within primary school culture, a culture well-known to them as former pupils, but unfamiliar as they move into it as teachers and as men.

> It's just something about the climate of the times, I think.
> There's something there in the back of everybody's mind, you
> know, touching children ... has become a dark subject ... I think
> men are afraid to ... because, you know, you're scared of how it
> might be interpreted and what repercussions there's going to
> be and ... I assume that there are rules, but I don't know what
> they are. (Dean)

Dean articulates his perception that discourses which position men as a
risk to young children are pervasive, yet seldom articulated. The fear that he
describes is compounded by a feeling of ignorance: as he sees it, there
are rules, but he does not know them. It is specifically the teacher's role
and the school context which Dean perceives as problematic:

> Well I'm thinking especially of this thing that's cropped up
> before where you get children to sit on your lap and this sort of
> thing, because in any other situation where a child has wanted
> to do that, when I haven't been a teacher then fine you just pick
> them up and no problem, but of course in a school
> environment it is entirely different, isn't it, especially perhaps,
> you know, as a man I think. (Dean)

Dean's description of the particular difficulties that he encounters as a man
and a teacher encapsulates the challenges posed at this point of transition
into the teaching profession, and the shifting and contextualised nature of
understandings of masculinity. Moving into the school environment Dean
becomes obliged, through a dynamic interaction with prevailing
discourses, to rethink his understanding of himself as a man. As Dean
learns to become a teacher he confronts numerous versions of teacher
identity as he works to construct his own professional identity. Faced with
numerous possibilities and constraints Dean must come to understand
himself as a teacher in relation to meanings that seem to be available to
him, as a mature man. This is clearly not a one-way process. There is an
active, dialogic interaction between Dean's perspectives and the
discourses he encounters. What versions of masculinity do contemporary
discourses offer and validate for the men students as they move into a
feminised culture? What might encourage a man to see himself as a
capable, caring, ordinary teacher of young children? What versions of

masculinity do the men bring with them from secondary schooling or from their workplaces or their family lives? Do the men need to learn a new version of gendered and classed-masculinity (in the same way that women in early teacher-training colleges came to learn middle-class femininity)?

Dean's comment that everything is "entirely different" as a man and a teacher throws into sharp relief what being a teacher can do to an individual. It can require a rethinking of the self. New understandings can spring from the challenge of understanding oneself in a different relation to others. The point that I want to stress is that this process can be a creative and enriching one and/or it can be constraining and baffling. Dean sums up his confusion and ambivalence:

> Because I think as a man, you know, you tend to be in no-man's land really. It's a very grey area, or is it? Perhaps I'm wrong, but that's my perception of it. (Dean)

Nine of the eleven men I interviewed discuss issues relating to physical contact with children. Each of these men talks about the assumed risks and suspicions of child abuse associated with men working with young children. The men recount anecdotes about pupils' demonstrations of affection. I have selected Peter's narrative, as one example of a retelling of the dilemmas the men face:

> Reading a story at the end of the day ... children came spontaneously out of their seats. Last year, when I was in teaching practice with my tutor sitting next to me and [they] just came up and put their arms round me. Little girls, you know, ... saying, 'I love you Mr. ...' and all that sort of stuff and I didn't really know how to react. ... The female teacher in the class would put her arms around them, or if they were upset the teacher always takes them aside and gives them a cuddle and stuff like that. I don't feel comfortable with that. (Peter)

Women primary school teachers have long been understood as caring and motherly, often at the expense of their professionalism, intelligence and knowledge about teaching. Current official discourses which criticise and seek to counter a so-called soft, feminised image do not challenge the belittling of the feminine; instead, they redescribe the job of primary school teacher, prioritising values, such as management, targets and testing

155

which are associated with heterosexual masculinity, and anchoring the intellectual and professional dimensions of the job to the 'not feminine'.

Jerry, Dean and Max talk about their position in the classroom as teachers, compared with that of the women teachers. Jerry points out that comforting primary school children with a cuddle is out of the question:

> Am I going to be authoritarian? I can't give them a cuddle. ... I have to leave the [classroom] door open. Just things like that. That is a bugbear, because ... you're slightly ostracised because of your sex. ... I went to ... the younger class... as soon as I sat down there's two of them, one on each knee. I tried to get them off. ... I've got to get rid of them. (Jerry)

The woman classteacher Dean works alongside tells him he must not cuddle the children:

> A few weeks ago, when I was in school, a little girl was crying and the teacher ... sort of gave her a bit of a cuddle and then afterwards, when the lesson was over, she said to me, 'You know you mustn't do that, don't you?' She said that to me. I wouldn't anyway, but she was maybe giving me a reminder that it's a different sort of standard. (Dean)

In the current climate, leaving the classroom door open and not cuddling children can be read as common-sense advice, an aside, an almost unnecessary reminder. But what do such advice and such practices do to Jerry's and Dean's sense of themselves as teachers of young children? These moves may create and confirm difference in the men's sense of themselves as teachers. Jerry says he is "slightly ostracised" and Dean talks of a "different standard".

Dean talks with his friend Max about their options as men teachers:

> Dean:
> Yes. But you do feel a bit - I don't know what to do when there is a child that's crying in the class which you would get in primary [school]. I don't know what you feel, but you don't quite know what to do really .
> Max:
> We haven't got the alternatives have we, that women have got.
> Dean:
> No. Obviously you talk to the child and try and work out what's wrong ... but you do feel a little bit ... as though women maybe

have the - would give them a cuddle and they're OK. (Max and Dean)

If a man's instinct is to cuddle a child, he must learn to stop before he starts. The men learn that as teachers they must monitor the contact they make with pupils very carefully. As a practical requirement this has an impact on the men's everyday work. But there is more to it than that. They are encountering situations which highlight sexuality, pleasure and emotions, themes which are seldom directly articulated and discussed in relation to men as teachers of young children. My reading of the men's comments is based on thinking that their feelings towards the children are what I understand as 'normal', although, as I have already discussed (see pp. 87-88), and as Pat Sikes documented (Sikes, 2000), there exists a possibility that interviewees may deliberately mislead interviewers. Dean and Jerry's position is complicated. There is discomfort, uncertainty and anxiety, even panic, in the men students' comments. Entangled in discourses which construct it as common sense that all physical contact with children by men teachers is potentially dangerous, the men students' only option seems to be that they learn to experience the proximity of children as wrong. They must maintain a disconnection between touch, pleasure and children in their understanding of themselves as teachers and must learn that such matters are not to be discussed. The men's individual perspectives will then slip more readily into an institutional context of primary ITE, where sexuality, pleasure and the emotions are themes traditionally excluded from the discourse.

Daniel resists the discourse of panic about physical contact with children, yet his comments are still enmeshed in an understanding that positions him as a risk to children and an acceptance that any physical closeness to children is inappropriate for men teachers. This is Daniel's recollection of his first day in school as a student teacher:

> I sat down on the first day [on the carpet] ... and found three of them sitting on top of me in ten seconds flat, climbing up me like I was a climbing frame, you know. You just think, right, okay, you sit down there, you sit there and you sit there and I've never had a problem with it. (Daniel)

Daniel enacts his understanding about contact with children through a

narrative which emphasises his professional capability in dealing with a situation, which, because of what he has learnt about men teachers and risk, could have been, at the very least, an awkward situation for him. This extract makes an interesting contrast to Daniel's description of working with the Cubs and holding children's hands, which I considered in Chapter 8. This demonstrates that Daniel's sense of self shifts in accordance with the contexts in which he finds himself and his investments in specific identities.

Peter is seeking ways to reconcile conflicting understandings of himself as teacher:

> The school should say to you, 'This is what we do. This is what we don't do.'. It must be confusing for the children ... the classteacher is doing something and the male in the class is then portrayed as something different. I think that's part of the problem and part of the challenge of being a male teacher ... I think children need to see males portrayed in classrooms as not different. ... Yeah, and it's difficult to demonstrate it [care] without getting a negative reaction. (Peter)

Peter is questioning versions of traditional heterosexual masculinity which emphasise separation between men and women, and which split being a man from being caring. His response is to insist that men are not different. The paradox is that Peter's resistance is constituted through and maintains discourses which separate heterosexual men from 'caring', the very discourses which Peter wants to question. Jim talks about men who have "spoilt it for people like me". He constructs them as 'other', reasserting his heteronormativity. The discourse which defines other men as potential abusers simultaneously constitutes a discourse of 'normality'. Jim's investment in the discourse helps to maintain his own position as a 'normal' heterosexual man.

Gavin describes a difficult situation which occurred when he was working at a Summer Camp. A four-year-old girl arrived each day crying:

> I used to have to sit her on my knee and calm her down and then she went home and told her mum ... and mum came in and created a big fuss. ... At the time I was really quite angry about that, that she presumed that because I was a male something was going on. ... The manager was very positive. She said, 'I don't care, all our staff have been checked. ... They

158

all know their jobs and their job is to look after the children. If one of the little children is upset they're going to comfort them.' I would have done the same if it was a little boy. I remember for the next three weeks I didn't want much to do with the child, just in case something else happened again. (Gavin)

Gavin's relationship with this girl and with her mother is framed by a discourse of risk. Gavin talks of being angry when the girl's mother assumed "something was going on". The emotional content of men teachers' and student teachers' responses to discourses of risk is noted by other writers who have reflected on men teachers' comments about suspicion of child abuse. For example, Jim Allan writes of the 'vehemence' expressed by men teachers about constraints on their behaviour (Allan, 1993, p. 124). Rebecca Priegert Coulter and Margaret McNay describe men teachers' 'resentment' of assumptions about masculinity and abuse (Coulter and McNay, 1993, p. 403). My focus is on Gavin's reading of the situation. His anger stems from his sense of wrongful accusation. Being a man teacher of young children has come to be constituted through discourses of masculinity as always a potential threat to the pupils' safety. Gavin talks about keeping out of the child's way for a while after that occurrence. And Alison Jones writes of men student teachers constantly trying to avoid being caught out, perhaps, for example, inadvertently touching a pupil's head (A. Jones, 2001). Men learn to be on the alert, protecting themselves from an ever-present threat of accusation.

Jerry describes primary school girls "dressed as young women" at an end-of-term party, when school uniforms were not required. He finds this "absolutely amazing". The girl pupils' clothes force Jerry to notice them as gendered and sexualised individuals, which goes against the grain of discourses which produce primary school pupils as unaware of their and others' sexuality. Jerry may have limited resources to analyse the girls' behaviours and his responses to them in relation to his professional identity as teachers. I do not blame him for that. Discourses of primary ITE constitute children's and teachers' sexuality as taboo, or only to be discussed in relation to child sexual abuse.

Donny talks of six-year-old girls treating him rather like a "sugar-daddy", and feigning a need for help with their work. He describes the girls

clinging to him, to his ankles, crying and calling him daddy and grandad. Donny seems uncomfortable about this and laments the fact that he has had no "formal training" to deal with these situations. This discomfort is created through the conflicting discourses at work in the classroom. The girls are enacting their heterosexual femininity in relation to Donny, whose masculinity they constitute, variously, as beneficent uncle and object of potential flirtatious interest, and comforting, safe grand/father. Donny's presence in the classroom becomes the focus for the girl pupils' fantasies and their articulation of different possible relations with men. It may be accurate for Donny to say he has had no guidance about handling such situations, but that very absence and silence in itself shapes the way Donny can interpret these classroom interactions. Publicly-expressed discourses that construct teachers and pupils as ungendered and without sexuality, *and* men teachers as sexually predatory and pupils as sexually innocent, collide with the gendered and sexualised discourses of the girl pupils. Donny learns he must not speak freely of interactions with pupils that can only be made sense of when gender and sexuality are taken into account. Donny learns that he must relate to his pupils as if they were innocent, asexual recipients of his teaching efforts.

Donny's discomfort in discussing the girls' behaviour is tied in with the ways discussion of sexuality is framed in the primary classroom: it is located within expectations of danger and suspicion. It would be all but impossible for Donny to experience or to articulate in a positive light the neediness that his girl pupils are enacting. Yet it might be easier for him if he were able to acknowledge the desires and anxieties that permeate the power relations that individuals play out in the classroom. Student teachers, in a particular position as both trainees and teachers, may be driven by a desire to be liked by their pupils, and by a need for their pupils' attention or respect. For men student primary school teachers such desires become entangled with discourses of risk and abuse, relegating them as completely inappropriate feelings. I am reminded of an example from the 1940s: a male probationer, trained in The Emergency Scheme for the Recruitment and Training of Teachers, said, 'The trouble is I like children very much, but have not yet learnt how far I should disguise the fact.' (Ministry of Education, 1950, p. 122).

In the limelight

Given the small number of men student primary school teachers, and the discourses that frame understandings of them, it is quite likely that they will be noticed in school. Daniel puts it like this:

> [Other people will be] standing there looking and thinking what's going on over here, there's this male student and if it's a female they've got a different view of it. (Daniel)

Both Max and Dean claim they would like to have worked with a male primary teacher in school:

> Dean:
> Interesting for the children to have two men in the classroom. It would be an unusual experience for them really, wouldn't it?
> ...
> Max:
> I would like to see the impact that another man has on the classroom. I would like to observe from a neutral point of view how the children reacted to see if there was a difference, because I've not had the chance to do that. (Max and Dean)

Max continued, explaining that it is not a first priority to think how children are reacting to him as a man, "You're worried about too many other things.". That is understandable, given the practical demands of teaching a class of children. Yet an awareness of his gendered professional identity and the pupils' responses to it, might help him to understand the dynamics of classroom relationships.

Peter describes some ITE sessions when he is the only man in the group, as "very uncomfortable". Whatever he does, he feels attention is focused on him. In Physical Education, "The girls laughed and said, 'Oh no we can't do that [exercise], but you'll be able to' ", although Peter insists he is "not particularly sporty". He thinks some of the women are "sort of cringing" for him. Peter's unease at being noticed constitutes part of his experience of becoming a teacher. Peter's presence is routinely and visibly framed by his masculinity. Women are well-practised in being objectified by a male gaze (Walkerdine *et al.*, 2001), but here it is women students objectifying a man. The discomfort that Peter describes is similar to that recounted by primary school teacher, Tom Moggach, in a newspaper article, entitled, 'Men needed in children's world' (Moggach, 2004).

161

Moggach writes, 'My most excruciating memories are of learning to teach dance: 48 women and me (I counted, horrified), pretending to be bursting balloons.' (*ibid.*, p. 23). Although I would not be surprised if some of the women had found it slightly embarrassing too, it would be flippant and unhelpful to dismiss his and other men's feelings of discomfort.

Dean thinks that the move into the context of primary ITE and schooling would determine the gendered behaviours of individual men:

> The mere fact that you're going into primary teaching ... you're bound to be non–sexist, non–aggressive. You're not going to be dominant. You're not going to have all these other supposed male traits by the mere fact of what you're doing, whether you're really like that or not. (Dean)

Dean is sensitive to the possibility that mature men students might dominate discussions and prevent others from speaking. He goes on to relate this to age and self-confidence:

> It is I think because when you get a bit older you're not so worried about what other people's perceptions of you are, whereas I think maybe when you're 18 or 19 you're very worried about saying something. Perhaps people think you're silly. Self-confidence sort of comes into it I suppose at that age. (Dean)

Peter expresses a similar outlook:

> I am on my own with twenty females [during ITE sessions]. I don't really mind, but maybe that's got something to do with my age. I think an 18/19-year-old might not feel so confident about bringing up something sensitive ... to say that they were worried about having a little girl sitting on their knee ... which I find quite an important issue. They might not ... want to say, ... because of the reaction they might get. (Peter)

Both Dean and Peter attribute their confidence to their maturity. In so doing, they separate themselves from younger men student teachers. I can read a humanist notion of the individual into Dean's perspective: he gives the impression that he has discovered his true self; his real identity has emerged and is now secure. Taking this theoretical position and

162

emphasising his age may enable Dean to strengthen his position and protect himself from what he may see as the possibility of challenges to his new identity as a student primary school teacher, whereas on other occasions he has sounded less secure of himself, saying, for example, that he feels he is in "no-man's land". Peter, in contrast to his feelings of embarrassment in Physical Education classes, in this extract emphasises his maturity and his self-confidence, in relation to younger men who might be inhibited about discussing physical contact with children, for example. In these two examples, the men students' shifting perspectives convince me that context, sensitivity and difference should be central themes when thinking about teaching, learning and change in relation to primary ITE.

Of the research interviews, Daniel says:

> I thought it was a good idea actually, because we are a very small minority. I don't know what the ratio is, but I imagine it is very, very small ..... good idea. I like to give our views because going back again to equal opportunities – seen from that side instead of, like, from the normal side. (Daniel)

He elaborates on his understanding of equal opportunities:

> You've got reverse-role equal opportunities, because usually when ... [people talk about] equal opportunities ... [they mean] females I think, coloured people and things like that, but then here it's like a reverse process. (Daniel)

Daniel links "normal" equal opportunities with women and, using dated terminology, "coloured people". His language and the use of the term "things like that" seems rather crude and perhaps reflects the limited opportunities that he has had to discuss issues of social justice and difference. Daniel welcomes the opportunity afforded by the research interview to focus on his position as a man and to express his opinions. That gender can mean paying attention to masculinity may have come as a surprise to Daniel. Thinking about gender in terms of his own identity means, from Daniel's perspective, that the tables are turned: he calls it a "reverse process". It does not follow, though, that Daniel suddenly sees a significance in encouraging students to think about their gendered

identities:

> I think teaching equality of opportunity between adults would be
> irrelevant to the actual course... anyway teaching is about
> children, so to teach about adults would be irrelevant... It
> wouldn't help me teach better. Right, it might help me be a
> better person; whether one might lead to the other or not - I
> think there are more important things to learn. (Daniel)

Daniel's narrowly pragmatic view of the ITE programme is perhaps not surprising in a climate which is predominantly concerned with performance skills and outward signs of effective teaching. It is not easy to argue for the value of reflecting on the discursive production of gendered professional identities in the face of discourses which marginalise gender, and leave virtually no space for thinking about emotional investments and relationships.

Peter articulates another site of unease during a course on equality of opportunity:

> I think that was the time I felt most threatened since I've been at
> college and the fact that maybe the tutors were picked ...
> because they were particularly good on gender studies or they
> were very biased. I felt that they were out to sort of crush the
> men immediately and they would openly admit that and I felt
> this isn't on ... You shouldn't immediately get the males' backs
> up. I agree that we have to be made aware of these things and
> it's good for us, but I think there is a danger of pushing it too far
> ... I just wanted to walk out of the lecture room ... Surely it's
> about making everyone a valuable part of the team, not trying to
> say this has been going on for years and you're guilty for it.
> (Peter)

Peter's support of equality issues is coupled with anxiety about challenges to existing privileges. He is confronted with the possibility of individual advantage as a man, and with principles of equality. Cultural myths may boost his confidence. The institutional context of primary schooling, with its assumed values of equality, challenges and disorientates him. In spite of his acceptance that issues of equality are important and his desire to be a caring teacher, Peter seems unprepared to challenge the status quo.

Taking a wider perspective, Max, one of the mature students, talks of his relation with second-wave feminism:

164

I can understand why there has been a whole upsurge not only in education but a load of things sort of centred around feminist issues. I can understand that any fair person can see that, but I wouldn't actually go to the extreme of sort of following that line myself. It doesn't appeal to me, mainly because, I suppose, of the image that feminism has had - not necessarily in very recent years, but in the 60s/70s. There's a whole generation of men who ran away from sort of striving feminists, you know, who felt threatened and felt that a lot of what they were saying was fair, but too extremely put. (Max)

Max finds himself in a tricky position here. Remember the unease expressed by Donny and Daniel in relation to what they acknowledge as men teachers' advantageous career prospects. Max accepts feminist principles, but not to the extent of following them himself. Men's resistance to feminist ideas, according to Max, centred on how women handled and presented their ideas.

Both Peter and Max talk about feeling confronted and challenged by new ideas about gender and feminism that would directly impact upon them as men. They see their discomfort and resistance as created by women "pushing it too far" (Peter) and ideas being "too extremely put" (Max). There is a real challenge involved in instigating change and taking a stand which would work against one's own position of privilege, even if individuals accept in theory that their advantage is inequitable. When Peter and Max say that they feel threatened, they may have a point. It would be easy to dismiss their resistance as self-interest, but I will take the men's perspectives seriously and bear them in mind when I think about learning, change and pedagogy.

What are the men's thoughts about how they might be taught in their primary ITE courses? Peter and Daniel consider the possibility of men-only discussion groups:

I don't know if that would help or not ... it's a wider thing. ... The college could sort of say, 'Yes, this is a good thing, you should be doing this.'. But mainly the college would be... standing out in society. It's a bigger society issue. ... The main thing is that we act professionally and don't rock the boat. (Peter)

165

Peter has spoken previously about wanting to be a caring teacher and wanting to counter stereotypes of men teachers. Here, his concern is that he should work within established boundaries and conventions. Peter's recognition of the importance of gender and equality issues is coupled with a resistance to, and anxiety about, challenging existing norms. Daniel was not in favour of men-only groups. His perspective is shaped by his understanding of his position as the object of women's gaze:

> Because of the female dominance in the profession to have a female perspective on it I think would be much more important because ... it doesn't matter what all the blokes say once you actually get out in school. It's all these women who are watching you and making these thoughts in their mind about what's going on and so to know what the women might be thinking as well would be important. (Daniel)

Gavin shares Daniel's perspective and explains that a mix of men and women in a group is preferable:

> In sessions, we [the men in the group] tend to split to try to give a balanced view. ... You definitely need some females there to get their view or it might become a bit biased. (Gavin)

Gavin justifies his preference for mixed rather than single-sex teaching groups by talking about "balance" and "bias". The men refer to similar themes when talking about their understanding of a need for more men primary school teachers. My interpretation is that in the men's minds, balance and bias are in opposition to one another. An alternative, more subtle and inclusive way of thinking might be created if the students were encouraged to think of perspectives. This might lead them away from the dichotomies that they seem to set up between men's and women's positions.

In Daniel's opinion, the men students do not specially try to work together in discussion groups, but perhaps the women do:

> It might be possible to look at it the other way: it's not the males gravitating towards each other, but the females gravitating towards each other and therefore excluding the males, you know, like get into partners ... the girls will go 'boomph' together and the boys will still be ... That might have something

to do with it rather than just the males thinking, grab another male I don't want to be working with one of those girlie types. (Daniel)

Peter's perspective is that discussion is best facilitated by having more than one man in the group:

I think it would probably be better to have a mixed group to make sure that you were making approaches on both and to make sure that they were held as equal – not as an equal representation – that's not the way it is going to be, but certainly maybe more than one male in the class and that you can actually have some discussion. (Peter)

Being the only man in a teaching group was not desirable from Gavin's point of view. Weight of numbers seems important to him:

Twenty girls in a group and knowing it [what I say as a man] will get their backs up. ... Maybe the men are quieter in the group, because there's not enough of them. ... I suppose there's so many of them [women], so they must feel very comfortable with whatever they have to say. (Gavin)

Women student teachers, from Gavin's perspective, gain confidence and a sense of entitlement from being in a numerical majority. Gavin thinks that his opinion will antagonise the women students and goes on to say that one man in a group might be "victimised". What Gavin perceives as an imbalance is not just about numbers: in the context of primary ITE women students represent a norm in relation to which men students will be observed and judged. In this short narrative, Gavin shows his awareness of the women's gaze on him, as a man, and his gaze on the other men in the group. Like Peter's embarrassment in a Physical Education class when he felt subjected to a female gaze, Gavin is thinking about the women students' view of him. Gavin's position in this context is as a relative outsider; it is the women student teachers whom he assumes will feel "comfortable". Gavin may see this situation as a dichotomy: difference perceived negatively, a polarity that results in tension, even antagonism, rather than debate. He is beginning to think of himself as a gendered individual, a man, and thinking about how women see him, something that perhaps those women themselves have not done with seriousness. The

167

men students did not speak at length about women teachers, but I think their comments are of interest, as they show the men thinking about women as a norm, something which they may not have consciously reflected on before. The men's presence as members of a minority group in the context of primary ITE coupled with a research interview which directs them towards awareness of their masculine identity helps to show them that their outlook and their understanding of themselves as teachers are gendered.

Conflict, ambivalence and paradox

My analysis of the men student primary school teachers' stories has illuminated their negotiation of conflicting discourses of masculinity, which simultaneously idealise and demonise them as teachers of young children. In place of accounts which homogenise men as teachers, reading the data has helped me to construct these men as individuals, as actual people with gendered, classed identities, who are actively thinking, learning and speculating about their professional selves, and who have intentions, ambitions, anxieties and concerns. Their stories enact difference, from each other, from other men and from women. Common to their stories is a sense of the men engaged in encounters at a point of transition in their lives. They are involved in a dynamic process as they work to construct professional identities that they will find satisfactory, even enjoyable. That process is not a simple one. Conflict, ambivalence and paradox have been recurring themes through my analysis of the data. A reminder of three examples bring these themes quickly to life here: Daniel wants to support equality in career progression *and* take advantage of the privilege afforded him by being a man; Dean thinks he is in "no-man's land"; Terry understands men as a potential risk to children, making his insistence on the importance of physical contact with children an act of defiance.

The text I am creating, based on data from Terry, Daniel, Michael, Max, Dean, Donny, Jerry, Peter, Gavin, Steven and Jim, is the result of my critical gaze on these men. In some ways, it is paradoxical that I am arguing against the objectification of men student primary school teachers and am subjecting them to my critical gaze as the focus of my research. Consider Peter's comment about the possibility of working with a male tutor during his ITE course:

I don't know ... maybe a man would help. A man could give you his experiences in school ... maybe [that's] putting too much emphasis on it. (Peter)

There is an irony in creating men student teachers as researchable subjects *and* wanting them to be understood as individuals, ordinary and not 'other'. Confronted with this paradox, I reiterate that my findings from the data demonstrate, illuminate and complicate my perceptions of these men as student primary school teachers. It is not enough to be aware of the complexity of the men's positions as teachers. My intention is to make visible, but also to understand and challenge assumptions made about men student primary school teachers and, from there, to suggest pedagogical approaches for primary ITE.

The discourses about masculinity that bear down on the men students can operate as if transparent; they make the positions and understandings that those discourses produce, operate as common sense. The men respond by locating themselves in relation to those discourses. Even when they vigorously deny the assumptions produced through discourses about masculinity (for example, that men teachers constitute a risk to children), the men are unintentionally doing work to maintain those assumptions. When current practices and values are naturalised, change seems impossible and the only course of action seems to be to reproduce existing behaviours and attitudes, suppress unease and accept inequalities, whether advantageous or not. Ways forward in primary ITE pedagogy might usefully focus on critical readings, not just awareness, and on debate, not just talking about what seems to be 'appropriate' or 'inappropriate'.

The stories that I have presented in Part IV have focused attention closely on the detail and specificity of individual accounts of those men's personal narratives of learning to become teachers. I turn now to the contemporary, historical and autobiographical contexts which frame the men's understanding of themselves as teachers of young children and others' perceptions of them. Standing back and looking at a wider landscape enables me to connect my readings of the men's personal narratives with their broader contexts, both present, past and personal.

169

Part V INTERPRETATION AND REFLECTION

Individual men learn to produce and present themselves as men teachers by actively negotiating official and popular discourses about men and teachers. They come to know themselves as teachers in the midst of a complex, conflicting network of pressures, expectations and privileges. As a former primary school teacher and tutor involved in training men who want to be primary teachers I have a perspective on that training, and on the men's perspectives. My view may not be the same as theirs, but working with them and talking with them has contributed to my thinking about their moves into primary teaching. I have insisted on explaining my perspective. This is out of step with some current popular debates about primary school teaching where a writer's standpoint and intentions may not be disclosed, leaving common-sense assumptions unchallenged. My understanding is that there is no neutral, entirely detached position from which to make observations. My perspective, like that of the men students, is produced and maintained through a complex web of often-conflicting discourses.

From my perspective, the discursively-produced positions available to the men student teachers seem complicated and contradictory. It would be simplistic to assume that numbers of men can be inspired by advertising campaigns to recruit them into teaching, and then easily work as teachers of young children, fulfilling assumptions that they will straightforwardly raise teaching standards and offer positive role models for boys in particular, and girls. Yet, assumptions about the ease with which an individual might become a primary school teacher are fed by popular culture. Think of fictional Mr Kimble. More recently, a television programme, *So You Think You Can Teach* (Channel 5, 6 February 2005) unusually about primary schools (many more television programmes are about secondary schools), placed three celebrities in primary classrooms to teach for two weeks, having given them a short period of observation in the school and four days' training. In the final episode of the programme, the headteacher of the school debriefs each celebrity and tells them about their potential as teachers. One is told to avoid teaching as she interprets curriculum requirements too loosely; another is told to become a headteacher, because she is so controlling of others and a third is told he would be employable as a teacher. The programme is intended to be light-

hearted. Even so, the underlying messages about primary school teaching are of interest to me. In a wider context where the understandings and preparation needed to be a teacher of young children are and have for years been contested, such programmes feed cultural myths that being 'thrown in at the deep end' is the best test, and the 'right' personality will succeed as a teacher with little need to think about what it means to be a teacher and little need for theories about teaching or how children learn. I think the decision to train as a primary school teacher is a serious one for men, as it is for women; it should not be treated naively, and it is important that cultural myths are noticed and read as such.

My interest throughout has been in the men students I work with and in the ways they interact with rhetoric about masculinities and being a primary school teacher. The nature of the rhetoric about men teachers of young children, its persistence, its apparent common sense and its high profile, frame the men's perspectives and mine.

Contemporary stories

I am often exasperated by publicly-expressed discourses about men primary school teachers, which prey on the vulnerabilities and aspirations of those both inside schools and out. These discourses clash with what my experience tells me about being a primary school teacher. They seldom take account of gender, social class and history, and often resort to polarised generalisations. Such accounts assume a common-sense quality. I feel compelled to tackle the reductive interpretations on my own terms, with a critical approach and from a declared perspective.

Here is one example of the discourses relating to primary school teachers. These extracts are from a 'Commentary' in *The Daily Mail* in the late 1990s:

> In the old days, schools recognised rebellious boyish behaviour as one of the basic forces of human nature. Boys were generally considered little beasts who had to be bullied into academic work by heavy-handed authoritarian teachers. Their physical energy was channelled in a daily double-dose of tough contact sport. ... The purpose of the great progressive revolution in our schools was to change all that. ... The aggressive, male-dominated culture was to be eliminated by new-fangled teaching methods which emphasised caring and sharing. ... Out with discipline, in with niceness. It was, in essence, a cissy culture, which suited girls better than boys. Most men left the profession. The ones who remained discarded their jackets and ties in favour of woolly jumpers. The traditional male role model disappeared. ... [W]e must turn the clock back on this feminisation of education. (Shakespeare, 1998, p. 6)

The article was written by a former inner-city primary school teacher, Stephan Shakespeare. Despite our both having been teachers, our perspectives are clearly at odds. Shakespeare is writing for a particular audience and is motivated by a need to make this a 'story'. That said, I do choose to think carefully about the ideas he expresses. Government politicians are paying increasing attention to the media, and *The Daily Mail* is a popular daily newspaper read by a significant proportion of the electorate. Shakespeare's rhetoric conjures up images of primary school

teachers and maps out ways they can be read. Boys and men are misunderstood and disadvantaged. Men's losses are the result of women's gains, and the feminisation of schooling is responsible. The solution proffered is to reinstate 'the traditional male role model'. I am not the assumed reader of this text. I am alienated by, though not simply excluded from it. My place in this rhetoric is difficult to establish. The persuasiveness of Shakespeare's text is supported by the writer's unself-consciousness and there is no sense that other perspectives exist; indeed, Shakespeare's viewpoint precludes others. I insist, in contrast, on considering others' perspectives. Thinking about Shakespeare's perspective now is paralleled by my earlier reflections on another journalist's interpretation of the primary ITE institution where I worked at the time (Smedley, 1992).

My history and my perspectives on teaching and teachers oblige me to resist common-sense discourses, although I am aware of their appeal. My reading of such texts is an individual and a social practice, shaped by social and cultural relations and allegiances, as well as conflicts. Articles in the media, and official accounts of teachers and teaching, should not be read as straightforward monologues, but as texts located within discourses and histories which interact with assumptions about men and women and their respective relations with authority, care and children. These discourses stem from and are supported by investments in difference and inequality, fears of feminism (on the part of men and women), by anxieties caused by changes in the family and workplace, and by fears of social and moral decline.

Consider Anthea Millett's oft-quoted comment about men teachers:

> We really are concerned about getting more men into teaching, partly because of their position as role models. But actually also to act as advocates for the profession, because I do think men make better advocates. (Millett, 1995, p. 22)

Anthea Millett was speaking in her capacity, then, as Chief Executive of the TTA. Did she take the effectiveness of role models and men's ease with professionalism for granted?

There is a discourse of demand for men primary school teachers to which the rhetoric about boys' underachievement also contributes. Through

the 1990s, newspapers have reported girls doing better than boys in examinations. In 1998 the gender gap was described as of 'crisis proportions' (Leader Comment, 1998, p. 19) and Stephen Byers, School Standards Minister at the time, urged us not to shrug our shoulders and say 'boys will be boys' (Byers, 1998, p. 8). In 2000, David Blunkett, former Education Secretary, spoke of a 'laddish culture' which he linked with 'a genuine problem of underachievement among boys' (Blunkett, 2000). The GCSE and SATs results in 2003 saw boys doing 'a whole lot worse' than girls (Crace, 2003). In 2005, girls are found to be 'beating boys in every area before they are five' (Clare, 2005). Concerns about boys' underachievement (one assumption being that they could do better) and their attitudes to schooling (frequently assumed to be negative) are neither new nor uncontested (Miller, 1996; Epstein *et al.*, 1998). A narrow version of boyhood and masculinity persists. Underpinning concerns about boys' underachievement are essentialist assumptions about boys' interests and expectations about schooling. There is no recognition that gender is learnt over time and from boys and girls, men and women, and that different ways of being masculine exist.

Becoming and being a teacher is belittled by current rhetoric. It is not easy to take gender seriously in the face of ideologies hostile to its significance for men, or if not hostile, which treat gender in old, essentialist ways, or new ways which paradoxically reinforce the old. The rhetoric masks the gendered and classed relations lived out in classrooms by teachers and children. It is not simply a question of those not doing the job, not understanding those who do, although that must be part of the problem. The rhetoric maintains hierarchies, allegiances, normality and difference and constructs and conceals fears of otherness and change.

Chris Woodhead, former Chief Inspector of Schools, and vociferous about teachers throughout the past decade, has contributed to the rhetoric. He insists that 'The will of the teacher must be imposed on the will of the children' (Woodhead, 2003, p. 77) and there is 'no intellectual mystique' in teaching (*ibid.,* p. 84). There is no recognition that student teachers are grappling with a new professional identity, with challenges about authority and discipline in the classroom, and with their developing understanding of what it means to be a teacher. Conflict, resistance, negotiations and compromises are not written into institutional narratives of teaching. It

becomes difficult for students to voice their values, understanding and experiences amidst rhetoric which seems to clash with and silence their perspectives. Official versions of learning to become a teacher do not help the students understand their moves into teaching.

Woodhead's contempt for teachers and of gender is palpable:

> Do we really need research into 'how schools as patriarchal institutions that are ideologically and culturally heterosexual ... exercise a level of control over the private lives of lesbian teachers'? (Woodhead in the *New Statesman*, cited in Durrant, 1998, p. 3)

His words tap into fears of homosexuality, and deride academic studies which do not focus directly on teaching effectiveness, but would show the social and cultural complexity of the teaching process. Woodhead commandeers the terms 'entitlement', 'culture' and 'humanity' (Woodhead, 2000, p. 13) *and* insists that questions about gender, sexuality and being a teacher are peripheral. From my perspective, they are central, otherwise there is little sense of the dynamics of a classroom or of the different investments that teachers and children make in the culture of the classroom. There is no recognition that teachers, women and men, work in contexts with children, boys and girls. Teaching is reduced to a genderless, mechanical task, while at the same time a morally important one.

Yet the gender of teachers and in particular the sexuality of men teachers is also frequently a topic in the media. In 1993 there was a case of child sexual abuse, carried out by a male nursery nurse in Newcastle (see Skelton, 1994) and reported and commented on widely in the media. I carried out my research interviews between 1994 and 1997. A selection of newspaper headlines illustrates the general context within which the men I spoke with were training and would later be teaching: 'Every teacher's nightmare' (Abrams, 1994, p. 21); 'Frightened of making contact' (Beckett, 1994, p. 2); 'A cruel abuse of trust' (Dean, 1996, p. 2); 'Teachers warned not to rub sunscreen on pupils' (Fletcher, 1998, p. 6); 'Do you have a girl of 9 or 10.. how do I pay? Kiddie sex bid by teacher' (Hepburn, 2003, p. 11).

Learning to be a teacher is beset with hopes and possibilities, pressures and constraints that constitute and are constituted by the students' social

worlds. What is being offered to men as future primary teachers and what is expected of them? The rhetoric of the TTA has placed substantial responsibility on beginning teachers:

> The country's economic and cultural future depends on high academic standards being achieved in our schools.... the newly qualified teacher will, from day one, possess the knowledge, skills and attributes required for effective teaching. (TTA, 1997, p. 2)

Estelle Morris, former Secretary of State for Education and Skills, perceived 'a new era of trust in our professionals' and praised teachers as 'a national asset of priceless value' (Morris, 2001, Foreword). David Milliband, Minister of State for School Standards, sees the teaching profession as 'at the cutting edge of public sector reform' (Milliband, 2003, p. 2). In the same speech on workforce reform he says, 'Teachers are tasked with transmitting knowledge and culture. With broadening horizons.' (*ibid.*, p. 3). The expectations made of teachers are great, and seem in Milliband's version of teachers' remit, to include a contradictory mixture of perpetuating fixed and established understandings, at the same time as bringing about change.

Men students are forging their professional identities in a relation with official discourses which lament an absence of men teachers and call out for more of them. In 1996, for instance, the TTA stated:

> If present trends continue, there will be very few male class teachers in primary schools by 2010 ... There is a general consensus that, for many and different reasons, this would not be desirable. All else apart, a profession where one sex or the other predominates to such an extent is simply not a true reflection of society today. (TTA, 1996, p. 11, para 23)

This perspective is repeated in the TTA's Corporate Plan for 2003-2006 which talks of 'under-represented groups' and the need to reflect the wider community in teacher recruitment (TTA, 2003b). One of the TTA's Key Targets and Performance Measures is annually to achieve an increase of a further 20 per cent of male trainees on top of the previous year's baseline, by November 2005. The TTA's Corporate Plan for 2004-2007 talks of a 'manhunt' to recruit more men into primary training (TTA, 2004b, p. 4,

Strategic Aim 1). The message that more men are needed is one which is repeated and reinforced in numerous ways. Men are treated as a homogenous group and are positioned as the solution to the 'problem' of too many women. It is difficult to think of the individual men I have spoken to, who are learning to be teachers at a specific time and in a specific social world, in relation to the generalisations of such accounts.

In response to concerns about teacher recruitment, the TTA, in conjunction with the NUT, carried out a survey of one thousand 16-19 year-olds and explored their views of teaching as a career. Doug McAvoy, at the time the Union's General Secretary, said the survey

> reinforces our concern about the feminisation of the teaching profession. The poorer performance of boys compared with girls has in part been linked with a lack of male role models in early years education. Male-free primary schools would further damage that situation. (Doug McAvoy, quoted in Carvel, 1998, p. 9)

An absence of men is construed negatively and the official response has been to recruit men energetically through advertising campaigns.

Men are being headhunted. In 2002 the TTA ran a series of advertisements in the sports pages of the daily newspapers, posing the question, 'Are you looking for a transfer?' (for example, Evening Standard, 21 October 2002, p. 72). The TTA's radio advertising campaign of June 2003 was also designed to appeal to men. The advertisements featured John Motson, football commentator, and John Virgo, snooker commentator, and were timed to coincide with news and sports reports on the radio. The use of sport as a lure for men demonstrates how one version of heterosexual masculinity is reinforced as the norm. How do the men students make sense of this targeting of men? The straightforward and light-hearted tenor of the advertisements suggests that men make the decision to teach, lightly. My data has challenged that assumption.

The TTA's recruitment campaign, 'Use your head. Teach', launched in September 2003, targeted men, in particular graduates who might take up teaching as a career change. This focus ties in with a changing recruitment picture in teaching in general, with an increasing number of recruits of over 25 years of age (Revell, 2004, p. 2). Mary Doherty, Director of Teacher Supply and Recruitment, asks, '20,000 men are using their heads

177

every day, teaching primary school pupils. Men who have not yet applied: do you know what you are missing?' (Doherty, quoted in TTA Press Release, 2003a). Add to this, Prime Minister Tony Blair's bullish statement which drives home an upbeat message, 'There has never been a better time to be a teacher.' (Blair, speaking at the National Association of Head Teachers annual conference, Cardiff, May 2004, quoted in Halpin, 2004, p. 2). Official, public accounts make being a teacher seem absolutely straightforward and unquestionably positive. Teaching is presented as a task that individuals can do efficiently, irrespective of the context, if they have acquired the right skills. It is not that I simply want to counter these versions. My point is that they leave no space for stories which recognise the ongoing and sometimes difficult process of constructing a professional identity as a teacher.

I have worked to make visible well-rehearsed, common-sense arguments which claim legitimacy and conceal their authors' perspectives. When writers write from an apparently neutral position which asserts a superior point of view, my response is not simply to disagree, but to look beyond the surface features of the text, to think about intentions and perspectives.

In spite of being an involved professional my relation to public discourses about primary school teachers is a difficult one. The rhetoric about teachers is symptomatic of certain perspectives on the social world which feed into and are nourished by essentialist assumptions about men and women. Existing hierarchies are reinforced, not challenged, men are in demand and women are found lacking. When girls (and it is, by and large, middle-class girls) are doing well academically, newspaper-reports bemoan the underachievement of boys: girls become the villains of the piece, because, it is supposed, they have achieved at the expense of boys.

Current discussions about primary school teachers and teaching frequently treat gender superficially or disregard it, focusing doggedly on skills and standards instead. Such accounts block any recognition that teaching is a social practice, carried out by individual women and men working in schools, which are themselves part of wider communities. The relative positions of men and women in the current social and cultural world are confirmed through discourses which lament an absence of men teachers and too many women teachers. Such readings do not simply

emerge, but are identified and named by individuals operating within institutions such as the media, government, schools and universities.

In the Introduction of *'Qualifying to teach'*, teaching is described like this:

> But teaching involves more than care, mutual respect and well-placed optimism. It demands knowledge and practical skills, the ability to make informed judgements, and to balance pressures and challenges, practice and creativity, interest and effort, as well as an understanding of how children learn and develop. (TTA, 2002a, p. 2)

The oppositions constructed in this extract polarise stereotypically feminine and masculine characteristics: care, respect and optimism on the one hand, and skills, knowledge and judgement on the other. So, teaching according to this account, requires more than the feminine, it requires the masculine. As one TTA spokesperson said, 'Our message is that teaching is neither "cosy" or "soft" - it's intellectually challenging and stimulating.' (Quoted in Carter, 1997, p. 13). A similar angle is taken by Charles Clarke, at the time Secretary of State for Education and Skills, 'No longer can anyone consider taking up teaching as a soft option.' (C. Clarke, 2004). A tougher, dynamic, heterosexually masculine primary school culture is being promoted. The move seems to construct primary teaching as a 'good job for a man'. It has been a good job for a man before. In the early 19th century most school teachers were men, but with the demand for more teachers following the 1870 Education Act and the beginnings of state schooling, elementary teaching became redefined as female; men moved into the management and administration of schooling. Today, men are being actively recruited. However, men are not flocking to train as primary teachers and amongst those who do, there is a high withdrawal rate (Thornton, 1999b). Moves to masculinise primary school teaching can be seen as a response to the perceived dangers of feminisation. Panic about standards, and about both the feminisation and ill-discipline of young boys has contributed to this and to a perception that men teachers are needed. A distrust of child-centred education and women's work underscores this panic.

With these discourses ringing in my ears, I can return to one of my central questions: how do men student teachers negotiate the

assumptions made about them as men and teachers of young children? I am not simply adding my voice and the men's to the debate, as missing pieces of a jigsaw. I am making a contextualised, critical reading of individual men students' narratives of becoming teachers. Their struggle, like mine, involves creating spaces for and constructing professional identities amidst conflicting, even hostile discourses.

Two examples, one from the academic world and one from popular culture, illustrate the effect of gender on understandings and interpretations, which I want to keep in mind. In her research into language use in British call centres, Deborah Cameron found that managers believed women were naturally good at tempering their behaviour, expressing sympathy and concealing anger. And managers thought that men, on the other hand, had to feminize themselves to learn those same skills (D. Cameron, 2000). It would follow from those assumptions that men would be praised for behaviours that women would be expected to show; men would be forgiven for not behaving sympathetically, whereas women would be blamed. Cameron's research demonstrates that individuals' readings of social practices and behaviours are gendered. The same skills are read differently in men and in women. Meanings are attributed in relation to common-sense understandings, long-established fictions and traditions, hopes and fears, all of which are produced and maintained by individuals in their social worlds. An individual's understanding is a construction, the work of imagination and fantasies produced through prevailing discourses. And reinvention and change are possibilities.

My second example is *Gender Swap,* a programme which produces and reflects a popular interest in masculinity and femininity, gender identity and transgression. In the one-hour documentary two television celebrities, with the help of prosthetics, stylists and coaches, swap sex. Carol Smilie, a presenter of interior design programmes, becomes Jeff. Shaun Williamson, an actor in a popular television drama, becomes Barbara (*Gender Swap*, Channel 5, 3 January 2005). The transformations in each case were based on mainstream stereotypes of heterosexual masculinity and femininity and embodiment. For example, Carol, as Jeff, was taught to swagger and to speak in a direct, blunt manner; Shaun, as Barbara, was told to smile constantly. Oversimplification and contrast characterise the

programme.

My interest in *Gender Swap* centres on its demonstration and maintenance of difference between men and women. One theme which is drawn out in the commentary during the programme is the contrast between the ways Carol and Shaun respond to their transformations. Carol laughs about becoming Jeff and learning his mannerisms, whereas Shaun seems embarrassed and uncomfortable. The image of a woman dressed as a man is accepted and read differently from readings of a man dressed as a woman. Think of pantomimes. A woman: innocent and attractive, as the leading boy. And men: ridiculous, in 'character-roles' as ugly sisters or washerwomen. Underpinning Carol's and Shaun's storylines in this programme is difference in the way cross-dressing signifies, and in the past has signified, for men and for women.

Common-sense arguments, rhetoric in the media and underlying assumptions in official policy discourses all conspire to contrast masculinity and femininity and to assert boundaries between them. Publicly-expressed narratives construct men teachers as an ideal, as a risk, as countering stereotypes by making an atypical career choice, and as upholders of traditional, heterosexual masculinity. Men student teachers come to know themselves as men and as teachers of young children in the midst of these conflicting versions of what they have chosen to learn to become.

Contemporary perspectives on teachers and their work have histories, which on close examination, with gender in mind, show continuities and also distinct shifts. Reflecting on the historical context of teacher training, men's involvement in teaching and the historical development of masculinity, helps to highlight constructed and specific past understandings of men teachers.

Historical perspectives

I begin with the stories of two elementary school teachers, Philip Boswood Ballard and F. H. Spencer. I refer to their stories, not as representative accounts, but as ones which encapsulate topics and themes which have been important in my reading of the data from the men student primary school teachers: masculinity, social class, culture, families, change,

ambivalence.

Philip Boswood Ballard was from an isolated Welsh town, Maesteg. His father was associated with the local tinplate works and the family was comfortably off (Ballard, 1937). In his autobiography, Ballard writes of being a pupil teacher for three years, and attending Borough Road Training Centre in London between 1884 and 1885. There he met men from different backgrounds and wrote that he became 'alive to my own peculiarities' (*ibid.*, p. 4).

Ballard taught in Settles Street School from 1886. He describes a fight he felt compelled to have with a class bully, in order to establish his authority as teacher. Ballard won, but goes on to describe how he hated using force to civilise the boys (*ibid.*, p. 65). He worked hard to win the boys round and to establish a friendship with them, which he deemed important. When he visited the home of one boy he was shocked at the squalor and poverty, writing, 'What the boy needed was not culture but decency; not book-learning but soap and water, clean clothes, wholesome food, and unpolluted air.' (*ibid.*, p. 66). In 1898, Ballard was appointed headmaster of a pupil teachers' school in Glamorgan, and in the early 1890s became an Inspector, serving Glamorgan Education Committee and London County Council and writing several text books on mental arithmetic, English and intelligence tests.

The autobiography of a male elementary school teacher and later Inspector, F. H. Spencer, was published in 1938. F. H. Spencer's father worked in a factory, but had intellectual interests and was keen for his son to go to college and become a schoolmaster. F. H. Spencer says that, had anyone asked him if he wanted to become a teacher, he would 'probably have said "No", the natural answer for a boy of fourteen.' (Spencer, 1938, p. 74). However, it was 'a natural avenue of employment' (*ibid.*, p. 75), offering better working conditions than his father had ever enjoyed. Spencer became a pupil teacher in 1886, and later, in his first teaching post, described himself as 'a lonely novice, friendless, and always too prone to self-criticism.' (*ibid.*, p. 160). He went on to be an able teacher, and although not ambitious, later became Chief Inspector of Education for London County Council. He describes his envy of the easily-cultivated

middle classes (*ibid.,* p. 9), while his own striving for culture was working 'against gravity' (*ibid.,* p. 228). Lecturing at the City of London College he moved into a 'new social stage' epitomised by living in a house with its own bathroom (*ibid.,* pp. 227-228).

The transition into a professional culture as teacher was not always an easy or welcome move, as commentaries of the time illustrate, 'We were over-teaching our masters and under-teaching our children.' (*The Economist,* 21 September 1861, cited in Tropp, 1957, p. 78); 'The sort of education suited to such persons [elementary teachers] is a sound, homely, practical and plain one.' (*The Economist,* 2 November 1861, cited in Tropp, 1957, p. 78). James Kay-Shuttleworth, who introduced the pupil-teacher system to England and set up a training college at Battersea in 1840, fervently believed that working-class teachers had a responsibility to promote middle-class values to their poor, working-class pupils. Kay-Shuttleworth thought teachers especially prone to 'intellectual pride, assumption of superiority, selfish ambition' (Kay-Shuttleworth, *Four Periods of Public Education,* 1862, p. 309, cited in Tropp, 1957, p. 14). Teaching offered escape and betterment, but not straightforwardly. James Blacker, President of the National Union of Teachers, spoke of teachers' 'aspirations toward that high intellectual plane which has come to be embedded in one word - "culture". ' (James Blacker, Presidential Address to the National Union of Teachers, *NUT Report,* 1901, p. xi, cited in Tropp, 1957, p. 171). Yet culture remained the preserve of those who had a public school and university education, not men elementary schoolteachers. The social mobility that teaching offered created tensions which I have already discussed in a contemporary context in relation to student teacher Terry. Trainee teachers became upholders of a middle-class culture to which they had a complex relation (Widdowson, 1980), rather like the working-class men who joined the Victorian rural police force and were in the awkward position of policing those from their own social background (Steedman, 1984).

Teacher training colleges operated, as they do today, as sites where gendered professional identities were forged. Three well-known histories of teacher training mention the different expectations and experiences of men and women teachers, but do not reflect on gender (Tropp,1957; Taylor,

1969; Dent, 1977). Other histories of teacher training colleges chart the fortunes of the college and have less to say about the gendered lives of the students (Smart, 1982; McGregor, 1981; Dymond, 1955). Life at teacher training college in the late 19th century was hard: long days, spartan conditions, low-level intellectual work (but plenty of it), numerous restrictions and regulations (Tropp, 1957; Dent, 1977; Miller, 1996). It was an instrumental training designed to shape future teachers' moral development, personality and religious commitment. At Homerton College, Cambridge, the mission was to 'isolate and regulate' trainees (Simms, 1979, p. 60). A 'spartan life' was promoted at St John's College, Battersea, to help the men students relate to the working-class children they would be teaching (Adkins, 1906, p. 50). The men carried out cleaning, preparing food, gardening and tending livestock. The social, educational and economic gains that teacher training offered, albeit not straightforwardly, encouraged men, and women, to accept the controlling regimes of college life (Taylor, 1969, p. 292). By the latter half of the 19th century the men were entrusted with some leisure hours and not obliged to work as 'domestic Mary Janes' (Adkins, 1906, p. 146). Most men enjoyed better living and working conditions at college than women. The men's colleges were housed in better buildings (Sturt, 1967; Dent, 1977). Women's colleges with women principals and spinster teachers were stigmatised, coupling femininity with inferiority, both intellectually and socially (Heward, 1993).

Women at teacher training college have been described by historians as 'more conscientious and compliant than men' (Dent, 1977, p. 15) with behaviour that was 'easier to control' (Taylor, 1969, p. 292). Dent's and Taylor's comments embed acceptance and hard work in women teachers' identities. Feminist academics have told different stories, emphasising women's ambition, intellectual interest, independence and friendship (Widdowson, 1980; Miller, 1992; Edwards, 1993, 2001). And two stories of women students at Whitelands College in the late 1890s illustrate their agency and resistance. Therese La Chard's autobiography recounts how she organised a general strike among the students and attended a protest meeting against the Boer war, in the knowledge that 'Had I been discovered, my days at Whitelands would indeed have been numbered.' (La Chard, 1967, p. 105). Elizabeth Gore's biography of her aunt, Dame Lilian Barker, who attended Whitelands College between 1894

and 1896, shows she was not bowed down by the regulations of the college. Lily refused to wear the regulation Whitelands bonnet, left the college premises when it was not permitted and would not act as a Godmother to a junior (Senior girls were expected to act as Godmother to a new arrival, a Godchild, in order to brief them about college routines and rituals.) (Gore, 1965).

Men's resistance to college regulations was taken to be masculine common sense. Tales of men students' antics at St. John's, Battersea, such as smoking pipes on the college roof, when smoking had been banned (Adkins, 1906, p. 144-5), construct an image of these men as legitimately unwilling to submit to authority. In the 1880s, seniors (second years) at Borough Road Training Centre played pranks on the juniors (first years). Philip Boswood Ballard recounts how all the seniors voted, in a debate, against smoking; the juniors followed suit, only to be astonished as each and every senior then lit up a pipe or cigar (Ballard, 1937, pp. 44-46). School-boy culture in the early 20th century constructed smoking as a manly act of rebellion (Heward, 1991, p. 39). Rhetoric of the 1930s about boys' essential natures had a similar ring to it, characterised by historian Margaret Littlewood, as boys' 'anarchic and anti-authoritarian' spirit (Littlewood, 1995, p. 51). Boys' rebellion against first the mother and then female teachers was, in this interpretation, entirely understandable, as had been women's acquiescence. In 1887, James Runciman, an ex-teacher, wrote a collection of stories depicting men at teacher training college as escaping 'intellectual ruin by successfully resisting the culture which his social superiors prepared for him ... the tendency of the course is to cramp and depress a man's mind' (Runciman, 1887, cited in Copelman, 1996, p. 49). This construction of masculinity protects men teachers' position as effortlessly superior in intellect and initiative.

Teaching young children has not always been 'women's work', any more than it is straightforwardly 'women's work' now. The decision to learn to become a teacher was, and is, taken by gendered and classed individuals in specific contexts and in relation to change, which illustrates an interrelation between teaching as work and a wider social and educational context.

In the early 19th century, most teachers of young children were men.

Men made better teachers according to Samuel Wilderspin (1791-1866), founder of the Infant School System. He spoke out against Dame Schools, run mainly by women, and promoted infant schools run by men:

> A man's position as head of his family ... enabled him to exercise a better degree of authority over children, partly because he felt that women had neither the physical strength ("the intention of nature") nor "at present" the intellectual powers ("the defect of education") to manage an infant school. (Wilderspin, 1834, cited in McCann and Young, 1982, p. 175)

An ideal of teacherliness was inscribed in men as fathers (Copelman, 1996). Men were to head the infant schools, with women (their wives, sisters or daughters) as assistants. The authority of the husband was a central aspect of Victorian masculinity (Tosh, 1991, 1999). Manliness in Victorian England equated with honour and respectability: bravery, strength and independence; women's honour and respectability equated with dependency, sexual purity, domesticity and dependence (Rose, 1992).

By the 1840s the situation was changing. Karen Clarke explains how infant schools shifted to become the 'non-prestigious domain of women' (K. Clarke, 1985, p. 84). Financial considerations played a part: Wilderspin suggested a salary of £70-80 a year for a master and mistress, but a lone schoolmistress could be paid as little as £35 (Wilderspin, quoted in Turner, 1970, cited in K. Clarke, 1985, p. 84). Clarke explains the shift as a result of the separation of spheres into the male-public and female-private and a developing ideology of the family. By the 1840s the word 'parent' for the first time clearly implied 'mother'. Infant schooling became for women a 'public substitute for an area of private responsibility' (K. Clarke, 1985, p. 84). Men did not relinquish their authority: they wrote advisory manuals for middle-class mothers and moved into the public sphere of educational theory and policy. Since the early 19th century theoretical knowledge and policy-making in education have been largely the preserve of men, with women teaching in classrooms (K. Clarke, 1985; Martin, 1994). Exclusion is part of a historical tradition.

In 1870, just prior to the expansion of elementary schooling, there were 6,882 male elementary teachers in England and Wales, and 6,847 females. By 1896, there were 26,547 men and 68,396 women (*British Parliamentary Papers*, 1897, cited in Bergen, 1982, p. 12). The 1870

Education Act, which began moves to provide free and compulsory state elementary schooling, increased demand for teachers and this was met by far more new women teachers than men. Between 1871 and 1911 the number of 'male elementary teachers per thousand occupied men' increased just over three-fold; over the same period the number of 'female elementary teachers per thousand occupied women' increased more than ten-fold (*British Parliamentary Papers*, 1897 and *Statistical Abstract for the United Kingdom 1898-1912,* cited in Bergen, 1982, p. 13). By the 1890s, the increasing number of well-paid opportunities for young men in shops, offices and factories (Tropp, 1957, p. 170), and the limited range of work available to women, made becoming a pupil teacher a less attractive proposition for boys. Girls of lower social classes, and by the end of the century lower-middle class girls continued to turn to teaching. Angela Burdett-Coutts and later Louisa Hubbard campaigned to encourage middle-class women to work as mistresses in elementary schools (Widdowson, 1980).

The 1870 Education Act was motivated by desires to occupy and control unruly working-class children, and the government's perception that a skilled and schooled workforce would be economically competitive and politically amenable. State schooling provided a site for the maintenance of the ideology of the family, of domesticity and motherhood for girls, and paid work for boys (Purvis, 1995). In the late 19th and early 20th centuries girls were to study housewifery and secretarial subjects and be educated for a private, domestic life, whilst boys were to be educated for public life and a different world of work (Turnbull, 1987). Tensions between independent public schooling and state schooling, and between elementary and secondary school teachers further complicate the picture. Public school masters, who had been to university, were deemed to have 'natural' skills and did not have to be trained as teachers. They enjoyed higher status than certificated teachers (Skelton, 2001a). Elementary teachers, through the National Union of Elementary Teachers, pressed for secondary schooling to be open to pupils in the elementary system and for a register of teachers that would open up secondary teaching to elementary teachers. Secondary teachers, however, wanted to retain their separate middle-class status. The Bryce Commission, appointed in 1894 to look into secondary schooling, and comprising men, all of whom were public-school, university-educated

and middle class, favoured separate secondary schools and secondary school teachers (Bergen, 1982). Social class and gender divisions and ambivalence about educational entitlement run through the history of education and on into contemporary assumptions.

Hilda Kean's studies of women teachers' politicization and their teaching experiences in state education in the early 20th century indirectly shed light on men teachers' relation to professionalism, teaching as work and the state (Kean 1990a, 1990b). Women teachers' relationship with the state has not been the same as men's (Kean, 1990a). Women could not vote. Their involvement in the public sphere of teaching was closely regulated and curtailed: women were paid less than men, subjected to the marriage bar and banned from the Inspectorate. Women's presence as teachers was permitted; they were allowed a slice of the public sphere of work when state schools required more teachers, and women could be employed more cheaply than men. These historical observations of what being a teacher might mean to individual men and women force questions about entitlement, obligation and inequality to the fore. The opportunity to become a teacher is assumed to be welcomed by women, a natural choice and one to be grateful for. That same choice for men can be read as more of a sacrifice. For working-class women and men becoming a teacher is construed as an opportunity to better oneself. These assumptions and their effects are not clear cut. For example, when I decided to become a teacher of young children, having taken a Masters Degree in Renaissance Studies, some friends thought it was a waste, my social class and academic qualifications, and assumptions about the un-intellectual nature of primary school teaching as a job, overriding assumptions, on that occasion, about my being a woman.

In 1914, men were joining the armed forces in large numbers to fight in the First World War. By 1918, the numbers of men student teachers had dropped to under one tenth of the 1914 figures (Dent, 1977, p. 89). The loss of so many men during this time soon resulted in women being encouraged into teaching and in 1915 a twelve-week course was offered by London County Council for women who wanted to teach infants. Two further episodes in history illustrate men's and women's changing relation to teaching as work: the activity of the National Association of Schoolmasters in the 1920s and the establishment of the Emergency Scheme for the

Recruitment and Training of Teachers devised in the 1940s.

The National Association of Schoolmasters (NAS) was formed when the National Association of Men Teachers split from the National Union of Teachers in 1922. It had as its aim to protect and promote men teachers' interests. Members of the NAS praised marriage, motherhood and the home as women's essential purposes. The conventions of marriage, motherhood and home-making were key signifiers of femininity and clashed with women teachers' professional aspirations for stimulating careers and financial independence (Partington, 1976; Oram, 1983, 1989, 1999). NAS rhetoric saw independent, career-minded women as freakish and faddist and against the natural order of things (Kean, 1990b, p. 103). It accused married women teachers of neglecting their rightful duties, and positioned spinster teachers as frustrated and embittered. Women's relation to their gender and to work were constructed in opposition to one another, and in opposition to men's.

Teaching offered a unique opportunity for women. The marriage bar was deployed sporadically until the turn of the century, whereas in the civil service it was implemented more strictly and consistently (Widdowson, 1986). Teaching provided an independence and security that lower-middle class men already took for granted. Men teachers, the NAS argued, should receive a higher salary than women in order to fulfil their roles as breadwinners for their families. Rhetoric and policy normalised men as the legitimate, 'real' workers (Rose, 1992, p. 189) by positioning women primarily in relation to their sexual role and their responsibilities to care for children and men. Women teachers were treated with contempt if they were ambitious *and* if they were not and saw teaching as a stop-gap before marriage. They were accused of selfishness for demanding equal pay (Partington, 1976, p. 42) (Women received less pay than men for the same work until 1961.). Men's position as valued teachers was sustained and safeguarded. Simultaneously, teaching was seen as second best as work for men. A Board of Education publication, *Report on the Training of Teachers*, expressed

> a feeling that for a man to spend his life teaching children of school age is to waste it in doing easy and not very valuable work, he would not do it if fit for anything else. (Board of Education, 1925, cited in Oram, 1989, p. 22)

Ideological and economic factors interacted to shape state policy about men's and women's access to teaching as work. The marriage bar, enforced in the early 1920s, enshrined domestic ideology and the cult of motherhood, preventing women elementary teachers from combining their teaching careers with married life (Oram, 1983, 1999). The bar was introduced as a response to teacher unemployment, largely of women. In 1944, when there were concerns over the low numbers of teachers, the marriage bar was abolished.

The NAS insisted that men teach boys over seven years of age (Oram, 1987). This opinion tied in with nationalistic sentiments during and after the First World War: masculinity and militarism were strongly linked. If boys were to become 'real' men, they must be taught by men. This argument turned on a conception of the culture boys must be inducted into, and on what men and women teachers signified and represented. The rhetoric of the time was framed in part by eugenics. In the Presidential Address of the NAS Conference, 1925, the speaker claimed that 'an insufficient supply of men teachers must disastrously affect the future of the race' (Presidential Address, quoted in the *Times Educational Supplement*, 18 April 1925, cited in Oram, 1987, p. 109). Ethel Froud, General Secretary of the National Union of Women Teachers, rejected such claims, insisting that women teachers did not make boys 'namby-pamby' (Letter to *Manchester Guardian*, 8 June 1933, cited in Oram, 1987, p. 109). But some women shared the perspective of the NAS: the Women's Council to Advocate Masters for Boys was fearful for the manliness of boys should women teach them (Partington, 1976). Women teachers were cornered in a 'no-win' situation as far as teaching boys was concerned. They were criticised for their harsh repression of boys' 'natural' high spirits *and* for their soft, caring approach, which made boys effeminate 'mummy's boys' (Littlewood, 1995, p. 52). *Men* teachers were seen as essential for boys. Their participation as teachers was sustained through discourses encapsulated in policies and beliefs which valued masculinity and men, and scorned femininity and women.

Men teachers were concerned about women's gains in the professional world of teaching. According to Margaret Littlewood, the idea of women in authority over men, as headteachers, school doctors or inspectors, was met by men teachers with horror (Littlewood, 1995; see

also Partington, 1976). The NAS insisted that it was against the natural order of things for men teachers to work for women headteachers, reflecting the ideal of the patriarchal family and protecting headships for men.

Alison Oram and Margaret Littlewood, feminist historians, have written fascinating accounts of the trade union activities of women and men teachers in the 1920s and 1930s and I have drawn on their accounts in this chapter (Oram, 1987, 1989; Littlewood, 1995). Using detailed evidence of the time each author charts the debates that ensued. Women teachers, as Alison Oram points out, were disadvantaged in employment as teachers: they were paid lower salaries, were subjected to the marriage bar and had fewer chances of promotion (Oram, 1987). Men teachers were confronted with social and economic change, as women moved more fully into the professional world of schooling as teachers and headteachers. The men wanted to protect their interests. Alison Oram's and Margaret Littlewood's accounts make important political contributions to understanding the inequalities experienced by women teachers. I approach their accounts now from my perspective as a reader particularly interested in men teachers. And in line with my reading of my own data, my motivation in reading these histories is not to criticise, justify or excuse the opinions and activities of the men. My intention is to pause and to speculate about the men's perspectives and how the men teachers are constituted in Oram's and Littlewood's accounts.

My contemporary discussions with men student teachers have taught me that the men, as individuals, face conflicting discourses and each man works, in various ways, to negotiate the privileges that his masculinity bestows upon him and the threats it constructs. Each man is a product of his time and his social world, though not without agency. I bring this understanding with me now to my rereadings of these histories.

What I have learnt from my own contemporary research helps me to notice and think about objectification, a woman's gaze on a man. My reading of Oram's and Littlewood's historical accounts constructs an understanding of men teachers in the early 20th century, which I want to question. The men teachers appear in these histories as confidently understanding themselves as superior, actively serving their own interests and hostile to women's independence. Littlewood writes that 'the

authoritative female gaze' of women physical education inspectors on men teachers was met by the men with 'true venom' (Littlewood, 1995, p. 54). Oram writes of the 'misogynist attitudes of the NAS' (Oram, 1989, p. 31) and the dominant position of men teachers whose interests coincided largely with those of the state. Oram and Littlewood constitute men teachers in the National Union of Schoolmasters as powerful and combative in the face of threats to their privileged status. I want to put forward an alternative reading. It is a tentative suggestion, based on what I have learnt from contemporary sources. I see the men teachers of the NAS as entangled in discourses and material advantages as teachers, as well as being faced with what they perceive as the threat of capable, qualified women teachers, headteachers and inspectors. I do not want to suggest that the men teachers were only passive victims of the prejudices of their times, but I do have questions about how we might read their position and their responses. What was it like for those individual men in that institutional context, to try to establish their professional identities through networks of discourses which positioned them as superior, advantaged, ideal teachers for boys *and* which constituted teaching as far from a high status job for men, and more significantly, as a good job for a woman?

The Emergency Scheme for the Recruitment and Training of Teachers was devised in the 1940s to meet the demands both of post-war educational reconstruction and the anticipated raising of the school-leaving age from fourteen to fifteen years of age (which took place in 1947) (Dent, 1977, p. 121). Recruitment for the one-year course began in 1944 and, after the end of the war, was open to all men and women with a year or more's service in the forces or war industry. Ironically, as historian David Crook points out, this one-year course was launched at the same time as the McNair Report (1944) was insisting on the inadequacy of the two-year teacher training course, which had been introduced in 1860 (Crook, 1997, p. 382). When questioned about the minimum educational standards required for recruits to the scheme, Sir Robert Wood, chair of the committee reporting on the scheme, simply said, 'We shall have to decide if he seems the right sort of chap.' (Wood, quoted in Crook, 1997, p. 382).

Statistics presented in a Ministry of Education account of the scheme published in 1950, show that men opted to teach older children: no men

trained for pupils aged 2-6 years or 5-9 years (Ministry of Education, 1950). The same report stated that married men involved in the scheme thought it was a risk to take teacher training and felt it was very important to succeed. A survey of probationers' experiences in their first teaching posts illustrates the sense of social responsibility some felt and their concerns about how to relate to their pupils. It is difficult, one man in the survey commented, 'to cultivate that air of aloofness which makes discipline so much easier.' (*ibid.,* pp. 121-122). His comment, made back in the 1950s, is echoed by student teacher Dean, almost 50 years later, who wants to be himself in the classroom, but understands that 'real' teachers "keep their distance". Behind these anxieties are conflicts between official versions of teacherliness and individual men's understandings and aspirations. It might be predictable that men students today, with limited opportunities to articulate and reflect on their gendered professional identities, lose sight of their own perspectives in the wake of publicly-voiced accounts of what being a teacher entails.

The gendering of jobs is an active process. Change and discursive shifts, rather than linear progression and natural suitability to certain kinds of work, characterise the development of work through history. Harriet Bradley's sociological study of midwifery, baking and cotton-spinning, identified the prospect of economic advantage and social or technological change as prerequisites for men's moves into women's work (Bradley, 1993). Two examples illustrate change in the gendering of jobs. Philanthropic work, deemed suitable for middle-class Victorian women, developed into welfare work for women employed in munitions factories during the war. The job expanded to include the management of industrial relations. At that point, a discursive shift repositioned women as unsuitable; they were sidelined into dealing with the welfare of women staff only. The job was renamed 'personnel management', signifying masculinisation. The profession was redefined, its status raised and the most prestigious posts claimed by men (Bradley, 1993). A similar change took place in midwifery. Attending to women giving birth, once constituted as the preserve of intuitive women midwives, was highjacked by medical men (Donnison, 1988).

Michael Apple, American sociologist, writes about the transition of

teaching from being men's work to being women's work in the United States and in England (Apple, 1986). Apple's argument is a complex one about the role of the state in education and the working lives of teachers, and the interrelatedness of the economy, professional identity and autonomy. He argues that the history and development of elementary school teaching is inextricably linked with political, economic and cultural struggles. Post-1870 in England, as teaching became women's work, it was transformed and its 'patterns of autonomy and control' changed (*ibid.*, p. 58). The development of compulsory elementary schooling in the late 19th century created a sudden demand for more teachers which in turn confronted local education authorities with extra costs: women teachers literally fitted the bill as they could be paid lower salaries. Women's moves into elementary school teaching were personal choices, prompted by desires for independence and learning, which were themselves manoeuvred and controlled by government policy and attitude towards state education. The use of the marriage bar, which I have already mentioned, is another example of the ties which were actively manipulated by the state, between employment of women and the wider economy and, as Apple points out, which are framed by conflicting discourses, which insist that:

> the proper role for women is at once to be recruited into the paid workforce for economic reasons, *and* to stay at home in order to reproduce the "traditional family." (Apple, 1986, p. 14)

Women and teaching formed an 'enclave' (*ibid.*, p. 69) in which professionalism became an illusion. Women teachers were subjected to ever-increasing administrative control by men in the service of the state, its economic health and political power. That intensification of the demands made of women teachers was misinterpreted as professionalism and in practice meant more work and far more technical, routine responsibilities. Women's relation with teaching as work and professionalism is a complicated one, constructed out of state policies which sometimes beckon them into paid work and at other times shut them out. The different work opportunities for women and men, and the different career patterns women and men teachers might expect, also meant that women's relation with professionalism was an outsider's. The 19th-century idea of 'professions' was designed in the interests of middle-class men, and so

the idea of 'woman' and 'professional' works with an inherent, historical contradiction (Miller, 1996).

This economic and cultural perspective on women teachers as workers and professionals forms part of the historical backdrop to my reading of the complexity and ambivalence of the men student teachers' position today. Terry, Michael, Daniel, Max, Dean, Donny, Jerry, Peter, Steven, Jim and Gavin chose to work in the women's world of primary schooling, yet, as men, they are more readily understood as professionals and workers in a positive relation with the public world of work, the economy and the state. One consequence is an expectation that men will have a relaxed approach to the bureaucratic requirements made of teachers: Charles Clarke's laughter on hearing about a male headteacher who sometimes abandoned the planned curriculum in favour of party, comes to mind again here (see pp. 148-149). The positive relation between masculinity, professionalism and work bestows significant expectations onto men. One assumption is of an entitlement to a good salary. This can be read as the ability to choose to forego such a salary for altruistic reasons: Peter gave up a good salary to become a teacher and his colleagues thought he was "crazy" to do so. Another outcome of the positive relation between masculinity, work and professionalism is an expectation of career progression. Jerry expected to "get to the top of the tree" and become a headteacher. The men students think about their decision to become teachers, their professional identities and their work as teachers in ways which have been framed by historically-established expectations about men and work. Even though this can be read as a positive relation between men and professionalism, my analysis has shown that individual men's understanding of career progression and professionalism is not necessarily easy: for example, Gavin and Peter talked of the pressure of expectations that they would become headteachers.

A historical and sociological perspective on gender and work reinforces my argument that men are not straightforwardly marginalised from teaching young children, and it is neither helpful nor accurate to see teaching as simply and traditionally women's work. Understanding teaching as a domestic occupation reflects the gendered ordering of social relationships and the social position of children more than it does the work itself or the ways women teachers talk about their work (Biklen, 1995).

Being able to reflect on past changes in the gendering of jobs illuminates my perspective on current understandings of what it means to be a primary school teacher.

Reflecting on a history of the production of masculinities foregrounds the production of gendered difference and change. Women's role in the construction of masculinities is rarely acknowledged in discussions of men teachers and boys' schooling, past or present; when it is, women are often blamed for feminising boys. Christine Heward's account is one exception. Heward uses the autobiography of Robert Roberts, a working-class man born in 1903, to highlight complex relations between a father and his son and to argue that the mother and the relationships established in families play a part in men's understanding of their gendered selves (Heward, 1996). Robert Roberts was alienated by his father, who struggled to maintain his patriarchal authority through 'bullying, temper and drunkenness' (*ibid.*, p. 37). For the father, masculinity was constituted through skilled manual work and the rejection of schooling. When Roberts junior came top at technical school his father roared "Go out and find work!". Roberts junior followed his father's lead and took a job in the brass-finishing shop, saying, "That was school done. I was entering the world of men." (Roberts, 1978, cited in Heward, 1996, p. 37). Ursula, in Lawrence's *The Rainbow,* whom we have met before, also spoke of connecting herself with the 'outer, greater world of activity, the man-made world' when she took the first steps towards becoming an elementary school teacher (Lawrence, 1915, p. 335). Ursula's relationship with her father was complicated too and comparable with that of Roberts with his father, in that it can be characterised by alienation. However, for Ursula the alienation was produced through her father's expectation that his daughters should remain dependent upon him; his was 'a secret pride' in the fact that his daughters need not go out to work (*ibid.,* p. 334), which collided with Ursula's intense desire for independence and knowledge. Returning to Roberts' story, as time progressed, he negotiated a version of masculinity quite different from his father's, strengthening his relationships with his mother and sisters and later changing career to become a tutor and writer. Men student teachers also learn and experience masculinity as a social relation with their families, other men and women student teachers and

tutors, and the teachers and pupils they encounter in schools.

Relations between men and women is a theme in Peter M. Lewis's autobiographical account of being a pupil and later teacher at boarding school (Lewis, 1991). Men teachers and boy pupils at boarding school are cared for by maids and matrons, who do the demeaning work that the culture dictates men must not do. Lewis recounts his father summoning the maid at their home, so that his mother could reprimand the maid for a fault that his father himself had noticed. Lewis calls this the 'remote control' power of the father (*ibid.*, p. 173). The father's assumed authority and the mother's obedience enact specific patterns of power and inequality through social relations defined in relation to their social class and gender. The father's position as head of the family is bolstered by the positioning of professionalism, public institutions and the state as masculine. Traces of these assumptions are echoed in taken-for-granted expectations of men and women teachers today: women are rewarded for their maternal natures and men for authoritative patriarchy.

Readings of behaviours are shaped by gender and social class. Angus McLaren's historical study of professional discourses of criminal trials and medical histories, 1870-1930, illustrates how the concept of 'virile, heterosexual, and aggressive masculinity' was established and maintained through the construction of 'deviance', 'unmanliness' and 'femininity' (McLaren, 1997, p. 2). For example, cross-dressing by women could be seen as erotic; cross-dressing by men was a criminal offence or a sickness. Constructing men's behaviour as a transgression and penalising it, served to protect and define superior versions of masculinity. Judges, in 'condemning laborers' brawls as irrational outbursts and turning a blind eye to gentlemen's duels' (*ibid.*, p. 3) maintained clear boundaries between unacceptable working-class and acceptable middle-class masculinities. These versions of masculinity and social class became naturalised and operated as pre-existing norms.

The judges, journalists and lawyers of McLaren's study believed there was one form of masculinity. The crucial point in relation to my own research is McLaren's argument that those men were themselves doing the work to construct the version of masculinity they assumed to be natural. There is a dialectic relation between individuals and society. Individual subject positions are discursively constructed in social contexts; social

contexts (such as the family or school) are maintained and resisted through the process of individuals constructing their gendered identities. Although McLaren does not refer to educational institutions, his argument is relevant. He argues that hegemonic versions of masculinity do not map directly onto individuals' lives. Individuals are 'invited' to adopt certain positions (*ibid.,* p. 238). 'Invitation' suggests agency: invitations are offered or withheld, accepted or refused. McLaren makes use of Michel Foucault's view that the sexual categories and gender norms of the 19th century underlay a system of power, which was maintained and regulated by professionals in medicine, criminology, pedagogy and the law.

Invitations are not always directly taken up as intended. During the 18th century, young Englishmen of rank embarked on what was known as the Grand Tour (Cohen, 2001). Travelling abroad was meant to remove boys from their overprotective mothers and homes, and make men of them. Thinking about the Grand Tour as a cultural practice, feminist historian Michèle Cohen writes of the experiences of these young men. The paradoxical outcome is that they returned with an interest in fashion and 'display' (*ibid.,* p. 132), a desire to look at themselves and be seen, which was mainly associated with women and with the very effeminacy that their travels had been planned to oust.

Paying attention to history helps me to understand contemporary contexts, but not by showing how past events lead inexorably to the present. Constructing a gendered history can disrupt and change accepted perceptions of present events. Another earlier piece of research by Michèle Cohen does just that, as she tackles, from a historical perspective, the 20th-century so-called crisis of boys' underachievement and the accompanying sense that 'the world is somehow upside down' (Cohen, 1998, p. 19). She explains how a discourse of achievement has been constructed and deployed differently for girls and for boys for the past three hundred years. Examples from Cohen's argument demonstrate shifts in the construction of success and failure for men and women.

Cohen refers to John Locke's educational treatise, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, published in 1693, and analyses his discussion of boys' and girls' learning, the discourses he adopts and the explanations he offers. According to Locke, boys fail to learn Latin by the rules of grammar; girls succeed in learning French by prattling in it. It is method not intellect

that causes success or failure here. This produces girls' superiority as 'just a trick of the light' (Cohen, 1998, p. 21). Through most of the 18th century, the English gentleman's conversation was unfavourably compared with women's verbal fluency. At the end of the century, men's taciturnity was reinvented as a sign of strength of mind; women's ability to converse freely was repositioned as a sign of a weak intellect. Hence, Cohen argues, there was created an 'obligatory connection between depth of intellect, masculinity and taciturnity' (ibid., p. 24).

Turning to a government document of the 1920s, Cohen points out how the eager, achieving girl is pathologized, for fear of 'overstrain'. Boys, on the other hand, are admired for their 'habit of "healthy idleness"' (Board of Education, 1923, p. 120 cited in Cohen, 1998, p. 27), which is construed as entirely appropriate behaviour for boys. Boys' success has been and is attributed to their intellect (something within) and their failure to teaching methods (something external). In contrast, girls' success is attributed to teaching methods (something external) and their failure to intellect (something within). Hidden talents become inscribed in constructions of masculinity, and hidden inadequacies in femininity.

Underachievement operates as an institutionalised assumption. Cohen problematises boys' underachievement in unexpected ways, arguing that historically constructed discourses have as their object boys' achievement and success. I can apply this argument to my findings from reading my data: gendered constructions of achievement and being a 'good' teacher frame contemporary understandings of individual teachers. Men's potential to be successful teachers is understood in relation to their intellect and their authoritative, charismatic performances (something within); their failures are attributed to feminisation and the inadequacies of over-theoretical and infantilised ITE (something external). Women's potential to be successful teachers, in contrast, is based on their hard work (something external) and is also belittled by being attributed to natural instincts and personalities (something internal or assumed to be predetermined); their failures are down to poor intellect, weak discipline and over-conscientiousness (something within).

Moves to construct professional identities involve negotiating conflicting gendered discourses which have histories and which have changed over time. There is an active and dialogic relation between the

past and the present, in which each is 'created, maintained and energised by the other' (Cunningham and Gardner, 2004, p. x). Paying attention to history does more than demonstrate that it is inaccurate to think of teaching young children as simply and traditionally women's work. As feminist historian Alison Oram argues, 'the sexual division of labour in teaching was neither a natural nor a static phenomenon' (Oram, 1987, p. 116). A historical account highlights discursive shifts in relation to teachers and their work. Traditions change. Ideas about masculinity and femininity and popular narratives of men and women teachers' professional identities alter over time and interrelate with social transformations such as expanding educational and employment opportunities for women and the valorising of entrepreneurship and competition in a predominantly masculine world of business. Education policy, economic considerations, discourses of gender and social class, individual teachers' hopes and ambitions interact in a web of contradiction and conflicting investments. Historical perspectives show past changes, contradictions, differences and inequalities. Historicizing my study of men student teachers points out the traces of past ideas which work to shape the men's understandings and others' perceptions of them today. History also reminds me that the men's and my contemporary understandings are rooted in local, specific, gendered contexts.

I have been part of the world of primary schooling and primary ITE throughout my professional life as a teacher and as a tutor, and this has a bearing on how I understand myself and others and what I think it means to be a teacher. My sense of self also constructs and is produced through my memories and experiences of beng a girl pupil, a daughter and a mother.

An autobiographical narrative
I can picture myself as a beginning teacher: a woman walking into the Reception classroom in a large Victorian school in South East London. I see myself sitting in the obligatory 'teacher's chair' surrounded by children. My relation to the children was a contradictory mixture of discipline and friendship, control and autonomy. What strikes me now is the extraordinary amount of calm and empathetic efficiency I was expected to demonstrate in the face of difficult situations, such as fights between children, and on one

occasion between parents. I do not want my story to be slipped into a classic stereotype: a tough class but she survived. I look back on my teaching experiences and wonder how I kept the lid on it all, how I felt able to present myself on a daily basis as the embodiment of stability and good sense, who would rarely raise her voice but would appear, when others' nerves were frayed, to determinedly provide the calm closure to a disturbance. Of course, I did not always succeed. And the exterior calm (such a central characteristic of teacherliness, I now realise) hid uncertainty and ambiguity that had to remain hidden. Which stories can I, and others, tell of our teaching experiences?

I think back to my own schooling. It is a middle-class girl's story, which revolves around best friends, working hard, loyalty to the school, helping and admiring the teachers: gendered experiences. The ways I was positioned as a schoolchild were shaped by gender and social class, as these were played out through discourses in the family, classroom and playground.

In 1988 I moved from working in a classroom with thirty five-year-old pupils, to an institute of higher education where I was to teach adults to become teachers of young children. My academic background and route into university life, as well as the particular status of primary ITE, have a bearing on my own relation with academia. As a primary school teacher, my position was not defined in relation to an academic subject, but in relation to young children. I began working in higher education as a teacher on a secondment, to bring 'recent and relevant experience' into students' teacher training, later acquiring a permanent position of employment. There are tensions in universities between vocational ITE courses, and academic degrees. Those tensions, which have a history, manifested themselves in various ways in my experience. Some tutors talked of two separate groups of students: 'student teachers' and 'ordinary students'. On occasions, student teachers had to fit in with timetables designed for students who were not spending time out in schools. Tutors on ITE courses who reinvented themselves and moved from ITE to teach degree courses in Education, or better still (as it was perceived) in another academic subject, were thought to have done well for themselves. I am aware that other former primary school teachers, now working as academics, such as Carolyn Steedman and Valerie Walkerdine, whose work I have made use

of, have seemed keen to move on from their backgrounds working with young children. Although I too have moved from the classroom context, I still feel a commitment to think about and write about the importance, challenges and pleasures of being a primary school teacher.

As an ITE tutor, I puzzled over ways to work with groups which comprised, say, twenty-five women and two men. I would always remember the men's names. I had to dash around schools to observe student teachers and assess their teaching, interview prospective student teachers, teach a myriad of courses, find time for research, scholarly activity and a plethora of meetings. At one such meeting, we tutors agreed that a nineteen-year-old woman student wearing a top that bared her midriff had not got the outward signs of teacherliness quite right. For men students, no tie seemed too casual, a suit too formal. We sought safety in the words 'appropriate' and 'inappropriate'. I reflected on the contradictions between 'student' and 'student teacher'. Being a student signifies growth, freedom, broadening the mind; being a student teacher means being sensible, complying with rules, being a pupil at university and a teacher at school. In the past decade, the enriching experience of further education has been undermined by utilitarian expectations of all university courses. Vocational ITE courses have a specific place in this context. Since the inception of teacher training colleges in the 1840s their relation to academic university courses has been an uneasy one. Theory and practice have been constructed as oppositional. Today, tensions between theory and practice, and discourses which shape teaching as a technical performance, prompt and are exacerbated by students' desires for courses that provide instant technical teaching ability.

On May 1st 2000 Tim was born. I became a mother. The parameters of my personal and professional identity shifted. I have had to reorientate myself and manage contradictory features of my new identity as mother, doctoral student, and tutor in early years and primary education. At different times, I have confronted the practical challenges and assumptions associated with being a working-mother, a full-time mother and a part-time student. I have listened to my son enacting heterosexual masculinity through his account of the games of chase he and other boys play with the 'kissy girls' at school. My relation to my research was shifting and my interest in masculinity intensified by observations of my son learning his

identity as a boy.

My mother, Emmie, now in her eighties, left Chidham Village School, West Sussex, at 14 years of age to work on the family smallholding. Her father had been a lawyer, but was unable to return to work after the First World War. As a young woman, Emmie attended evening classes in English, and one in Biology. During my childhood she worked part-time as a florist, and through my teenage years, studied and took exams in floristry. She has long been a member of the Women's Institute, attending monthly meetings. In spite of perhaps feeling unskilled in literacy, she has written short stories (one of which was read aloud on local radio), children's stories which I enjoyed, and even a limerick which made its way on to national television. She keeps a diary. I am fascinated by the continuities that I now notice shaping my identity - a commitment to and pleasure in learning, study, writing - an identity also shaped by my father.

My father, Eric, died on August 31st 2004, at 89 years of age. His father was a Master Shoe Maker and the family lived in Manchester. My father attended Manchester Grammar School, then University and moved to West Sussex to work as a secondary school teacher of French in a grammar school there. He also spent a few years working in a teacher training college. I have always known these facts, but after his death came to realise them afresh. Recently, I chanced upon some of his job references; one describes him as a 'cultured man' who commanded respect from his pupils. He was a man whose education and profession positioned him, in my view comfortably, in an intellectual world. Although my story is not one of 'always wanting to be a teacher' I can read into my past an easy relationship with schooling.

My argument is for an understanding of the multiplicity of investments in the various, conflicting discourses which prevail about masculinity and men as teachers. Becoming a teacher is a process of production, enacted through language and social practices and relations. Men who choose to work as primary school teachers today are inserted into traditions which have histories and which seep into contemporary discourses about teachers, teaching and masculinity. The men student teachers are actively involved in maintaining, challenging and producing the discourses which frame their

203

professional identities.

The difficult, but necessary, task is to notice and scrutinise these value-laden discourses which construct common-sense norms that can otherwise seem to be beyond question. Students could learn about how they come to know themselves as teachers and, specifically, how 'being a teacher' is constituted for them and by them through their interactions with historically-shaped social and cultural worlds, as mediated by language.

Chapter 11: Conclusions

My purpose in this final chapter is to stand back and reflect on what I have learnt about men student primary school teachers, and about research, and to identify future areas for study. From my particular vantage point as an involved professional, and having examined the work a group of men do to construct their gendered professional identities, I will set out a range of teaching strategies and ideas for primary ITE. I will look back on the process of carrying out this research, my methods and the principles that underpin them. Taking a more personal perspective again, I will think about my own experiences and my changing professional identity.

I return now, specifically, to the two central questions I posed at the outset of this study. First, how do men student teachers negotiate the assumptions made about them as men and teachers of young children? Second, what theoretical perspectives are necessary for me to write about individual men students' complex relations with being a teacher? In summary, how has this text answered those questions? The text I have constructed, based on my critical readings of data from eleven men student primary school teachers, enacts their and my moves to establish a voice amidst a complex criss-cross of often-contradictory discursive positions. The men are at a point of transition, learning to be primary school teachers, and work to negotiate complicated assumptions and expectations about them as men and teachers of young children. That process of constructing a professional identity is carried out by the men through language which can maintain or challenge inequalities and which is always embedded within social and cultural contexts which have histories. The ambivalence, emotional investment and paradox that I read in the men's narratives cannot be understood without recourse to the men's developing understanding of masculinity and difference, and I have had to build a complex theoretical network to enable me to make a critical and sensitive reading of the men's talk *and* to acknowledge the part played by contemporary, historical and personal contexts in the formulation of that talk and my reading of it. Thinking about the men's professional identities and my theoretical approach, difference, identity, language, and contemporary, historical and autobiographical contexts have been essential strands.

Teaching students to learn to be teachers

Three themes that I think are central to learning to be a teacher permeate my thinking. Together they work to make visible 'mutual, cultural discursive threads' (Davies, 2003, p. 178) which speak individuals into existence. First, active encounters. By this I mean individuals connecting with each other, and engaging with assumptions, ideas and experiences, both their own and other people's. Second, detail. Here I am thinking of the value of specificity, looking closely at moments, in an autobiography, in the classroom, in history, and thinking about how such evidence might be understood. Third, sensitivity and difference. I have in mind an acknowledgement of what is involved and what can seem to be at stake when individuals are at a point of transition, when their assumptions are challenged, when they begin to see the particularity of their own positions and the possibilities of change.

Discourses of teacherliness are so familiar, so accepted, that it is difficult to see them as constructed. They operate as if natural and incontrovertible, yet they are shot through with gendered assumptions which have histories. Looking closely at men's ideas and perspectives has shed light on assumptions about masculinity and men as teachers. A sense of not fitting in, disjunctions, unease, conflicts, is coupled paradoxically with feelings of specialness and being idealised. I have not wanted to write about the men as if theirs is simply a story of disadvantage and advantage. Listening to and thinking about the detail of the men's narratives, I encountered subtlety, ambivalence and tentativeness and it is on those features that I have wanted to concentrate.

In the context of primary schooling and ITE we are weighed down by polarities: masculinity and femininity, teachers and pupils, tutors and students, primary and secondary, theory and practice, academic and vocational. These dichotomies are created and fed through discourses which essentialise difference. An emphasis on separateness and a definite sense of place and position can appear to be attractive, and it can also make those positions seem entrenched, even hostile to one another. In terms of gendered identities, polarity masks and denies the relational and shifting nature of understandings of masculinity and femininity and sets a competitive tension between the two.

My analysis has illuminated and problematised men's ongoing

negotiation of conflicting discourses as they learn to become primary school teachers. Discourses of masculinity simultaneously idealise them and construct them as objects of suspicion, forming and constraining the men's possible understandings of themselves as teachers. What sort of pedagogical practices might help men students to notice the entrenched, apparently common-sense assumptions that shape their perceptions and others' perceptions of them? How might the process of ITE suggest to students that alternatives are possible? What sort of teacher:student relationship and interaction could help students to rethink themselves as teachers? These are not the kinds of questions that I see prioritised in ITE at present. They exist more as a resistance to dominant trends and interests in marketability, skills, technical know-how and management. Neither is it necessarily easy to think of such searching questions about pedagogy when, as a practising tutor, I can imagine arriving in a class, with two hours ahead of us and, say, twenty-five student teachers who want to know how to be 'good teachers'. Understandably, they too want to know what to do when they meet a class of pupils.

It would be quite possible in the current climate to see the pedagogical implications that I propose as over-complicated and abstract, an indulgence at the cost of practical advice. A persistent backlash against theoretical understandings of education and teaching belittles anything other than pragmatic approaches to teaching as a skills-based craft. In spite of these pressures and in some ways because of them, my argument is about the importance of the less tangible, but, I think, fundamental underlying understandings which construct individuals' perspectives of what it means to be a teacher and what kind of teacher they might aspire to be.

I begin by presenting suggestions for a pedagogical approach which I think goes some way to acknowledging the tricky, often paradoxical positions in which men student primary school teachers find themselves. In doing so I am confronted with an awkward question. Is it justifiable for me to argue that the pedagogy I propose, based on my research into men, will similarly benefit women students? I think the answer is yes, on the basis that the suggestions I am making do not work to resist change and maintain the status quo by pandering to narrowly-defined masculine stereotypes. Rather

207

they are based on my understanding of the ambiguity and paradox which men students encounter as they enact their identities as teachers through adopting and resisting conflicting discourses of masculinity. Women student primary school teachers experience ambiguity and paradox, though their positions are constituted and understood through different, related discourses. I am carrying forward a sense of the pervasiveness and apparent intractability of cultural myths about men as teachers, and an awareness of the men's hopes and concerns, which I have illustrated and illuminated through the analysis and interpretation of my data. I now go on to outline a pedagogy that acknowledges the complexity and fluidity of students' identities at a point of transition, and that works to make space for students to notice, articulate and reflect on their own perspectives in the light of the contexts within which they are working and living.

Conversations

Think back to Michael and Daniel's discussion. Had Michael expressed his "old-school" opinions in a seminar should I as tutor have challenged him, told him his views are outdated and sexist? Not to do so could be interpreted as colluding or at least opting out. Perhaps I should simply have told him he was wrong. Confronting him directly might seem to be the best course of action, given the requirements for beginning teachers to 'recognise and respond effectively to equal opportunities issues as they arise in the classroom, including by challenging stereotyped views' (TTA, 2002a, p. 12, para. 3.3.14). It would be possible, if Michael cooperated, to teach him to adopt a different discourse, but that might not of itself disrupt or challenge his perspective. Following Bronwyn Davies's research into teaching children to read and write beyond their gendered identities (Davies, 2003) I think a different kind of teaching is called for. That is a pedagogy that centres on making individual perspectives visible, helping students to notice what they have learnt about being a man and being a teacher of young children and to see what they have learnt as part of a set of shifting and specific practices, rather than a universal, abstract truth. Dialogue and engagement, what Ken Jones has described as 'cultural connectedness' (he is writing of some secondary school classrooms) where teachers create a 'dialogic space' (K. Jones, 2003, p. 151) might, if adopted in teacher training, create a climate where difference can be

discussed and discourses of teacherliness made visible, examined and reworked. Critical readings and reflective writing can enable individual students to see their understandings of themselves and others' understandings of them as discursively produced. Here are three possibilities.

1 Autobiography

Autobiographical writing can make visible an individual's own perspective, 'a telling of one's own specificity' (Davies, 2003, p. 178). Contextualising and interweaving that personal story with the events, practices and ideas of the time, has been described by Ivor Goodson as writing 'the life story and the life history' (Goodson, 1992, p. 6) and this strikes me as a constructive and manageable practice for students to adopt. From my own experiences of thinking and writing autobiographically and from my experiences as a tutor helping undergraduates and graduates to do the same, I am encouraged by the shifts in thinking and the questions raised, as students acknowledge their perspectives and notice how they are positioned and also, ironically, how they have worked to maintain even those positions that seem undesirable.

In the research interviews, I noticed the students narrating past events and recollections and relating them to current priorities and practices, for example Max's and Steven's memories of their own teachers when they were pupils at school. And Jerry showed his awareness of public discourses calling for more men teachers as role models for children of single-parent families. Given a teaching context, such memories and comments could form the basis of critical reflection and further learning.

The effect could be both to emphasise the specificity of the men's own viewpoints and to connect them with others and the contexts of time and place in the institutions in which they work, so depersonalising and politicising the assumptions made about them. This in turn can be a spur to change and action, as positions are seen to be not fixed and inescapable, but shifting and open to reinvention. Discourses are a legacy of a gendered history and are powerful, luring individuals as they try to construct a coherent sense of self. A historical perspective can also support and challenge assumptions and show that what seems to be the

inevitability of the present has been arrived at through shifts and disjunctions as well as continuities.

2 Thinking about becoming a 'good teacher'

Learning to be a teacher is at the same time a familiar and a risky business. Students who choose to enter primary ITE will all have had experiences as pupils, sometimes quite recently; they will have known many teachers and participated in hundreds of lessons. Unlike those who enter other professions, student teachers will begin their training with deeply-entrenched ideas about what it means to be a teacher, many which they may be unaware of. General discussions, which I have often instigated with beginning students, about what it takes to be a good teacher, help to establish some parameters of professional practice. Talking in general terms about versions of professionalism can guide student teachers towards the less immediate, underlying issues about being a teacher. But such discussions can also slip into all-too-familiar discourses which drift past and are not engaged with. Students can become swept into prevailing discourses which seem to disregard the very values individual students themselves hold. Persistent dichotomies which, for example, separate masculinity from the care and nurture of young children, make it harder for men to work their ways into certain possible versions of their professional identities. How can students go against the tide of insistent discourses which tie them in with valorised skills of management, effectiveness, and authority? Both students and tutors would benefit from paying critical attention to specific localised examples, rather than seemingly generic, universal constructs of the 'good teacher' or the 'good student teacher'.

3 Surprises

Surprise, 'a response to violated presupposition' (Bruner, p. 1986, p. 46), however engineered, can instigate a process through which student teachers become aware of, question, even re-evaluate how they see themselves as teachers. Through reading or generating texts, sharing autobiographies or teaching experiences, or through cultural comparison and contrasts, student teachers might be surprised. Accepted norms might then be challenged and other possibilities imagined.

Classroom relations

Coincidentally, at about the same time as I was deciding to focus my research on men student primary school teachers, a male student teacher, (let's call him Rick here) presented me with a daffodil at the end of an ITE class. I think he had picked it in the gardens outside the classroom. The presentation was followed by Rick's request to be excused from the next week's seminar as he had a pressing engagement of some kind (I have written briefly of this before, see Smedley, 1997). His gesture, which I understood as clearly tongue-in-cheek, was shaped by the signification of a gift of flowers, heterosexual attraction and persuasion. Rick's humour in staging this little event was intended to facilitate his bold question (he knew such requests are usually not meant to be granted).

This event has stuck in my mind: it happened in the mid-1990s. It has done so because it is an example of an overt recognition that tutors and students are gendered and sexualised beings. When Máirtín Mac An Ghaill was given a bunch of flowers by a male Muslim secondary school student who had passed his exams, there followed heterosexist jokes, the pupil had to defend himself against homophobic abuse, and Mac An Ghaill, as teacher, was reprimanded by the headteacher (Mac An Ghaill, 1994, p. 1).

The constraints on acknowledging that teachers and pupils are gendered and sexualised beings are powerful ones. Paying attention to university classrooms as sites of the production of gendered identities is not simply an attempt to create a 'truer' picture of what goes on. Discourses of masculinity make available to men various possible subject positions as students, which also criss-cross and interact with the possible versions of themselves as teachers. Alison Jones tackles the complicated subject of women, desire and sexual harassment in the context of university teaching (A. Jones, 1996). She writes of 'meaning frameworks' which enable or seem to make unsayable certain versions of ourselves (*ibid.,* p. 107). Specifically, Jones is working towards the 'possibility of pleasurable, good teaching and learning amongst embodied and passionate teachers and students.' (*ibid.,* p. 108). Her work poses a question which I see as directly applicable in the context of primary ITE: how might we instigate discursive shifts that open up the possibility for individuals to see themselves differently, acknowledging the complexities of gendered professional

identities?

Returning to my own data, several of the students spoke about the possibility of men-only discussion groups as part of their ITE. Recall that Gavin thought one man in a group might be "victimised" and a mix of men and women would ensure a "balanced view". Daniel felt that men needed to know what women were thinking and so was not in favour of men-only discussions. Single-sex classes are discussed more frequently in relation to secondary schooling and, currently, boys' underachievement (for example, Salisbury and Jackson, 1996). Boys-only classes or a boy-friendly curriculum can resort to stereotypical contexts and teaching approaches which are assumed to suit an unquestioned version of what it means to be a boy. For example, focused on football, and fast-paced, competitive and highly-structured. Such a pedagogy reinforces old norms and dominant and limited forms of masculinity. It highlights gender in reactionary ways. Mary Thornton organised a club for men in primary ITE, but found that the men did not show commitment to it or participate fully (Thornton, 1999b). This raises important questions of ownership and purpose. Might men-only groups serve a purpose in primary ITE? Based on the experience of carrying out the research interviews I think they might. Arranging a men-only discussion as part of a regular course could help the men reflect on themselves as gendered individuals and, through dialogue, to encounter sameness and difference with others. The purpose of such discussions would not be to teach in spurious 'men-friendly' ways. The intention would be to make visible the perspectives of the men, both to the men themselves and to others, with a view to teaching the students about the complex interplay between gender and professional identity.

For my own part, I would welcome opportunities in primary ITE for both men and women to read and discuss teachers' stories, which might include contemporary and historical accounts by men and by women, the students' narratives, and perhaps their tutors'. A detailed narrative, set in a specific time and place, can help to shift the reader from comfortable generalisations and notice, for example, the discursive production of 'good' and 'bad' teacher which has shaped the account and the understandings that underpin it.

The reading, writing and interactions that I am proposing as a pedagogy reflect the processes that I have been engaged with in this

research, thinking and writing about the men student teachers' narratives. What have I learnt about the constructedness and genderedness of teacher identity and what it means to be a 'good' teacher? Discourses of masculinity construct successful men teachers as men who are not hindered by theory or bowed down by administrative requirements. Mature, middle-class men are assumed to be good managers, knowledgeable, firm but fair. Unsuccessful men teachers have been let down by an over-theoretical training and held back by the culture of primary ITE epitomised as feminised and infantilised. Men teachers' failures are attributed to their marginalisation from a feminised culture in school and to women's success at protecting the teaching of young children as women's work. Unsuccessful men are understood to be effeminate, homosexual or too 'laddish': young, irresponsible and 'macho'. Negative assumptions about men who work with children collide with changing narratives of classed, heterosexual masculinity which call for caring men, and add to the challenges men face in choosing to work as teachers in primary schools.

Discourses of success and failure for women teachers are constructed differently and construct difference. Discourses of femininity construct women teachers as successful, because women are naturally good with children, they are used to mothering children, they accept low salaries, approach the work as a vocation, and are suited to the domestic and housekeeping elements of the job, some of which are routine and mundane. Women from working-class backgrounds are assumed to be grateful for the opportunity to better themselves as teachers. The ideal of femininity is read as youthful, accommodating, soft, non-confrontational, patient, modest, self-effacing. It is heterosexual, not homosexual and not too overtly feminine or sexual. Women's failures are attributed to lightweight intellect, lack of rigour and overconscientiousness. The possibilities for understanding success and failure, good and bad, turn on the intersecting axes of gender, social class and age.

Heterosexual women are naturalised as teachers of young children, in the feminised workplace of the primary school and are in a numerical majority. And women teachers have long been criticised for their feminised practices in the classroom, which, so the argument goes, suit girls and disadvantage boys. Heterosexual men teachers are 'other' as teachers of young children, in the feminised workplace of the primary school, and are in

213

a numerical minority. And they are in demand as the ideal teachers for young children, especially boys. Individual men may need to justify their position as teachers of young children and to assert their heterosexuality, yet this is within a context where being a middle-class, heterosexual man can be read as signifying the potential to be a better teacher. Men may be positioned on the margins, but being a man is also read as being the holder of a potentially superior position, an entitlement constituted historically through readings of masculinity and men's position in the family, the world of work and the state.

Transition and contradiction

The path I have taken on this research journey has been a varied and quite complicated one. I have learnt, as I intended, about the men students' understandings of themselves as teachers of young children, and this has formed the basis for my suggestions about pedagogy in primary ITE. I have also learnt several unexpected things. Such learning could not have been predicted or planned at the outset of this research: it has been stimulated by change brought about through a network of interactions between my research (its context, the process of carrying it out, and my perception of it) and me (my understanding of gendered identity).

When I began this research I was a full-time ITE tutor. The decision to undertake doctoral research was a personal one, based upon my professional interests, my commitment to learning, and to primary school teaching in general. It was, of course, not a decision taken in isolation. The culture of higher education through the 1990s was increasingly moving towards competition and quantification. There was increasing pressure on each tutor to publish in academic journals, as well as take responsibility for administrative tasks and teaching. The research profile of each tutor was to be planned, monitored and evaluated. These were all things I came to expect to do and to happen in the course of my job, but the degree of surveillance and level of expectation seemed to be intensifying. I refer to this shifting, wider institutional picture to emphasise that the context within which I was working was a shifting one.

In 2001, after the birth of my son, I stopped working on my research for a while: this is what is described in the official documentation for doctoral students, as an 'interruption'. I resumed my studies, anticipating

some challenges, such as picking up the threads, up-dating the literature review, writing again. I had not anticipated an ongoing need to reorientate myself, first, to the process of undertaking a doctorate, second, to gender and masculinity, and third, to the changing context within which I was studying.

Following the 'interruption', I reflected anew on my perception of and relation to the task of research and academic writing. Practical issues such as time for writing and more abstract ones such as my sense of self as a researcher have been affected by the new responsibilities of being a mother. This demonstrates my personal, gendered experience of the process of carrying out research. Robin Usher asks a question that I could well ask, 'do we then simply research ourselves?' (R. Usher, 1996 p. 35). His answer to the question is to emphasise that 'we ourselves are a part of rather than apart from the world constructed through research' (*loc. cit.*). I have worked to bring autobiographical reflection into the text. That personal context, alongside contemporary and historical perspectives, has become an important dimension of the research, framing and shaping my driving force to examine the men students' discursively produced gendered identities.

Throughout this research I have been concerned with individuals' understandings and perspectives. I have made my perspective clear, as a woman, as a former primary school teacher and as a primary ITE tutor working at a university, and I have reflected on the ways my perspective has informed the selection, analysis and interpretation of the data. During the course of this research my perspective has changed in significant ways. The transition into the culture of motherhood involved me in reinventing my understanding of myself as a research student. One common-sense narrative about my position would be simply that there is a 'conflict of interests', a tension between time for family and for work. The delights and frustrations of motherhood are time-consuming and work/life balance notoriously difficult to get right (Sikes, 1997). I am more interested in the conflicting constructions of 'mother' and 'researcher'. 'Motherhood' signifies caring and selflessness, and is at odds with the ways researcher and academic signify: solitary worker, task-oriented, single-minded. The contradictory positions of academic and mother have been characterised in the following dualities, 'production/reproduction, selfishness/selflessness,

independence/dependence, career-orientation/mothering instinct (Raddon, 2001, p. 2). The challenge for me has been to negotiate a satisfactory position in the face of two contradictory places defined through opposing discourses.

Perspectives on 'doing a PhD'

I have already argued that researcher, research and researched are interconnected in complex ways, but this is seldom acknowledged other than in a practical sense (albeit an important one) by those who write books to guide doctoral students in their task (for example, Philips and Pugh, 2000). Current policy conceptions of doctoral research as essentially a pragmatic training for future research militate against the recognition of anything more subtle or complicated. Behind questions about a researcher's relation to the research process are wider policy-driven moves, which I have already touched on briefly, and discourses which define and delimit doctoral study. Psychologist and teacher Phillida Salmon contrasts a 'training' view of doctoral research, which assumes knowledge to be objective and given, with a view which acknowledges the 'authorial character' of research and takes into account individuals' perspectives, institutional contexts and history (Salmon, 1992, pp. 16-17). Market forces and the demand for skilled researchers to support economic development have also resulted in research councils promoting PhDs as *'training*: as the acquisition of competencies' (Leonard, 2000, p. 186). A concomitant drive towards efficiency and cost-effectiveness has valorised concrete, quantifiable findings and also eroded the creative exploration of a subject and more open-ended interpretations and conclusions.

Research is a social and contextualised, as well as an individual, activity: researchers are not working in isolation from the rest of their lives. Helen Johnson, for instance, has written about the numerous personal crises she experienced whilst a doctoral student. This caused her enormous stress, undermining her confidence and ability to pursue her studies (H. Johnson, 2001). Johnson was able to move forward through a process of reflective practice and analysis of her relation to the academic world and to theorists, which I would read as underpinned by Johnson's understanding of conflicting discourses about femininity and academia. Sue Clegg's research into the 'lifeworlds' of individual research students

illustrates the diversity and specificity of their understandings of doctoral research (Clegg, 2001). Personal perspectives contribute to the perception, formulation, and interpretation of research undertakings.

Phillida Salmon tracks the experiences of ten PhD students, women and men (Salmon, 1992). The detailed transcripts of the students' comments provide insights into the various ways each individual has found 'a personally viable mode of working', which accommodates their circumstances (*ibid.*, p. 103). However, Salmon's analysis of the students' comments does not directly consider gender. Such an analysis could have shifted the focus from the personal, to a more contextualised understanding of the challenges the students faced.

There is a complex relation between women, research and academia, which has been carefully documented by Diana Leonard in her guide for women doctoral students (Leonard, 2001). From this guide I take a strong sense of women researchers as working within institutions which position them inequitably. Women academics and researchers occupy a 'marginalized periphery' (*ibid.*, p. 188). They are subjected to discourses which can be depoliticising: women academics must try harder and be more assertive, then they will succeed. Such discourses, whilst seeming to address gender issues, paradoxically emphasise the superiority of the normative group by positioning others, i.e. not males, as 'different or deviant and as having (or rather being) a problem.' (Leonard, 1997, p. 156). There is a case to be made for research into men doctoral students as gendered, as men. I would be interested in investigating men doctoral students' understandings of their gendered identities. In the light of my research into men student primary school teachers, I wonder whether men doctoral students' relation with research and academic writing is as straightforward as assumptions about the masculinity of academia might suggest. Redirecting one's gaze towards individuals whose gendered identities have remained generalised and homogenised is, from my experience so far, a fascinating and illuminating process.

What have I learnt from undertaking my research in the way I did?
Working closely with data from a small group of men moving into the world of primary school teaching and ITE, I have examined the detail of their perspectives, as they work to construct their gendered professional

217

identities. The richness of the data gathered through interviews has enabled me to think about the students as individuals, as well as to explore themes of common concern to the men. By adopting a rigorous yet speculative approach I have avoided sliding into well-worn conventional understandings of men student teachers and the generalisations and polarities that follow from them.

My priority has been to think about how the men's understandings of themselves have come about. I have worked to resist judging or criticising the students for their comments, concentrating instead on the discursive production of their narratives. This raised ethical issues which I have discussed, and which, in the event, did not pose problems. However, if I were to research potentially sensitive issues again, and in the light of ever-increasing concerns about men's implication in children's safety, I would take further advice on addressing ethical concerns.

A changing context, shifts in my perspective, and the learning I have done, have been integral parts of this research. During the course of my research I have kept a research diary of sorts. This included notes about reading, related discussions and 'asides' which I felt were relevant to my questions. I have become increasingly interested in the process of research and think such a narrative could be a fruitful source of data for further reflection. Tracing the development of ideas over time, either my own, or, in another context, that of student teachers, might shed light on the processes involved.

With the benefit of hindsight, I have been able to reflect on this research as enacting what I am proposing for the students: encounters with others' perspectives, reading and noticing assumptions, traditions and perspectives, generating texts and rethinking professional identities at points of transition. I am fascinated by the many layers of interpretation which I have been engaged with in this research, as I make readings of the men's readings of their professional identities. My readings have taken into account the dialogic interactions in the context of the research interview, as well as the contemporary, historical and autobiographical contexts of my reading of the data as a text. I am intrigued by these multiple interactions and the complexity of a woman's gaze on men and the men's responses and interpretations of that gaze.

What next?

I have already mentioned that I value the teaching possibilities of working with teachers' narratives. With this in mind I am interested in disseminating my ideas through publications that would engage students and support tutors in teaching in these ways. My analysis of the contradictions faced by men student teachers might also be of interest to those involved at policy level in recruitment and in the design of primary ITE. Illustrating that the men students are individuals with specific cultural backgrounds, aspirations and anxieties, might counter some of the popular assumptions made about men teachers. It is a challenge to communicate both within the academic world and beyond. It is possible to fall foul of 'ivory tower' accusations as well as simplifying or popularising ideas for catchy headlines. Mindful of the diverse audience I would like to reach, the path I would rather follow is via professional conferences, educational publishers, academic journals and teaching. I would like to write an accessible, academic text, perhaps a pamphlet, which would encourage dialogue with the reader about the gendered professional identities of primary school teachers. And I would hope to adopt and share the teaching strategies I suggest, in my own future teaching. In addition, I plan to design and teach a course about gendered professional identity, which I hope will be of interest and use to qualified teachers of young children. Looking further ahead, I want to think and write more about the process of undertaking a doctorate. Gathering stories from men and women research students could be juxtaposed with my own story, with a view to examining the discourses which produce possible understandings of what it means to be a researcher.

As for the men student primary school teachers, my interests remain most closely with those at the very start of their professional careers, in the first year of their ITE courses. One possibility is to talk with a larger, diverse group of men student teachers as they encounter that point of transition into the culture of primary ITE, coupled with collecting detailed evidence of their perceptions of their experiences in school and at university. Tracking a group of men student teachers through their training and beyond would provide an evidence base for valuable insights into individual men student teachers' understandings, expectations and experiences.

My research has raised further questions for me concerning

beginning student teachers' ideas about being a teacher and how those perspectives are received by tutors and teachers, at the start of their ITE courses. Is there space for students to articulate and reflect on their understanding of teacherliness or do students quickly come to learn there is an institutional discourse which defines how they should think about being teachers? My research has demonstrated the influence of gendered discourses in the production of student teachers' professional identities and, coincidentally, has taken me a little way into thinking about the gendered relations that exist between teachers and pupils, from the teachers' perspective. This is a sensitive topic and one which warrants further investigation. All of these possibilities for research are driven by my understanding that critical readings of the narratives of individuals, and reflective thinking about the gendered discursive production of the ideas that underpin them, can lead to a rethinking and reimagining of what it means to be a student primary school teacher.

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229

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Appendix 1

Table 1: Men Teachers in Nursery and Primary Schools in England 1997 - 2003

Numbers and percentages (per centages *italicised)* Statistics for 2002 and 2003 are provisional estimates.

TABLE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

Source DfES (2005) Table 19, p. 40.

Appendix 2
Table 2: A
chronological shift

perspective	masculinities	men teachers	consequences
* pre-second-wave feminism e.g. Yardley (1971), R. King (1978)	* gender not a focus * passing reference to behaviour and personalities of men	* all but invisible * hard to discover much about men's experiences, even in texts by men * noted as minorities and headteachers	* no detail about professional lives of men teachers as men * men homogenous and silent group * no impetus for change or challenging assumptions
* feminism e.g. Evetts (1990), Acker (1992)	* redressing implicit focus on men as norm * focus on gender and women teachers * describes differences between women according to ethnicity, class and sexuality * masculinity not the focus and not problematised	* briefly acknowledged minority * ambitious and advantaged in terms of careers * no detail of men's own professional experiences	* provides framework for change * demonstrates gendered experiences of women teachers * men not researched as gendered beings * generalisations about men persist, and obscure their perspectives
* post-feminism and opposes feminism e.g. Biddulph (1994), Shakespeare (popular press) (1998)	* essentialist, fixed version of heterosexual, white, middle-class masculinity * homophobic * feminisation a problem for men * men a homogenous group and disadvantaged	* special contribution to make as men * needed to teach and discipline boys * good teachers and role models * might abuse children and/or be homosexual * not natural carers	* reinforces or reinvents status quo * perpetuates myths about men teachers * hides differences between men, excluding many * accepts and promotes an anti-women point of view * men unproblematically presented as a solution e.g. to boys' underachievement
* post-feminism and pro-feminism e.g. Skelton (2001a), Mills (2003)	* gender relational * masculinities - plural, shifting and shaped by class, ethnicity, sexuality in context * complexity and diversity of individuals' experiences and perceptions	* diverse group * minority in feminised workplace in masculinised culture * contradictions for individuals e.g. assumptions about career * men as gendered beings	* provides detail about professional lives of men * acknowledges difference and men's perspectives * men teachers can challenge status quo and support feminist project, with benefits for women and men

255

Appendix 3

Table 3: Men and Women Teachers in Nursery and Primary Schools in England in 2003

TABLE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

Source: DfES (2005) Table 19, p. 40

Appendix 4

Table 4: Newly Qualified Entrants to Nursery and Primary Schools: men by age in full-time or part-time service in England on 31st March 2003

TABLE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

Source: DfES (2005) Table 8 (i), p. 20

Text cut off in original

Appendix 5
An example of Questionnaire 1, completed.
(Some details have been omitted to ensure confidentiality)

Please circle as appropriate

Year (①) 2 3 4　　Sex (Ⓜ) F　Age Phase FYS (UP)

Fill in your age _27_

Please tick all boxes which apply to you

Question 1 What were the _main_ influences on your decision to be a teacher?

My family/friends are teachers ☐　　　　Having children of my own ☐

I enjoyed school myself ☐　　　　　　I played schools as a child ☐

Someone suggested to me that I would be suited to teaching ☐

Who was this? Specify:

Other ☑
Specify: _Worked with children in an activities centre and found that I enjoyed and was apt at instructing and working with children._

Question 2 What do you feel was the most relevant experience you had before starting your course?

Sunday school teaching ☐　Brownies/cubs/beavers/camps or similar ☐

Youth work/playscheme ☐

Babysitting ☐　　Nanny/au pair/childminding ☐　　Nursery/playgroup ☐

Other ☑
Specify: _Working in a children activity centre for a year._

258

please turn over

Question 3 In your opinion, which of the following are the 3 most important strengths in the making of a successful primary teacher?

Patience ☑   Caring ☐   Approachability/good listener ☑

Authority/discipline ☐   Sense of humour ☑

Organisational skills ☐   Dedication/vocation/commitment ☐   Ambition ☐

Knowledge of subject/special expertise ☐
Specify:

Other ☐
Specify:

If you wish to add further comment please use the space below.

In regards to question three a teacher must exhibit, many varying qualities all of which are important.

Appendix 6
An example of Questionnaire 2, completed.
(Some details have been omitted to ensure confidentiality. I have typed the student's comments for ease of legibility and presentation.)

Age 44 Upper Primary 3rd Year student

When and how did you decide to be a teacher? (Did you receive advice? Who or what influenced you?)
When - 2 or 3 years before I came to college.
How - Through observation of the job whilst working in schools in a completely different role, I came to realise that teaching would offer me a far more satisfying career than I was currently in. Experience with youth work and my ability to communicate with children suggested I had the personal qualities required for the job. Various LEAs were trying to recruit students with a wider experience of life and at the time my finances were secure enough to make the prospect a reality. So ...

Can you identify situations, at college or during School Experience, when you felt confident or particularly positive? uncomfortable or apprehensive? Please give brief details to describe one or more of these situations and how you feel about them.
I try to be confident and positive in all things with varying degrees of success. I have found that I have strength in some areas I was unaware of and some weaknesses too. These are to be expected and are part of living. The only times I've felt particularly uncomfortable is when confronted with intellectual elitism or aggressive feminism but these are life rather than college situations. My age and gender are not consistent with most people's image of a student teacher which has on occasion caused me some irritation. The only thing that is purely college that causes me any serious grief is the system of handing in coursework 5 minutes after the preparatory lectures end.

What do you think will be your greatest strengths as a teacher?
I am quite good at dealing with people, have fewer gaps in my understanding of the world around me than many of my fellow students, I am a very good teamworker, am happy to work and organise myself independently and have a great deal of enthusiasm for learning in general.

Appendix 7
An example of a student teacher's autobiographical writing.
(Some details have been omitted to ensure confidentiality. I have typed the student's comments for ease of legibility and presentation.)

Age 19   Upper Primary   Male

The teacher from primary school that instantly springs to mind, is the teacher that I had in my final year. The main quality that he had, that no other teacher in my primary school had, was the ability to make every aspect of learning fun. For example, in one lesson of science, we made rockets from 2 litre lemonade bottles that actually flew. We decorated them in groups, and then attached a pump inside the neck, placed it on a clamp and pumped it up. This of course took place in the playground and different groups used varied amounts of water inside the bottle, to see how far and high the rocket flew.

In another science lesson, he invited a scientist friend of his, who had constructed a small volcano model, which at the end of the lesson, actually erupted.

The teacher was really liked by the whole class, because he was so enthusiastic, and he seemed to know each and every one of us individually. This was his first year at the school, which made his understanding of us all the more remarkable.

I suppose in a way, he is a role model for me, because I have always wanted to teach the final year of upper primary, and hope I could be as brilliant as he was.

Another activity which I have just remembered, was when we could all be the teacher for one day, which was something we had obviously never done before. At the end of this activity I was lucky enough to come first, and from that moment I decided that I would go into primary school teaching. You could say that my teacher was an inspiration!

As a closing comment, I would like to say that this particular teacher has certainly influenced me as to the sort of primary teacher I would like to be. One that is always full of enthusiasm, and to have the ability to try and make every aspect of the curriculum interesting.

261