Poetry and Pose:

Heterosexual Male Teachers' Presentation of Gender Identity

In the Secondary School English Classroom

Joshua D. Curnett

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Department of Educational Research,

Lancaster University, UK.

This thesis results entirely from my own work and has not been offered previously for any other degree or diploma.

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Signature: Joshua D. Curnett

Abstract:

In this PhD thesis, I have investigated this question: How and why do heterosexual male secondary school English teachers present gender identity in the classroom? Prior to my thesis, little or no research existed regarding this question. I have reviewed literature in the areas of gender identity, masculinity studies, secondary education, and Queer educational theory to delineate the boundaries of my thesis study as well as identify a gap in the literature where my research lies. In addition, I have used the nascent methodology of braided autoethnography for my research: a braided autoethnographic approach allows me to write about my own experience alongside as well as within the narratives I developed regarding the interviews of my research subjects. As a result of my study, I have found that the subjects and I converge upon and diverge from different points regarding how and why we present our gender inside and outside of the secondary school English classroom, particularly regarding our sense of masculinity as essential or contextual. I conclude the thesis with three recommendations regarding my findings: 1) this research question suggests further study as it is currently written and also in various, new forms; 2) the nascent methodology of braided autoethnography necessitates further theoretical and practical description, and 3) secondary school teacher training can be developed regarding the contextuality of the teacher's presentation of gender identity within a classroom.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Part 1: Research Question, Background Information, Context of the

Research, Influential Readings, and Key Terms for Understanding

1.1.1 Research Question

How and why do heterosexual male secondary school English teachers present gender in the classroom?

1.1.2 Background Information

Hegemonic masculinity embedded in a heteronormative culture affects the presentation of gender by heterosexual men. As a result, the presentation of gender for heterosexual men who teach secondary English can be complicated, and there is scant research in this area of study. For instance, men who choose to teach secondary school navigate degrees of perceived "femininity" regarding their taught subject, specialty, or area of expertise: '"the sciences" are associated with high-status [traditionally-masculine] traits such as rationality or objectivity, while "the arts" are associated with [traditionally-feminine traits such as] emotion and

subjectivity. It is the construction of these traits as gendered which leads to the assignment of

the subjects as masculine or feminine' (Francis, 2000, p. 35). Additionally, in 2015-16, just

25% of American high school English teachers were male (Digest of Education Statistics), a

figure that resonates within other developed and English-speaking countries.

And so, if gender expression in a heteronormative culture is considered hierarchical and

violent (Butler, 1990/2006), heterosexual men who choose to teach secondary school English

as a career are "doubly-stigmatised": not only are these men schoolteachers, but they are

teachers of English. As a result, heterosexual male secondary school English teachers can—

for an entire career, perhaps—engage in a kind of hypnotic, reflexive, unexamined pose and

presentation of 'recuperative masculinity' (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Lingard &

Douglas, 1999; Martino, 2008) in order remain within a perimeter of heteronormative gender

expression in the classroom. This is despite—or because of—their situation within the

"woman's work" of teaching English language and literature to their students.

1.1.3   Context of the Research

Within a heteronormative culture which valorises traditionally masculine careers (Martino,

2008), men who teach can be perceived as performing masculinity in a traditionally-

feminine context. This is not a misperception. In Western countries, teaching as a profession

is still dominated by women. In 2017, for example, over three-quarters of teachers in state-

funded schools in the UK were women (School Teacher Workforce), and in the same year,

nearly 77% of the 3.8 million public school teachers in the United States were women

(Loewus, 2017).

While women represent the majority of teachers, men represent the majority of leadership

positions in politics and business. For example, in 2016, women held fewer than 30% of seats

in lower houses of Parliament across the OECD (OECD, pp. 4-5), while only 1 in 5 members

of the United States House of Representatives in 2018 were female (CAWP). Also, at this

time, roughly one-fifth of board members of publicly-listed companies in the OECD were

female, while nearly all CEOs in OECD member nations were male. In the same countries,

men remained 'under-represented' in educational careers (OECD, pp. 4-5).

The linking of gender and career seems to be inculcated early in one's life as well, often

during a period of 'orientation to social valuation' of occupational preferences when a child is

between 9-13 years old or even earlier (Gottfredson, 1981, pp. 545-546). For men in Western

countries, then, school teaching is beyond heteronormative cultural boundaries (Dodson &

Borders, 2006), and males who teach school can become problematic for traditional

narratives and expressions of masculinity. Male teachers could be engaging in a kind of

performance of monoglossic, essentially-masculine behaviours to signal heterosexual and

male (Francis, 2012), and the consideration of this kind of gender presentation for

heterosexual men who teach secondary English is where my research lies.

1.1.4   Influential Readings

To further contextualise the idea of how hegemonic masculinity in a heteronormative culture affects the presentation of gender by heterosexual men in the secondary English classroom, several readings have been influential for my research. Raewyn Connell's Gender and Power: Society, the Person, and Sexual Politics (1991) has shaped my understanding and application of masculinity and gender theory. Also, In A Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development (1982) by Carol Gilligan has informed my understanding of feminist ethical frameworks. More specifically, Gilligan's "Ethic of Care" presented in the book has become a lens for my research regarding gender presentation in the teaching profession. Additionally, Wayne Martino's research, and in particular the article 'Male Teachers as Role Models: Addressing Issues of Masculinity, Pedagogy, and the Re-Masculinization of Schooling' (2008) has provided helpful theory regarding the problematising of heteronormativity in education. Furthermore, the longitudinal study Stories of Self by Jo Warin (2010) has been helpful to understand how gender identity and presentation is relational and contextual for individuals.

Methodologically, two works have been especially influential for my research. Evocative Ethnography: Writing Lives and Telling Stories (2016) by Carolyn Ellis and Arthur Bochner has given me a framework of theory and language to write within an autoethnographic tradition. More specifically, the theoretical concept of 'braided autoethnography' described by Barbara Tedlock in 'Braiding Evocative with Analytic Autoethnography: Section Three Introduction' in Handbook of Autoethnography (Holman, Adams, and Ellis, 2013) allowed me to methodologically locate the dissonance between my own experience and the experience of others in a way that could be described and expressed as research.

1.1.5   Key Terms for Understanding

There several key terms for understanding regarding this research:

Braided Autoethnography. This is a nascent methodology that allows a researcher to deconstruct and then re-present lived experience as a complete member researcher (Adler & Adler, 1987) of the community they study. Braided autoethnography reflects a researcher's anti-foundational and relativist positioning. The autoethnographic, subjective writing of the researcher regarding the research question is foregrounded; however, experiences of other research subjects can be described by the researcher and inserted (as braids) into the autoethnographic narrative. The relationship between 'braids' can be dissonant; this space for dissonance allows for relativistic and perhaps wider interpretation of the experiential phenomenon initially described in my research question.

Gender Identity. This is a widely-theorised concept that generally describes a continuum between a fixed gender identity that corresponds to one's sex role—masculinity for men and boys and femininity for women and girls—to a fluid gender identity that does not necessarily correspond to one's sex role but instead can correspond to one's lived context.

Hegemonic Masculinity. This is the theory first developed by Raewyn Connell (Carrigan, Connell, and Lee, 1985) that describes the way society prioritises traditionally-masculine, heteronormative attitudes and behaviours associated with heterosexual men and boys over traditionally-feminine attitudes and behaviours associated with women and girls or homosexual men and boys. Hegemonic masculinity describes and deepens culturally-accepted attitudes of misogyny and homophobia.

Heteronormativity. This political term refers to the tendency of the world to default to a male-dominated and heterosexual normative framework in which heterosexuality is normal and queer sexuality is problematic (Warner, 1991).

Monoglossia and Heteroglossia: Francis (2012), for example, couches gender in terms first expressed in Mikhail Bakhtin's work regarding language. She argues that Bakhtin's linguistic concepts of monoglossia and heteroglossia relate also to gender, 'elaborating how the monoglossic, binary account of gender operates to mask and pathologise heteroglossia' while also affirming that heteroglossic 'disturbances' of gender are inescapable and should be 'celebrated'

Sex, gender, and sexuality: These terms have varying definitions and interpretations throughout the literatures considered for this research. I will attempt to define them here

simply and clearly: *sex* refers to one's biological sex (Clayton, J.A. & Tannenbaum, C., 2016,

p. 1863). *Gender* refers to the spectrum of one's socially-constructed, non-binary identity,

often considered on a continuum between masculinity and femininity (Butler, 1990).

Sexuality refers to "an an enduring pattern of emotional, romantic and/or sexual

attractions to men, women or both sexes" (American Psychological Association, 2008);

most often in this paper, sexuality will refer to homosexuality (same-sex attraction) or

heterosexuality (opposite-sex attraction). The aforementioned three terms are separable. For

example, one's sex role does not determine one's construction of gender identity, and one's

sexuality does not emerge from one's sex role nor from one's construction of gender identity.

The combinations of these separable concepts are numerous and broad, and their necessary

separation has much to do with the aims and objectives of this research.

1.2   Part 2: The Research Focus, Its Importance, and Its Location in a Larger Field of Study

1.2.1   The Research Focus

The main focus of this research is to investigate how heterosexual male secondary school

English teachers experience the presentation of gender and identity in the classroom. There

are well-researched sociological fields regarding the normative behaviours which

characterise heterosexual men in a hegemonically-masculinised world as well as the way that

teachers' caring, essentially-feminine behaviours are prioritised in the classroom.

Additionally, there is a body of research to be found regarding the challenges homosexual

male teachers can find when presenting their gender identity to students, and there is also a

(smaller) body of research which investigates the violence of hegemonic masculinity in

education (Skelton, 1993). These areas will be further described in detail in the literature

review chapter.

However, there is little or no research regarding the experience of heterosexual male

secondary school English teachers living in a hegemonically-masculine, heteronormative

world and how these men describe their gender presentation and identity in the classroom.

This is the focus of my research. However, a research publication that might be considered

congruent with this research study is Francis & Skelton (2001), but their excellent and

helpful research is done with a wider lens and different methodological consideration.

1.2.2 Importance of the research

A reason that this research is important is there is scant research regarding the experience of

the presentation of gender in the classroom by secondary school English teachers. This lack

of consideration of how teachers present versions of masculinity while teaching secondary

school English could prove to be important for further educational training, research, and

development. The training, for example, could direct teachers towards more-progressive,

less-traditional ideas of gender identity and expression bound by heteronormative and

hegemonically-masculine cultural biases. Also, this research is important for women and

girls as well as for people who identify as LGBTQ+. Hegemonic masculinity that exists

unchecked within a heteronormative landscape—and especially when that landscape

includes the highly-restrictive space of the classroom—harms all students. I will further

comment upon these ideas in the Findings chapter of my thesis.

1.2.3 Its Location in a Larger Field of Study

This small gear of research can help to more easily turn larger wheels of social justice in

education, "wheels" such as gender equity, the normalisation of Queer identity, the lessening

of homophobia, and the reduction of normalised violence towards women.

Another analogy for the importance of this research in the broad field of education is that it

can help improve how teachers and students learn together, as two dendrites fire

communication to each other across a synapse. If the dendrite representing the English

teacher (if you will) repeatedly fires messages wrapped in heteronormative, masculinised,

and hegemonic bias to the other dendritic end represented by the student, the student can

learn to expect that varyingly-toxic message. However, if the dendritic end represented by

the English teacher fires messages which resonate with an Ethic of Care or progressive ideas

of gender identity or the deconstruction of hegemonically-masculine gender normativity to

the students' waiting dendritic ends, then both teacher and student —both dendrites—can

grow in a healthy, progressive way. Perhaps the dendritic ends represented by the students

will begin to expect and even demand messages from their teachers which are grounded in

progressive considerations of gender expression, refusing to tacitly accept messages which are

de facto heteronormative, hegemonically-masculine in nature, and oppressive.

1.3. Part 3: The Value of the Research

1.3.1 A Gap in the Literature

Scant research exists, but please see my prior reference to Francis and Skelton (2001),

regarding how heterosexual male secondary school English teachers construct and present

gender identity in the classroom. Furthermore, the concept of how hegemonic masculinity

affects a heterosexual male secondary school English teacher's presentation of gender

identity is not apparent in the literature. Because of my research, I intend for a heterosexual

male educator to be able to identify how and why hegemonic masculinity affects his

conception and presentation of gender identity in the classroom.

1.3.2 Troubling the narrative

By researching heterosexual male secondary school English teachers' presentations of masculinity, we might begin to widen the focus of what masculinity means and how it shapes secondary school male English teachers' constructions of identity in the classroom. Perhaps this research can help describe a different, more progressive "male role model" teacher whose identity is not predicated on traditionally-hegemonic and masculine cultural values but who instead recognizes and demonstrates a detachment from heteronormative, homophobic gender roles. This positioning connects to my anti-foundational ontological views and my relativistic epistemological consideration of what masculinity means, and there can be value found in these progressive considerations of a teacher's gender identity in a heteronormative landscape such as education.

1.4   The Aim of and Objectives for This Research and Why the Research Interests and Inspires Me

1.4.1 The Aim of This Research

The aim of this research is to describe the experience of heterosexual male secondary school English teachers' expressions of gender in the classroom.

1.4.2 The Objectives for This Research

Within this aim, I have identified several objectives:

· locate and describe my lived experience as a heterosexual male secondary school English

teacher.

· research and describe the experiences of other male secondary school English teachers.

· apply theory of hegemonic masculinity, gender identity, Queer theory in education, and

secondary English teaching to the findings of my research.

· consider the findings of my research in a way that will suggest ideas for the consideration

and development of secondary education teacher training.

1.4.3 Why This Research Interests and Inspires Me

I am interested in this research for several reasons. One reason is that I have spent most of

my career as an English teacher in secondary education—I am in my 23rd year of teaching

secondary school English as I write. More specifically, I often wonder about the distance I

can feel between my expression of masculinity in the world and my expression of

masculinity in my classroom; my expression of masculinity can seem so different to me when

I am teaching than when I am not. As a result, I am interested in learning more about my

own performance of gender and expression of masculinity with my students.

I am also inspired to pursue this research because of the kind of researcher I want to be. I

aspire to write about the narratives of others, documenting their rich, textured, lived

experiences and how they resonate with my own. A braided autoethnographic research

methodology fits my anti-foundational ontological and relativistic epistemological

positionings. These positionings propel me towards considering phenomena in education

regarding gender and identity (broadly) and the effects of hegemonic masculinity upon

pedagogical practices within a heteronormative culture's system of education (specifically).

Another reason I am interested in and inspired by this research is because of the three most

important women in my life: my daughter, my wife, and my mother. I want to use my

platform as a researcher so that I might strengthen social justice in education in order to help

those who write educational policy and philosophy better understand how gender and

identity influences teaching and learning. For my young adult daughter (17 years old and

considering her university applications at the time of writing), I want her to experience

teachers, lecturers, and professors who are aware of the influence of heteronormative

cultural biases and the invisible grip of hegemonic masculinity upon teaching and learning.

For my wife, also a career school teacher, I hope that she will work with colleagues who

understand and think critically about the profound influence of often-unexamined

expressions of masculinity upon their teaching practices and professional relationships. And

for my mother, a retired reading specialist and kindergarten teacher who spent nearly 40

years in American public-school classrooms, I would like to honour her legacy of teaching

thousands of fortunate students in situations which were in all probability androcentric,

hyper-masculinised, and oppressive towards her lived experience as a brilliant female

educator, colleague, and employee.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The research question and autoethnographic situation I've described in the introduction

chapter concern major theories of masculinity studies, gender, and education. In my review

of relevant literature in this chapter, I will delimit these fields of scholarship. More

specifically, I would like to focus broad concepts of gender, education, and masculinity

studies into the more manageable concepts of, respectively, 'hegemonic masculinity,' 'gender

identity and performance,' and 'Queer theory and secondary school English education.' It is

in the spaces among these refined theoretical concepts that my research question, 'How and

why do heterosexual male secondary school English teachers perform masculinity in the

classroom?' is located.

In Part 1 of the literature review chapter, I will consider the theory of hegemonic

masculinity. I will comment upon its history and etymology and its situation within

heteronormative cultures. I will then comment upon the emergence of the "Ethic of Care"

(Gilligan, 1982) as a feminist theoretical stance which provides a rebuttal to androcentric

ethical ideas, particularly in heteronormative cultures which value and reinforce hegemonic

masculinity's hierarchy.

In Part 2, I will investigate the literature surrounding gender-as-identity as well as gender-

as-performance. In particular, I will consider work which comments upon my position as a

heterosexual male working to disempower an unjust system of privilege, a kind of

'patriarchal dividend,' (Lingard & Douglas, 1999, p.6) from which I benefit. I will also look to

literature which describes the performance of gender as an interdependent rather than

independent act.

Part 3 of the literature review will attend to the literature of Queer theory in education.

Here, I will also consider research surrounding the development of school subjects as

gendered spaces of instruction (Paechter, 2000), including the secondary school English

classroom as a gendered space.

2.2   Part 1: Hegemonic Masculinity

2.1.1 Hegemonic Masculinity Within Heteronormative Cultures

Hegemonic masculinity is a central theoretical concept for my research. Broad theories of

politics (Gramsci, 1929) and gender (Carrigan et al., 1985) are combined within the concept's

idea. The former half, Gramsci's 'hegemony', coalesces with 'masculinity' to form a theory of

gender and power (Connell, 1991). Gramsci's deployment of the concept of hegemony

emerged from his experience 'of 1917 and the presence of the word in Lenin's writings'

(Hoare & Sperber, 2015, p. 119); however, his conception of focused political power is not

one that I will rely upon in my research. Rather, masculinity's constrictive effect upon

culture is a way in which Gramsci's essential idea of control, dominance, and subordination

can be applied to an experience of masculinity and, very specifically, how it is constructed

and then performed by, very specifically, a heterosexual male secondary school English

teacher in the classroom. The consideration of hegemony—one group's implicit power over

another—and its effect upon my performance of gender in an occupational setting is central

to my research.

The degree to which hegemonic masculinity influences my performance of identity as a

male, heterosexual secondary school English teacher is hard to overstate. Hegemonic

masculinity favours essentialised qualities based on sex role such as 'power, authority,

aggression, [use of] technology' and dominance (Connell, 1991, p. 302); power, strength,

single-mindedness, bravado, determination, self-reliance, individuality, competitiveness,

survival, and independence (Sabo & Panepinto, 1990, as cited in Skelton, 1993); and the

rejection of 'anything that even remotely smacks of femininity' (Kimmel, 2008). These

masculinised qualities maintain hegemony over "feminine" qualities such as care, caring,

relationship, flexibility, patience, collaboration, and a dependence upon others (Noddings,

1984) and qualities that, to be more socially acceptable, must be disguised as male (Gilligan, 1982/2003, p. 13).

The irony of my situation regarding my research is clear: I am seeking to disencumber myself of the destructive qualities of masculinity which are associated with my gender. The hegemonically-masculine and culturally-acceptable qualities for heterosexual men do not align with—yet still inform—teaching. More specifically, I seek to reduce access to this social construct: 'Men can adopt hegemonic masculinity when it is desirable, but the same men can distance themselves strategically from hegemonic masculinity at other moments. Consequently, "masculinity" represents not a certain type of man but, rather, a way that men position themselves through discursive practices' (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 832). My research question is located here. I will examine constructions and performances of gender identity outside of the secondary school English classroom and the transformation of the construction and performance of gender identity inside of it: how and why do I and others construct and present versions of masculinity?

It is my intent, then, to consider how the concepts of hegemony and masculinity coexist in in a very particular space: the secondary school English classroom. As a result of my research, I hope to suggest better and more robust considerations for the situation of heterosexual male secondary school English teachers and the often-complicated construction and expression of

gender and masculinity in the classroom. For the purposes of my literature review, however,

I want to first consider the concept of hegemonic masculinity more closely.

2.2.2 Gramsci, Connell, and the Concept of Hegemonic Masculinity

Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony (egemonia) (Hoare & Sperber, 2015, p. 117) in his

Prison Notebooks (1929) describes an oppressive and controlling 'vision of the world' for a

culture (Hoare & Sperber, p. 32). Hegemony, for Gramsci, exists 'to stress the cultural and

moral dimensions of the exercise of political power' (Hoare & Sperber, p. 118). Gramsci's idea

resonates with the Marxist concept of normative, controlling values of the ruling class

(bourgeoisie) of any society (Marx & Engels, p. 34). In both Gramsci's and Marx's theories,

the values of subjugated classes—Gramsci's subalterns (Forgacs, 2000, p. 197) and Marx's

proletariat (Marx & Engels, 2008/1848, p. 43)—are removed from possessing relative

ideological and its corresponding political power. These class divisions and imbalances of

power inform the adjective within the phrase 'hegemonic masculinity,' a type of masculinity

which 'is always constructed in relation to various subordinated masculinities as well as in

relation to women. The interplay between different forms of masculinity is an important part

of how a patriarchal social order works' (Connell, 1991, p. 296).

Hegemonic masculinity is a coalescence of Gramsci's political theory and, broadly, Raewyn

Connell's social one, an implied system of cultural preference that promotes men and

subordinates women to maintain male supremacy. The male hegemon is, of course, central to the theory; whatever his predisposition towards cultural power, a man is complicit in the imbricate, shifting, amalgamated nature of hegemonic masculinity and, willingly or unwillingly, contributes to its maintenance (Demetriou, 2001). Therefore, I can make hegemonic masculinity "visible" through research, and I can attempt to deconstruct hegemonic systems of power. I intend for my research and writing to help disrupt the narrative of male, heteronormative entitlement and power from a very particular space: the secondary school English classroom.

The concept of hegemonic masculinity describes a social dialectic that reflects gender rather than economics or politics (Carrigan et al., 1985, p. 577). Patriarchal concepts of the world delimit ideological norms in hegemonically-masculine cultures; furthermore, 'heterosexuality and homophobia are the bedrock of hegemonic masculinity,' suggesting that, generally, 'the relationship of men to women is oppressive' in hegemonically-masculine cultures (Donaldson, 1993, p. 645). For educational researchers like myself who want to reduce oppression and promote equity with the fulcrum of social justice, then, the symbolic, ubiquitous classroom's situation within any heteronormative culture presents a target for change.

2.2.3 Heteronormative Bias

Heteronormative bias shapes the concept of hegemonic masculinity. For the purposes of my research, heteronormativity means that heterosexual people such as myself are culturally accepted as 'normal.' In this definition, that which is not heterosexual is problematic and therefore 'othered,' and teachers who are not 'normal' can be stigmatised. Martino (2008) critically considers the idea that male, heterosexual teachers-as-role-models are what boys need and that finding heterosexual, "masculine" male teachers who fit heteronormative stereotypes does not address the underlying psychosis regarding femininity in males: 'Being a role model [as a teacher] becomes synonymous with being a "real man" who is able to ensure that boys' masculinity remains intact or is appropriately cultivated' (p. 193). In other words, heteronormative behaviours of teachers who are considered role models can signal that the man is 'safe' within a hegemonically-masculine cultural milieu (Martino, 2008, p. 192).

The conjoining of heterosexuality and safety in heteronormative culture is a way that heterosexual men can maintain a structure of domination over women as well as over men who are not heterosexual (Demetriou, 2001; Martino, 2008). It is not a stretch to consider that heterosexual male secondary school English teachers like myself can either explicitly or implicitly use this conferred power to our advantage and maintain 'symbolic order' or even the orthodoxy of straight 'white, male, bourgeois' people (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 122).

2.2.4 Dynamism Inherent in the Maintenance of Hegemonic Masculinity

Hegemonic masculinity is contextual and dynamic, changing with cultural concepts of what masculinity symbolises and how power is expressed. Wetherell and Edley (1999) suggest a dual approach for how to consider and analyse hegemonic masculinity, an approach that applies well to my study. One approach emerges from the suggestion that 'participants display to each other their understanding of what's going on, or 'action orientation' (Heritage, 1984, as cited in Wetherell and Edley, 1999, p. 338); another approach considers the discourse regarding 'institutionalized forms of intelligibility' (Shapiro, 1992, p. 38). As a male secondary school English teacher studying the performance of gender and masculinity in the secondary school classroom, the former idea will shape how I talk with other male secondary school English teachers about their experience with my research questions. The latter idea will inform my consideration of theory and how gendered careers and gendered subjects within education impinge upon male secondary school English teachers' performances of gender in the classroom.

Thus far in Part One, I have considered literature regarding concepts of hegemony and masculinity and their convergence within the theory of hegemonic masculinity. The next section of Part One will consider the criticism of androcentric ethical systems and the feminist response to that framework: The Ethic of Care. This dialectic and investigation into the attendant literature is relevant to my research question because of the applicability of Gilligan's, Noddings', and others' feminist theory to bolster my position as a heterosexual

male secondary school English teacher working to trouble heteronormative narratives which

implicitly prioritise expression of masculinity in

education.

2.2.5 Hegemonic Masculinity and the Emergence of the Ethic of Care

The Ethic of Care and its emergence as a feminist response to frameworks supporting

hegemonic masculinity is central to my research because of the fundamental, ontological

importance of the qualities of caring to teaching well (Noddings, 2012, p 773). Before the

emergence of the concept of the Ethic of Care (Gilligan, 1982), Lawrence Kohlberg's process

of moral development (1981) systematised virtue-based, Kantian system of evaluating ethical

development (Ettenberg Aron, 1977, p. 202). If a person, regardless of gender, could

demonstrate progress through Kohlberg's stages (in order), then the person would be

considered appropriately-developing and morally sound (Buttery, 1982, p. 28). Problematic,

however, was the theory's bias towards a masculinised concept of justice-as-ethical-pinnacle

which promotes and fixes an 'eternally' masculinised version of 'symbolic domination' onto

our worldview (Bourdieu, 2001).

This concept was and is, for females, perhaps analogous to the false premise and tacit

acceptance of a universal heterosexual experience within a heteronormative culture's ethos.

In other words, females could "show progress" through Kohberg's stages of moral

development while adapting to and displaying androcentric qualities and ways of thinking

that fit into a culture of hegemonic masculinity. Feminist theorists such as Carol Gilligan

(1982) and Nel Noddings (1984) questioned the creation and relevance of Kohlberg's stages of

moral development for female experience: Kohlberg's enormous theoretical flaw was to

frame and define moral development through an androcentric, masculinised, and

heteronormative lens of justice.

2.2.6 Carol Gilligan, Nel Noddings and the Ethic of Care

Carol Gilligan (1982) argues for a reconsideration of Kohlberg's masculinised conception of

moral behaviour and development. Gilligan suggests her questions about 'reality and truth'

are 'about psychological processes and theory, particularly theories in which men's

experience stands for all of human experience—theories which eclipse the lives of women

and shut out women's voices' (2003/1982, p. xiii). Gilligan's 'feminine' or 'relational' ethical

system is a foundation for the Ethic of Care, a theory which is a central for my research.

Arguing that Kohlberg's construction of moral development within universal principles of

justice are exclusive of the traditional traits of female 'goodness,' Gilligan comments upon the

paradox of the ethical 'achievement' of 'individuation' for males and of receptivity or

goodness for females (2003/1982, p.18). Gilligan suggests that the 'different perspectives' of

males and females in their moral development 'are reflected in two different moral

ideologies, since separation [for men] is justified by an ethic of rights while attachment

[female] is supported by an ethic of care' (2003/1982, p. 164), while also highlighting moral

qualities of 'relationships, needs, care, response, and connection rather than principles,

justice, rights, and hierarchy' (Noddings, 2013/1984, p. 11).

Nel Noddings (2013/1984) considers an ethic of care 'in the deep classical sense [of

femininity]—rooted in receptivity, relatedness, and responsiveness' (p. 23) and that 'it is the

recognition of and longing for relatedness that form the foundation of our ethic, and the joy

that accompanies fulfilment of our caring enhances our commitment to the ethical idea that

sustains us as one-caring' (p. 27). While Noddings is not arguing that care is essentially

gendered, the capacity to care, receive (emotionally), and listen—not traits many would

associate with the concept of hegemonic masculinity because of the reasons I have outlined

in the first section of the review of literature—are central to teaching secondary school

English effectively and well. Furthermore, Noddings suggests that there is a dissonance

between masculine and feminine 'approaches to education and, indeed, to living' but that we

might achieve a kind of genderless morality if we can 'enter a dialogue of genuine dialectical

nature in order to achieve an ultimate transcendence of the masculine and feminine' (p. 27).

Noddings' suggestion of a genderless morality which transcends masculinity and femininity

is reflected in researchers who have developed the ethic of care in the literature since its

creation.

2.2.7 Broadening the Concept of an Ethic of Care

Warin and Gannerud (2014) warn against an essentially-female concept of care (p. 196) and comment upon a 'problematic and gendered association of care' to what is considered 'woman's work' and that care-in-education is often neutralised in favour of more 'masculine,' neoliberal educational ends such as test scores or rankings (p. 194). Also, post-feminist scholars describe a progressive educational landscape in which caring is non-gendered and is rather considered as a human capacity or strength (Tong, 2008, p. 149; Tronto, 1994, p. 103).

From my positioning as a career secondary school English teacher, I do not necessarily agree with the plausibility of a de-gendered concept of care and will further comment upon this position in the Findings chapter of this thesis. Fundamental cultural systems which support hegemonic masculinity and the maintenance of heteronormative behaviour in the world are strong. The sex role of the caring male teacher, or the heterosexual male teacher who can trouble traditional and restrictive tropes of masculinity with qualities implicit within an Ethic of Care, seems to remain necessary to deconstruct cultural hegemonic masculinity. In other words, I will argue that male secondary school English teachers like myself must intentionally perform gender to change concepts of masculinity rather than erase gender to change concepts of masculinity and, more broadly, to catalyse a reconsideration of normative behaviour. We should endeavour to construct and perform heterosexual masculinity in a new way, one that does not underpin and maintain essentialised, traditional, heteronormative, or hegemonically-masculine cultural values.

We need to be men in a different way.

2.2.8 The Men's Movement and Neoliberal Education as Normative Forces for Hegemonically Masculinised Culture

Literature surrounding the Ethic of Care includes a response to feminist theorists from the "men's movement." The men's movement is a response to second-wave feminism and intends to recast and foreground traditional conceptions of heterosexual masculinity as a culture's normative force. For example, men's movement de-facto leaders such as poet and writer Robert Bly lament the plight of 'soft men' who do not embody essentially-male identities and behaviours. These are men, who have 'learned to be receptive, but receptivity wasn't enough to carry their marriages through troubled times. In every relationship,' continues Bly, 'something fierce [italics his] is needed once in a while: both the man and the woman need to have it"' (1990, pp. 3-4). Bly and others in the men's movement who construct and promote hegemonic masculinity argue for a way of being male which embraces a kind of essentially-violent expression ('something fierce') and rejects what is "soft." This normative, homophobic trope of hyper-masculinity (Kimmel, 2008) serves as a kind of warning for how male teachers—and explicitly for heterosexual male secondary school English teachers, for the purposes of my research—might pull back from the edge of expressing themselves in anything other than generally-heteronormative ways (Martino, 2008).

Noddings (2013/1984), however, identifies the 'womanish' receptivity Bly denigrates as weakness instead as a characteristic strength of an Ethic of Care; receptivity, to Noddings, can be a kind of ferocity. 'We can switch,' she writes, 'from an assimilatory mode [as female objects] to a receptive-intuitive mode [as females empowered] . . . . We are not attempting to transform the world, but we are allowing ourselves to be transformed' (pp. 952-53). Note Noddings' placement of women rather than men as "allowers" in this situation; women are the subject rather than the object of the sentence's pattern. This idea is relevant to my argument for a recasting of how heterosexual male secondary school English teachers must reconsider themselves as men who can receive and demonstrate receptivity—who can care— almost exclusively.

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In addition to the men's movement's reaction to feminist ideals, literatures regarding the advent of neoliberal, outcomes-based theory and practice in education have described qualities inherent in and indicative of hegemonic masculinity in culture. A neoliberal educational landscape values competition, achievement, independence, rankings, and test-based scores which are geared towards economic success (Hursh, 2012, p. 152). For example, it is now commonplace for state schools to be ranked in league tables against other state schools, and 'this represents a subtle, but crucial shift in emphasis . . . from student needs to student performance and from what the school does for the student to what the student does for the school' (Apple, 2001, p. 413). Apple describes a culture of caring (e.g. how the school

should 'do' for the student; how the school attends the student's 'needs') in the way schools

were and a culture of masculinised ideals (performance and standardisation which define a

student's worth) for the way schools are. Apple's, Hursh's, and others' criticism of neoliberal

educational ends extend the cautionary arguments of early-20th-century progressive

educational philosophers such as John Dewey who promoted the development of and care

for the individual student above the idea of the economic end of schooling (Simpson, 2001, p.

198).

When students or even schools do not measure up to neoliberal concepts of efficiency and

achievement based on predetermined outcomes and standards, then there are processes for

'casting out and excluding what does not fit into normalized spaces' (Popkewitz, 2012, p. 4).

Teaching can (worryingly or perhaps even terrifyingly) become a disingenuous,

performative, public act in order to meet neoliberal performance targets (Ball, 2003). This is

not unlike my central argument for researching this phenomenon within the landscape of

the secondary school English classroom: how and why do heterosexual male secondary

school English teachers perform gender and masculinity? The performance occurs in a

classroom, a space that is bound by hegemonic masculinity, heteronormative cultural biases,

and neoliberal ideas, all metaphorically pushing in on the classroom's walls. The male

secondary school English teacher's performance of gender in this space can be considered a

political act which challenges hegemonically-masculine, heterosexual, neoliberal cultural

norms. In other words, we can work to reduce abjection, which 'is the casting out and

exclusion of particular qualities of people from the spaces of inclusion' (Popkewitz, 2012, p. 6). By our construction and performance of gender as non-traditionally or non-essentially masculine, or by our construing of masculinity with an Ethic of Care, we can demonstrate that we value what is non-normative.

2.2.9 Conclusion of Part 1 of Literature Review

To this point of the review of literature, I have shown how hegemony and masculinity are separate concepts that have been combined for a theoretical purpose that delimits the theory of hegemonic masculinity. I have shown that masculinised theories of the moral development of human beings have been recast by feminist theorists to include an Ethic of Care; and I have shown that hegemonic cultural frameworks such as the men's movement (specifically) and, more broadly, neoliberal educational policy can serve as theoretical counter-balances for how socially-conscious, progressive male secondary school English teachers might construct and perform their gender identity in the classroom for political purposes. In the next section of the literature review, I will focus on literatures of gender identity and performance. These literatures exist within a larger body of work regarding Queer theory in education. Considerations of gender performance, gender identity, and Queer theory are essential for my research question because I aim to trouble the narrative of heteronormative, hegemonically-masculine male experience for secondary school English teachers.

Furthermore, a consideration of literature regarding gender and Queer theory will help to focus how and why male secondary school English teachers construct and perform gender in the classroom. I have chosen to explore these literatures after considering concepts of hegemonic masculinity to frame a deductive organisational structure for the literature review. This arrangement reflects the way I intend to investigate my research questions as well, through general cultural observation and questioning of hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity and then, more specifically, through individual experience regarding gender performance and identity.

Part 2: Gender as Identity and Performance

2.3.1 Presentation of Gender Identity

Butler (2004) theorises that gender is a kind of performance, a 'doing' that elicits a sometimes-conscious, sometimes-unconscious expression that is 'beyond oneself in a sociality that has no single author' (p. 1). Hegemonic masculinity's effect upon social structures can, therefore, shape one's gender identity. If we exist within patriarchal social structures which prioritise the suffocating and relentless 'doxa' (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 122) of what is gendered male over what is gendered female, then the consideration of male teachers' understanding of their construction and performance of gender in their own practice is important to try and

ensure a socially-just education for all. More specifically, the academic conversation synthesising ideas at the intersection of hegemonic masculinity, heteronormative culture, gender identity, and heterosexual secondary school male English teachers is scant and necessitates more consideration.

Heterosexual male secondary school English teachers can embody power through the presentation of our gender identity because we are heterosexual men in a hegemonically-masculine society. Heteronormative structures reflect our ways of performing masculinity; also, they both catalyse and become strengthened from these performances. Men "like us" promote neoliberalised and mythologised versions of masculinity and the world, further strengthening the framework of domination and repression which hegemonic masculinity constantly adjusts to maintain. With little or no problem, we can choose to validate our way of performing masculinity by simply maintaining a kind of normalised heterosexual masculinity, like the way a snail maintains its fixed shell (Warin, 2010).

However, this choice of presentation of gender identity for heterosexual men can be, with the kind of critical consideration I intend to promote with my research, similar to a chameleon's changing colour based on its background and context. In this sense, men who teach secondary school English can tell 'a story of self rather than creating a strong sense of self. This is a subtle but important difference. It emphasises adaptability and the chameleon-like nature of the self as it changes according to the social context' (Warin, 2010, p. 39). We

heterosexual male English teachers can also, as Butler (2004) suggests, revisit and reveal the invisible, unmarked narrative of the straight male in a heteronormative environment—and this is my goal in researching these overarching questions. More specifically, and for the purposes of my research, we heterosexual secondary school male English teachers have the power to deconstruct repressive sociocultural narratives present in our classrooms which empower us and disempower women.

2.3.2 Working to Disempower One's Own Unearned Privilege

With this research, I intend to mitigate or even erase my privilege so that a more socially-just educational landscape might follow. Connell (1991) asks an important question regarding my situation as a researcher: 'What reasons for change have enough weight, against this entrenched interest, to detach heterosexual men from the defence of patriarchy?' (p.16). It is hard to overstate the importance of the idea within Connell's question for my research. He lists five reasons for change, which I'll paraphrase here: 1) beneficiaries of corrupt systems can identify their corruption; 2) heterosexual men can have important and equal relationships with the women in their lives; 3) non-normative heterosexual men ('effeminate' or 'unassertive,' according to Connell) are oppressed by hegemonic masculinity; 4) change in gender relationships is happening; and 5) heterosexual men are capable of sharing feelings regarding the human condition (pp. 16-17). In response to the original

question Connell asks, my answer is clear: With my research, I would like to help revise an

oppressive, gender-based system of privilege from which I have benefitted for a lifetime.

2.3.3 Toxic Masculinity

Skelton's (1993) research presents a bleak picture of the kind masculine identity for a

secondary school teacher—albeit in the subject of physical education, not English—that my

research is constructed to challenge. His description of how men and boys were expected to

behave in school is one that resonates deeply with me because it is how I was expected to

behave as well: 'Men and boys were expected to . . . put up a certain kind of "manly"

performance, if they were to win the accolade of being a "good teacher" or a "good lad,"

whether that was a praiseworthy "rough diamond" or playground "hard". Violence, and the

threat of violence, was not only the principal means of speedily laying down the ground

rules at the start of the year, but it encoded messages about the nature of masculinity'

(Beynon, 1993, pp. 193-194, as cited in Skelton). This description describes the place I come

from and the way in which I learned to perform masculinity at school; Skelton, through his

subjective narrative, focusses the broad concept of hegemonic masculinity and how 'these

qualities [of being a "proper lad" or a "proper P.E. teacher" constitute] a type of masculinity

that became hegemonic' in education (Skelton, 1993). By reflecting upon this type of toxic

foundation in my own experience, I have begun to research and write about ways to

"unlearn" a fixed masculine identity while seeking out other male secondary school English

teachers who might comment upon their own experience of this idea.

2.3.4 Homophobia as a Heteronormative Regulator for Gender Identity and Performance

Some performances of masculinity in heteronormative cultures show that one is not a

dangerous 'other' and is therefore not to be considered a kind of cultural pathogen

(Halberstam, 1998). The essentialised expression of what it means to signal oneself as a

heterosexual male within heteronormative structures—and therefore not dangerous or

'other'—is central to my research. Furthermore, reflexivity of a subject—in the case of my

research, the researcher or the subjects I have interviewed—can combat or negate

performances of 'artificial, contrived' stereotypes rather than 'complex, real and normal'

performances' of gender (Wetherell & Edley, 1999, p. 346). Additionally, Warin (2010)

suggests that the researcher has a subjective, emotional involvement in all research, a

feminist perspective (p. 59). My research is situated here in the literature, at the gap in

gender performativity between traditional expressions of masculinity and a more progressive,

iterative, and flexible concept. I intend to explore this space in my braided autoethnographic

findings and in the discussion thereof.

2.3.5 Laddism in Students and Teachers

Gender performance can be considered a reaction to hegemonic tropes of masculinity, and this reaction can be sometimes identified as 'laddish behaviour' (Jackson, 2006). Teenage boys behave in 'laddish' ways for two essential reasons: to aspire to mythologised and unattainable expressions of hegemonic masculinity as well as to compensate for 'a fear of being regarded as insufficiently laddish,' or like a girl (p. 9). Although this is a description of male behaviour that is far removed from my current experience as a middle-aged, heterosexual secondary school teacher, Jackson's delineation of the essential choice of 'the lads' is still (troublingly) relevant to my research question.

My consideration of heterosexual male secondary school English teachers' performances of gender remains within a generalised cultural milieu that, for better or worse, valorises what is 'laddish' and eschews that which is 'insufficiently laddish.' Furthermore, Jackson relies upon a definition of hegemonic masculinity for how 'laddish' boys construct a gender identity: 'heterosexuality, strength and toughness, power, competitiveness, and subordination of gay men' (p. 10; in Frosh, et al., 2002). Because of the heteronormative, hegemonically masculine culture in which I exist, all of these essentialised, hyper-masculine qualities for the performance of gender identity are still at play for me as I decide—each day, each hour, each minute—how I will present myself.

Jackson argues later in her book that teachers should not allow boys to 'downgrade activities and topics gendered as "feminine"' (p. 128). [removed inaccurate reference to Jackson] For

the male secondary school English teacher to help the 'lads and ladettes' of Jackson's study,

he must construct safe, caring, relational methods of connecting with students. In a previous

section of this literature review, the consideration of an Ethic of Care (Gilligan, 1982;

Noddings, 1984) comments upon why this kind of teacher-student connection requires the

teacher to perform gender in a way that does not subscribe to the hegemonically-masculine

ideals and norms of "lad culture."

2.3.6 Conclusion of Part 2 of Literature Review

In Part Two, I considered the literature surrounding the concept of gender as identity and

performance. The presentation of gender and identity (2002/1990) of male heterosexual

secondary school English teachers is central to my consideration of the concept. Our refusal

to defend the patriarchal structures which privilege and empower us while disempowering

women (Connell, 1991) is also key. By identifying and naming tropes of toxic masculinity in

education (Skelton, 1993) made inconspicuous and unmarked by heteronormative cultural

frameworks, I can work to mitigate homophobia and laddism (Jackson, 2006) via real and

contextually-relevant presentations of gender (Warin, 2010; Wetherell & Edley, 1999).

In Part Three, I will consider how hegemonic masculinity and the presentation of gender are

relevant to Queer educational theory and why this theory informs my research question. In

particular, Queer educational theory problematises heteronormative, tacit expressions of gender in education.

2.4 Part 3: Queer Theory in Education

2.4.1 Problematising Essentialism

Queer theorists problematise male performances of a tacit, unquestioned, essentialised masculine identity. Queer theorists trouble acceptable cultural performances of gender within "safe" heteronormative boundaries as well as the taboos which delimit these boundaries. Queer theorists argue for ways to '"see" gender beyond the body' and endeavour to consider gender 'as distinct from the sexed body' (Francis, 2010, pp. 477-478). Also, Queer theorists are critical of the 'homophobia (not to mention heterosexism) [that] is especially intense in the field of education, a highly conservative and often reactionary field' (Pinar, 1998, p.2). Queer theory can illuminate ways male secondary school English teachers could further consider and make purposeful their expressions of gender identity and performance.

2.4.2. Troubling Binary Expressions of Gender

Queer theory troubles rigid, binary gender roles. Francis (2012), for example, couches gender in terms first expressed in Mikhail Bakhtin's work regarding language. She argues that Bakhtin's linguistic concepts of monoglossia and heteroglossia relate also to gender, 'elaborating how the monoglossic, binary account of gender operates to mask and pathologise heteroglossia' while also affirming that heteroglossic 'disturbances' of gender are inescapable and should be 'celebrated' (p. 1). Jackson (1990) employs autobiography to illuminate his own troubled relationship to masculinity, a relationship that has emerged in a 'gender-blind and a power-blind world' (p. 4). Jackson's research seems to be a kind of Oedipal exercise in self-discovery, a journey that allows him 'to activate a process of critical reflection on the mouldering patterns of behaviour and entrenched assumptions associated with conventional masculinity' (p. 14). Jackson's inward journey of discovery for understanding through critical reflection is similar to the braided autoethnographic research methodology I will use; I am exploring my own and others' 'entrenched assumptions associated with conventional masculinity' and how they affect the landscape of the secondary school English classroom.

2.4.3 Problematising the Heterosexual Male Teacher Role Model

Martino's (2008) criticism of the popular demand for more male role models in elementary school classrooms foregrounds the problematising of heteronormativity and homophobia that are central to Queer theory. The concept of Martino's research, while it focuses on elementary school classrooms, is also relevant to the secondary school English classroom and

the heteronormative bounds in which it exists. Martino writes that the call for male [heterosexual] role models as teachers 'is reflected more broadly in the culture where fears of emasculation continue to be signified through what has been termed in North America as "the age of the wuss" (Gillis, 2005), resulting in the "pussification of the western male" (duToit, 2003)' (2008, p. 190). The yoking of pedagogy with the need for becoming a heteronormative male role model is an attempt at a kind of re-masculinisation of the profession, to make it safe for men to be masculine in a space that is seen as conducive to women's work (Martino, 2008, p. 192). The offensive and homophobic language in Gillis and du Toit to which Martino refers is deeply embedded in the misogynistic stance of heteronormative, patriarchal cultures which include schools and classrooms like my own (see Skelton, 1993).

2.4.4 Female Masculinity

Female constructions of masculinity are also important to consider within Queer theory and are relevant to my research. Jack Halberstam (1998) considers female masculinity and expression as 'masculinity without men.' Female masculinity, Halberstam argues, remains in kind of liminal state because it is occluded by 'the complex social structure that wed masculinity to maleness and to power and domination' (p. 2). Halberstam's consideration of social complexities regarding masculinity is important for my research. As I mentioned earlier regarding the historical stigmatising of what is 'female,' a male teacher's inculcation of

what it means to be masculine—as distinct from the sexed body—should be questioned

critically in the way Halberstam describes.

2.4.5 The Transgressive Space of the Classroom

Queer theorists posit a kind of hope for what could be realised in the transgressive space of

the classroom, where identities of teachers represent 'a site of permanent becoming' (Jagose,

1997, p. 131, as cited in Harris and Gray, 2014, p. 3). We can excavate embedded forces of

hegemonic masculinity and perhaps recast them towards a recognition of non-traditional,

homosexual, or feminine expressions of masculinity (Harris and Gray, 2014, p.3). The

literature of Queer theory helps to define my identity as a researcher: I inhabit this space as

an interloper, a straight male who wants to promote LGBTQ rights and identities, identities

that do not align with heteronormative ideals. As a male, heterosexual secondary school

English teacher, I can access the transgressive space of the classroom where I can construct

and perform gender identity that diverges from heteronormative identities for men like me.

Here, I can trouble the hegemonic narrative of the straight, white, heterosexual male with

Queer educational theory as I plan and deliver lessons.

2.4.6 Teaching as a Socially-Just, White, Heterosexual Male: A Complicated Political Position

Queer theory in education suggests that although I am heterosexual person, I can be a Queer scholar in that I live the truth of 'identity, subjectivity, and criticality' (Harris & Gray, 2014, p. 9). I am agentic in subjectivising my identity as a heterosexual man who champions queerness as a non-sexual way of being but rather as a way to consistently question socially-accepted, normative, objective, positivist narratives and, in turn, value subjective experience. I intentionally "Queer myself in the classroom" to live the truth of Mayo's concept of 'interrelationality' (Harris & Gray, 2014, p.9). This type of discourse is practically absent in my experience of neoliberalised and heteronormative educational contexts; rarely—if ever— is hegemonic masculinity or heteronormativity troubled in any curricular or pedagogical regard. I cannot remember a single instance in a quarter-century of teaching when I have been questioned about my gender identity or performance of heteronormative ideals. And so, my choice to queer dominant cultural narratives in my secondary school English classroom is political.

2.4.7 Lacking Engagement with Hegemonic Heterosexuality

Queer teachers can lack 'critical engagement with (hegemonic) heterosexuality' (Rodriguez, 2007, p. 6). My research suggests that heterosexual teachers also lack critical engagement with "hegemonic heterosexuality" because of our privileged positionality. We heterosexual male secondary school English teachers must be agentic to trouble these dominant discourses of heteronormativity so that teaching can become a political act. Just as we heterosexual male

teachers should question our tacit power within social structures and orders, we should also carefully consider how we construct and present our gender identity to students in the classroom so that the space is inclusive.

Ferfolja (2014) considers and then recasts Foucault's concept of a disciplinary and normative surveillance of what is valued by society in this regard: 'schools . . . remain overwhelmingly heteronormative organisations where . . . queer subjects remain under surveillance and subjugated by regulatory technologies' and heterosexual subjects can remain unmarked' (p. 30). When I position myself politically as a heterosexual male English teacher championing Queer ideas, behaviours, and identities—marking myself, in a sense—I can attempt to answer important questions such as, 'What [is the] best way to trouble the gender categories that support gender hierarchy and compulsory heterosexuality?' (Butler, 2002, p. xxviii). In my classroom, and in the name of social justice, I can choose to become marked while knowing that I am surveilled by the system designed and maintained by people like me.

2.4.8 The Secondary School Classroom as a Gendered Space

Despite comprising only a quarter of the American teaching workforce over the last thirty years (Digest of Education Statistics, 2015-2016), male educators have traditionally dominated secondary school education's decision-making roles (Superville, 2016). If we consider not only males but males who are white and heterosexual, that privileged path to

power in education was even more entrenched systemically (McIntosh, 1988; Ryder, 1991).

Their displacement from a majority of those roles (Hansen & Quintero, 2018; Hill, Ottem, &

DeRoche, 2016, p. 5) has been perhaps catalysed by an increasingly-critical consideration in

recent decades of political, economic, and social systems geared towards the maintenance

of male privilege and power. Fortunately, men and women now share power in many

Western secondary schools. For example, in school year 1987-88, 25% of U.S. public school

principals were female; in 2011-12, the percentage had risen to 52% (Hill, Ottem, &

DeRoche, 2016, p. 5). Also, women and men in U.S. public school education earn

commensurate salaries for the jobs they perform (Hansen & Quintero, 2018).

2.4.9 Femininity and Teaching Secondary School English

Furthermore, secondary school English classrooms within this larger gendered space of

school are 'not monolithic entitles but shifting amalgamations of subgroups and traditions'

and can 'change boundaries and priorities' (Goodson, 1983, p. 7). Commenting on the nature

of power, Paechter (2000) suggests that whatever is powerful and worth knowing has been

gendered male and has been prioritised (p. 27). Mathematics and science give this illusion

and suggest a kind of omnipotence by those who know their ideas (Walkerdine, 1988, p. 207,

as cited in Paechter, 2000, p. 27); these powerful forms of knowledge rely upon a

decontextualization of the self (Paechter, 2000). Men and women who 'know' mathematics

and science must 'relinquish the personalised, contextual aspect of the self' and that 'for

women and girls to become involved with such disciplines, to engage with them successfully,

requires a denial of femininity, of part of one's (albeit socially constructed) identity'

(Paechter, 2000, p. 28). This is a similar kind of denial implicit in the career choice of male

heterosexual English teachers: we embrace a culturally-constructed femininity as a part of

our constructed identity.

2.4.10 Conclusion of Part 3

In a sense, we male heterosexual secondary school English teachers are identifying as Queer-

in-the-classroom: we eschew traditional heteronormative, gendered concepts of career

success which are rooted in power. This connects to not only my research question but also

to my anti-foundational ontological impetus for this research, one which is expressed in

relativistic epistemological worldview. We construct our gendered identities in the

classroom based upon the needs of our students rather than upon the needs of a

heteronormative society that prioritises masculinity. We find meaning through our careers

by embracing that which is not culturally normative. Our subject status as a traditionally-

feminine realm within a traditionally-feminine profession can perhaps complicate our

choices regarding how we construct and present gender to our students; I argue that this

decision allows us to be 'queer in the classroom.' Because we are relentlessly associated with

our gendered bodies in the context of the English classroom, we must negotiate and re-

negotiate again—perhaps daily, perhaps hourly, perhaps with every single interaction we have—how we construct, present, and reflect masculinity. My research is located here.

2.5 Conclusion of Literature Review

Within these literatures, I have focussed on ideas regarding masculinity studies, gender, and education. Furthermore, I have divided this review into a consideration of the concepts of hegemonic masculinity within masculinity studies, gender identity and performance within gender studies, and Queer theory within educational studies. Within each of these specific areas of the review of literature, I have highlighted major theorists and concepts, intending to delimit what has been researched about and what is relevant to my research question.

In conclusion, by reviewing literatures relevant to my research question, I have drawn boundaries around it in three ways. One is that within a heteronormative culture of hegemonic masculinity, heterosexual male secondary school English teachers construct gender identity in the classroom. A second is that the secondary school English classroom can be a transgressive and political space for the presentation of a teacher's gender identity. A third is that, as a secondary school English teacher, I can trouble traditional, essentialised narratives of masculinity by my choices of how I present gender, and this presentation is informed by Queer theory in education.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

I will divide this chapter into five parts. Part 1 will consider the ontological and

epistemological foundations for choosing an autoethnographic methodological approach.

Part 2 will introduce my readers to analytic (Anderson, 2006) and evocative (Bochner &

Ellis, 2016) autoethnographic methodologies as well as their convergence within a braided

autoethnographic methodology. Part 3 will describe the method—writing-as-method—that I

will employ in my research. Part 4 will describe theoretical underpinnings of my choice of

methodology and method. Part 5 will describe how I selected the participants for this study.

3.2 Part 1: Foundations

3.2.1 Definition of Autoethnography

Autoethnography 'is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and

systematically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural

experience (ethno)' (Ellis, 2003; Holman Jones, 2005; qtd. in Ellis et al., 2011). This

etymological deconstruction provides a helpful introduction for my argument regarding

autoethnography as a methodology for my research: I want to describe and systematically

analyse my experience as a heterosexual male secondary school English teacher to further

understand and then describe how I perform gender identity in a secondary school

classroom.

Moreover, I want to research how my experience in heteronormative, hegemonically-

masculine culture influences how I signify heterosexual and "safe" within my classes while

paradoxically allowing me to perform masculinity in non-traditional, feminine, or queer

ways: because I am "safe," I can trouble gender norms without being considered pathogenic

as is evidenced in the literature of Queer educational theorists (Francis, 2012; Halberstam,

1998; Martino, 2008; Pinar, 1998). I will rely on parts of my own experience and how I can

describe its influence upon my presentation of my own gender identity as a male English

teacher. By writing in an autoethnographic tradition, I intend for this thesis to be a political,

socially-just, and socially-conscious act (Adams & Holman Jones, 2008). It will serve as a

narrative which does not promote 'the objectivity of laws and theories' (Rorty, 1982, p. 195;

in Bochner & Ellis, 2016, p.49). Rather, it will be developed with a methodology designed to

'move audiences emotionally in order to engage questions of identity, diversity, racism,

sexism, injustice, and human suffering' (Bochner & Ellis, 2016, p. 61). My application of this

methodology will help me engage an audience regarding these ideas.

3.2.2 The Liminality of Autoethnography

Autoethnography 'diverges radically from the analytic, third-person spectator voice of traditional social science prose' (Bochner & Ellis, 2016, pp. 81-82) and exists as an 'avant-garde method of qualitative inquiry that has captured the attention of an ever-increasing number of scholars from a variety of disciplines' (Stahlke Wall, 2016). It is a flexible and democratically-oriented methodology that can 'simultaneously deprivilege our academic inquiry while serving to help recover ideas and practices' from marginalised points of view (Rose, 1990).

Also, the methodology is something of a pariah even within the qualitative sociological tradition, criticized for its capability to produce 'self-indulgent, narcissistic, introspective' work (Stalhke Wall, 2016). This liminality and contestability of the methodology (Denzin, 2017, p.2)—in its current form—is what draws me to it: my qualitative research question is not designed to find objective truth, nor is it one that can be essentially validated from others' experience. Autoethnography-as-methodology frames my attempt to explore how and why I present gender in the classroom while allowing me to utilise any data I collect through research to continue to deconstruct-through-story normative and culturally-hegemonic expressions of masculinity for heterosexual male secondary school English teachers.

3.2.3. Theoretical division within the methodology

Autoethnographic tradition has, in the last two decades, generally divided into camps of 'evocative' autoethnography (Bochner & Ellis, 2016; Ellis, 1997; Ellis et al., 2011) and 'analytic' autoethnography (Anderson, 2006). Anderson argues that idiographic, subjective, and evocative autoethnography has a different purpose from a nomothetic, analytical autoethnographer's gaze: the former focuses on narrative which can move readers emotionally while the latter is more responsible to academic tradition because 'analytic ethnographers must avoid self-absorbed digression. They are also constrained from self-absorption by the ethnographic imperative of the dialogic worlds they seek to understand' (2006, p. 385). Furthermore, Anderson recommends analytic autoethnography as a methodology for researchers who are 'troubled' by evocative autoethnographic emotionality and who want to reorient themselves towards a realist autoethnographic tradition (2006, p. 374).

In response, Bochner and Ellis (2016) suggest that analytical autoethnographers influenced by Anderson 'cling to traditional goals of generalization, distanced analysis, and theory building, directing their work mainly to other scholars' (pp. 62-63). The theoretical tension between these influential voices in the field has allowed for the development of an autoethnographic methodology that will allow me to more fully investigate my research question: braided autoethnography (Tedlock, 2013).

3.2.4 Coalescence of Disparate Methodological Theories

Tedlock (2013) describes a concept I will call 'braided autoethnography' as a way of remaining responsible as a social science researcher to a traditional institutional analytical framework while also justifying the methodological capability of telling one's own relevant stories: '[the] gaze' of an autoethnographic researcher who braids analytic and evocative methodological approaches 'turns inwards towards the self while maintaining the outward gaze and responsibility of autoethnography' (Tedlock, 2013, p. 358). As a career secondary-school English teacher, I am a complete member researcher, or CMR (Adler & Adler, 1987) of the community in which I research. As an analytical autoethnographer, I can interview others in my community and collect data regarding the phenomena of the presentation of gender and masculinity in the secondary school English classroom. However, as an evocative autoethnographer, I can also rely on my own interpretation of experience within the community—even treating the data I analytically collect from other community members in an opinionated or subjective way and as part of my narrative. I can engage in the analysis and shaping of human experience and vulnerability within a social group—heterosexual male secondary English teachers—of which I am a part. Later in this chapter, I will return to the idea of the symbolic resonance of a braided autoethnographic framework for my research.

3.2.5 Application of Methodology to My Research

I will write about my experience regarding my presentation of gender and masculinity as a teacher; this kind of focus on key moments is in the evocative autoethnographic tradition (Bochner & Ellis, 2016). I will also narratively present findings of semi-structured interviews with other male secondary school English teachers. The intention of including data from interviews with fellow male English teachers is not to tick a box for the institution's recommendation of how to write a PhD thesis; rather, it is to suggest that my research can 'fit productively in other traditions of social inquiry' (Anderson, 2006, p. 374) and perhaps be more useful to promote social justice. By employing a braided autoethnographic approach, and to continue the metaphor, I can weave my own voice within the voices of others, valuing subjective, relativist interpretation rather than objective, positivist data collection and presentation: 'Autoethnography cannot be judged by traditional positivist criteria. The goal is not to produce a standard social science article. The goal is to write performance texts in a way that moves others to ethical action' (Denzin, 2014).

3.2.6 Ontology

Ontological relativism. There is a great disparity between the ideological weight or size (or some other measure) of how an ontological position eventually produces a researcher's methodological choice, especially one as esoteric and obscure as 'braided autoethnography'; nevertheless, and however remotely, they are linked (Grix, 2004). I feel as if I am describing how the ethos of an entire continent influences a very small, remote, barely-habited village

in its hinterlands. Nevertheless, I have chosen to consider the remote village (if you will) of braided autoethnography as the methodological expression of my ontologically-relativist position as a researcher. Ontological relativism describes an understanding the fundamental nature of the world that, in the Kantian tradition, we experience through cognition rather than as it 'is' (O'Grady, 2002). Because of my ontological positioning, and because my methodological choice proceeds 'from an antecedent ontological [assumption]' (Hay, 2007, p. 118), I can effectively and ethically utilise braided autoethnography to explore 'the nature of the social and political world' (Hay, 2007, p. 117).

3.2.7 Feminist Research Positionality

A function of a social justice researcher's relativist ontological positioning is to foreground traditionally-obscured or marginalised voices via one's methodological choice. Feminist research methodology necessarily values what is subjective and relativist rather than what is objective and positivist, a 'point of rupture' from traditional and masculinised sociological interpretations of experience (Smith, 1987, p. 49) within which 'most aspects of positivism were antithetical to feminist principles and practice' of research (Stanley & Wise, 1993). This is because a positivist sociological research tradition developed by men occludes or even erases women's voices and experience (Gilligan, 1982). My motivation, then, in choosing a methodology is complex: I must choose a methodology that aligns ontologically with my relativist worldview and ethically with my position as a researcher for social justice. Also, I

am writing from a feminist perspective because I realise that hegemonically-masculine social structures allow a heterosexual male to disingenuously 'dodge among multiple meanings [of a subjective positioning] according to [our] interactional needs' (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 831).

 While I am not answering my research question from the position of a woman's experience, I am using a methodology that allows me to comment critically upon the sexist society of which I am a part and which I represent. Furthermore, I have chosen autoethnography-as-methodology to reject positivist, sexist sociological and interpretations of the world. I will, instead, rely upon the subjective truth of narrative and story to continue to promote social justice and to trouble traditional narratives about gender roles and the expressions of hegemonic masculinity in teaching, questioning 'the traditional logic of the heterosexual, narrative ethnographic text that reflexively positions the ethnographer's gender-neutral (or masculine) self within a realist story' (Denzin, 2017, p. 10).

3.2.8 Epistemology

Epistemological Anti-foundationalism. An ontological relativist, I also consider anti-foundational epistemological ideas characteristic of my experience. Foundationalism and its essentially realist, positivist implications for how we categorise and know truths, following Cartesian and Kantian philosophical traditions (Elgin, 1984, p. 423), do not align with

subjective, autoethnographic accounts of one's own experience: 'autoethnography cannot be judged by traditional positivist data' (Denzin, 2017, p. 3). The irreconcilability of one's subjective, relative experience with a transcendent absolute is the position of the epistemological anti-foundationalist; a researcher experiencing the world from this perspective is 'committed to the notion that there are no absolute truths, and no real certainty beyond the contextual frame that is generated by nonrational cultural forces' (Hammond, 2008, p. 29).

By devaluing the positivist and foundational narrative of the oppressor, a feminist researcher like myself cannot foreground another, oppressed community's 'superior knowledge,' because 'measuring suffering [is] much like calculating the number of angels on a pinhead, although considerably more ethically and politically objectionable' (Stanley & Wise, 1993, p. 227). As a result, braided autoethnography can be considered a viable methodological choice to explore my research question because of its essentially-idiographic characteristics and its capability for extension of ideas brought into focus with an ontologically-relativist lens.

3.2.9 Autoethnography-as-Postmodern Qualitative Research Tradition

A final comment in this section of the chapter regards the methodology of autoethnography in the postmodern, qualitative research tradition. Richardson (2000) suggests that postmodernism troubles an autoethnographer's traditional data collection and reporting

methods while 'free[ing] ethnographers to re-present their findings' in new ways (pp. 253-54). The methodology requires the researcher to include themselves as a member in the community they research. Inclusion rests on a kind of mutual recognition between researcher and community as well as an ability to interpret signs and maintain a self-reflexive stance (Anderson, 2006, p. 382; Hayano, 1979, p. 100). To complicate matters, there is no one generally-accepted style of reporting, analysing data for, or presenting data within autoethnography: a tension between the subjective and objective presentation of data is inherent to the methodology (Hayano, 1979, p. 102; Richardson, 2000, p. 254).

This tension is necessary because autoethnography 'acknowledges and accommodates subjectivity, emotionality, and the researcher's influence on researcher, rather than hiding from these matters or assuming they don't exist' (Ellis et al., 2010). As a qualitative research methodology that foregrounds and accommodates research for social justice, it eschews traditional sociological constructs which advocate a 'White, masculine, heterosexual, middle/upper-classed, Christian, able-bodied perspective' from which a researcher can invalidate other perspectives (Ellis et al., 2011). The methodology requires narratives of researchers who are part of voiceless or underrepresented communities to foster and catalyse social change (Hayano, 1979, p. 103). Furthermore, a contemporary autoethnographer must bridge metaphysical questions of being with stories of 'real flesh-and-blood people who have real-life experiences in the social world' (Denzin, 2014).

3.2.10 Conclusion of Part 1

In Part One of this chapter, I established the ontological and epistemic justifications of my methodological choice of autoethnography to explore my research question. In Part Two, I will revisit the work of four theorists, Carolyn Ellis, Arthur Bochner, Leon Anderson, and Barbara Tedlock, whose autoethnographic methodological frameworks influence my choice. More specifically, I will attempt to provide a more detailed analysis of how evocative autoethnography and analytic autoethnography combine to frame braided autoethnography and why it is a plausible methodological framework for my research question.

3.3. Part 2: Evocative, Analytic, and Braided Autoethnography

3.3.1 Evocative Autoethnography Definition and Description

Evocative autoethnography, a subgenre of autoethnography, is a methodology which extends from that definition, allowing for wide ranging application of its framework to an autoethnographer's research. A description of evocative autoethnography by Bochner and Ellis (2016) is helpful:

> [It] inhabits a space between science and art; between epistemology and ontology; between facts and meanings; between experience and language; between the highly-stylized conventions of fact-based reporting and the unfixed alternatives of literary, poetic, and dramatic exposition, between a cold and rational objectivity and a hot and

visceral emotionality; between a commitment to document the reality of what

actually happened and a desire to make readers feel that truth coursing through their

blood and guts (p. 66).

Admittedly, it's a lot for me to live up to as a researcher and writer; in fact, Bochner and Ellis

(2016) go as far as describing the methodology as 'not only . . . a method but . . . a way of life'

[italics mine] (p. 61). However, the methodology's flexibility and inherent transparency for

the researcher's subjective experience allow me to attempt to consider how and why I

experience the secondary school English classroom as a transgressive space for my own

presentation of gender and masculinity.

3.3.2 Trauma, Difference, and Social Justice within Evocative Autoethnography

Evocative autoethnography, 'a genre of doubt and uncertainty' (Bochner & Ellis, 2016, p. 94)

also allows an autoethnographer to surface and describe issues of trauma or difference.

Furthermore, it is a genre that relies upon selective, important experiences of the researcher

which serve as catalytic moments of insight into the autoethnographer's work. For these

reasons, it is a methodological choice that turns away from 'the realist ethnographic project'

(Denzin, 1996, p. 200) and can include the traumatic and unique (read: anti-foundational)

stories of 'more women, working class, ethnic and racial groups, gay, lesbian, transgender,

and third-world scholars' (Bochner & Ellis, 2016, p. 167; Couser, 1997) 'to show us how to

feel the sufferings of others' (Denzin, 1996, p. 201; qtd. in Bochner & Ellis, 2016, p. 53).

As an educated, middle-class, heterosexual white man, I am not represented in Denzin's list. Furthermore, I do not suggest that my experience of gender identity and its presentation in the secondary school English classroom is one that is wrought with the degree, level, scope (or perhaps another measure I am unaware of) of emotional trauma autoethnographers included in the previous list have possibly experienced in their lives. Nevertheless, I am an autoethnographer who is intentionally turning away from realist, objective representations of experience written in ethnographic research traditions created by white, heterosexual, privileged, educated men—men like me. Instead, I research for a particular kind of social justice: I hope that de-facto, unthinking, and rote presentations of gender by heterosexual men who are teachers might become less prevalent in secondary school education, and I would like to use my subjective narrative to challenge the power structures of gender identity and relations [in education] (Ferfolja, 2014 p. 95).

3.3.3 Criticism of Evocative Autoethnographic Methodology

A preponderance of criticism regarding the methodology of evocative autoethnography seems to revolve around these questions: "Does it seem true?" (Richardson, 2000, p. 254) or "Is it sociology?" (Anderson, 2006) or 'Is it [even] research?' (Tolich, 2010). More critical and even openly-hostile opinions and reactions online in the form of abusive tweets that are 'often gendered and misogynistic' towards autoethnographers as creative, non-traditional-

researchers are readily available (Campbell, 2017). The former are fair questions, of course,

given the considerable theoretical and philosophical distance between it and more-

traditional positivist, foundational sociological research methodology. However, I would like

to approach the research with this philosophical justification: it is not possible to give a 'true

account of an experience' via an 'empirically stable I' (Denzin, 2014; Rorty, 1989)? This

dislocation of 'I' is an ontological position which allows for narrative plasticity and a kind of

'epistemological doubt' within an evocative autoethnographer's work. Because it is therefore

not possible to give a true account of subjective experience, all narrative is a sort of fiction;

however, 'there are true . . . fictions . . . that are in accord with facts and facticities as they

are known and have been experienced' (Denzin, 2014).

3.3.4 The Strength of Subjectivity in Evocative Autoethnography

The subjectivity of truth and the inclusion of what is epistemologically doubtful within the

methodology stems from 'the crisis of representation' in the field of autoethnography

(Bochner & Ellis, 2016, p. 167); for evocative autoethnography to remain relevant to the

institution, inclusion of non-traditional stories told by non-traditional ethnographers in via

non-traditional methodologies (such as this) is an epistemologically-necessary

methodological tenet. Also, to buttress methodological relevance against such criticism, it is

important for an evocative autoethnographer to strive for 'truth or verisimilitude' through

narrative (Denzin, 2014). As I develop my narrative regarding how I and why I present

gender in the classroom, I will also strive to align with Denzin's 'facts and facticities' (2014). I

will attempt verisimilitude, humility, and a healthy criticality rather than fictional falsity,

facility, and solipsism so that my research can be taken seriously by the institution.

3.3.5 Analytic Autoethnography: Definitions and Uses

Analytic autoethnography is the second plait, if you will, of a braided autoethnographic

methodology. Analytic autoethnography was developed by Leon Anderson (2006) as a

critical response to the relativist, anti-foundational, and postmodernist frontier being staked

out in the name of evocative autoethnography by Carolyn Ellis and Arthur Bochner. In

addition to his criticism of Bochner and Ellis's work, Anderson (2006) is also critical of other

'symbolic interactionists' in the field such as Richardson (1994) and Denzin (1989, [1996]) (p.

374).

As I discussed earlier in the chapter, Anderson's concern is the emotionality and researcher

subjectivity of evocative autoethnography. Very specifically, Anderson is critical of the

methodology's 'unintended consequence of eclipsing other visions of what autoethnography

can be and of obscuring the ways in which it may fit productively into other traditions of

social inquiry' (2006, p. 374). Anderson's target audience includes researchers who do not

want to abandon a realist tradition in sociology, those who want other methods of qualitative

inquiry than what evocative autoethnography can offer, and those who are 'methodological

fence-sitters across a wide range of disciplines' and who might not have 'postmodern sensitivities' (2006, p. 374). He presents his methodological framework as a reorientation towards realism (2006, p. 374).

3.3.6 The Relevance of Analytic Autoethnography for my Research

Anderson's (2006) criticism is directed towards a methodology that, as I have argued thus far, fits my research question and purpose well. Nevertheless, I can understand the practical utility of analytic autoethnography. Also, I am an older PhD student—50 at the time of writing—and perhaps am not as completely experimental in my methodological approach as I might have been 24 years ago if I had taken professor Susan Linville's advice given to me in the late afternoon light on the sidewalk outside of her office and had, in fact, begun my PhD program on the heels of my master's degree in English. My hard-won sagacity (and, to a slightly-lesser degree, my receding hairline, moderate hearing loss, and dodgy lower back) suggest that the institution and audience for which and whom I am writing might take me more seriously as an researcher working towards a more socially-just educational landscape if I carefully deploy Anderson's methodology within my autoethnographic approach. More specifically, I can speak with other CMRs in semi-structured interviews regarding their experiences related to my research question. This can deepen my own awareness of my experience while also guarding against possible charges of solipsism and blinkered-thinking that can perhaps plague evocative autoethnographers when writing for the academy.

While I do not agree that autoethnographic research should be conducted from a realist's analytical perspective, I can nevertheless understand how my identity as an educated, white, heterosexual, middle class man writing feminist research on issues of gender and identity might give a reader pause regarding the authenticity, relevance, verisimilitude, applicability, and 'truth' of my singular voice. I can also understand (and, frankly, can even feel (Mason, 2018)) why the inclusion of perspectives of others in my field would strengthen my thesis.

Therefore, I turn to what I will call braided autoethnography.

3.3.7 Concept and Application of Braided Autoethnography

The confluence of evocative autoethnography and analytic autoethnography can be found in an esoteric but—for the purpose of my research—quite viable methodology, braided autoethnography. It is important to note here that I am possibly (though not at all confidently) describing this methodology for the first time. More specifically, and why I am tenuously making this claim: Tedlock (2013) does not explicitly use the term 'braided autoethnography' but rather describes the concept by using the gerund form of 'braid,' or 'braiding,' rather than the participial 'braided.' In that sense, Tedlock is nominalising the concept of braiding autoethnography as a thing to be done in the present tense by combining

two distinct strands of autoethnographic research methodology, whereas I am qualifying the

concept of autoethnography with the past participle braided as a way of thinking regarding a

predetermined, methodologically-strategic and identifiable confluence of two distinct

strands of autoethnography, a fixed methodological approach rather than a suggestion. It is a

very slight but nevertheless identifiable difference in terminology and application that

necessitates clarification here.

Braided autoethnography is similar to yet differs from established autoethnographic

approaches because of 'how much emphasis is placed on the study of others, the researcher's

self and interaction of others, traditional analysis, and the interview context, as well as on

power relationships' (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2010, para. 15). Established forms of and

approaches to autoethnography which are similar to braided autoethnography include

reflexive, dyadic interviews which 'focus on the interactively produced meanings and

emotional dynamics of the interview itself' (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2010, para. 18) as well

as *interactive interviews* which provide 'in-depth and intimate understanding of people's

experiences with emotionally charged and sensitive topics' (Ellis, Kiesinger & Tilmann-

Healy, 1997, p. 121, qtd. In Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2010, para. 21) in which 'researchers

and participants . . . probe together about issues that transpire, in conversation, about

particular topics' Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2010, para. 21).

However, braided autoethnography differs from dyadic interviews in that the braided autoethnographer should identify as a complete member-researcher, or CMR (Adler & Adler, 1987) of the group being studied (in this case, heterosexual male secondary school English teachers), one who relates to their subjects as 'status equals, dedicated to sharing in a common set of experiences, feelings and goals. As a result, CMRs come closest of all researchers to approximating the emotional stance of the people they study' (Adler & Adler, 1987, p. 68). Autoethnographers conducting reflexive, dyadic interviews can already be CMRs but are not encumbered in this way if they are not; in dyadic interviews, 'the researcher's experience is not the main focus' (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2010, para. 18), whereas in braided autoethnography, a researcher's experience is inextricable from the interview and is as important as the participant's story.

Also, braided autoethnography differs from interactive interviews. Interactive interviewing is a 'collaborative endeavor' which considers 'what can be learned from interaction within the interview setting' (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner, 2010, para. 21). Braided autoethnography is not purposefully collaborative, and data for writing the braided autoethnographic narrative emerges from a semi-structured interview framework. Braided autoethnography also differs from interactive interviewing in that is an iterative form of research which relies upon writing-as-method (Adams St. Pierre, 2018). A braided autoethnographer attempts to write something inventive, new, and iterative (Adams St. Pierre, 2018). In this regard, each braided autoethnographic text could be unique in form and structure because its artful writing is part

of the research that is produced; again, the production of reflexive, dyadic interviews or interactive interviews are not necessarily linked with writing-as-method in these ways.

Another formal way that braided autoethnography is separable from reflexive, dyadic interviews and from interactive interviews is in its intentionality to weave the narrative of the researcher within and around the narratives produced from interviews. These strands of the braid, if you will, should be distinct and identifiable—perhaps from text features, perhaps from font changes, perhaps in other ways—whereas produced texts from other methods of conducting autoethnographic research are not distinctive in this way.

Furthermore, I am not suggesting whatsoever that the concept of braided or braiding analytic with evocative autoethnography is my own thinking—it is Tedlock's, and it is her research that has informed me of the concept. Nevertheless, Tedlock does not clearly qualify autoethnography with the adjectival braided in the way that, for example, Anderson defines analytic autoethnography or that Bochner and Ellis define evocative autoethnography as a distinct and describable autoethnographic methodology. Stahlke Wall's (2016) methodological theory of 'moderate autoethnography' to a lesser degree informs my conception of braided autoethnography, but I do not agree with the term 'moderate.' It seems to be euphemistic for 'realist' to me, which is not the concept of autoethnography I have chosen to employ for reasons I have previously described in this chapter.

Braided autoethnography-as-methodology allows for my research question to be explored and the research presented in a way that, 'by writing and performing vulnerably from the heart with passion and analytic accuracy, [it allows for the autoethnographer to] emerge from a flat, soulless representation of social worlds outside the self into sensuous, evocative research that encourages and supports both personal development and social justice within the world' (Tedlock 2013, p. 362) This is how Tedlock suggests that evocative and analytic autoethnography can be 'braided.' Key here is the somewhat-buried phrase 'and analytic accuracy' to describe how an autoethnographer can write and perform vulnerably—yet analytically—from the heart.

I am also reminded of the body of experimental literature often called 'creative nonfiction' (Singer & Walker, 2013) that braids truth and fiction. While I will not fully chart and present this genre as further ballast for the ship of my methodological choice, I nevertheless intend to present my research as a hybrid of analytic truth and autobiographical fiction which 'infuses wild energy into familiar forms. The hybrid is transgressive, polyvalent, queer, [challenging] categories and assumptions, exposing the underlying conventions of representation that often seem so "natural" we hardly notice them at all' (Singer & Walker, 2013, p. 4).

3.3.8 Development of Braided Autoethnography

Tedlock's methodological conception is not a recent development in her work. Thirty years ago, she argued for a hybrid of the emerging theoretical camps of ethnographer-as- 'coolly-dispassionate observer of the lives of others' and ethnographer-as-'emotionally-engaged participant' (1991, p. 69). She suggested that this still-unnamed hybrid form could present a new option for what was a 'choice between writing an ethnographic memoir centering in the Self or a standard monograph centering on the Other' (1991, p. 69). Ethnographers, she argued, could present these forms together in a 'single narrative ethnography, focused on the character and the process of the ethnographic dialogue' (1991, p. 69).

A decade later, Tedlock writes a critical response to the emergent evocative autoethnographic approach, suggesting that an overreliance upon one's subjective story of field experience might not be 'responsible enough' for academic purposes. She refers to this methodological turn towards evocative autoethnography as 'the Achilles heel of much of the "new ethnography,"' and argues instead for 'the explicit building of an intersubjective, or interobjective if you prefer, dialogical world as the basis for social scientific ethnography' (Tedlock, 2000, p. 204). Tedlock's positioning of the autoethnographer between subjectivity and objectivity—braiding the evocative with the analytic—is key for why I have chosen this methodology and how it facilitates the exploration of my research question.

3.3.9 Meta-resonance of the Ethos of Braided Autoethnography Within My Research

It is important to note here that these descriptions of braided autoethnographic methodology resonate within the field and subject of my research. It is as if Singer and Walker's (2013) description of creative nonfiction—a "sibling" of braided autoethnography, surely—also describes my presence in the classroom (and I will pull keywords from Singer and Walker's (2013) description and use them in scare quotes as modifiers within my comparison here): the transgressive space of the secondary English classroom allows me to present my gender in a way that is "polyvalent" and "queer" and which "challenges categories and assumptions" about the narrative of the heterosexual, white male in a culture shaped by hegemonic masculinity and heteronormative behaviour. Because I am considered "safe" within a heteronormative culture that prioritises masculinity, my non-hegemonic attitudes and behaviour are perhaps "hardly noticed." Also, and furthermore, the purpose of my research into one's presentation of gender and masculinity in the secondary English classroom also aligns with Tedlock's (2013) intentions for the use of braided autoethnography: personal development and the amelioration of issues which necessitate calls for social justice.

3.3.10 Conclusion of Part Two

In Part Two of this chapter, I described and contextualised the theoretical differences of evocative autoethnographic methodology and analytic autoethnographic methodology and the reasons for their combination into braided autoethnographic methodology, a methodology that applies well to the purposes for and the exploration of my research

question. The next section of this chapter, Part Three, will build on this discussion, focusing

on the method of my research.

Part 3: Writing-as-Method

3.4.1 Descriptions of Method

Writing is the method of presenting the research of braided autoethnography. It is a

challenging method. Bochner and Ellis (2016) suggest that evocative autoethnographic texts

appear in a variety of written forms, including 'short stories, poetry, fiction, novels,

photographic essays, personal essays, journals, fragmented and layered writing, and social

science prose' which can, by turns, rely upon 'concrete action, dialogue, emotion,

embodiment, spirituality, and self-consciousness' (p. 65). Anderson (2006), however,

advocates for a different style of writing to suit analytic autoethnography, one that 'includes

a broad set of data-transcending practices that are directed toward theoretical development,

refinement, and extension' (p. 387).

3.4.2 Writing for Different Methodological Purposes

As a result of these differences within the method, the braided autoethnographer must write

well academically and also in registers that do not reflect the academy, creating a 'layered

account . . . of the author's experience alongside data, abstract analysis, and relevant

literature' (Ellis et al., 2011). It insists upon the researcher's ability to write widely and well,

from diaries and journals to field notes and narratives to interviews and academic research

(Ellis, 1991). These are disparate methods of writing must be applied separately and in

various contexts to create the whole of braided autoethnography.

3.4.3 Writing as a "Post-Qualtiative" Research Method

Writing-as-autoethnographic-method differs from writing for the production of scientific,

positivist research. Like Yeats' inseparable dancer and dance (1933), the former style is

inseparable from the results of the research. The latter style, however, is a 'predictive' style

of writing (Guttorm et al., 2015, p. 16) that is a separable, identifiable conduit rather than a

method of research. The separable, identifiable way of presenting findings through writing

sanitised, scientific, positivist research has influenced the method of qualitative research over

the last 50 years. Currently, PhD students like myself conducting qualitative research

generally write within 'predictive' and scientific, positivist categories: we begin with a

research question, we describe a design for the study, we collect interviews and data, and

eventually finish a product and consider the meaning of it all (Guttorm et al., 2015, p.

16). To avoid this kind of predictability in qualitative research methodology, Adams St.

Pierre (2018) suggests a method couched in 'post qualitative inquiry' which relies upon

'writing as a method of inquiry' (p. 603). My research method is influenced by Adams St.

Pierre's work.

3.4.4 Writing-as-Method and Its Relevance for My Research

It is my intention to use 'writing as a method of inquiry' in the upcoming sections of my

thesis to attempt to avoid 'narrow methodologies [and structured expectations of writing]

that almost prevent us from doing something different' (Guttorm et al, 2015, p. 17). Post-

qualitative inquiry via the method of writing can apply to how I surface a necessarily self-

reflexive, critical autoethnographic narrative; by 'doing something different,' I can access and

use theory I have been 'reading, thinking, writing, and living with' to write about my

experience 'beyond the methodological enclosure' of autoethnography (Adams St. Pierre,

2018, p. 604). Of course, the freedom that writing-as-method offers is attractive, but it is also

risky for a graduate student writing his thesis. Nevertheless, I think that its institutional

unorthodoxy works well for the onto-epistemological and methodological underpinnings of

my research for the reasons I have described thus far in this chapter.

3.4.5 Writing-as-Method and Its Function Within the Methodology of Autoethnography

Process and Product. Writing-as-method is also entwined with methodology of

autoethnography: 'theory, writing, and ethnography are inseparable material practices'

(Denzin, 1996, p. xii). Regarding this inseparability, 'a researcher uses tenets of autobiography and ethnography to do and write autoethnography [as] both process and product' (Ellis et al., 2011). The exploration of our community of membership, our application of theory, and the surfacing of the reflexive and critical stance of the writer-as-subject create 'worlds . . . through the texts we write and perform about them' (Denzin, 1996, p. xiii). Additionally, writing-as-method allows the autoethnographer to write 'tiny moral tales' and 'stories' which 'record the agonies, pains, successes, and tragedies of human experience [and the] deeply-felt emotions of love, dignity, pride, honor, and respect' (Denzin, 1996, p. xiii). These stories, if written well, can be more accessible to a wider audience than one engaged with traditional academic research, 'a move that can make personal and social change possible for more people' (Ellis et al., 2011) because writing can make 'readers . . . feel something and . . . do something' (Bochner & Ellis, 2016, p. 58). I intend for my writing later in the thesis to function in this unpredictable and organic way.

3.4.6 Writing for Social Justice

Of course, not only autoethnographers comment upon the utility and power of writing-as-method to foreground previously-powerless or occluded voices. Other researchers, theorists, philosophers, and activists in the pursuit of social justice also comment upon the method's applicability for catalysing change through the use of language. For example, Paulo Freire's (2000/1970) concept of 'praxis' (p. 53), or critical reflection, suggests that writing or talking

in the spirit of praxis is the root of liberation for oppressed people, catalysing the turn from

the infamous 'banking education' of the oppressor to the pedagogical methods of inquiry

rooted in dialogue which empower the oppressed (pp. 72-75). Frantz Fanon (2008/1952)

argues that a colonizer's language is a permanent message of inferiority to the colonized: 'The

[Black] Antillean who wants to be white will succeed, since he will have adopted the

cultural tool of language' (p. 22). Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) argues that writing in the

language of the oppressor leaves one with 'no chance of advancing African literature or

culture' (p. 24). Jo Warin (2011) suggests that writing objectively is inauthentic for feminist

research purposes and that it is 'a way of writing the personal and subjective out of the

research process' (p. 810). As a researcher for social justice, I intend to alleviate suffering of

human beings by exposing social injustices through the method of writing.

3.4.7 Conclusion of Part 3

In Part Three of this chapter, I have argued for the relevance of writing-as-method for

braided autoethnography. I have shown how the iterative and flexible qualities of the

method allow for the researcher to write subjectively and in unpredictable ways. I have also

described how writing-as-method is relevant for autoethnographers like myself who are

working progressively towards social justice.

In Part Four, I will consider the relevance of braided autoethnographic methodology and writing-as-method with the lenses of feminist theory, gender theory, and Queer theory. While this commentary will be relatively brief because it is restricted only to the concept of the applicability of very broad theories to a methodology and method, I will eventually recast concepts from these three theories upon my braided autoethnography in the discussion chapter of this thesis.

3.5 Part 4: Theoretical Applications to Braided Autoethnography and Writing-as-Method

3.5.1 Feminist Theory and Application

As I have mentioned earlier in this chapter, a feminist researcher realises that 'most aspects of positivism [are] antithetical to feminist principles and practice' of research (Stanley & Wise, 1993) because of 'the repeated exclusion of women from the critical theory-building studies' (Gilligan, 2003/1982, p. 1). Androcentric positivist and objectivist research in the social sciences such as Kohlberg's influential theory of the stages of moral development (1981) occluded, distorted, negated, and pathologised women's experience, because "legitimate" research only emerged from an academic male's fixed position rooted in hegemonically-masculine and heteronormative cultural advantage. To begin to dismantle that structure, feminist researchers had to—and continue to—rely upon story and its subjective truth revealed through 'different voices and the dialogues to which they give rise,

in the way we listen to ourselves and to others, in the stories we tell about our lives'

(Gilligan, 2003/1982, p. 2).

3.5.2 Feminist Theory and the Relocation of Male Voices

We feminist researchers (and I humbly include myself here) continue to implicitly criticise

positivist sociological research frameworks which once acted as a gatekeeper against female

voices incapable of 'uttering the appropriate passwords' for validation in the literature

(Noddings, 1984/2013). By conducting braided autoethnographic research reliant upon

writing-as-method, I can emphasise the power of my voice for the amelioration of social

justice while paradoxically but intentionally dislocating and disempowering my voice as a

heterosexual man. In other words, I can work to criticise my own sense of 'privileged

irresponsibility' (Tronto, 1993, p. 121) and critically question the 'patriarchal dividend'

(Connell, 1995, p. 79; Lingard & Douglas, 1999, p. 50) of that privilege in order to 'perform a

labour of symbolic destruction and [consequent] construction' (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 123).

3.5.3 Gender Theory and Application

Butler (2006/1990) asks an important question that can be explored via braided

autoethnography: 'What happens to the subject and to the stability of gender categories

when the epistemic regime of presumptive heterosexuality is unmasked?' (p. 31). Men in a

hegemonically-masculinised 'regime' can choose when and when not to 'mask' implicit power of a social arrangement which is dependent upon the subordination of voices unlike their own. Heterosexual men like myself can claim or reject context to maintain our dominance: '"masculinity" represents not a certain type of man but, rather a way that men position themselves through discursive practices' (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 831) because 'gender is always relational' (Nascimento & Connell, 2017, p. 3978). The privileged positionality and relationship of masculinity is wrought with a disingenuous version of self that is 'socially sanctioned' and can be imagined as 'full, complete, describable, as coincident with an image, as a fictional unity' when, in fact, it is subjective and 'restless, incomplete, and distributed' in nature (Wetherell & Edley, 1999, p. 342).

3.5.4 Gender Theory and "Identity Work"

If a revised consideration of one's presentation of gender via a post-structural methodology such as braided autoethnography and its method of writing can trouble dominant narratives, I can also begin to engage in what Whitehead (1999) refers to as 'identity work' to dismantle normative frameworks of power in the discourse of masculinity (p. 60). This kind of identity work can allow for a 'close scrutiny of the everyday detailed practices of teaching' (Warin & Gannerud, 2014, p. 198), practices which are influenced by my presentation of gender and masculinity in the secondary school English classroom.

3.5.5 Queer Theory and Application

The methodology of braided autoethnography as well as writing-as-method allow me to foreground Queer educational theory in my research. Queer theory disrupts 'sex and gender identity boundaries' and deconstructs 'identity categories' (Gamson, 1995, p. 190). Furthermore, Queer theory in education supports the need for policy that reflects non-traditional gender identities (Martino, 2008). This policy can describe and recommend the dislocation of gender from sex so that educators can intentionally 'untether gender categories from physical bodies' in school (Haywood & Mac an Ghaill, 2012, p. 577).

3.5.6 Queer Theory and Recuperative Masculinity

Researchers working with Queer educational theory can also explore ways male teachers attempt to appear 'safe' within heteronormative educational settings where anything 'Queer' is pathologised through the practice of 'recuperative masculinity' (Martino, 2008, p. 191). Beneath the general expectation of male teachers to appear 'safely masculine' in the classroom are, of course, corrosive-yet-culturally-heteronormative boundaries. This is a complex situation: we are expected to be appropriately masculine while relating to others in a space that is very much considered ground for the 'women's work' of teaching (Harris & Gray, 2014; Martino, 2008, p. 192; Skelton, 1993).

3.5.7 Queer Theory and Its Resonance Within the Method of Evocative Autoethnography

While developing a methodology for evocative autoethnography, Bochner and Ellis (2016) recall that 'we knew about critical theory, had read Foucault (1970, 1982) and Butler (1990), and were strongly aligned with the cause of social justice for LGBT people. You could say that we were 'queering' social science' with the methodology' (p. 60). Bochner and Ellis (2016) also refer to the work of Holman Jones and Adams (2010), who consider autoethnography as a 'political, "queer" methodology useful for opening more ways of being in the world' (p. 61).

3.5.8 Queer Theory and Its Resonance Within the Method of Braided Autoethnography

Even more specifically and for the purposes of my research, a braided autoethnographic methodological approach can reveal voices of heterosexual men who teach secondary school English because 'the English classroom is an ideal site for introducing and dealing with narratives of gender variance and transgender phenomena' (Martino et al., 2012, p. 136). While Martino's comment is most likely directed towards curricular choices, I can also interpret his suggestion of a consideration of non-traditional stories of gender and masculinity, or 'alternative masculinities,' (Halberstam, 1998, p. 2) as applicable to my own experience as a heterosexual male teacher performing gender in the classroom.

3.5.9 Part 4: Conclusion

In Part Four of this chapter, I described ways in which three major theoretical considerations for my research—feminist theory, gender theory, and queer theory—influence my choice of methodology and method. These theoretical lenses will be reconsidered in the 'discussion' chapter of my thesis; however, it is relevant to link them here with braided autoethnography and writing-as-method to suggest a congruence of theory and practice. As I have argued, prominent theorists in each field highlight the importance of subjectivity-and-story, and subjectivity-and-story are fundamental for conducting braided autoethnographic research via writing-as-method.

3.6 Part Five: Selection of Participants for This Study

When I began to consider the identification and selection of participants for interviews, I wanted to find other male, secondary school English teachers who taught in private international schools in Singapore so that participants would be complete members of my field (Adler & Adler, 1987). In December 2019, I began researching seven private international schools' faculty directories for male secondary school English teachers based on names and, when available, photographs. I then began to contact prospective teachers and their department heads via email and phone. After receiving some responses, I selected participants to be interviewed and continued to follow up on other leads. Then, COVID-19

hit us all. Of course, this unforeseen and tectonic shift in our lives affected the plans for my

research.

Fortunately for me and to the credit of the subjects I had already selected between

December, 2019 and February, 2020, they stood by their commitments and agreed to be

interviewed over Zoom. I am still humbled that, as we began to worry about the safety of our

family and friends, as social freedoms in Singapore were curtailed, and as we shifted to online

instruction while our school campuses closed, the subjects still met with me over Zoom; I am

not sure I would have done the same if the situation were reversed. Because of this

experience, I learned something about the importance of commitments and staying true to

one's word.

I interviewed the subjects of my study using a framework of questions that I could manage

the interviews within. The three main areas of the question framework I used for each

interview were 1) to allow the subject to discuss his identity as an English teacher, 2) to

discuss his ideas about what it means to be a man and to be masculine in the world away

from school, and 3) to discuss how those perceptions of self overlapped in the classroom.

Also, when I asked the interview subjects questions, I wanted to explore a modernist,

dialogic relationship with them so that the friction of our differences was the focus of the

interview (Wegerif, 2008, p. 348). The selection of the participants in my study seems to

have allowed for this frictive, revelatory quality in interviews. Because we were heterosexual

male, secondary, private school English teachers in Singapore, quite specific similarities and differences regarding our concepts of gender and the presentation of our gender identities inside and outside of the classroom emerged, as one might understand and identify traits when comparing and contrasting styles within a narrow category.

3.7 Part Six: Research Ethics

I received ethical approval for my research from the Lancaster University ethics board before beginning my research, and before conducting my research interviews, all participants gave their consent for their interview data to be used anonymously in my research. I interviewed four white heterosexual male secondary school English teachers over Zoom calls. I had originally arranged to meet the teachers in-person and to conduct interviews on their school campuses, but we could not meet in this way because of the advent of COVID-19 and the closing of public spaces. Each interview lasted between one and two hours, and I interviewed one participant twice. Three participants were from one private international school, while one was from another private international school. None of the participants were from my school. Two of the participants are British, one is an Australian, and one is an American. Three of the participants are married, but one was not clear about his marital status. All of the men were between 30 and 50 years old and had been teaching secondary school English for more than 15 years. Although I did not ask, one could infer that each man was middle-

class based on professional status, his residence in Singapore as an expatriate, and his description of his education, his social life, and his tastes.

Before each interview, I explained that we would operate under the Chatham House rules: we could discuss the issues and ideas from our talks, but we could not refer to identities. I explained that I would be recording the interviews and would follow the ethical guidelines for my university regarding data storage and eventual deletion after 5 years. I also explained that each participant would be referred to in my research by a pseudonym. Again, all gave their consent to these terms.

Additionally, one of the participants is a friend, and there are myriad ethical issues to consider here. I'm still not entirely comfortable regarding the revelation in this thesis that he is a friend, since this will, of course, reveal his identity to him (if he should ever read this work). I write critically about him and his essentialised conflation of gender identity and sex and conclude that my research is for teachers like him who could and should reconsider their traditional, fixed ideas.

3.8 Part Seven: Selection and Analysis of Interview Data

Because I am a complete member-researcher (Adler & Adler, 1987) of the field I researched, I understood and could consider and then write about data in a rich, textured, and nuanced qualitative way. My goal for selection of each participant's data was to create a thread of the participant's answers in which I narrated my thinking as the participant spoke; my internal narrative was no more or no less important than the participant's. I included all participant comments which seemed to reveal or clarify 1) how the participant considered his own construction of masculine gender identity, 2) how he presented it in the world outside of school, and 3) how he presented it in the classroom.

There were also practical considerations for the selection of data. Because braided autoethnography is a new method of research and is iterative, I had to decide upon an artificial length for its sections (e.g. braids) so that it could proportionally fit into the word limit for the thesis as a whole. This consideration allowed me to focus clearly on the three foci listed previously, but it also forced me to cut sections from the interviews which I felt were not essential to answering the semi-structured interview questions. This was a challenging process of selection, but the choice usually became clear as I repeatedly listened to the interviews while transcribing them and then deciding when the participant was adding extra detail to a central theme or was perhaps speaking tangentially about an idea he had already established. The recursive nature of transcription was essential for me to select what was and was not essential for the purpose of my research question.

Additionally, my analysis of the interview data and of my own autoethnographic writing is a theory-led analysis. I reverted to the main theories I introduced in the literature review chapter (hegemonic masculinity, gender identity, secondary school pedagogy, queer educational theory, and writing-as-method) and applied them each as a lens for analysis of the data. These lenses are the sections of the 'Findings' chapter of my research.

3.9 Methodology Chapter Conclusion

I wrote this chapter with the intention of clarifying my choices of methodology and method for my research question and purpose: I will use writing-as-method within a braided autoethnographic methodology to consider how and why heterosexual male English teachers present gender in the classroom. This method and this methodology, I have argued, are germane to my position as an ontological relativist and an epistemological anti-foundationalist. Writing from a feminist researcher's subjective point of view and in unpredictable, non-traditional ways, I can develop an autobiographical narrative while also "braiding in" the narratives of other heterosexual secondary school male English teachers.

While the majority of this chapter focused on ontological and epistemological reasoning for my choice of methodology and method, I also connected theoretical underpinnings for my

choices which refer to concepts outlined in the introduction and literature review chapters

of my thesis. These feminist, gender, and Queer theoretical connections to the reasons for

my choice of methodology and method are also important for the upcoming discussion

chapter of this thesis. In the discussion chapter, I will use these theoretical and

methodological perspectives as lenses to review the purpose of my research: to improve

social justice by broadening a consideration of how heterosexual male teachers can choose to

present gender in the classroom.

Chapter 4: Findings/Braided Autoethnography

4.1 Introduction: Becoming Aware of Gender Identity and My Presentation of It in the Secondary School English Classroom.

Over the course of my 23-year career as a secondary school English teacher, I became more and more aware of a phenomenon in my life. I would perform traditionally-masculine behaviours when I was away from the classroom but would rarely perform them while I was teaching. Away from class, I "did" hetero male quite well, actually. I grilled meats with a kind of knowing sagacity, as if their perfect levels of doneness were my special, manly secret. I coached my children's sports teams, whistle around my neck and snazzy team shirt freshly laundered for each Saturday's matches. I drove our portly minivan aggressively in the anodyne suburban traffic while listening to '80's rock. I had a red toolbox full of tools I used to fix things badly around the house. Outings to expensive professional sporting events with mates were the highlights of my social calendar.

I also wore the suburban hetero white male uniform—knit polo shirt or plaid button-down, khaki pants or khaki cargo shorts with thick leather belt replete with brass buckle, and athletic shoes or boat shoes—that (rather loudly) announced 'hetero white guy' to the community. I signalled to the world what it would get from me, and my semaphore-like messaging allowed me to, perhaps ironically, continue a quite-camouflaged existence. It was

as if I was a daily photograph being ever-developed in society's chemical bath and could live my life without comment as long as I didn't move too much and blur the final image as it hung and dried.

My identity as a heterosexual guy is still, of course and even as I write, given constant, unbidden positive stimuli from the heteronormative world around me: I am an ever-salivating dog in a landscape of always-ringing bells. I see the heterosexual male's curated tastes, wants, and needs packaged, pitched, and then endlessly recirculated. Diversify your portfolio at ostentatiously-named and obviously-wealthy brokerage firm here! Buy this finely-crafted and ridiculously-expensive watch for your future generations (read: son)! Take this pill to keep an erection that should flag after four hours, maximum! Drink this patriotic and manly beer that your father probably drank! Watch the fourth iteration of an action movie franchise starring cartoon characters you are probably nostalgic about because they were on your lunch box when you were seven! Wear this stylish synthetic shirt/short combo when exercising that whisks sweat away from your armpits and crotch through hidden vents and secret layers of space-age fabrics used by astronauts in the International Space Station! Eat large steaks in this dimly-lit and brassy restaurant that also looks like the inside an oak-panelled private library! Layered carefully but very deliberately over all of the above (and more), of course, is the patina of heteronormative and homophobic sex, delivered in an infinite loop to the Pavlovian audience via the objectified, pornographic, gazed-upon female form. This omnipresent female image designed to hold the attention of the heterosexual male

audience is used as the prime gear to sell every product above. In Pavlovian terms, it is the

loudest bell of all.

After a weekend (or an evening or a holiday break-full) of coaching a team or going to a

stadium or grilling meat or becoming angry with other drivers or yelling at someone on the

phone or partially-fixing a clogged drain or talking with a neighbour for an hour about the

crazy weather we're having lately or 'that damn president,' I would go back to my classroom

on Monday morning and feel as if I was detaching myself or removing myself from a mould.

Entering my classroom, I felt as if this mould was lifted off of me and that I could be

someone else entirely at school. Not that I was necessarily expected to be someone else at

school, but that I wanted to be someone else. I wanted to drop the act of performative

masculinity and behave like the person I felt like, a man who did not necessarily align with

heteronormative cultural expectations. Someone who could be emotional and receptive and

spontaneous and even (gasp) unsure or flat-out wrong at times. Someone who thought

advertising was simply nefarious, profit-driven, heteronormative thought control, especially

for white, heterosexual men like me. Someone who abhorred violence. Someone who didn't

give a damn about discussing the weather or the president or anything else couched in terms

of small talk. Someone who disliked and was quite terrible at being "handy around the

house." Someone who enjoyed reading novels during the afternoon or watching obscure

independent films or going to an art museum rather than a game. I had to begin asking

myself: why did the man I seemed to be in class feel so different from the man I seemed to be

away from it?

Trying to answer this question is the catalyst for my research.

4.2 Organization of My Braided Autoethnography

Braided autoethnography is a nascent methodology of autoethnographic research, designed to allow both researcher and reader to make connections between the researcher's experience and the experiences of others who have membership in the field defined for the project.

I will braid the autoethnography into eight parts. Four parts will reflect my own experience, and four will consider the experiences of the teachers I have interviewed for my research. The parts regarding the men I have interviewed will be entitled 'Braiding It In' along with each subject's pseudonymous first name, and these sections will appear (by turns) after each part of my autoethnography. I have also italicised the text of the 'Braiding It In' sections to symbolically differentiate them from my own experience, which is important for a braided autoethnographic methodology.

Finally, I would like to remind the reader that the oblique resonance of each section with other sections is an intended effect of a braided autoethnography; like a modernist work, the

sections do not need to be considered in a linear manner, nor are the experiences of the

interview subjects intended to align with my own.

4.3 Braided Autoethnography

Part 1: UFC Sundays and The End of an Identity

I am at my friend's house on a Sunday. He invites four or five of us to come over and

watch UFC fights about once a month. UFC stands for Ultimate Fighting Championship, a

mixed-martial arts (MMA) event. It is violent, brutal, and bloody. Though it is not a common

occurrence, fighters have died in the infamous MMA 'octagon.' There is a two-meter-high

chain-link fence surrounding the eight-sided mat. The fighters, bare-chested, barefoot, and

with only the most minimal-looking gloves on their hands, are locked in the cage to fight.

They are allowed to hurt each other in any way possible—kicks, punches, elbows, shins,

fists—except for head butts, gouging the eyes with fingers, choking with hands, or attacks to

the genitals.

A fighter can only lose by being knocked out, by being hurt so badly that the referee

stops the fight, or by 'tapping out'—tapping the mat or the other fighter to signal 'stop'—

when put into a submission hold (read: they've been forced to submit because their air

supply has been cut off or their arm or leg is about to break by being bent in the wrong

direction). Between the rounds of each fight, a buxom young woman in a bikini and stilettos

struts around the octagon with a large card in her hand, showing the audience what round is

coming up. The mat she walks upon is splattered with blood and human fluids in a macabre,

Jackson-Pollock-meets-Emperor-Nero sort-of-way.

As we laze on the couches and gaze at the wall-sized television screen, we all look

similar. We are middle-aged, heterosexual white guys. Most of us have children. We wear

thick gold wedding rings. We're outfitted in tee shirts and loose-fitting athletic shorts and

actually resemble piles of clothing at a recycling store. All of us have beards or considerable

weekend stubble, and most of have some form of male pattern baldness. We smell like day

old deodorant's eventual surrender. Our conversations are monosyllabically

Neanderthalesque and are punctuated by low, surreptitious, gurgly laughter. We don't look

each other in the eye when we speak.

We are straight men watching televised, violent sports together. It is (by a long ways)

our most comfortable social setting.

We have each brought our version of "man food" to contribute to the "dude" potluck

that accompanies watching the UFC fights, and we eat like animals. Our plates are

mountainous with buffalo chicken wings; nachos with seasoned minced beef, melted cheese,

sour cream, guacamole, and jalapeños; sausages and peppers in thick buns with ketchup and

mustard; bowls of chili; piles of tortilla chips; flotillas of pickles; and lakes of ranch dressing.

Also, and as a polite nod to health, we each have a few carrot and celery sticks in a pious

little pile to the side. Everyone but me is drinking beer. A recovering alcoholic, I drink Coke

Light. I cannot help but count how many beers each guy has over the course of the

afternoon. My calculations tell me that the average is four per man. The elastic waistbands of

our athletic shorts are stretched tighter and tighter as the afternoon wears on.

After the main event, I would leave these get-togethers feeling practically comatose

with my overconsumption of food and unsure about why I had just spent four hours

watching people try to practically kill each other for sport while I ate like a pig. Also, I

didn't feel like I knew any of the men hanging out for the day any better than I did before I

arrived; rather, I had only spent more time with them and that that demonstration of stoical

fortitude was also a demonstration of my willingness to be their friend. In a white

heterosexual man's world like the one I inhabit, the emotionally-stunted nature of that

entire exercise is precisely how one shows one's capability for membership in the group.

And so, I would go back home on Sunday evening, connect with my family for a

while, go to bed, and then wake up on Monday morning to go to school and assume my

identity as a secondary school English teacher. After a few years of the UFC Sundays at my

friend's, I began to seriously question the moment on Monday morning, barely 12 hours after

I had been mainlining pork green chili with cheddar on top, screaming at the television

when a bloody knockout or bone-breaking submission hold would occur and bring a fighter

to the verge of death, when I would ask my students to pull out their notes on, say, the

poetry I had assigned for analysis over the weekend.

'OK, everyone. What did you think of Carol Ann Duffy's piece? Can we first talk about any images or symbols that seemed important to you as you read the poem?'

What in the hell was going on here?

In whose universe was watching hours of MMA as entertainment and eating belly-distending amounts of minced meat covered in cheese sauce at all compatible with poetry analysis?

Mine, apparently.

Something was seriously off. I began to think about my masculinity in a different way because of this dissonance. (Yes, dear reader. It's true. I have most likely been spurred to a PhD thesis by watching bloodsport with the boys and eating nachos.) Things started to become reversed for me: the classroom had been a place where I could behave in a different way than my "normal" self. However, I was beginning to feel that my "normal" self existed in the classroom and that my behaviour away from it was abnormal. The exchange of those constructed identities seemed to occur at the threshold of the classroom door.

It was as if I could perform masculinity in a very definite and culturally acceptable way when I was in the world as a heterosexual father, husband, son, brother, friend, and coach. But my performance of masculinity as a heterosexual teacher was something quite unlike that 'outside' performance: it was emotional, unpredictable, quiet, funny, dramatic, receptive, unsure. Queer. Radical. Feminist. Open. Honest. Organic. True. I would also not expect my performance of this kind of masculinity to be accepted at my friend's UFC Sunday get-togethers (and I am admittedly smirking as I write that). What would the lads say if I

talked about the exploitative nature of watching UFC, the combatants for which have almost certainly come from a life marked by poverty, abuse, and poor education? What if I wept rather than cheered when I saw a fighter being beaten senseless on the giant TV screen? What if I tried to have a conversation about how I was feeling in-the-moment? What if I asked one of the lads to tell me how he was feeling inside? What if I asked the lads to turn off the television between rounds because the woman in the skimpy bikini and high heels holding the placard while being filmed from rakish, gawking angles actually objectified and sexualised the female body for the hegemonically-masculine, unfettered male gaze? I'm fairly certain I know the answer for all of these instances: silence, then derisive laughter, and then perhaps an epithet sarcastically-hurled in my face.

Prior to the UFC Sundays, I had been watching sports like this with mates as far back as I can remember. And I can safely say that the above hypothetical would have the same result—silence, derisive laughter, and the punctuation of an insult—every single time. (Not practically every single time. Every single time.)

I stopped attending my friend's gatherings on Sundays after I identified this gap in my perception of myself and the (mis)construction and (mis)representation of my own masculinity in the world. My friend continued to invite me for a while, but I would tell him truthfully that I was going to spend some time with my family and that I couldn't make it this time around. Eventually, he stopped inviting me, and I haven't heard from him or any of the other MMA-and-nachos lads for any social get-togethers since.

For me, it was time for a reckoning. And so, I write.

Braiding It In: Mitchell

I felt a real camaraderie with Mitchell, a secondary school English teacher, from the first time we spoke. His gentleness and ability to reflect upon my questions seemed different than the other subjects I interviewed about this phenomenon. There was a seriousness and an openness about his ability to discuss perhaps challenging ideas in a way that the other subjects did not express. At times, I felt that I was talking with someone who was very much like me regarding the questions I asked him, particularly when he was talking about his gender and its expression in the world. A bit younger than me, Mitchell has been a secondary school English teacher for 15 years. He comes from a more stable background than I do; his father was a doctor and his mother was a nurse.

'I was always very influenced, then, by my mum growing up. . . . I guess I was always closer with my mum, which I think impacts on my sense of sensitivity.' He also described a childhood in which he read a lot and had a father [a doctor] who 'was always very calm, never aggressive, didn't drink a lot, but was very, very dominant. He was very caring towards his patients, but I think I get more from my mother than from my father.'

Mitchell describes his experience as a boy at school as one where he 'would be called "gay" and all that because I would talk to girls and was capable of that. I did write poetry at times, mainly privately, but I was very non-traditional masculine at the time. But

then I played sport and was quite athletic. I was tall for my age at the time. I grew ahead of people and I could operate in the world of sport if I needed to.'

Mitchell feels that, as a secondary school English teacher, the classroom isn't a space where he transforms at the door like I feel that I do, however: 'I would like to think that I generally am myself [in class]. I would still say things I would normally say; I would generally be myself. There are times when I joke around or prance around [in the classroom],' for example. Mitchell also says that his presentation of self is contextual: if he were out with friends, 'I think I'd switch to what's going on in that sort of all-male world.' I can relate to this very much.

'I think there's a difference in being a man and being masculine,' he says. 'I don't think I would do anything to try to perpetuate my masculinity. I've never been in a fight. I'm not an aggressive person. I have a deep, commanding voice, but I don't use that. I think ultimately we have to define masculinity. If we're talking from a basic biological p.o.v., there are things that happen because of testosterone coursing through our blood. I am masculine in many ways. But I do not seek out much those tropes of masculinity, I guess, in my relationships or friendships.'

When I ask Mitchell if he thinks a receptive kind of caring, or an Ethic of Care, is necessary for men to become good English teachers, he paused for a long time and then said in a deadpan voice, 'Yes,' and we both laughed, and I joked, 'Ok, then. Let's just move on,' and the laughter continued. But he qualified it and said 'I think it would be almost

impossible, right, to [do an English teacher's job and] explore character and motivation and deeper meanings related to the human experience without being able to put yourself in someone else's shoes. I think those are all necessary skills for any good teacher to have. I think that came from when I was younger with my relationship with my mother, and my friendships with girls, and when I did dance and drama and singing. I used to do a lot of art and so on. So I think I have creative thinking; you have to have creative thinking to look at the world in different ways.'

When discussing the influence of hegemonic masculinity and heteronormative cultural expectations on our teaching, I asked Mitchell if he felt that 'straight' was ok and that LGBTQ is 'different' in the world and that, paradoxically, it is different in the classroom. 'A bit,' he replied. 'Like I said, when I was younger, there was an "are you gay" kind of thing: I liked English, I could write well, and I did art. But I definitely don't feel it now. I guess there's an element of "I'm very typically male otherwise." I'm six foot four, and I'm [refers to his age] and really happy, often have a beard, I've got quite a strong, powerful voice. There's no campiness, I guess, to me. I guess I have those kind of masculine traits I've blocked out through no design of my own: it is what it is.'

Mitchell said that he finds other men who are 'heteronormative and [who are also] in touch with their feminine side' inspiring but that he doesn't 'really question it. It's not something I really ever consider or worry about. But maybe it's because I have a solid enough foundation to where I don't have anything to prove in terms of what kind of man

you are or whatever.' This made me feel unlucky, I suppose: I do not feel that I have a solid foundation at all. I always feel that I have something to prove.

We end by talking about how our students might perceive us as traditionally feminine or something other than masculine. 'I will often connect with the girls more than the guys, though I have strong relationships with the guys. The guys, I guess, because of my sense of humour: I can use light-hearted put-downs and things like that. I can do it for girls and the guys. I guess for the guys, it's kind of expected more, but I guess that's how I kind of build that relationship. With the girls, it takes time.'

Mitchell says that he's 'had comments from the girls where they expect one thing but they get something else: they often are a bit wary of me to begin with because of the beard and the height and being a man and so on, and they kind of are almost kind of intimidated because they expect me to be a certain way. And I can have a commanding, powerful voice or whatever. But once we kind of get past that, and I get to know them and they get to know me, and break down certain barriers, I think they realise a very, very different side of me, you know, the sensitive [side]. If they have the maturity to begin to unpack that, to look past the 'maleness,' then they see that other side and so on.'

Part 2: Present-Tense: Going to School

Another night of broken sleep. I can often carry my anxiety from the school day—

challenges with students, colleagues, administrators, or parents—into my dreams, and it

wakes me up around 2 a.m. I remove my horrifyingly-embarrassing sleep apnoea mask, get

out of bed while trying not to wake my wife, go to the living room, and lie on the couch. I

usually read on my phone for an hour and a half while wearing my blue-light-blocking

reading glasses and then go back to bed when I feel tired again. I've developed a few mental

meditations to help me fall back to sleep as I crawl back into bed, again trying not to awaken

Leigh. I have created my own all-time football starting 11, and I go through them one-by-

one. Peter Schmeichel in goal. Maldini at right back. Baresi and Beckenbauer at centre backs.

Roberto Carlos on the right, Maldini on the left. My midfield (right to left): Messi, Iniesta,

Dalgleish, and Cristiano Ronaldo. The two strikers are always Pelé and Ronaldo. Even

writing their names here makes me feel happy, calm, and sleepy. I imagine these footballing

gods somehow playing together, what their cohesion might look like, how various Ronaldo-

Pelé-Messi combinations might occur. Of course, I ready my counterargument for not

including Maradona in case anyone invades my dream-state to criticise his obvious-yet-

intentional omission. I'll never forgive him for the Hand of God goal in '86 or his cocaine-

addled performance at USA '94. In a few minutes, I'm dreaming again.

When I re-awaken with my alarm at 6:15, I feel like I've been on a long plane flight. I

shower, drag a razor over the stubble on my neck, and trim my beard with an electric

clipper. I check for and remove renegade nose or ear hair. I lean in and look at my face,

closely. Shockingly ugly, I think. Fifteen years ago, I used to feel differently and would

think, at times and if the lighting was right, 'Not too bad.' Not anymore, that's for sure. There are permanent, green-grey bags under my eyes. My forehead is riven with two major worry lines. A skin tag here, a mole with an uneven edge there (should I call a doctor?). My teeth are irrevocably stained from decades of black coffee. My eyebrows seem to be shrinking inwards from the sides, revealing a kind of bony outcrop. I have a horseshoe of hair around the sides of my head with a thinner expression of hair over the top: I'm not fully bald but not fully hirsute, either. A tonsorial middle ground. If I squint, I can see my grandfather Howard and his Navy machinist's crew-cut staring back at me. All I need are some thickly-framed glasses and a burled-wood pipe to complete Grandpa Howard's image. Because of a hunch, I recently checked Rembrandt's age when he painted his most famous and most unflattering self-portrait, and my hunch was right: in his withering, unvarnished perspective of himself, he was just about the same age that I am now. I understand Rembrandt's resigned, disgusted, slightly-aghast, and ultimately accepting gaze because I see it in my eyes every morning.

With two medium-pressure swipes in each hairy pit, I apply the same brand of deodorant I've been wearing since I hit puberty. My toothpaste is the basic, cheap kind I have been using for even longer than that. I brush my teeth more carefully now than I did a decade ago so that I don't inflame my gums and make them recede from my thoughtless attack upon them. I take my five daily pills—two square, salmon-coloured ones for chronic anxiety, one small, spaceship-like blood-orange-hued one for hypertension, and two bright Mykonos-villa-white discs for gout and wash them down with a glass of oily tap water from

the yellow porcelain cup I keep next to the sink. Medicated, fresh, and clean, I make my way

to my closet to decide what to wear.

My clothing choices are some of the most obvious ways I signal "straight" in a

heteronormative, hegemonically-masculine landscape, especially the one I'll inhabit at

school. I used to think I was fashionable, but I was only fitting into a predetermined look: I

wear the uniform of a straight, white, male. I have three styles of shirt that I wear to school:

polo, short-sleeved dress, and long-sleeved dress. The several polo shirts are blue or red, and

I have a rather-edgy one that is blue-and-red striped. The short-sleeved dress shirts are

patterned or plaid. The long sleeve dress shirts are blue or blue-and-white Oxford-striped.

My trousers are, sadly, stretch-to-fit and are constructed of a synthetic material that is light

and comfortable and make an embarrassing and slight whooshing noise as I walk. I think that

they are specifically made for men like me who do not want to worry about ironing and who

loathe wearing pants in general. My selection of trousers is completely khaki-hued, ranging

from your olive drabs through your regulation tans and browns to your standard greys. My

thick, durable leather belts are designed for ranchers or farmers or truck drivers. The belts

are all old, and the indentations in the leather around the holes betray the growth of my

waistline. Over the last three-and-a-half years as I've been sitting, reading, and writing for

my PhD work, I have stretched the belts even more and have begun to wear my shirts, when

acceptable, un-tucked. I wear the same basic style of shoes each day. I have four pairs. They

are brown moccasins with flat urethane soles; I have found that shoes with heels hurt my

lower back after an hour or so, so I have bought shoes with flat soles. I rotate the four pairs

and am surprisingly fastidious about this aspect of my wardrobe. You'll see me in the same

pair of shoes every fourth day, rain or shine.

After performing my toilet and dressing, I descend into the worst kind of 'straight

white male' mode: I feel the world must bend to my will, and yet so much . . . everything,

really . . . could go wrong. I feel pugilistic and raw, as out of control as I ever feel. Sweat

begins to appear in wet bands on my shirt at various contact points, especially around my

nipples and on the tops of and backs of my shoulders; if you simply painted the sweat

patterns of my shirt on a blank canvas, they would look not unlike airplane wings

(shoulders) with two round jet engines underneath (nipples). This aeronautically-inspired

sweat pattern infuriates me because I think I look so . . . stupid.

Of course—and like it is for all hetero white men the world over, I suppose—the

catalyst for my seethe is my obsession with leaving the house on time. To arrive slightly

early for anything is a kind of holy commandment delivered in its own gilded arc from our

insane god of control, and I get irrationally, ridiculously upset if we leave later than the

agreed-upon 7:05 a.m. Not 7:06, 7:05. Why can't we just be on time? Why is 7:06 or 7:07 or

the dreaded 7:09 even in the realm of possibility for the slackers I call my family? If reach the

7:10-7:12 range, I will actually leave our flat, insert myself alone into the car in the garage,

buckle myself forcefully into the driver's seat (note: the car is still turned off and I am alone),

close the driver's side door, and sit and act like I don't see anyone who gets in after me.

When all of the malingerers I call my family have finally managed to get in, I feel that

turning on the car, opening the gate, and turning out of our street is pointless because now

we are certain to be the worst of all things for straight, white, men: late. We. Will. Be. Late.

Possibly really late. And I will appear to be not in control of my realm. How could you? I

think, looking at my wife and my children. How could you possibly be seven minutes late for

leaving an environment in which you could have taken the time to arrange your things

properly the night before so that my morning is not ruined because we have not been able to

get in the car by 7:04:30? Ungrateful wretches, all of you. Words like 'divorce' and

'orphanage' bounce around my addled, unquiet brain.

　　　　I can lose my temper if we start the drive and are late but have to return home for a

forgotten assignment or special graphing calculator or sport bag or book containing the

dedicatedly-written homework notes or a physical education uniform or the specially-

packed lunch that must be eaten today because of its perishable contents. My expressions of

anger in these moments are not the same as my father's were, however. His anger on the

morning drive was outwardly threatening and portended the physical violence he could use

on the transgressor who broke his concentration; Dad never turned the car around for

anyone. 'Don't' make me pull over' or 'You're cruisin' for a bruisin', mister' he'd say to my

brother or me as he stared us down from the rear-view mirror and lit a Winston, his eyes

narrowing as the smoke formed twin jets out of his nostrils.

　　　　In contrast, my morning drive anger is like a fire that burns inwardly and renders me

mute after uttering an expletive-laden phrase (my involuntary expression is nearly always

'Oh, for fuck's sake!' but has been known to morph into the more direct 'Fucking hell!' or

even—if I'm tired, I suppose—just the workmanlike 'Fuck!') to the car in general. My wife

becomes appropriately frustrated with me because of my emotional infantilism, and this completely understandable and necessary—yet, admittedly, stinging—rebuke of my behaviour makes my inwardly-burning fire rage even more intensely. After returning home to retrieve whatever's been left and re-starting the journey to school, the BBC World Service on the car's radio becomes a kind of palliative, since nobody's speaking to anyone anymore and will not be for the rest of the twenty-minute drive. British accents from SW London describe banal economic forecasts for developing countries. I honestly try and follow the thread of how the price of millet has gone through the floor, how the IMF's prognostications will come true if they go unheeded, how millions of millet-dependent people could very well be affected adversely, especially if (insert looming, annual, destructive weather pattern here) occurs as expected. The white lines of the expressway, the dysfunctional, leaden silence I've caused in the car, the moons of sweat under my breasts, the BBC reporter's insanely-myopic and thorough reportage on millet shortages: I can hardly breathe.

We pull into the parking space in the underground garage at school. My wife is a middle school Social Studies teacher in the school; our daughter is a high school senior. The quality of our goodbyes reflects the severity of my tantrum about being on-time. If it's been a particularly stressful morning, no goodbyes happen; my wife and daughter escape from the toxic environment as soon as possible (with a slightly stronger-than-normal slam of the car doors, I always note). If it's been a relatively normal morning with only low-level insecure white heterosexual male stoicism and narcissism to deal with, then perfunctory goodbyes, pecks on the cheek, and even an 'I love you' will occur. On the rare mornings where Dad is

singing and feels that anything is ok with him—Leigh can drive, we could forget something

and it's no big deal, we even laugh and joke with each other—then it's actually a hug and a

meaningful word or two before going our separate ways. But these mornings are extremely

rare. When they do happen, however, it is as if I am able to drop the act of being in control

and trying to make the world fit into my vision of it and can accept other realities than my

own. I don't feel like a chump for not being the one to manage the situation, and if I am a bit

late to a meeting, that's ok. I'm not perfect, I'll think.

Much of what I have expressed towards my family during these desultory morning

drives, I have begun to realise, faintly-but-nevertheless echoes the way my father behaved

towards me when I was a boy. Unlike me, however, my father was a violent and abusive

man; he expressed his self-justified anger quickly and without restraint with those who

disagreed with him or who upset him in some way. At 188 cm and 130kg, it was easy for him

to physically threaten and overpower my mother, my younger brother, and me when this

happened. And he would, regularly. Weekly. Daily. My childhood is punctuated by the

timbre of his angry, resonant, indignant voice, the feel of his meaty hand yanking me hard in

the direction he wanted me to be pulled, the slam of a screen door and the squeals of his car's

tires as he—yet again—threatened to leave our family and never come back.

And so, I seethe inwardly, not outwardly, so that I am not angry in his way. Even

with my patented inward-seethe, however, I feel like I am him and am behaving like him.

But I am not. I am not using my hands to choke my children when they misbehave. I am not

making my wife cower in the kitchen corner as she shields herself because she's spent too

much money. I am not staring my family members down while smoking a cigarette and saying, after a threatening and dramatic pause, "Pardon me?" if I have heard something I do not like and suggesting, if the answer is not appropriate, that violence will definitely occur.

My father showed me an aberrant picture of what it means to be a heterosexual man in the world. His demonstration was not entirely his fault; he was abandoned by his poverty-ridden and divorced parents as a boy and had to bring himself up the best he could, bouncing from house to house to house, even living in an orphanage for a time. Nevertheless, his patronising, sexualised, and controlling attitude towards my mother and all women—replete with stacks of pornographic magazines under the winter jumpers in his closet—is what I learned. His silent and stoic—cool—behaviour with other men while watching televised sports is what I learned. His quick turn to anger and physical violence when his needs were not met is what I learned. His reluctance to admit fault or express real emotion is what I learned.

My father died eight years ago, indigent and alone. I have come to realise, after much therapy and inward reflection, that his actions were his choice, but his situation was not his fault. Had my father been born into a loving family, or even if my father had had a loving teacher or two along the way who invested in him academically and emotionally, he could have been a person who in all probability would not have abused me, my brother, and my mother. This thought helps. But I have also come to realise that I will never be able to feel what it is like to know that your father is a good man in the world, either. Somehow, that realisation catalyses much of why I am considering my own masculinity and its expression.

I need to know.

As I finally get to my classroom and pull the ring of school keys out of my stretch-to-fit pocket and unlock my door, I can feel my tension recede (and not just because my pants have become less-tight). The room itself looks pleasing to me as I enter it. I have taught in the same classroom, H418, for the last seven years. There's a bank of windows along the back wall that looks out over emerald green, well-cared-for football fields and an adjacent swath of Rousseauian rainforest; the windows face west, and so if I am at school late, I can watch the tangerine sherbet-hued sun set. The windows are also functional. I open them whenever I wish. I like to open them when it rains and the cooler air mixes with the sound of a downpour.

My walls are full of bulletin boards on which I put student work. I like to take time on them and make them colourful and meaningful. Removing and then placing new student work on the boards is unexpectedly time-consuming and can take hours to do well and make them look good. I do not think that many secondary school teachers do this anymore. My white boards are also covered in colour, and I spend time on them each afternoon for the following day. I like to write our class schedule and lesson objectives in ways that stand out and show that I care. If I'm very honest here, I know a bit about colour theory and text features and try to use colour contrasts and font sizes and symbols ways that will draw students' eyes to different sections of my board.

When I arrive at my classroom in the mornings, I realise that I am undergoing a transformation as soon as I step through the door. I shed the weight of expectations of myself

as a heterosexual man in the world. I often stand right at the classroom door's threshold as I welcome my students to each class period of every day. In a slightly-pathetic, balding, middle-aged-male-secondary-school-English-teacher way, I am the Colossus of Rhodes at this moment, one foot in my harebrained, masculinised idiocy, and one foot in my more thoughtful and intentional presentation of gender as a pedagogue.

Braiding It In: Dennis

Of any of the research subjects I interviewed, Dennis seemed to me to be the most similar to me and my views regarding teaching and gender identity. I ask him about what he likes to teach in the high school English classroom, and he answers, 'Being a middle-aged white guy, I try not to go to my favourites, really, the ones I would necessarily gravitate towards. One of my favourite stories that I like exploring with them is—I don't know if you know the Indian writer Chitra Divakaruni—she wrote a short story called "Mrs. Dutta Writes a Letter," and I like looking at that with students. And I like looking at Jhumpa Lahiri's Interpreter of Maladies.' Dennis says that getting away from Anglo-centric literature is 'our opportunity, really, to introduce different perspectives fundamentally for students.'

Dennis remembers being told by his lecturers after finishing his PGCE that he 'was in a very fortunate position in that there just weren't that many male English teachers up for grabs' and that our profession 'in the UK, in the state system, is definitely gendered and

you would find a prevalence often of female English teachers,' but maybe less so internationally.' He also recalled, in terms of gendered subject areas, students saying that he 'always seemed more like a Maths teacher' and that he'd press them and the students would say, '"Well, you look quite organised and you run a lot, you know,"' and Dennis said that he had 'no real concept of what they were going on about,' but that it was interesting to be seen in that way. I suggested—jokingly—that we male English teachers must be fundamentally disorganised and out-of-shape, and he said, 'Fundamentally, I think it was that idea of creativity and disorganisation and every trope that would go along with that' that would define us as a group.

When asking Dennis about gender roles in society and how we male English teachers might be considered "lower" in a traditionally-masculine social hierarchy, he says that 'we don't like to believe that there's any sort of hierarchy based on wealth, but you know it comes up in different forms. . . . There's that connection between the male and the provider and therefore the income bracket as a definer of masculinity to an extent. So yeah, it's there, but it's often there as something that's being rejected, but nevertheless, it's something I've been aware of without any doubt.' It is interesting to me that Dennis equates the masculine hierarchy with wealth rather than, say, power or influence or even job category.

Dennis is married to an older woman from another culture than his own, and he describes her as a 'strong and independent woman' who would be seen as 'the one who is,

as it were, "in charge"' if their relationship were described by other people. 'I've never had any problem with that,' Dennis says. 'She would hate it if I was trying to take control of things and doing those ridiculous things' like ordering for her at a restaurant or other stereotypical, traditional behaviours for men. But regarding larger forces of hegemonically-masculine ideals or norms, Dennis suggests that female empowerment and masculine domination is not necessarily changing: 'You look at any sort of correlation with serious social change and percentages in key posts in careers or advancement, et cetera, and you don't see that. So, do I think [gender hierarchy] has been changed? I think that not yet. I hope that it is, and again, it depends on the context, doesn't it?'

I asked Dennis about his self-perception of how he expresses his masculinity. 'I don't see myself as very masculine, but I am aware that there are moments in life . . . in which you present yourself and there's still that notion of having a more male persona in certain contexts. And they would mainly be social contexts.' Watching football at a bar? I ask. 'Yeah, exactly. The way you talk . . . again, it's hard, because to what extent are we saying that that is necessarily masculine and to what extent is it that we are almost deliberately de-intellectualising ourselves, within those sorts of contexts. Do you know what I mean?'

I feel that I know precisely what Dennis means and that he is describing the impetus for my research.

He continues: 'There's a register in which we talk, potentially talking sincerely and seriously about the world and our place in the world, and social contexts in a way don't encourage us to talk in that way, in that reflective, serious, and sincere way. So, I don't know how much it's to do with gender—those sorts of social situations—and how much it has to do with actually in a range of different social situations the persona that we inhabit is slightly aware that you need to be not openly earnest and overly serious because it's just like you're just having a chat.'

I ask Dennis, then, how does this persona change when he's teaching? Does he deliberately signify masculinity? 'So, I think that certainly with my classes, I would signify masculinity hopefully as no different than femininity. I think that what I would hope to signify are qualities that have to do with being an open person, and being a warm person, being a balanced person, a critically-minded person, somebody who is willing to admit fault, somebody who's willing to not take themselves seriously, who is willing to see people as equals regardless of traditional barriers such as age, and I think that's a key one for the classroom.'

I am thinking to myself as Dennis describes his perception of his identity as a teacher that this is how I often perceive myself as a teacher, too. It is also a description of non-traditional behaviours for men, many of which describe "caring."

He continues, 'So the idea that I don't necessarily see myself as "the authority," (although one might implicitly present oneself that way) . . . . I would hope that my

students would feel that they could always challenge me and that I would not then be defensive in my response to that and say that "No, no. I'm the only person who can have those sorts of ideas." So I think about masculinity being about modelling what I hope to be the best side of myself. I think that one does that as a teacher very naturally, because we see that in the world, and it's part of our role, and we hopefully do the same as a parent as well. Which I've probably thought more often.'

I suggest to Dennis that his concept of gender identity seems to align with the Ethic of Care. After describing the concept to him, I ask if he feels that his persona changes between classroom and world. I expect him to answer affirmatively based upon what he's said, but he does not. 'No, I don't think it does.' But then, he says, 'But once my group or context changes from perhaps from within my teacher community, then I would say that again, it depends.' Dennis says that he's a certain way with males in his family ('the males in my family are very much the more intellectualised versions of ourselves,') and that he'll 'meet up with old uni mates or friends from other stages in my life' and that 'yeah, they will be slightly different.'

Interestingly, Dennis then suggests that, regarding traditional masculinity and maleness, 'I think that I'm not necessarily particularly typical: I think that sometimes I get the piss taken out of me for those characteristics, so it's not uncommon amongst my friends to call me a bit "metro" or to slightly mock me for overintellectualising something or being a bit too sincere in the moment.' I suggest that these ideas of being caring or open

or having a sense of humour or even crying—qualities of good teaching, perhaps—are allowed in the classroom but maybe not when I leave it. 'Well I mean I think what I'm saying, Josh, is that I wouldn't necessarily say that my experience is that different to yours. But what I would say is that the level of which sometimes people might sort of very nicely and good-humouredly take the piss out of me [outside of the classroom] would be for those reasons.'

Nevertheless, Dennis says that 'outside of the classroom, I would still behave in very similar ways and still speak the way that I would be in the classroom. But what's really interesting from what you have said and I wouldn't necessarily go so far as to describe it as anxiety, but there's certainly that degree of social awareness that we have when the way we present ourselves is being received in a manner that creates a response where people are kind of like, "OK, that's not the norm; therefore, that's different" and whatever comes from that.'

Part 3: Construction of Masculine Identity When I Am Teaching: Beginning The Lesson

As I transform at the classroom door, I genuinely laugh and smile when I see my students arrive. I do not feel—nor want to feel—traditionally-masculine or manly or powerful or strong or controlling. I feel caring, not righteous. I feel receptive, not dominant. I feel like a collaborator, not a leader. I am greeting each student by name. I am giving hi-

fives (or, in the age of COVID-19, 'air' hi-fives). I am asking students how they've been, even extending little inside jokes that have developed over the course of the term. If there is a student who looks troubled, I make a mental note. Also, if I need to speak with a student about missing work or an absence or otherwise, I try to have them wait for a moment so that we can chat; I don't want to do it in the classroom in front of the class, where they might feel more exposed or vulnerable. If a student has experienced something difficult such as a death in the family or a cancer diagnosis of a relative or a serious injury, I make sure to speak with them about it here and listen to them. I need them to understand that, more than anything else, I care about what is happening in their lives. I don't try and show that I care; rather, I do care.

I feel that the more I reveal of myself in caring ways that are contextual for my role as a teacher rather than in less-caring and more stereotypical ways that I might act as a heterosexual man 'in the world,' the more my students seem to connect with me. This creates a feedback loop: they seem more eager to know me, and I feel more eager to know them. Just this week (as I sit and revise this draft), two boys wrote me emails to see how I was doing after I had to leave school to take my son to the A & E, and another boy asked me about it in class. Just yesterday, two girls—former students—stopped by on their lunch break to say hello and catch up. I think that I am lucky as a teacher to have these kinds of interactions with my students, and I think they are directly the result of my choice to turn away from hegemonically-masculine ways of presenting my identity in the classroom.

The students are now seated at their tables in the classroom. There are four or five students to a table. The mood in the room is usually something like quietly happy or expectant or at least something like 'ready.' The feeling I have inside is similar to the feeling I would have when began to play football as a young boy aged 6, before the sport became gendered and violent for me: I was anticipatory, hopeful, ebullient. Joyous with a hint of butterflies-in-the-stomach for what was about to occur. Happy to know I was not terrible at the game. Relieved that my skills suited the purpose. Liking the approbation of the people I interacted with. Laughing a lot, smiling a lot, joking a lot.

I rely on the underpinnings of constructivist pedagogy for the planning of my lessons. I have not been a 'stand and deliver' teacher since important teaching mentors—both women—began to wrench me away from that identity when I began my career. I like to begin class with thematically-relevant stimuli which allow the students in their table groups to construct meaning and then make connections. Every year in my AP English classes (AP, or "Advanced Placement," is a similar designation as the A-level classes of the UK's educational system), for example, we read literature that comments in various ways upon class differences and distinctions. And so, I'll begin class with, for example, photography by Alfred Stieglitz or Dorothea Lange, or a painting by Frida Kahlo, or a song by Woody Guthrie, asking students to consider the content and then make a short argument for how it comments upon, for example, The Tortilla Curtain by T.C. Boyle or 'A Dream Deferred' by Langston Hughes. I'll ask students about how long they think they'll need to work it out. Almost always, the answer is, 'Fifteen minutes.' I don't know why it's not ten or twenty.

They always want fifteen. A quarter of an hour for the genesis of constructed, collaborative learning.

My behaviour during this introductory exercise has been relatively uniform for two decades. I'm smiling. I'm flitting around the room, excited by the connections they're about to make, connections I cannot know yet. 'OK. You know what to do. Choose a scribe for the table group. If you were the scribe last class, you're exempt because of your previous selflessness and generosity. Also, choose someone who will report out to the class when it's time; it can't be the scribe (so scribes, make your writing legible!). Also, you remember the golden rule: every student must participate in the table discussion at least once. Even if you're not sure if your idea is relevant, you should give it a go. Don't forget how smart you are.' Students immediately dissemble into various games in which the loser becomes the scribe. Small faux-arguments erupt here and there like happy firecrackers. Also, I know who the quiet students are and can help them participate.

As the students begin to commiserate about the photograph or painting or song or sculpture or architectural expression or graph or short video clip or dance or whatever else I've decided to surprise and engage them with, I move my rolling chair from table to table so that I can listen. I rarely, if ever, intercede in their discussions (unless a student looks completely disengaged; I'll have a quiet word with him or her. Usually, there is a relatively serious personal problem I haven't been aware of, and I give the student permission to sit and just listen—as participation—for the day). I revel in this part of the class period, simply listening to them think critically and make connections between seemingly-disparate genres

that, 10 minutes prior, they had probably never considered as relevant (think I.M. Pei's entrance to The Louvre as a comment upon Candide's discovery of El Dorado, or a video of Russian parkour in a mid-90's apocalyptic, post-Soviet landscape as a comment upon African American folk art, et cetera). I have to be careful not to lose myself too fully in a group and to keep circulating. My goal is to sit with each of the groups and listen for moments of brilliance. I've been at it long enough now that I can remember who said what brilliant thing while I was sitting and listening each group, and I'll use that when I pull the class back together as a whole group.

'OK, folks. That's about fifteen minutes. I'm sorry if I'm cutting any of you off right now. I know there's still some good thinking and conversation happening,' I'll say. The class becomes quiet, looking at me. I say one of my standard corny lines: 'And a hush falls over the crowd.' A few smiles. 'Can you raise a hand if you're the speaker for your group?' Hands raise. We're ready. I have to be at my most receptive and caring in the next phase: anything can happen. Students can make completely generalised, irrelevant, inaccurate, or even unintentionally-offensive comments about the stimulus and its application to our text. For most of the comments students will make, this is not the case: they are searingly insightful and bright. But in every class period, it happens at least once, and often more than once. This is when I'll use what I listened to and remembered from the groups to gently redirect what's been said without shaming or hurting the student who's unintentionally erred. For example, let's assume we've considered Alfred Stieglitz's photograph 'The Steerage' (1907) as a

stimulus to begin the class period while we are, over the course of a month, reading Orwell's

1984. It is a stimulus exercise I have used for more than 20 years.

A student might say something like, 'Well, we thought that the differences between

the decks were kind of like Charrington's shop, because Winston and Julia had to go upstairs

to the room above Charrington's shop to find a bit of privacy. Like Winston and Julia, the

people on the top deck have more privacy than the people on the bottom deck in the

photograph.'

This is an opportunity—one of many that I'll have in this period and in every period

of the day—for me to care for the student who has spoken (and, by extension, for their

group). The thinking is interesting and critical, but it is not entirely accurate for how the

ideas might match up. Winston and Julia, both Outer Party members, are already on the 'top

deck' in Orwell's Oceania; Charrington's shop, however, is located in the 'Prole quarters'

among the underclass, reflected in the dark recesses of the lower decks that lurk in Stieglitz's

famous image. If anything, Winston and Julia's occupation of the room in Charrington's shop

would most likely be the reverse of what the student has suggested: they would place

themselves below decks, hidden among the Proles, away from the gaze of the Party. For a

heterosexual white male teacher, this moment is purpose-built for me to use every

culturally-acceptable lever I have to show that I am right and the student is wrong while

justifying the subtle shaming of the student by doing so.

But I do not.

'I like a lot of what you've said there: you are aware of how Stieglitz uses clear and distinct lines in his photo to demarcate class. Absolutely right. Great thinking! Accurate. But . . . let's consider it another way, too. How might larger classes in 1984 be symbolized in the photograph? Can you remove Winston and Julia from the idea and then reapply your thinking? I remember Ahmad saying something like that in your group earlier when I was listening. Ahmad . . . is that about right? Am I reflecting your thinking?'

And Ahmad, with a kind of surprised nod, then continues the thought and makes a more accurate and focused connection. In that moment, it would have been so easy for me to simply say, 'No, that's not entirely accurate thinking. Charrington's shop is in the Proles' quarters, so logically that idea cannot be analogous to the groups in Stieglitz's photograph: Winston and Julia cannot symbolically remain above decks in the Stieglitz photo. Do any other groups have ideas here?' But that would have been a traditionally-masculine, controlling, binary, rude, and uncaring way to go about it (as well as uneducational; I would have explained the answer for the entire exercise, which is antithetical to constructivist pedagogy). I would have not listened for anything salvageable in the student's answer, only that it did not fit my own unilateral conception of what might have been accurate. Instead, and as a constructivist teacher who tries to care for students by listening and then helping them construct knowledge, I can attempt again and again to exist in a world of greys rather than in black and white. I can also remain with the same group (as I have) rather than simply moving on. This is an example of a choice not to maintain the hegemony of the heterosexual male teacher. It is indicative of how to present my own identity to the class.

Saying the phrase 'I wonder if you could tell me a bit more about that' is another way I like to show respect towards my students and convey to them that I'm listening to them and caring for them rather than just shutting them down when they do not answer with an idea that fits my own regarding accuracy. Almost always, after this prompting, I'll understand what they're trying to say in a different, new, and clearer way. Also, I will be able to thread my thinking into theirs so that it is a balanced consideration of the knowledge being constructed. In this kind of deeper exploration of a student's answer, the teacher does not 'own' the knowledge, nor does the teacher get to be the only one in the classroom who is correct. We all contribute to what we are learning and what we know collectively.

As we stitch this most recent quilt of constructed knowledge together while the groups have a chance to describe connections between the stimulus and the text, I will often have a student stand at the white board with a dry erase marker and list ideas that are shared. We will then review the complete list together, and I'll ask this question, the same question I've asked for 20 years: 'So, what have you learned here?' Please take a minute or two to write your thoughts.' After a few minutes, I'll ask for ideas. And hands shoot up. Always. Not some of the time; all of the time. For 20 years, students aged 14-18 in my English classes have raised their hands at this moment. That means thousands of students have raised their hands at this recurring moment in my classroom: they want to explain something new they've learned in the first 25 minutes of a class period. I'm quite proud of that, actually, now that I write it. Maybe I'll write a column for an edu-journal and call it something catchy like 'The 25th Minute: The Most Important 60 Seconds of a Class Period.' (Scrawls note to self.)

At this point, after we've collated and then discussed our best thinking together, I get to say my favourite sentences to the class: 'Absolutely brilliant. I don't know how I got so lucky this year. They seem to have placed all of the smart kids in this period. Please don't let the counselling department know about this scheduling error, ok? The other teachers will be jealous because of the mistake, of course. Keep it between us.' The first few times I say this corny joke during the school year, there are blank looks around; students are not sure what to make of it. 'Is he serious? Do they know who the smart kids are in the school? Are we all here? Why is he saying these things?' But then they begin to pick up on it. By the end of the first semester, they're smiling to themselves and shaking their heads a bit as if they cannot believe I'm saying it again. I try to say it in each period and, if not, at least once per week. They've compared notes with students in other sections I teach and begin to say things like, 'You say this to all of your classes!' My friend told me you said the same thing to them!' and I respond, 'No. No I do not. It is only your section. How could I tell lies? All the smart students are here. I don't know why this happens to me every year. Every year, I get all of the smart ones in one particular section!' (It's funny: in the thank you notes I receive from some of the students at the end of term, many of them mention being grateful to have been a part of "the smart class," complete with scare quotes and a smiley face.)

Having constructivist conversations about learning, praising students for being smart, and intentionally searching for ways to not embarrass but rather affirm my students is a long, long way from towering over and threatening a student—which I did without any kind of backlash or reproach when this particular young man talked back to me in 1998. It is as if I

am a different person in class entirely. I cannot think of any current classroom situation in which I would even think of intimidating a student verbally, much less physically, as I did to that freshman student in 1998. It would violate everything I have become and everything I believe in as a teacher. I'll share an example from last year: in the middle of second term, just before COVID 19 hit and we moved to online learning, a class period of seniors had begun to slack off. Their university acceptances had been mostly delivered, and they had generally—not all of them, but most of them—begun to relax on finishing their assignments. It's a tricky time for me because my white, heterosexual male gender identity is traditionally-conditioned towards strictness, following rules, and turning things in on time. Nevertheless, and despite knowing these things about myself, I had worked quite hard on a lesson for this class and had expected students to produce writing to participate in the class period I had planned for them. (What was my clear error here? Relying on second semester seniors' homework for the success of the lesson. Rookie mistake.)

Of course, the majority of the university-bound seniors were unprepared, and I felt angry inside as I stood in my untucked polo shirt, stretch-fabric pants, and flat moccasins. I had a choice to make. I could lay into the students with a monologue about responsibility and character and individual resourcefulness, replete with strident tones and meaningful pauses as I scan the room with a kind of mock indignation and look into students' eyes, the height of 'heterosexual male teacher' behaviour. Or, I could recognise the anger I felt inside was not really anger but more like embarrassment or even shame for not appearing to be in control, which my identity as a heterosexual male suggests that I always need to be. I could

take a breath, choose not to express the flash of anger, excuse myself from the classroom for a

moment, go have a drink of water at the water fountain around the corner, take a few deep,

calming breaths, think about a different plan for the period by backing the lesson up a step or

two to include in-class writing time for the students which, adding to my embarrassment, I

should have done in the first place when I was planning, and then return to class. I chose the

second option in this case. The irony? Students are emotionally intelligent people. Though I

did not express my frustration or my flash of anger, they could also (without too much effort)

connect the idea that they were unprepared and that, as I realised it, became upset, and took

a moment outside of the classroom to compose myself fully. This probably had much more

impact and meaning for them than had I laced into them with a heterosexual male's self-

justified, narcissistic, 'mansplaining' rant.

Braiding It In: Tom

Tom is the only one of my research subjects I know personally. I learn a lot about

him that I did not know when interviewing him for this work. We've never discussed

theory or ideas like these before, and I feel a hesitancy in myself as soon as the interview

begins. In a sense, the tension I feel talking with Tom is not unlike the distance I feel

between being in the world and being in my classroom. While I interview him in the

Zoom call, I notice that he is drinking a beer. I don't mention it.

When I ask Tom about what it means to him to be a man, he says that having children of his own changed his perspective. Before having his own children, he says, '[Being a man] fit pretty well with your stoic, step-up, shut up, get the work done, don't complain . . . but again after kids, and as my kids get older . . . I find myself far more thinking about my mom: when am I going to have grandkids? When am I going to have grandkids? And my children are far too young to be thinking about grandkids . . . but thinking about nurturing, the nuzzling of a little baby. So I think to be a man, for me, is almost impossible to look through these days without looking at it through the lens of a parent or a father.' Tom is one of the best fathers I know, and so I am not surprised to hear him say this. I admire the way he is with his children and have asked for his advice on occasion in the past.

Tom says that his role in the family is traditionally feminine while his wife's role is traditionally masculine: 'The roles are kind of reversed. My wife makes more money than I do, she has a little bit more prestige in her position. She doesn't cook. She doesn't care about food. It's [just] fuel for her body. Whereas I am "Oh, how can we balance what the kids are eating for breakfast and nutrients" and things like that. And so I think probably that that has changed a bit in my thinking and certainly it's different from the roles my mother and father played.' I ask him about his parents, and he says that 'Dad worked at [a corporation]. Got up, suit and tie, a kiss goodbye, and home for some meat and potatoes on the table. It wasn't quite the "meet him at the door with a pipe and a glass of Scotch," but it

wasn't far off.' I tell Tom that I remember that, too: although my mother worked, she would feel the need to make sure the house was tidy and that dinner was ready before my father got home.

When I ask Tom about his conceptions of a masculinised world and a culture of hegemonic masculinity, I do not follow his answers necessarily. He discusses the teaching of feminist theory and says that 'it's still pretty rare for men to be a feminist or even using [feminist] as a tag or label.' He also suggests that he's reminded of his own masculinity during his day when his male students need to get up and move rather than just sit in their chairs: 'The boys are much more kinetic, moving, or whatnot,' he says. And then he says, 'Conversely, girls will say "Can I go to the bathroom," and then another girl will say "Can I go, too?" and [Tom imitates female voices] "no, we're just going to the bathroom." I'm not completely sure what Tom's talking about at the moment.

Tom's always made me laugh, and when I ask him again about masculinity and ways he just obviously signifies being masculine or male in the world, he discusses his recent weight gain and purchasing new clothes. He does not care much about fashion and considers it a waste of time. When buying new clothes for teaching, he says that he spent 'an hour at the outlet malls, trying to figure out what size and has my neck increased in size as well as my shirt, and outlet mall prices were wrong and so I spent a good ten minutes on Amazon after figuring [the sizing] out, ordering five blue oxfords, you know: long sleeve [to] wear a tie with the shirt.' Tom then orders 'five powder-blue oxfords, six

pairs of khaki Dockers, and that's literally the last time I've shopped for clothes or thought about what I was gonna put on.'

Tom continues: 'Two of my female colleagues were like "Look at you and your blue shirts. What's with you and . . . the [students] wear a uniform, but you wear a uniform, too. What's going on there?" Tom also says that 'I think my wife could probably wear a different mix and match of clothes every day of the year, but for the last two years in a row, I've worked the same five [blue shirts and khaki pants]. . . I need to re-up, but . . . I feel it's a pretty masculine thing, I suppose.'

I must admit that I'm laughing as Tom describes his fashion sensibility, and I can't help myself and ask him if he thinks he'll stay with the powder blue shirt/khaki combination when he eventually shops again for clothing. 'That's a good question. I do have a grey pair of pants and a navy shirt and a white shirt. But those are more like special occasion ones. So maybe I'll have to shake it up. I don't know.' I'm laughing hard.

I try to circle back to how Tom might construct masculinity differently in the classroom and away from it, and his answers are hard for me to understand; he jumps quickly from thought to thought. He begins to discuss cooking and grilling meat. But then he says that he's maybe more masculine inside the classroom than he is outside of it: 'Presentation-wise, probably in the classroom, the difference is probably just being really conscious of especially with my younger students: I'm much, much bigger physically than literally all of my students and so it rarely plays in my head, but I always go with a hi-five

or a fist bump at arm's length in saying hello which is a pretty masculine thing to do. . . .

As opposed to with friends outside of the classroom, a hug, peck on the cheek, a handshake

. . . that physical sense of space is much closer outside of the classroom than it is inside of

the classroom.' I am still sort of confused by what Tom is saying here, but I think he might

mean that he's less worried about expressing masculinity in the world than when he is

teaching, where it could be problematic because of his size (he is a large man, bigger than

most men I know). I can also infer that he is thinking about traditional masculinity

differently than I am.

I get to the point as the interview is coming to an end: 'Do you feel that your

presentation of your masculinity in the English classroom is something other than

stereotypically heterosexual? Is it more feminine than your presentation of yourself

outside of the classroom?'

His clearest answer emerges, and I feel tension: his answer is abrupt, almost as if I

have insulted him. It feels defensive. 'Not for me, I don't think so . . . my presentation is

pretty straightforward and as much as I'd like to think I can adopt and present from a

different perspective, I really doubt that I do.'

I'm not really satisfied with that answer, and I press Tom a bit: 'Can I ask why not?

Why do you doubt that you do?'

'Yeah, I guess just feeling comfortable with who I am, right? I've always been big.

My thinking there goes with just how does someone know they've been mis-assigned their

sex in a transgender sense. Men and women probably think differently, right? The crass analogy is that it's just a matter of plumbing, right? How do you know that was a mistake? What is it that makes you convinced that it is something feminine or masculine inside you that has been wrongly assigned? And I think I can sympathise with and certainly empathise with most positions of 'other,' but that's just when I struggle to try to understand, right, and I don't think I understand it. Thus, can I really present from something other than who I am? And being confident that yeah, this is how it's supposed to be. This is how it is.'

I am unmoored by Tom's answer here.

Part 4: The Minilesson, The Conference, and The Conclusion

The next part of my class is usually focused on a fifteen-to-twenty-minute presentation of a skill or idea or explanation, a "minilesson," in today's edu-speak. If I ever lecture, it happens here. Most of the time, however, I'll have prepared slides or will have prepared a whiteboard to guide us through what declarative knowledge needs to be presented. A traditional learning set in which students take notes individually or raise a hand to ask a question occurs now. This situation is designed to highlight my white, heterosexual male point of view, and it fits with a hegemonically-masculine culture: the male has the knowledge, is speaking, and is telling students what or how to think. Students are to be quiet, should listen to me, and should take notes on what the male teacher is presenting. If

you show a kind of open disrespect to me during this set by appearing not to listen or to care, I am justified in a heteronormative, hegemonically-masculine society to become something like angry—not irate, not furious, but angry—with you and call you out in front of others. Nobody would really question me for doing so; it is a righteous situation for a heterosexual male teacher.

However, I have had to change and develop ways in which I construct my gender identity differently during the 'mini-lesson.' One way that is very helpful for me is the use of silence rather than direct confrontation. After all, I teach teenagers. For example, if I notice that a student is checking a cell phone or talking with another student or otherwise, I have learned to pause what I'm saying. I just stop. The class becomes quiet. I say, 'I am waiting for everyone to show me that they are ready to learn.' I do not look at the student whom I know is on the cell phone or who has been whispering away and distracting another kid. I do not need to. The student gets the message and, when I see that the behaviour has changed, I simply begin again.

If the student persists, I again have choices about how to construct my gender identity and to leave space for students to feel respected, cared for, and listened to. At this point, I will stop the lesson and ask the 'repeat offender' to come into the hallway with me while the class waits. When it is just the two of us outside of the class's view, I ask the student if what I'm seeing and hearing aligns with what they feel like their behaviour has been in class. I do not accuse. I ask. The student almost always agrees with me, that yes, my perception has been accurate. Then, I'll ask a second question: is there anything else

happening in your life that I am unaware of that has made you make these choices? Again, almost always, there is something else: a breakup with a boyfriend or girlfriend, being cut from an athletic team's try-out, getting a bad grade back on a test in another course, a sick grandparent. Often, there are tears as soon as I ask this deeper question.

At this point, my former teaching self would probably have chosen not to believe the student, since being a white heterosexual male traditionally means that you never allow anyone to put anything over on you at any time, and if they try, you punish them so that it does not happen again. However, now, I try to listen carefully, and I make myself believe that I trust what the student says to me. I tell the student that I care about them and their learning and that if they need to get a drink of water and come back to class, they can do so. I'll then go back and start teaching again as if nothing has happened, and in nearly all cases, the student I've spoken with does their best to show that they can participate in class in this traditional setting. Of course, the respect I show the student by speaking with them privately and trying to understand their behaviour rather than punish it goes a long way towards developing a classroom environment that is caring, receptive, flexible, emotionally-safe, and nurturing (traditionally feminine and caring) rather than stoical, tinged with anger, rigid, emotionally-toxic, and stultifying (traditionally masculine and violent). It is a way of demonstrating that, despite my gender and sexual orientation, I can be something other than the hegemonically-masculine male educator.

Another way that I try to be caring and thoughtful rather than demanding or controlling during the minilesson is to use humour and to allow students to interact and

collaborate with me. For example, part of my responsibility as an English teacher is to ensure

that all of my students can write mechanically-sound, sophisticated syntactic patterns. Even

though they're juniors and seniors, not all of them can do it when we begin the course. It can

be embarrassing for a seventeen-year-old to realise (or admit) that, after ten years of formal

education, they do not yet understand how a comma actually functions or the purpose of a

semicolon or why a group of words is a fragment rather than an independent clause. If I'm

not very, very careful about the power dialectic at play, I can alienate and belittle the student

quite easily. Showing a student error-laden writing and then punishing them with poor

marks creates a writer who is ashamed and who cannot feel confident about expressing

themselves in words and sentences. However, showing a caring and thoughtful way of

revising sentences based on patterns of error (e.g. 'You're only making this one error,

actually. You just repeat it a lot. But really, it's just this one thing. No big deal at all. I had

trouble with this one too when I was your age. Here's what we can try,") is a way I try to be

receptive and also constructive while showing students that there's a way out of these

learned patterns of error.

    At times, this minilesson is when I am my most emotionally-vulnerable with my

students, when I feel that my gender presentation and identity is perhaps furthest from my

essentialised appearance as a straight, white, male. I can—and do—express my emotions

clearly and freely. I can cry. I can read poetry with passion. I can act. I can sing. I can even

tell personal stories about when I have felt sad or depressed or vulnerable or scared. I also

think it is important for students to see a heterosexual man be vulnerable, and so I try to

participate in assignments. I can feel embarrassed and vulnerable. But I am also showing them that I can be creative, artistic, and (if you will) out of control. I can be seen.

Another example of this kind of emotional vulnerability during the mini-lesson would be for writing poems, another assignment I've kept from that influential high school English teacher's class so long ago. I'll ask students to choose a famous poem that speaks to them thematically and then write their own poem that follows the form and structure of the original (and so, if the original is a sonnet, the student writes a sonnet, for example). I myself try new poems each year, and I read my own efforts to the class during a mini-lesson to give them a 'model.' Recently, I wrote a kind of long, epic poem about the tragedy of violence towards African American people, and I used Billie Holiday's haunting song 'Strange Fruit' as a refrain and as a melody for my reading. I found a version of the song in Sound Cloud that did not have lyrics attached, and I played the melody on repeat as I read my long poem to the class.

Being able to sing or act or read poetry to my students allows for a construction of masculinity in the classroom that is not congruent with the prevailing heteronormative conception of what a heterosexual—and in my case, a heterosexual American man—should 'be' or how he should act in a hegemonically-masculine hierarchical structure. In a very identifiable and purposeful way, I have transgressed from what is normative for traditional masculine expression into what is non-normative, and I have also shown that it is acceptable in my classroom to express masculinity as something other than stoical, in-control, violent, angry, and punitive. I notice that more and more students who might otherwise retreat into

silence and a kind of tough pose from which they do not need to emerge will take risks and will be vulnerable, too. For example, watching students have the opportunity to stand and sing or recite personal, emotional poems or attempt acting a monologue is perhaps helping to deconstruct, brick by brick (or person by person), the hegemonic structures which can so easily suggest what it means to be heterosexual and male in the world.

The last section of a typical class period is, for me, the most challenging. Part of it is physical: the first two sections of my period can be challenging emotionally, and I am no longer a young man with boundless energy. I can get a bit tired around the 50th or 55th minute, especially if it is my third 80-minute-long class period of the day. However, this last section is when I must be my most-receptive, my most-caring, my most-intuitive self and perhaps my least-masculine, least-individualistic, and least-unemotional self. It is the time during which, when it is necessary and when the students are not, perhaps, extending the learning from the minilesson, I conference one-on-one with them. The first two sections of my class period will often inform what we consider and discuss here. I have a separate table at the back of my room where we conduct the conferences; it's not away from other students but is simply behind everyone else. The students in the room can hear the conferences, which is important: as a constructivist educator, I believe that students continue to learn for themselves as they listen to what a student and I discuss about an assignment.

I feel something like Sophocles' character Tiresias in the play Oedipus Rex when I conduct conferences with my students: I feel that I do not have a gender and am only a truth-teller. My goals for student conferences are simple: I want to make the student feel

listened to, respected, and that they have learned something. I do not want to control the conference. I purposefully keep my hands in my lap so that the student does all of the typing or the writing. I will ask the students if it is ok if I make a suggestion about how to change an idea or improve before I make it. Also critical for my conferences is the dedication to silence on my end when there is a pause. It is during the silences that the students are thinking and can produce knowledge that demonstrates learning; if I am talking at them during these spaces, then I am doing the thinking, not them. On another level, my quietness is about giving up control so that they might construct their own learning after seeing a pattern of error or after trying a new skill, the necessity for which has emerged in the draft we are working on together.

Important moments for me as a heterosexual male teacher during conferences often occur with the students who would be likely marginalised in a traditional 'raise your hand and stand out' classroom setting, students who are not part of a majority or who have implied hegemonic advantages. In our conferences, I can actually listen to what they have to say about themselves rather than feel like I must tell them what to do. Almost always, I will have a conference at this time during which a student from a marginalised or disadvantaged position tells me something frank or unexpected or beautiful about their lives that I would not have known otherwise. I feel as if I am collecting hidden treasure in these moments because these small revelations are precisely how I can connect with the students and show them that I care for them.

Also, and even though we are in the classroom with all of my other students, our conversations can feel private. Students and I will talk about almost anything that might occur regarding why the writing has emerged on the screen or page in the way that it has. It is as if my intentional listening—a real, live adult who is sitting with focused attention on what the student has to say—is remarkable to them and deep gears of human behaviour begin to turn: it is as if the student realises 'I am fully listened to, and so I will tell the truth here.'

As a sort of benign Iago, I feel that "I am not what I am" during conferences regarding traditional gender expression for a heterosexual man. Instead of being forceful, I am receptive. Instead of speaking, I try to listen. Instead of writing directions, I sit with my hands folded. Instead of making direct eye contact, I look down at the page or at the screen. Instead of thinking about what I will say, I try to paraphrase what a student has said to me. Instead of speaking in statements, I try to ask questions. And, critically, I pause and do not fill the silences with my own voice, and I am very careful not to interrupt a student. All of these ways of being are not reflected in how I seem to perform my gender expression and identity away from the classroom as a heterosexual, white male.

Considering the manner in which I usually arrive at school each morning, I have transformed.

I will often feel joy in the closing minutes of a class period—not because it is over, but because it has occurred and I have been a part of it. Words that come to mind here: ebullience, happiness, relief, camaraderie, hope, gratitude, thankfulness, humility. Grace. I

like to take time to remind them how smart they are and that if they work hard on our

assignments, they can accomplish what they like in the course. I will also try to remember

and highlight what a particular student has said or done to stand out during the period, often

a student who is marginalised in some way; I'll say, 'I really appreciated it when X treated Y

in an academically-respectful manner, giving Y the credit for an idea that came up in a small

group' or 'I heard Z say something in a conference that was really just incredibly intelligent,

and I appreciated that,' for example. I feel very powerful during these minutes, as if I am

(and reader, please forgive my earnestness here) touching the future. During these moments,

I feel that teaching secondary school English is the most influential profession I could have

chosen for myself.

I again stand at the door—regaining the threshold between worlds—and dismiss the

students. I try and say their names one last time and give hi-fives. I extend jokes that have

come up. I tell particular students that I appreciated their efforts. I gently remind students to

finish late work that's overdue. If I can be fully in the moment, I can tell students who are

experiencing difficulty away from the classroom that I'm thinking about their situation and

their lives and that I hope things get better before we see each other again. Sometimes, if

there's a troubled student who seems completely off, I'll ask them to wait just a moment as

the rest of the students file out and then I'll have a word with them to check in and see

what's happening. Almost always, a student will tell me about a sick relative or a breakup or

a bad grade or a friend who was unkind something else troubling them. I try and listen

rather than speak, and they seem to appreciate that very much. Again, my behaviour here is

quite different than how I might behave in the world away from my classroom as I present myself as a man.

Braiding It In: Dean

Dean seems reluctant or guarded when we begin the interview but warms up a bit as we get to know each other. A career secondary school English teacher, Dean has (by turns) been both a teacher and Head of Department as well as working as a teaching and learning director. He's taught in several countries as well and, to me, really seems to 'know the ropes' of teaching secondary school English. As a CMR, I hear the ring of truth in what he says about our profession. He says that he likes to 'be able to bring something more contemporary and a bit less "classic-establishment" type of lit to the students: my Grade 10s are doing [Carol Ann] Duffy for the first time. Duffy's worked really well.'

Dean's pattern in the interview is to disagree first but then agree somewhat later in the response. For example, when I ask about the gendering of secondary school subjects, he says, 'That's tricky because I don't see it in that way, but I know that there's very much a perception and perhaps a very broad perception of stereotypes [for subjects in secondary school] and how they could be perceived.' But then he refers to an upper-level literature course he's currently teaching and says that 'it's far more popular with girls, and English in particular': in his class of 18 students, he has 'three boys, one other boy who is transgender,

and the rest are girls. You could say that maybe high-level literature is more female-gendered in that sense . . . but I don't see it as a female-gendered subject.'

When I ask Dean about his idea of masculinity and what it means to be a man as a kind of masculine ideal, he says that he does not have that ideal. He says that 'it's probably the same as what it means to be a woman' and couches the response in terms of being an adult and having responsibility, self-awareness, and integrity rather than being defined by gender. He then explains what messaging he received as a child: 'I think those expectations about being a boy or being a girl were clearly defined and are still defined and still prevalent' for children and goes on to say that contemporarily, being a man in the Western world 'has become far more fluid as a concept in the same way as has what it means to be a woman. . . . There's a lot of progress made and those ideas are no longer as clearly defined or as black and white as they used to be.'

Dean's ideas regarding gender and sex role are progressive: 'I think gendered ideas are a social construct, but I feel like those social constructs have merged and have become more fluid,' especially when it comes to cultural contexts. Dean's taught in a handful of countries in Europe, South America, and Asia, and that the social construct of masculinity can be strong, e.g. 'to be a man,' in certain contexts but not others. 'I think that by and large and certainly in Western countries, [what it means to be a man] has changed a lot.' He's also progressive regarding concepts of hegemonic masculinity: 'I don't know if it's as simple as "masculine = good, feminine = bad," but in terms of contexts, those ideas have

been associated with what it means to be male or masculine.' But he also says, 'I still see [being male or masculine] as good, relevant, and useful in some contexts, yeah.' Dean also considers an Ethic of Care to be something beyond gender: 'It's just good teaching, then, isn't it?'

But then I ask a bit more about why I'm researching: how are we male 'in the world' (such as watching football at a bar with mates) and then again in our classrooms when we are parsing poetry or reading dramatic works: does Dean construct his masculinity differently when he's in the classroom than when he's outside of it? He has a long pause and says, 'Yes and no. Tough question. It implies that there's deliberate construction in the way that [my question] is phrased. I wouldn't say I would deliberately try to construct anything that's particularly masculine in any way, shape, or form . . . but yeah, obviously, I fall into typical social standings. . . . I dress in a masculine fashion, for example . . . but, I don't know. I think I'm someone maybe more than others especially with older students . . . who is more myself in the classroom more than some other people might be. Right? So . . . I would hope that whatever identity I kind of project in the classroom is fairly consistent with [who I am] but I would project myself in a similar way [outside and inside]. But the students, if they bumped into me in a couple of years' time somewhere in a social setting and we chatted for twenty or thirty minutes, I would like to think that they wouldn't suddenly think, "Oh, this is a completely different side of you I haven't seen before." I don't know how to answer that question.'

It is interesting to me that Dean then discusses his subject and its content as a way to construct a feminist identity in the classroom: 'What I'm most conscious of, I think, is whether I'm explicitly exploring ideas of feminism or good feminist literature or looking at a representation of women and females in a particular text or just gender. I'm conscious of that it can for some people be perceived as not more powerful but maybe it would be easy to act as a role model and dispel myths. If people have a myth about feminism being about hating men, for example, then I am very comfortable and I hope it has a good impact, me being able to say, "Look I'm a feminist" or whatever so . . . rather than me worrying about whether I project my masculinity, I think I hope I project the notion that we are who are and we just need to be true to ourselves and respect others and their choices. I'm not sure if I'm answering your question or if I even can.'

Dean's quite aware of his identity inside the classroom and that the relative power of an English teacher to dispel tropes of heteronormative behaviour is important to use not only with students but also in the world: 'I don't think my role is different [outside of the classroom]. If I see that kind of [hegemonic] behaviour in a social setting, I probably need to question it or I feel like I should. I don't know. It know—I guess—maybe in the classroom it's the safest space for me to challenge that [heteronormative assumption of gender roles] with students rather than in a bar somewhere outside.' I also ask about showing emotion as a male who teaches English, and he says, 'I am very aware of the impact it might have. If I get teary reading a particular poem or something or occasionally

if we're watching a film version that's particularly moving, I am aware in the back of my mind that it might be more impactful, or it might be good. I think it's good for students to see me like that as a male teacher, as a man, as a male. So I'm aware of that. Maybe I shouldn't be aware of that. Maybe I shouldn't even think that way. I do know that I can both be that way, but I'm also conscious that that that might not be what they're expecting to see, even though I don't feel any fear about showing that behaviour. So, maybe you're right. Maybe we still filter society through those norms.'

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

To this point in my thesis, I have explored this question: how and why do heterosexual male secondary school English teachers construct and perform non-heteronormative gender in the transgressive space of the classroom? In this chapter, I will critically consider the findings of the braided autoethnography as a response to this question and will also make recommendations for further research.

The chapter is structured as follows: In Part One, I will return to each of the theoretical concepts shaping my research—hegemonic masculinity, gender identity, English educational theory, Queer educational theory—and apply them to the findings. In Part Two, I will also consider how the methodology of braided autoethnography has allowed me to critically consider and discuss my findings. In Part Three, I make four recommendations for further research.

5.2 Part 1: Discussions of Theoretical Concepts and Their Applications to My Findings

5.2.1 The Theory of Hegemonic Masculinity and Application to Findings

Connell's (1991) theory regarding hegemonic masculinity resonates within my findings. My search for research subjects itself was based on sex role and vocation (male secondary school English teacher), and my method of finding data was also influenced in these ways: I used my power, position, and authority as a male PhD researcher to contact other men in my field whom I did not know and to suggest that I would require a considerable amount of their time in an interview to help me with my research. One can infer that because of my privileged status within society, these men who did agree to speak with me understood implicitly that I had masculine power and agency in a world that prioritises male privilege and authority (Bourdieu, 2001).

As I began speaking with my interview subjects and getting to know them in my role as autoethnographer, there was implicit authority in the hierarchy of the conversation: I was clearly in control of the dialogue and could start and stop the conversation as I wished. If I chose to interrupt, it was acceptable. If I chose to make a light-hearted comment or to ask a more challenging question, it was acceptable. Again, this agency suggests the superstructure of hegemonic masculinity in which male authority is tacit and includes, among other ideas, a kind of 'single-mindedness' and 'determination' (Sabo and Pinepinto, 1990, qtd. in Skelton, 1993) to accomplish a goal. In this case, the goal was to complete interviews, and the men I interviewed understood my determination to accomplish the goal and therefore stayed 'with'

me, often for hours. The subjects of my interview seemed to respect my direction and

method of questioning, and not one of them argued with or critically questioned my

approach.

Part of hegemonic masculinity's continuous regeneration to maintain primacy in society

(Demetriou, 2001) is for men to prioritise what is masculine over what is feminine, to the

point of rejecting what is feminine when that concept occurs in a masculine context

(Kimmel, 2009). This prioritisation of what is masculine is implied in my choice of research

subjects: only men were interviewed. In a sense, I have rejected what is feminine and have

masculinised the context for my research, and I have perhaps, and ironically, strengthened

hegemonic masculinity's influence by rejecting the inclusion of women in my research.

However, as a braided autoethnographer, I also wanted to find men who were secondary

level English teachers who might comment directly on my own experience of a kind of

dislocated, contextualised presentation of gender in the classroom. While Halberstam (1998)

does comment upon a type of masculine dislocation as 'masculinity without men,' this was

not the thrust of my research question, and therefore I did not choose to interview women.

Perhaps further research into the idea of the teacher's construction of masculinity in the

secondary school English classroom can and should include women participants.

Nevertheless, my questions were designed to investigate the caring teacher (Noddings 2013)

and to convey—sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly—the Ethic of Care (Gilligan, 1982)

in their purpose. Additionally, within the outer shell of hegemonic masculinity previously

described, I attempted to maintain awareness of my subjective and emotional involvement in

the research (Warin, 2018) and foregrounded my own personal experiences when it was

appropriate in each semi-structured interview. This kind of subjectivity and even

emotionality defines a feminist researcher's perspective (Warin, 2018) and follows my

ontological, epistemological, and methodological positioning as described previously in the

methodology chapter.

Discussing caring and emotionality with the male research subjects proved difficult for me,

as if the influence of hegemonic masculinity kept us from fully considering the Ethic of Care

more deeply or abstractly. I will address more specific thematic findings from the interviews

later in this section, but generally, the men I interviewed came to a conclusion that 'caring'

(in the sense of Gilligan's theory) is 'just good teaching, isn't it?' Well, yes, it is, but how and

why a heterosexual male English teacher chooses to show caring is exactly the point here—

or even what it means for him to care. Does he show it in a way that is congruent with

hegemonic and homophobic cultural expectations for men, requiring very limited emotional

displays? Or does he show it in a way that would be acceptable for a woman's expression of

emotion in a world that pathologises femininity in heterosexual men?

The questions of how and why heterosexual male English teachers show caring is an area for

further research. In other words, it is socially acceptable to be a heterosexual male English

teacher, despite society's traditionally-feminine associations of occupation (teacher) and subject (English). But when considering the results of my study, it became apparent that we were expressing our masculinity in various ways despite the traditionally-feminine influences upon our chosen careers or, in Mitchell's case as well as my own, our lives. All of us are, in a sense, successful, career English teachers, but the idea of success-as-heterosexual-men was woven into a tapestry of our various interpretations of masculinity. Gilligan (1982) suggests that our success as caring male teachers would actually require that kind of masculine display (in various forms) in order to be socially acceptable, which brings me back to the questions italicised at the beginning of this paragraph. Qualitative autoethnographic research into these questions seems as if it could be limitless.

5.2.2 The Theory of Gender Identity and Application to Findings

The construction of gender identity inside and outside of the secondary school English classroom seemed to push the interview subjects towards a description of themselves that suggested an essential or traditional performance of masculinity in the manner a snail maintains its shell rather than how a chameleon might change its colour in varied contexts (Warin, 2010). All of the men that I interviewed suggested that they are not essentially different inside and outside of the classroom and that they were essentially always 'masculine,' contrary to my experience. This would further the idea of a continuance of the theory of hegemonic masculinity that I have researched and then reported upon in my

thesis: male privilege—and especially male heterosexual privilege—allows for this kind of undisturbed continuance of a masculine conception self, regardless of context inside or outside of class. In other words, to be masculine is hegemonic and the context is subordinate to this expression.

One's perpetual identification as heterosexual and male in hegemonically-masculine, heteronormative societies strengthens frameworks of power which we secondary school male English teachers can access and utilise for dominance (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Also, the data from my research suggests that we can choose when and where to display a traditionally-masculine identity for our own benefit. To return to Warin's (2010) metaphor: it would be like the men I interviewed eschewing the snail's shell at key moments when something different than heterosexual masculinity was required (in class at times or otherwise) but then returning to it immediately when the context had changed: it is a performance of heterosexual masculine identity-as-default. This use of masculinity for one's own advantage—to enter and exit the "shell" as needed—is different than an attempt to deconstruct the unjust social advantage of masculine expression that one might undertake by eschewing that advantage when it would be more convenient not to do so. In other words, it is likely more challenging and perhaps more honest for heterosexual male teachers to be (if you will) chameleons than snails in the hegemonically-masculine, heteronormative educational landscape of secondary schools; a snail-like approach is much more likely to continue to receive a 'patriarchal dividend' (Lingard & Douglas, 1999).

Of the men I interviewed, I consider two of them, Tom and Dean, as adherents to the trope of hyper-masculinity (Kimmel, 2009). These men seemed somewhat reluctant to express themselves in anything other than heteronormative ways (Martino, 2008) and referred to their wives as a kind of foil or reverse-image to explain their own less-than-masculine traits (e.g. their wives are very strong people). Both men also unhesitatingly described themselves as being masculine inside and outside of the classroom. Additionally, Tom rejected the idea of being able to adjust or contextualise one's gender expression: for Tom, sex role and gender identity are fixed and congruent because, as he said, 'it's a matter of plumbing, isn't it?' and because 'he's comfortable with himself.' It is precisely for teachers like Tom that I have begun to think about extensions of this research into new projects such as teacher training.

5.2.3 Theory Regarding English Education and Application to Findings

My research suggested that all of the men involved in the study intended to be inclusive of women and girls in their classrooms and that the work of empowering women and girls was important. Theoretically, foregrounding a student's needs over the institution's demands suggests the reduction of and deconstruction of neoliberal, systemic forces upon education (Apple, 2001). All of the men in the study described making curricular choices which helped students feel successful individually via poetry or choices in texts or by designing writing assignments or discussion topics that they themselves were able to effect in their own

classroom; the research subjects did not describe anything like feeling subordinated to the institution. The irony here lies in the consideration of the power and agency the subjects of my research feel that they have to make these pedagogical choices. These (and I use the following adjective hesitatingly but for intentional effect, considering the field of inquiry) renegade decisions undergird general theory and findings discussed in the literature review chapter regarding how hegemonic masculinity is constructed and then perpetuated in society. Heterosexual men are rewarded and admired for—again, using these words for effect to describe the teachers' decisions—courageous, iconoclastic, and rebellious decisions which are symbolised by 'going one's own way' in the classroom. This situation suggests further research with female subjects as part of the study is necessary.

A Deweyan insistence upon the care and success of the individual student (Simpson, 2001) is also an important part of feminist theory in education, that the well-being of and care for the individual supersedes any kind of outcome or performance target within which an individual might be subsumed. The research subjects' dedication to individual students in their classrooms rejects the kind of masculinised, neoliberal teaching that can be described as disingenuous and performative (Ball, 2003). Popkewitz (2012) describes the focus on individual success rather than upon cultural expectation for a masculinised sort of success or achievement as a reduction in 'abjection.' All of the men I interviewed seemed committed to this concept and that each and every student in his class was worthy of inclusion. This commitment to inclusivity and the success of each student in the heterosexual secondary

school male's classroom, as evidenced in my interviews, has something to do with our

choices of a subject and profession with traditional associations to women. While the men

involved in the study did not describe having to interrupt their performance of masculinity

in order to be a secondary school English teacher, they did choose to make allowances for

what might be pathologised outside of the classroom (caring for the individual regardless of

systemic expectations; choosing inclusive texts rather than texts that imply abjection).

5.2.4 Queer Educational Theory and Application to Findings

Queer educational theory also resonates within my findings. Francis (2012) recasts Bakhtin's

linguistic concepts and encourages the disturbance of traditional, monoglossic narratives of

gender expression. Rather, Francis describes heteroglossic expressions of gender for educators

aware of and committed to Queer theory. Francis's theory regarding the problematisation of

gender constancy recasts Warin's (2010) comment upon the contextual, fluid expression of

one's gender identity. The men in my study were not necessarily aware of heteroglossic

constructions of gender for the purpose of the classroom ('It's just good teaching, isn't it?')

but were aware of their masculine identities as monoglossic extensions of their 'true selves,' a

fixed or unchangeable mark that would both support and result from the imbricate nature of

hegemonic masculinity. In a landscape—writ large societally, writ small educationally, and

writ even smaller when considered as the landscape within the walls of one's own secondary

school English classroom—that prioritises heterosexual masculine expression, the men in my

study had no real impetus to be other than traditionally masculine inside or outside of the classroom, perhaps because of the pathologising of homosexuality and Queerness in heteronormative, hegemonically-masculine society. This concept, again, could warrant further study.

The purpose of my research is not only to describe heterosexual male teachers' experience in the secondary school English classroom but also to trouble heterosexual male teachers' hegemonic expression of heterosexuality (Rodriguez, 2007) and so expand theory of how gender can be considered in education. This research can help make heterosexual male teachers aware of non-traditional, homosexual, or feminine expressions of gender identity and make possible a kind of recasting of self (Harris & Gray, 2014). Two of the subjects (Dennis and Mitchell) chose to discuss their own femininity, whether perceived by themselves or others, while Tom rejected the concept of gender fluidity or one's biological capability of behaving in ways other than 'straight male': to him, any other expression would seem disingenuous.

An ironic challenge for the heterosexual male secondary school English teacher is to maintain his guise of masculinity while also eschewing overt, crude expressions of laddishness (Jackson, 2006). None of the men interviewed, except, perhaps, for Tom, were marked by a kind of toxic masculinity (Skelton, 1993) or what might be considered laddish behaviour. All were in their own ways empathetic, aware, or even 'woke' men who,

nevertheless, either knowingly or unknowingly continued the presentation of a type of

traditional masculinity inside and outside of the classroom. While being a career secondary

school English teacher connotes something other than the type of toxic apex male figure

depicted by Michael Douglas in Wall Street (1987), Alec Baldwin in Glengarry, Glen Ross

(1992), or Leonardo Di Caprio in The Wolf of Wall Street (2013), the subjects in my study

did not generally reject what is strong or competitive to embrace what is pathologised as

"gay"; I had the sense that all of the men in my study, including myself, could easily "do lad."

Indeed, all of the men described their behaviour while watching sport at a bar as a

comfortable expression of masculinity for themselves or even as their "most male"

environment. Again, this data conjures Warin's (2010) conception of the snail and its

acceptable, fixed shell of hegemonic masculinity.

5.3 Part 2: The Application of Braided Autoethnography and Writing-as-Method To Findings

Contextually, the methodology of braided autoethnography (Tedlock, 2013) and the method

of 'writing as method' (Adams St. Pierre, 2018) have allowed me to consider and discuss my

own experiences as a complete member-researcher, or CMR (Adler & Adler, 1987), in the

field being researched. This position of subjectivity is a feminist researcher's perspective

(Warin, 2010) with which I can consider my 'privileged irresponsibility' (Tronto, 1993),

question my 'patriarchal dividend (Lingard & Douglas, 1999), and 'perform a labour of symbolic destruction and [consequent] construction' (Bourdieu, 2001).

The arrangement of the narratives within this braided autoethnography was an iterative and creative experience, a kind of large mosaic or pastiche of words which needed to hang together in a way to suggest something whole while also exposing differences. I would suggest that the braided autoethnographer has a responsibility not to arrange narratives in a way that would coerce the reader of a research objective or aim, however. The braided autoethnographer should attempt to arrange the narratives in an organic way that emerges from the researcher's description of their experience in the field. This, of course, has infinite possibilities because it is qualitative research in the autoethnographic tradition and reflects a braided autoethnographer's anti-foundational and relativistic theoretical positioning. As I developed my own narrative regarding my presentation of gender identity and masculinity in and out of the classroom, I also decided when and where the narratives of others might fit to reveal their stories and ideas most clearly.

Futhermore, as I began to write the autoethnographic narrative and explored what choices and influences might have driven me to question my own expression of gender in the classroom, I also began to feel the how deeply-emotional the research and writing would become. The process was naturally iterative and reflexive rather than forcedly fixed and positivistic, and this realisation made me more confident in my ontological and

epistemological positioning and reasoning for choosing braided autoethnography to investigate my research question. Each research situation—whether interviewing men for my study, researching literature to situate my project, conversing with my supervisor each month to both revise my ideas and find a path forward, or writing the thesis itself—has seemed to suggest or invite an array of new considerations for writing and research, and my feelings about my own status as a CMR have changed and changed again and changed yet again.

Even more concealed in my research has been the fact that throughout the entire project, I have continued my career as a secondary school English teacher and have reconsidered my gender expression in real time, each day, with my students. The world of my PhD research and the world of my classroom have become increasingly concordant as the days, weeks, months, and years have passed. During my research and writing, I have reconsidered my own expression of gender (how, when, where, why, and for what purpose). At times, my awareness of my own heteronormative, traditionally-masculine tendencies and habits towards an expression of identity as a teacher were and are so obvious to myself—but perhaps not to my students or colleagues—that I could not help but feel something like a coalescence of incredulity and embarrassment and shame and even a kind of deep sarcasm and black humour. This constantly-iterative plait, if you will, of the braided autoethnographic research has been fascinating and even exciting to consider. I would go so

far as to say that the awareness of my own expression of gender in the classroom has become

something heteroglossic, fluid, and alive.

Perhaps Ellis and Bochner were quite right when they suggested that autoethnographic

research can become a way of life.

5.4 Part 3: Recommendations for Further Research

5.4.1 Recommendation 1: Train Secondary School English Teachers to De-pathologise Homosexual Identity and Expression in the Classroom

We male heterosexual English teachers can misconstrue an Ethic of Care. Our

misconstruction of Gilligan's theory (1982) lies within our selection and use of literature

rather than with our manner of expressing gender. The purposeful use of feminist, non-

traditional literature in our classrooms can and does allow heterosexual male English

teachers to maintain and benefit from the imbricate, shifting frameworks of hegemonic

masculinity which we can still leverage as needed (Demetriou, 2001). The use of feminist,

non-canonical literature can be a kind of display of one's subscription to non-

heteronormative ideas or behaviours while the heterosexual male teacher does little to

change his own expression or, more essentially, his belief in the continued agency of

traditionally-masculine ideals such as strength, individuality, competitiveness, a lack of

emotion, expressions of violence, or otherwise in his own life. In a sense, the heterosexual

male secondary school English teacher can be compared to a heterosexual man who participates enthusiastically in a women's rights rally—correct sign made, correct tee shirt donned, correct slogans shouted—before getting back on the train home to settle in for a night of football down the pub with his mates. Teaching this way is, in a sense, "drop-in feminism."

"Drop-in" to feminism in our classrooms is not unlike the concept of "voluntourism." The do-good traveller immerses himself in a culture to "help" for a week and then returns to his own life feeling much better about himself and his contribution to the world. He does not, however, pause to reflect on the inequitable system which he maintains and from which he benefits that necessitated his "help" in the first place. The results of my research suggest that the men in my research study as well as myself do not promote feminist literature or feminist ideals in a constant and engaged way outside of our classrooms; one can infer that this is because of, either wholly or in part, the pathologisation of what is homosexual in a heteronormative culture. The "drop-in" promotion and use of feminist literature in class can ironically protect the structure of hegemonic masculinity we rely upon for social standing via traditionally-masculine expressions of self outside of the classroom.

Martino (2008) critically comments upon the mythologised role of the heterosexual male teacher in the classroom as a saviour or protector of children, the "role model." My research would suggest that something other than the male-secondary-school-English-teacher-as-

heterosexual-role-model is needed. Rather, heterosexual men who are not only comfortable with but who are also trained to express themselves in other-than-traditionally-hegemonically-masculine ways could begin to de-pathologise homosexuality in the secondary school English classroom. An ethical foundation for the value system of such a training program could be found in the Ethic of Care (Gilligan, 1982). To be sure, there is scant literature which comments upon how heterosexual male secondary teachers—to say nothing of heterosexual male secondary English teachers—should consider their own gender and sexuality in teacher training programs in order to increase gender sensitivity and to de-pathologise homosexuality. My research suggests that a training program is needed to broaden the scope of what a male teacher "role model" means as well as to train heterosexual male teachers to think critically about how they express gender.

5.4.2 Recommendation 2: Train Secondary School English Teachers in Gender Sensitivity

We are not yet fully aware of what our various expressions of hegemonic masculinity construe for our students or even for our colleagues; we are still straight men relying on our 'patriarchal dividend' (Lingard & Douglas, 1999) to teach secondary school English as we see fit. Also, and perhaps because of our male privilege, Wetherell and Edley (1999) suggest a kind of tacit understanding or ease of what's happening between ourselves rather than considering what others might perceive in us; this is problematic.

We can become more sensitive to issues of gender and can develop teacher training for men

to reduce abjection, 'the casting out and exclusion of particular qualities of people from the

spaces of inclusion' (Popkewitz, 2012, p. 6). More specifically, it is important that we become

aware of our own particular qualities that might make people who are not heterosexual men

feel unintentionally cast out or excluded. It is here that our awareness of and commitment to

the devaluing of hegemonic masculinity and its socially-acceptable, traditionally-masculine,

and often-toxic expressions of power, strength, individuality, and emotion can foster a more

equitable classroom.

An intentional turn towards gender sensitisation in education in which teachers are not only

trained to avoid stereotyping of traditional gender-related behaviours but also to 'change

one's views and limited perspectives and values' regarding gender (Chan, 2010) could be a

helpful development of this research. For example, what if students in the secondary school

English classroom were greeted not by a teacher who, on the first day of class, decided to

review the syllabus and the seating chart and the method of assessment and grading for the

semester but rather by a teacher who asked the students to write about their hopes and fears

for the first week in his classroom and how he (the teacher) might get to know them better

(and then, perhaps, directing them to the website where they can review the syllabus and

procedures on their own time)? What if the same teacher wrote alongside the students and

expressed their own hopes and fears for the first week together? This kind of beginning

awareness of the Ethic of Care and of gender sensitivity—moving from a position of speaking

to a position of listening, from a position of one who tells students what to think to one who receives instructions from students about how to construct sensitive, caring, and gender-aware curricular decisions—could begin to shape how male secondary school English teachers in particular and, more broadly, how teachers in general are trained.

5.4.3 Recommendation 3: Theorise a Masculine Ethic of Care

Post-feminist scholars such as Tronto (1993) and Tong (2009) argue that non-gendered expressions of care are necessary. I do not agree and would like to return to Warin's helpful metaphors of the snail and the chameleon. All of the men I interviewed were quite aware of their own gender and its expression both inside and outside of the classroom, and all argued that their gender identity was either very much constant or something like constant, regardless of context (e.g. 'I am myself').This suggests Warin's snail and shell, of course, and it also suggests Connell's initial description of the powerful influence that hegemonic masculinity holds over culture.

After reviewing a portion of the considerable literature on the topic of gender and its masculine expression—I am not sure I could read it all in a lifetime—as well as reviewing post-feminist literature on the concept of genderless expressions of care, and after considering this literature against the findings of my interviews as well as my own autoethnographic writing, I do not think that a de-gendered expression of care in the

classroom is possible. We can, however, work to detach our gender identity from heteronormative, homophobic expressions and behaviour. Therefore, I can express care as a man, but I should learn to express care and gender in ways that are not always regarded positively or "safe" in a heteronormative world. I should attempt to deconstruct to the imbricate nature of hegemonic masculinity in society, and I can do this with my choice of how to express care. As a heterosexual male teacher, I should be trained to understand and express progressive conceptions of gender and identity.

There is much work to be done regarding how to train teachers to care for students in their classrooms in ways that are inclusive of homosexual, feminist, and LGBTQ+ perspectives. This suggestion is different than simply choosing representative literature to read with students, which I commented upon and attempted to explain earlier in this section. The work I advocate here would, rather, focus on dismantling patriarchy so that the symbolic selection of non-canonical literature by a teacher in the secondary school English classroom happens in a space in which all students are cared for and taught in ways that contribute to the conclusion of socially-acceptable expressions of hegemonic masculinity.

5.4.4 Recommendation 4: Develop training for teachers who have survived abuse

A critical awakening that emerged from my autoethnographic research was unexpected: I had not considered myself, before this research, as a survivor of childhood abuse and neglect.

As a result of this reconsideration, my thesis has become something of an Oedipal exercise for me: I know I must face its relative horrors to understand the subjective truth of how I behave, both as an educator and as a man.

To clarify, the draft of my autoethnography stretched to more than 30,000 words and included detailed reflections upon my childhood and adolescence and the critical awakenings regarding gender and identity which occurred during those years. My father loomed quite large in these reflections, and his abuse of me became clearer and clearer as I wrote. To fit the parameters of my thesis, however, I needed to cut much of my writing to respect the word limit for this submission. Perhaps the chapters I wrote about my childhood and adolescence could find form in another way someday.

My own survival of my father's abuse and neglect as a young person and the phenomenon of my sensitivity to gender and its expression in the classroom necessitates more research and discussion. In particular, I would like to research and interview teachers who identify themselves as survivors of childhood abuse and neglect—perhaps even narrowing this research to teachers who have survived abuse from their fathers. I want to know more about how they construct their gender identity and expression of masculinity as well as how they might express caring as an educator. I would also want to know why they, as survivors of abuse, have chosen to become teachers. In this research, I think there is important

knowledge to be gained with these questions so that educators can promote a wider concept of social justice via gender identity and expression.

Furthermore, I have begun to understand and would like to suggest here that my expression of gender in the classroom is an important, if still misunderstood, way that I have unintentionally and instinctively found to heal myself from that abuse. I take it upon myself each day as I "become a teacher" (and despite my tantrums about being late to school, et al.) to be a man who is kind and who can listen, who helps and who does not hurt, who can encourage rather than belittle, and who can become upset or frustrated without becoming violent. I think that because of the abuse I suffered from my father as a child and young man, I did not think that I was capable of these behaviours, and I often do not feel capable of them in my life away from the classroom, as incongruent as that feeling may be with my actual behaviour. Nevertheless, for much of my life, I used my masculinity to protect myself and show others how strong I was; inside, however, I felt that I really was a fake or an impostor regarding anything like kindness or decency or being "a good man."

These doubts, even now as I write at my table in my peaceful home, can plague and shame me, and I think they probably will to a certain degree for the rest of my life. But I feel that this research and, perhaps just as importantly, this nascent methodology of braided autoethnography, has revealed to me a way to begin addressing these doubts; perhaps other educators who have experienced a similar journey could also find answers in the

methodology of braided autoethnographic research. I would like to work with researchers in educational psychology to develop teacher training as a way to heal what has happened to us and to feel more comfortable expressing ourselves and our identity in kind and caring ways. Our ideas regarding a healthy expression of masculinity are aberrant not only because of the hegemonically-masculine, heteronormative culture in which we exist but also because of the abusive and violent fathers we have survived.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will be structured into five parts. In Part One, I will review the aim of my research question and how it has been met; in Part Two, I will review the objectives for my research question and how they have been met. In Part Three, I will give recommendations for further consideration regarding the research I have undertaken. In Part Four, I will describe the contribution to knowledge that has emerged from this research and how this contribution to knowledge occurs within a gap in the literature. In Part Five, I will describe how I have changed as a researcher.

6.2 Part 1: Research Aim and How It Has Been Met

The aim of my research is to describe the experience of heterosexual male secondary school English teachers' expressions of gender and masculinity in the classroom. I have accomplished this aim because of the chosen methodological approach and methodology used for this braided autoethnographic study. Braided autoethnography is a methodology that fits the aim of the research in that the researcher is compelled to braid their own narrative into the narratives of other research subjects (Tedlock, 2013). For this research project, then, I narrate my own lived experience as a Complete Member Researcher, or CMR, (Adler & Adler, 1987) and describe the experiences of other CMRs for the research question.

We are all heterosexual male secondary school English teachers. This focus and methodology

have allowed me to achieve the aim of my research.

6.3 Part 2: The Research Objectives and How They Have Been Met

6.3.1 Research Objective 1: Locate and Describe My Lived Experience as a Heterosexual Male Secondary School English Teacher

Much of my findings section is comprised of my autoethnographic narrative. The borders of

my narrative are defined by the concept of "critical awakenings," which echoes the concept

of "epiphanic insights" (Bochner and Ellis, 2016, p. 91; Denzin, 1996; Ellis et al., 2011). My

reflection upon my own lived experience as a heterosexual boy and man in a hegemonically-

masculine culture and how it had a qualitatively-causal effect upon my expression of gender

in the secondary school English classroom is important to note here.

6.3.2 Research Objective 2: Research and Describe the Experiences of Other Male Secondary School English Teachers

The "braids" of the braided autoethnography are comprised of my narrative re-telling of the

semi-structured interviews I conducted with other CMRs. Locating and then interviewing

these men during the onset of COVID-19 was difficult and most likely limited the scope of

my research, but nevertheless I gained valuable insights into the lived experiences of other

men who teach secondary school English. These insights described under the headings

'Braiding It In' in the Findings chapter both aligned with and deviated from my experience

of the presentation of gender and masculinity in the secondary school English classroom.

6.3.3 Research Objective 3: Apply Theory of Hegemonic Masculinity, Gender Identity, Queer Theory in Education, and Secondary School English Education to the Findings of My Research

Because of the usefulness of braided autoethnography as a methodology to excavate and

investigate my research question, I was able to apply the aforementioned theories to my

findings in the discussion section of this thesis. Because the narratives of the men I

interviewed both aligned with and deviated from my own lived experience as a CMR, or

complete member-researcher of the community (Adler & Adler, 1987), the dissonance of the

theoretical applications to my findings holds much interest for me and suggests that further

research is needed in this area of study.

6.3.4 Research Objective 4: Consider the Findings of My Research in a Way That Will Suggest Further Development of Teacher Training Methods

The theoretical implications for this objective are important for consideration here. Because I have found both congruence and incongruence in the qualitative findings of this research, these findings would suggest that teachers would benefit from further training, which I will describe in the 'Recommendations' section of this chapter.

6.4 Part 3: Contribution to Knowledge

I have shown for the first time that there is a consideration of one's construction of gender identity by male heterosexual secondary school English teachers. Before my research, there was no focused and articulated consideration of this subgroup in this way. More specifically, I have shown for the first time that men who are heterosexual secondary school English teachers construct masculinity in the classroom to either attempt to continue a fixed presentation of gender identity and/or to intentionally trouble our presentation of gender identity. We can "remain ourselves" in the classroom and/or "become someone entirely different" than we are away from school.

Regarding how we construct and present gender identity, I have shown for the first time that heterosexual male secondary school English teachers can attempt to construct gender identity by selecting feminist reading materials for the students, by developing caring, appropriately-emotional relationships with students, or by "just being ourselves" as heterosexual men. We can select multiple ways of presenting our gender identity without

being troubled because of the hegemonically-masculinised world in which we live and from which we receive privilege.

In my research, I have argued that these constructions of gender identity emerge from the overarching framework of hegemonic masculinity in which we live. Living in a hegemonically-masculinised world allows us heterosexual male secondary school English teachers to recuperate our masculinity whenever we wish, and this is a troubling conclusion regarding my contribution to knowledge. Whether we heterosexual secondary school English teachers are consciously or unconsciously constructing masculine identity in the classroom, these constructions continue to suggest a strong link between sex and gender identity for us: we can conveniently recuperate our masculinity whether we are inside the classroom or outside of it. This is not new *theoretical* knowledge, but this *is* new knowledge regarding the theories I have relied upon in my research as they apply to heterosexual male secondary school English teachers and how and why we construct gender identity in the classroom.

Another way I have contributed to knowledge is through my development of a new method of research: braided autoethnography. While braided autoethnography is similar to other autoethnographic approaches such as dyadic interviews or interactive interviews (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011), it is different and separable from them as well. One way that braided autoethnography is a new method is that it suggests that the researcher is a complete

member-researcher, or CMR (Adler & Adler, 1987), of the field they are researching. This

membership allows for the second way that braided autoethnography is a new method: the

collection, interpretation, and then presentation of data from interviews with other members

of one's field is organic, inventive, undefined, and even modernist in its nature. Because the

researcher understands the field intimately, they can use their experience to purposefully

'braid' data in novel ways. Prior to my research, the practical ideas I have described here

regarding the presentation of Tedlock's concept of braiding autoethnography (2013) were not

known; it is a new way of conducting autoethnographic research.

The Ethic of Care
(Gilligan, 1982;
Noddings, 1984)

Theory of
Hegemonic
Masculinity
(Connell, 1985)

Male English
Teachers and
Gender Identity;
Braided
Autoethnography
Curnett, 2021

Theory of Gender
and Identity
(Butler, 1990 &
2004; Warin, 2010,
2018)

Queer Theory and
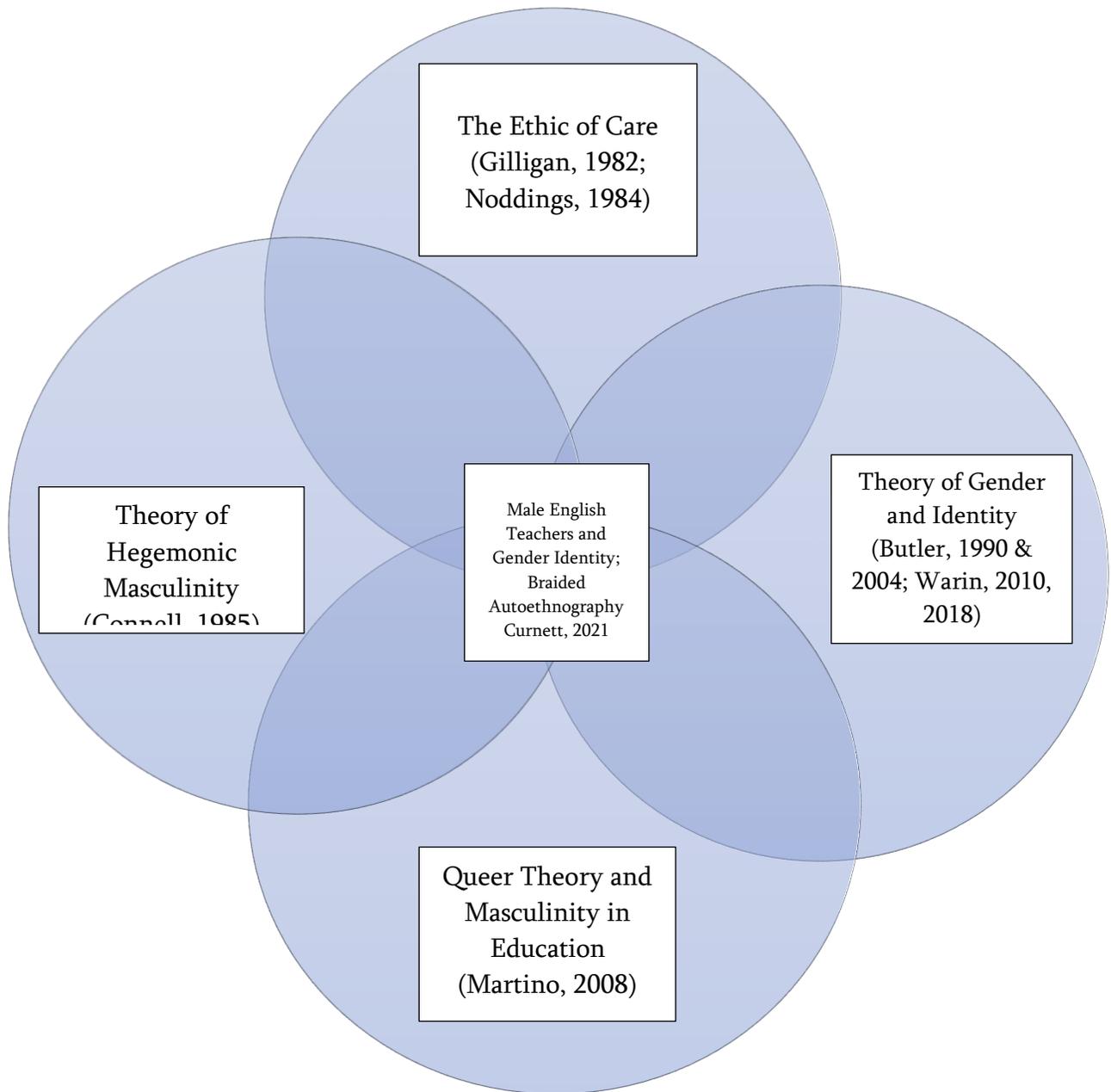Masculinity in
Education
(Martino, 2008)

Figure 6.4.1 The Location of This Research in the Literatures

6.5 Part 4: Recommendations

6.5.1 Recommendation 1: Continue to Research This Question as well as Variations of This Question, as Qualitative investigations into This Field of Study can be Considered Inexhaustible

The research question for this project, 'How and why do heterosexual men present gender in the secondary English classroom?', is one that is open for more research than my study has considered. Of course, I hope to have the opportunity to continue researching this question as written. However, variations upon this question are also important to consider: the framework of the question could accommodate variations in language to catalyse possible further research. For example, a qualitative autoethnographic study of the experience of homosexual male teachers and the presentation of gender in the secondary English classroom would be important to broaden the findings of this initial research. A similar study focusing on the experience of women who teach secondary school English and their presentation of gender would also be important as well as a study of how transgender teachers experience the presentation of gender in a secondary school English classroom. Furthermore, studies which qualitatively investigate the experiences of secondary teachers—regardless of sex role,

sexuality, or subject area of expertise—and their presentation of gender in the classroom

would be important for furthering this study's initial implications for what we now know.

6.5.2 Recommendation 2: Further Develop Braided Autoethnographic Methodological Theory

While Barbara Tedlock's suggestion that braiding analytical and evocative autoethnography

should be used as a way to construe relativistic and anti-foundational meaning by

considering the lived experiences of complete member researchers in a given field (2013),

her description of the idea is brief and can benefit from further development. I would

recommend that autoethnographic researchers committed to qualitative representations of

subjective truth for a sociological context or field would gain from a more robust and

detailed consideration of this nascent methodology. For example, there are many well-

referenced names in the field of autoethnography such as Carolyn Ellis, Arthur Bochner,

Leon Anderson, and Norman Denzin as well as Barbara Tedlock, but none of these

researchers has described the theory and method of braided autoethnographic research.

Two suggestions for further developing the method of braided autoethnography are

described here. My first suggestion is to clearly describe the positioning of the researcher.

The tool of braided autoethnography necessitates the researcher's commitment to and belief

in the relativistic and anti-foundational nature of lived experience. Meaning is described

rather than objectively revealed. Therefore, the braided autoethnographer must use their descriptive writing skills to evoke the lived experiences of other CMRs within a field and use others' experiences as filters, sounding boards, obstacles, and/or loudspeakers for one's own lived experience.

A second suggestion for the development braided autoethnography would be to create a methodological framework for braided autoethnographers. This framework could describe how to position oneself as a researcher, how to identify complete member researchers in the field, and how to collect data through semi-structured interviews. Most importantly, however, this framework would outline how a braided autoethnographer can write the narratives of others' lived experiences and position those narratives (as previously described) relative to one's own experience.

6.5.3 Recommendation 3: Develop and Plan a Teacher-Training Program to Reduce or Eradicate the Linking of Sex Role to Expression of Tacit and Normative Hegemonic Masculinity in the Secondary School Classroom

Gender sensitivity training is recognised in the field of education. Gender sensitivity training programs generally have one of two foci: teachers can be more aware of and sensitive to the gender identities of their students, and teachers can be more aware of and sensitive to the gender identities of their colleagues. However, there is little research or programming to

suggest that heterosexual male schoolteachers unintentionally but nevertheless continue the maintenance of a hegemonically-masculine society because of their own presentation of gender in the classroom.

The findings of my research as well as informal conversations with heterosexual male colleagues over the course of writing my thesis would suggest that even introductory readings and discussions of the concept of hegemonic masculinity or masculine tropes of being would go far in raising awareness of heterosexual male educators about our implied cultural power and why it exists. Furthermore, a teacher training developed in tandem with an educational psychologist could help create a framework for men who teach school to discuss the more challenging or toxic qualities of our masculinities rather than using them or, perhaps, hiding them and behaving as if they do not exist.

Schools could benefit in different ways from such frameworks and trainings for awareness of gender identity in heterosexual male employees in areas such as hiring, staff development, human resources, and school administration. For example, what if schools began to promote ways of expressing gender which promoted an Ethic of Care for all teachers, regardless of sex role, gender expression, or sexuality? Alternatively, what if heterosexual men were given safe spaces via training to reconsider and recast their own expressions of masculinity in the classroom?

6.6 Part 5: How I Have Changed as A Researcher

I would like to conclude this chapter with a reflection on how I have changed as a researcher and, perhaps more importantly, as a secondary school English teacher. Before I began this research, I was vaguely aware of my expression of gender as a heterosexual male in the secondary classroom. I came to realise, however, that my expression of masculinity seemed quite different when I was teaching than it was when I was away from school. As I have mentioned throughout my research, I felt constrained by hegemonic masculinity while away from class and freed from it while teaching. With my students in the transgressive space of the classroom, I can laugh, cry, dance, emote, draw, encourage, listen, and "be a man" any number of ways regarding how I show that I care for my students. These expressions, however, have not been comfortable for me and often remain uncomfortable for me away from the classroom. With friends and family, I can lose myself in easy tropes of heteronormative masculinity and feel that I can wrap myself in it and become invisible, really: nobody will expect much from me if I simply present what I need to in a particular context to "do heterosexual man." After completing this thesis, I now wonder about undoing a lifetime of having learned to erase myself in these ways.

Having undertaken this research and writing has allowed me to reconsider my masculinity and its expression. If anything, I am more unguarded in the classroom now as I think about the research of Butler, Gilligan, Connell, Martino or Warin and their collectively-progressive

theories and considerations for the expression of gender. I am determined to detoxify my own masculine expression as a teacher; usually this means that I actually say (tactfully, of course) what I am feeling about a situation rather than use a cliché or remain silent. Also, since undertaking this research, I have intentionally been more emotionally vulnerable with students in my classes. For example, the easiest thing in the world for me is to "talk footy." I have begun to refrain from doing this—though I do not think I will ever completely avoid its reflexive quality in me—and have started, instead, to ask students how they are and how they are feeling, for instance, about COVID-19 and their families. The responses have been surprising and inspiring; students seem to appreciate that I am giving them a space to talk about something personal or emotional and am willing to listen to them. Furthermore, if a student does actually say something emotional, I intentionally follow up with them the next time about what they said. When considered within the vast night-time sky of a socially-just secondary education, my few examples here seem like tiny and very distant stars. But they are luminary nonetheless; perhaps further research and training can allow more and more points of light to emerge.

Because of this research, I am also intentionally taking action to trouble heteronormative expression and consideration by heterosexual male teachers. For example, I recently spoke to faculty at my school about my research during a teacher-training day, and I will be speaking to faculty again next month (as I write). Additionally, I recently promoted Transgender Awareness Week, November 13-19, 2020, in my classes: I showed a slide deck explaining

what it means to be transgender and why it is normal, and I also explained that sex role,

sexuality, and gender expression are separable ideas and that it is normal to have differing

sexual attractions and gender expressions and sex roles. Afterwards, a transgender student I

teach came to me and thanked me profusely for the acknowledgement of his identity and

lived experience, that a teacher had never done such a thing before.

I was deeply grateful for my identity as a researcher for social justice in gender and education

in that moment.

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