BOYS DOING ART: NEGOTIATING MASCULINITIES WITHIN ART CURRICULUM.

By

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ABSTRACT

A recent stream of gender discussion has focused on a better understanding of the ways in which boys construct their concepts of masculinity, and the role of schools in this process. However, what has largely escaped attention has been the ways that individual subject curricula provide boys with opportunities to develop their concepts of gender.

A participant-as-observer ethnography was conducted over one academic year in a single-sex, fee-paying school for boys to examine this issue. Evidence from informal and formal observations and interviews of 40 staff and students was used to document participants’ beliefs concerning the structure of masculinity, the provision of opportunities within the school and art curriculum for boys to negotiate their concepts of masculinity, and the role of art curriculum in boys’ development of gender identities.

Participants’ responses created a four-layered model of boys’ engagement of masculinity. They allowed the researcher to describe and analyse a complex hierarchy of forms of such engagement that ranged from a superficial level comprising a predictable picture of stereotypes, to an almost inaccessible layer of “individual” masculinities. This final layer, described by boys as separate from their culture and constructed of their personal values and beliefs, owned characteristics similar to those being sought by contemporary gender research.

Six barriers that limited boys’ access to this final layer were identified in the school. They included the dominance of cultural stereotypes, a lack of a safe forum for the exploration of gender identities and an emphasis on a school curriculum that failed to facilitate expression. Additional barriers were related to the lack of freedom within classrooms, curriculum that generally came short of accommodating boys’ unique ways of learning, and very limited opportunities to develop egalitarian relationships.

Participants identified the school’s art curriculum as “boy-friendly”, in that it assisted boys to overcome these barriers. It held personal significance for boys, mandated exploration of “the self”, created a safe venue for expression and communication, and provided academic, intellectual and curricula freedom. It “levelled the playing field” between differing types of boys, allowed multiple solutions to problems, offered
curriculum that was relevant to boys “real” lives, was non-competitive, and allowed teachers to focus on “the personal” with boys.

These findings hold considerable significance for both art education and masculinity research. The study indicates that many boys already own the impetus to explore egalitarian masculinities. However, they require curricular support for this to happen in schools. Research presented in this thesis suggests that a discipline-oriented art curriculum owns epistemological and pedagogical qualities that can make it an exemplar of this type of curriculum.
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PREFACE

Some aspects of the data included in this thesis have been explored in articles that have either been previously published, or are currently in the process of publication, by this author.

The discussion of the various disciplinary approaches to masculinity (pages 27-62) was published in 2000 under the title “Multiple masculinities and the schooling of boys” in the Canadian Journal of Education, 25, (2) 152-164.

Boys’ responses to the interview questions concerning art education (pages 224-244) are currently in press by Australian Art Education under the title “Boys talk about ‘doing art’: Some implications for art education.”

Malcolm’s story, and the associated discussion concerning boys and art education (pages 8 to 21), is currently under review by Art Education under the title “Searching for meaning in one boys’ experiences doing art”.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to my Doctoral Supervisor, Professor Anna Kindler (Department of Curriculum Studies, University of British Columbia, and now Dean, School of Creative Arts, Sciences and Technology, Hong Kong Institute of Education) for her assistance not only during this project, but also throughout my whole graduate studies. Professor Kindler has been untiring in her attention to my many academic needs. I thank her for her professionalism, her friendship, her support, and her genuine interest in my growth as a researcher. I could not have hoped for a more skilled mentor.

I would like to thank the members of my doctoral committee, Professor Jane Gaskell (Associate Dean, Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia) and Professor Donald Fisher (Department of Education Studies, University of British Columbia), for their wisdom, patience and guidance. It must be a challenge to act in this role to a student living on a different continent. Professor Gaskell and Professor Fisher provided excellent advice on critical issues. I am indebted to their efforts.

The Principal, staff and students of “Greene’s College” are owed a special thanks. They were overwhelmingly supportive of the project from my first approach in 1997, and continued this interest through to the completion of the thesis. The art staff, in particular “Meg”, and “Victor” were instrumental in making Boys Doing Art a success. I cannot begin to describe the generosity with which they treated me. With little or no reward possible, they continually opened their doors and fully encouraged my investigation of their teaching. Likewise, many of the staff (both teaching and administrative) and boys of Greene’s College participated with enthusiasm in this project by giving of their time, and “opening up” in a way that allowed the ideas contained in this text to grow.

My children Tyson and Phoebe (and now, recently, Lachlan) deserve acknowledgement for their support through patience. During the long years of our graduate studies, Christine and I often discussed the rewards that children receive when they watch their parents role model the many struggles and accomplishments of studentship. Now that this time is past I can state that these rewards come at a considerable cost. A lack of finances, a pre-occupied father, and hours spent listening to mind-numbing discussions were the reality of their lives for some time. While the spectacular environment of Western Canada, and the lifelong friendships formed with the
wonderful people of Vancouver were a huge benefit of our time there, Tyson and Phoebe are to be commended on the maturity they displayed in accepting their lot with a spirit of adventure.

My wife Christine has been a partner in my studies for many years. Her interest, enthusiasm and willingness to discuss the many aspects of the project’s progress were the foundation of its eventual successful completion. Christine accepted without murmur the increased workload my studies caused, and supported my progress even when I felt none existed. It is because of her support and confidence in my abilities that I am now able to look back on a rewarding and profitable period of my life.

I pass on my heartfelt thanks to the teaching staff of the Faculty of Education with whom I had contact, and particularly to those within the Department of Curriculum Studies who guided my development for a number of years. I must also thank The University of British Columbia for their generous financial support through the endowment of University Graduate Fellowships in 1997, 1999, 2000 and 2001. I add my thanks to the Department of Language, Literacy and Arts Education at the University of Melbourne, Australia, for its support during the final writing and defence stages of this project. From this University, I am also indebted to Ms Kate Donelan, a most willing listener and knowledgeable adviser, and Mr Chris Ullbrick, a master of software issues, for their valued help.
DEDICATION

To Mike Pickering. A wonderful man.
SECTION I: ANTECEDENTS

Introduction to Section I:

The Ill-defined But Inescapable Link Between Curriculum and Boys’ Masculinity Development

Boys Doing Art is situated at the intersection of contemporary masculinity theory and art education curriculum. The study explores the wonderful phenomenon of boys doing art, and the special role art curriculum can play as they negotiate with their peers their individual concepts of “being male”. In the process, the project makes the case that masculinity is not a mysterious entity removed from boys daily experiences; rather, boys engage daily with their peers in negotiating and mediating their own values and beliefs about masculinity. As such, masculinity a multiple construct, is constantly in a state of movement as a concept, and the school curriculum, particularly art curriculum, plays an important role as a vehicle for these actions. The link between art curriculum and masculinity development is very real, much utilised by boys, and inescapably linked to many boys’ active development of masculine mores.

The text is divided into three sections. They slowly immerse us into what is a complex issue, beginning with the Antecedents; what we know, think we know, and should know about masculinity. The second section, Methodology, frames the study itself; how it was planned, its methodology, and the basic background information of the site school, gained during a preliminary “pilot study”. The third section, The Study, immerses us into the lives of a number of boys and members of staff, by recording their ideas and beliefs and actions. These observations are influenced by my own biases as a teacher and a researcher. But owing to the inclusion of considerable amounts of participants’ own comments and observations, I hope the ideas represented and
conclusions drawn are presented with enough impartiality to allow the reader to form individual interpretations of what was seen and heard. This section concludes by applying results from this study to the wider context of current masculinity debate in schools, and suggestions are made concerning future directions for education strategies and gender research.

Section I positions provides background information to the study by positioning the researcher in terms of his interests and the particular lens through which he views this phenomenon, by describing previous research (and lack of research) on this topic, and by placing Boys Doing Art within this literature.
Chapter 1: Framing the Issues - Art and the “Mysteries” of Masculinity

An Overview of the Chapter

Inquiries into educational practice are often inspired by teachers’ experiences in the classroom. This study is no different. My curiosity about boys doing art was slowly shaped by the actions of many boys across a decade of teaching. Of the hundreds of incidents I witnessed, some events and some students were, perhaps subconsciously, identified as “significant” and book-marked in my memory for future appraisal. This chapter will situate Boys Doing Art within such beginnings by providing an account of the way that one boy’s experience of operating within the art curriculum has ramifications well beyond the immediacy of his situation. Using this vignette, in Chapter 1 I will outline the key issues to be addressed in Boys Doing Art; I will situate in a preliminary way these issues within the broader field of boys’ schooling issues; I will define the parameters of this study; I will describe the structure of the report and its limitations.

Some Questions Concerning Boys “In Isolation”

Walking towards Greene’s College 1 I am struck by the fact that as a structure it is not at all what I expected. Its physical presence seems so much at odds with its reputation. From my experience with privileged private schools, and from what I’d heard about Greene’s College, I expected something grand; a magnificent main entrance, or an impressive facade, or rows of award winning buildings stretching out of sight. Instead, I am faced with something quite humble and unpretentious, a medium-sized flat building that looks like it has been given secondary position to a number of sports fields on the site.

1 This is a pseudonym. In a move characteristic of its openness, the school requested to waive its right to anonymity. It was my decision to continue to use pseudonyms in order to protect the identity of individual participants.
With all this space available, its single storey structure is surprisingly close to the street, hiding quite meekly behind a row of cedars. The inconspicuous brick walls, the low-slung roofline, and the school’s uncomplicated gardens around its perimeters, all help to create a feeling of comfortable existence without ostentatious trappings. In a way, the school’s architecture makes rather unimpressionable first impact on a visitor.

The only hint of affluence from the first view of Greene’s College, the only indication this place owns a privileged status amongst schools in the Western Canadian city that is its home, is a clerestory ceiling rising from the centre of the school block and running half the building’s length. This metal and glass edifice strikes me as architectural whimsy, as something that is uncharacteristic to the rest of the structure, and as being suggestive of extravagance somewhere at the heart of this institution. My impression is that it is the only outward sign that this school has money, it has prestige, and it enjoys privilege, the rewards earned from sixty years of successfully catering to the schooling needs of some of this city’s wealthiest children.

In spite of the non-intimidating nature of the building, I am still quite nervous approaching the school. I feel overwhelmed by the feeling that I am being presumptuous in assuming some mandate to impose myself into the life of this place. However, the fact is that I have been given permission to be an observer for a school year amongst the people of Greene’s College, to ask questions and to record their daily lives. My purpose is to report how its inhabitants view complex phenomena that are challenging educators into the twenty first century – the mysteries surrounding the way we are schooling our young males towards “manhood”.

Looking at Greene’s College I realise that there is no better place to begin my search for answers. This school only educates boys, and its concentration of young men in
one place is going to be very efficient for my study. Of greater interest, however, is that by being single-sex, its covert function is to “school for the man”, to take young boys and prepare them for their various roles in society. I am intensely interested in this phenomenon because it presents, in an actual education setting, something that is normally only theorised.

Educators are beginning to discuss more widely the idea of “schooling for masculinity”, and here, in this all-boy school, there is an example of it being enacted. However, choosing a single-sex school does have its drawbacks. The current climate of contemporary gender research in education often portrays such institutions to be an anachronism. Boys, this research claims, already enjoy the privilege of being the dominant gender and we do not need schools that try to accentuate this advantage. Schools that have resisted “going co-ed” during the sweeping wave of gender reform during the 1980s, it is argued, have ignored the reality of what “gender” means in the new age, and this has condemned them to a slow and ponderous shuffle towards extinction. Certainly, during my reading on this subject I have not found any influential genre of research that supports all-boys’ schools. By all rights, I should be avoiding this elite, privileged and exclusionary place like the plague. Yet, as I walk towards Greene’s College and question in my mind just what I really am hoping to do here over the next year, I feel excited by a strong sense of purpose. My aim is to gain a better understanding of boys’ and their schooling. My experience suggests this is the best place to begin.

This sense of “rightness” owes it roots to my many years of classroom teaching. For a decade before beginning graduate studies, I taught in primary and secondary schools in Australia. One of those schools was also all-boys, an institution with a similar “feel” to Greene’s College. That school was about the same size in terms of student numbers, it
had a similar reputation amongst the community, and I suppose it also had a common purpose. During those years as a teacher and administrator of art, I witnessed what I felt were both positive and negative issues to do with all-boys' schools. I accepted as logical the argument that the lack of girls meant boys missed some valuable "social skills" development. I accepted the assumption that so many boys together created a heightened sense of "machismo" with a result being a corresponding sexist school culture. I could also see how the bond of "brotherhood", created so strongly in these schools, resulted in an elitist network among its graduates as they lived out their lives in the community.

Certainly some of the practices of these schools were questionable. They had a largely male staff, justified on the grounds that "boys need role models" (except for the almost exclusively female staff teaching the early years where, conversely, they were not described a role models but as "nurturers"). The rhetoric "we do better without girls" created an arrogant and worrying image. An unpleasant aura of privilege and elitism permeated most levels of these schools.

I drew on these reflections often during my graduate studies as I considered and questioned the merits or otherwise of all-boy education. To reinforce my negativity, my fellow education students' automatic litany of the disadvantages of these schools worked in tandem with the predictable treatment and surprisingly sparse representation of single-sex boys' schools in the academic literature. Eventually, however, my mind began to register inconsistencies between, on the one hand, the theory that these schools were "hot houses of chauvinism", and on the other hand, many of the things I remember seeing while working in such institutions. Contrary to boys always marginalizing "the other", I remembered specific instances where boys I taught actively embraced what could only be called egalitarian concepts of gender. Rather than being aggressive and oppressive I
remembered specific examples of boys I taught coming to me for help with the harassment they were experiencing not from their peers but from staff, parents, and even from girls in sister schools. Rather than being non-communicative, insular and non-expressive, I remembered specific examples of boys I taught actively negotiating with others their individual beliefs concerning violence, rape, social injustice, wealth, race, equality, homosexuality, and so on. My own experience in all-boys' schools brought me to the realisation that educational literature on this topic was deficient, possibly to the point of misrepresentation. I surprised myself by beginning to question if there might be many positive attributes of all-boys' schools that went against the arguments I had previously accepted without question.

Although I was feeling an increasing discomfort about these gaps in the literature, I never the less stopped short of a determination to justify the existence of all-boys schools. They are quite capable of defending themselves, and they have often been insulated by their wealth from the need to do so. I eventually realised that my increasing discomfort did not come from this "misrepresentation" of all-boys' schools, but from the descriptions of the boys themselves. When analysing these institutions researchers were, for once, challenged to deal with boys in isolation. Thus, reading about male single-sex schools opened the door to the literature that dealt with boys within gender debate.

As I immersed myself in the literature, I developed a suspicion that educational researchers appeared to know very little about boys' actual practices. Although (or perhaps because) boys were rarely specifically addressed, their role in studies concerning a myriad of gender concerns in education tended towards generalisations about what they thought and why they acted the way they did. Boys dominated discussions, boys bullied, boys relegated girls to positions of inferiority, boys were selective in their subject choices.
and they marginalised those who differed from the norm. The literature contained monolith assumptions about boys, and suggested that few writers had stopped to listen to what boys actually had to say, or to ask them what their behaviours really meant. This omission was critical because, in my experience, boys had much to offer in the quest for gender-equal schooling, if only we would listen.

On that winter morning, looking at the facade of Greene’s College, the strong sense of purpose I felt came from the realisation that many boys taught by me over the years had been challenging me to explore in greater depth the phenomenon of their masculine development. Their actions in my art classes had been showing me that education’s comprehensive theoretical knowledge about gender was hindered by poor practical knowledge of masculinity. This literature was plagued with assumptions, generalisations, and stereotypes, and appeared more rooted in socio-scientific theory than being reflective of what boys actually did.

The boys had also been providing me a point of entry for my studies; the way they used their art lessons. I had consistently noticed boys’ willingness to open themselves to others as they engaged in the “creative process” of making and talking about art. There was, I felt, something that existed within the art curriculum, which provided insights into a whole new aspect of boys’ behaviour – an aspect that was totally contrary to those behaviours much of our gender literature in education told us to expect:

One Boy Doing Art

One example would be Malcolm, a boy I first taught when he was in grade five. Many members of the staff thought him to be quite “different”, a boy who often kept to himself and had a tendency to brood over issues and argue against popular trends. He was

\(^2\) A pseudonym
mostly quiet in class but he also had the ability to flare into emotive arguments against fellow students – and at times, even against what a staff member was teaching. He had a history of temper tantrums and low-level violence, a history of truancy, and a history of good academic ability displayed in a very haphazard manner.

Personally, I found him to be a great student to teach. As I showed slides of artists and spoke about the ideas that drove their passions, Malcolm would sit quietly listening, his red hair over his slight, pale face a picture of contemplative interest. When some other students would give in to the temptation of flippant and shallow answers, Malcolm would often become annoyed and would counter with responses demonstrating quite insightful thinking. If an assignment in our studio component met his approval, it was always done competently and completed to a standard that showed this boy could take a challenge seriously. But he was often a loner, or at best had a single close friend. The other boys mostly treated him with indifference. Malcolm’s carefully articulated answers in class discussions often seemed to wash over them with little effect. All in all, as far as I was concerned, the skinny little kid was a good student but a little out of place with many of his peers.

One Saturday afternoon when he was in grade six, Malcolm and a friend broke into a local suburban primary school and vandalised a number of classrooms and offices. The authorities measured the damage in the thousands of dollars, they called the police who laid charges, and the wheels of our society’s justice system were put into motion against Malcolm. On the following Monday morning, talk in the staff room centred on this “strange little kid”, how he had “finally really done it”, how the Principal would be forced to “come down on him”. The general opinion was that he would be expelled. So it was with some interest we waited for the Tuesday staff meeting to hear an official verdict on
the boy. During that meeting, the Principal spoke of Malcolm’s future – how expulsion would begin for an eleven-year-old boy a downward spiral, which would be extremely difficult for him to break. Amongst the eloquent phrases we were used to hearing from our leader came an important message – this boy was not bad, he didn’t deserve this type of future, and that we, the school, must fight for Malcolm.

Malcolm came back to school a few days later looking quite sheepish. He seemed to withdraw from the fame that his attempts at school refurbishment had provided him with his peers. With the Principal’s mandate in mind, I watched Malcolm with interest over the next few years. In grade seven and eight he became increasingly interested in the visual arts. While not necessarily “gifted”, Malcolm was focused, he was prolific, and he became captivated by two aspects of his art. He relished the challenge of art production, and he thrived in articulating the ideas that drove his work. He was always involved with his fellow students in the banter and discussions and arguments that are part of being active in art, often involving the lives and philosophies of the artists on whom we reflected during our studio work.

Malcolm chose art as an option in grade nine and ten and appeared in the studios more and more often during lunch hours and after school, as well as enrolling in a number of our evening extension programs. The intellectual properties of the subject, however, seemed to captivate him as much as anything. This included the history lessons which challenged boys to think about their work in context of the social philosophies of other artists, and the discussions with the other boys concerning their art works, what was working and what wasn’t and why, with no two opinions ever the same and no conclusions ever reached. The subject also included analysis of his work and friends’ work and other artists’ work, where he appeared to develop deeper perception skills and
ability to make reasoned judgments about what he could see. In short, it was the combination of history, of the discussion of aesthetics, of participating in arts criticism, which supported and strengthened his studio production, and appeared to turn Malcolm’s art into a rich source of intellectual inquiry.

I remember during the year when Malcolm was in grade ten, a secretive and mysterious nihilistic conceptual art group emerged within the school. Occurring suspiciously soon after his class studied Surrealism and Dada, a number of posters appeared around the school advertising the “coming of the Floppy Oreos”, and some anonymous articles were published in the school magazine that argued this group’s driving philosophy. These types of activities went on for some time until, dramatically, there was a “coming out”. The group (Malcolm and a friend) stood and read a political manifesto during an English Literature class before a bewildered teacher who was sure the lesson had started by exploring mysticism in Shakespeare. The manifesto proclaimed a state of “moral anarky” (sic), and signified the beginning of a period of activity the likes of which the school had not seen before.

Students in the school were captivated; from that time on something different was always happening as Malcolm and another student tried to outdo each other in conceptual “happenings”. There were pictures of marijuana being grown in pots on the roof of the Supreme Court building (doctored, we preferred to believe). A student sat all night in a hallway, dressed in a tuxedo, his diary of “thoughts” on a plinth before him, his eight hours of immobility captured on video for fortunate examiners to later watch. There were all-weekend art expeditions where inexplicable things were done with canvas and baked beans and celebrated in class the following week via Polaroid photographs. Students were wrapped in plastic and placed ceremoniously in the middle of a sports field. There was a
confusing incident during the first XI’s training one evening concerning some flour and a wheelbarrow.

Perhaps most importantly, there was a flurry of intellectual debate. I still have memories of slight Malcolm, paintbrush in hand, standing in the middle of the art room having a toe-to-toe argument about Andy Warhol with the school bully, a boy who in any other venue would have knocked him flat just for being within arm’s reach. This was a period of intense activity, with philosophical statements and academic essays written and distributed, groups of students arguing and conspiring, the normality of art lessons thrown out the window.

Luckily for the school and the art staff, the rigorous grade eleven and twelve academic years looked like they would dampen the mischievous aspect of Malcolm’s imagination, perhaps bring him down to earth a little and give the art staff some respite. But characteristically for Malcolm, from the very start of grade eleven he began turning out a stunning body of work, which caused quite a stir around the school. The works shocked us. Firstly, they were large, most about a metre and a half square, painted in oil on canvas. However it was their content that caused us the most problems. I remember one painting that contained strong sexual overtones was ripped off the wall by an incensed woodwork teacher in his self-appointed role as school morals watch-guard. The next day it was presented to the vice principal as “an insult to one’s sensibilities” and the art staff spent an interesting morning defending the artwork and Malcolm’s right to express in this way.

During this year, Malcolm’s art depicted his disgust concerning violence, rape, social injustice, capitalist oppression of society, and the moral degradation of society, themes in which many teenagers doing matriculation art seem to wallow. However, he had a way of
presenting them in a provocative, powerful context that made you sit up and take notice. He used a limited palette, he strongly manipulated his oils, and he employed stark composition. One of his works, called “Rape”, appropriated a popular commercial icon, the image of a girl that appeared on millions of boxes of matches. In Malcolm’s work she was naked, tied and gagged, threatened by two males with guns, a clumsy yet powerful symbol of the sexual exploitation of women by capitalism. Another, called “Suicide” depicted a figure in the very act of committing suicide. The subject had an actual Band-Aid stuck over his mouth; the superficiality of society’s attempts to remedy the anguish of the individual. And there were many others just like them, all of them powerful and challenging works.

I believe for Malcolm the paintings were very much the end-point of a long process. His studio work was supported by a wealth of assignments and statements, explanations and philosophical meandering, jottings in his journal, presentations to his class, endless discussions with other boys and art staff – all of which served as a powerful conceptual underpinning to his studio work. This theoretical foundation enabled him to survive his confrontation with the morals police in the vice principal’s office, and that empowered him to engage his peers so successfully in absorbing debates.

These processes lead to a heightened knowledge that, by grade eleven, had Malcolm leaving me floundering in his wake. Ultimately this was not important, as he never made it to grade twelve. The art staff was persuaded (perhaps even relieved) to let him enter his portfolio a year early in the annual matriculation external assessment at the end of his eleventh grade. Malcolm’s work, and his defense of this work, so impressed the external moderators he won one of the higher grades in the state for art and was given an early admission into the local university to begin his Bachelor of Fine Arts.
As I walked the driveway towards Greene’s College the first day of the study it was reminisces of Malcolm that filled my mind and helped me clarify my purpose. In my mind I came to the realisation I was not being presumptuous in assuming some mandate. My experiences teaching students like Malcolm and researching boys in education had led me consistently towards this place at this time. Of the hundreds of students I had taught, his case was the one I most remembered – not because he was necessarily unique, but because his story resonated with significance concerning the unanswered questions about boys’ schooling in my mind. This experience provided me with some meaningful connections I thought had the potential to fill the void between education’s haphazard and theory-based literature on masculinity and the reality of what boys did in classrooms, and suggested to me the contribution this study could make to gender knowledge in education.

The real importance of Malcolm’s experiences is not immediately apparent. On the surface it reads as a heart-warming “success” story. I am sure the headmaster would agree. At a young age Malcolm was on the verge of being made to live with the fact he had thrown away a benefit his parents, good people who certainly were not well off, had saved for years to give him. The headmaster’s belief in the boy and in the school most likely made a significant difference to this scared boy. Perhaps it was also a success for this all-boys school. Although it is quite possible Malcolm might have worked through his problems in a co-educational institution, the fact was it happened in this school, the type of place that much of the literature tells us is a hothouse for the breeding of competitive, insular males who actively seek to marginalise “the other”. In some way, this school developed a boy-culture that provided Malcolm opportunity and freedom to negotiate his own unique identity.
Art education should also claim Malcolm’s story as one of its successes. The focus on a discipline-oriented curriculum, particularly during those formative late primary and early high school years, with the slide shows and weekly art history lessons, the adherence to a skills-oriented curriculum slowly building his abilities year after year, the critique sessions, peer reviews and peer assessments where Malcolm argued and gave way, where others began to “see through the artist’s eyes”. All these things made a difference. While other subjects may, in different ways, provide similar challenges to boys, art can enjoy some credit here for being the vehicle for Malcolm’s renaissance, the tool he used for his rebirth from “boy in trouble” to “boy makes good”. I must admit it was at this superficial level I often analysed art’s importance to boys. Over many years of teaching the subject there were many “Malcolms”, all with different stories but unified by the fact they used art as a foundation, or as a fulcrum in their efforts to build and express their identities. As such, art, and the schools that supported progressive art programs, deserved considerable credit.

However it is beyond a simple apportioning of credit that the significance of Malcolm’s story lies. At a second level of analysis his experiences are heavy with meaning for boys’ current educational “predicament”. Malcolm’s experiences “flesh out” some impersonal but worrying statistics about boys’ difficulties in schools. For some time academic journals, the popular press, scholarly writings, school newsletters, and government reports to name a few sources, have been providing what is becoming an irritingly familiar litany of boys troubles. Modern age boys in Western countries, this literature proclaims, are experiencing academic, social and relationship problems (Figure 1). In the hyper-equality climate of modern society and education, boys are apparently the new underclass (Clarke, 1997; Men, tomorrow’s second sex, 1996). They perform worse
Boys Doing Art

BOYS' SOCIAL CONCERNS
- Suicide
- Violence
- Unemployment
- Incarceration
- Avoidance of Leadership
- Behavioural Disorders

BOYS' RELATIONSHIP CONCERNS
- Immaturity
- Sexism
- Chauvinism
- Restrictive 'hierarchies'

"CRISIS" OF MASCULINITY

BOYS' ACADEMIC CONCERNS
- Under-achievement
- Retention-between-classes
- Learning Disorders

Figure 1. The triptych of concerns for boys' schooling.

in academic tests compared to girls (Pascal & Bertram, 1995), their levels of literacy fall below those of girls, and they are more likely than girls to experience retention between grades – to be held back a grade (Lee & Bryck, 1986). Boys are the majority of cases diagnosed with learning disorders (Bushweller, 1995). Boys are less likely to attend universities than girls (Duffy, 1996), and contrary to common beliefs they are less likely to have meaningful careers than girls (Pascal & Bertram, 1995). These factors combine to construct social problems. Boys often have low self-esteem. Boys have lower career expectations than girls. Boys are more likely than girls to be unemployed. Boys form the majority of behaviour disorders (Soderman & Phillips, 1986). Boys are many times more likely than girls to commit suicide, to have a car accident, to be incarcerated, and to be victims of violence (Bushweller, 1995).
These genuine causes for concern irritate because they are often quoted in such limiting ways that little useful theory for educators has resulted. Two arguments have predominated. One approach argues such statistics prove boys are in crisis. Society, it claims, is on a feminist inspired attack on boys where equality of opportunity has swung too far towards the feminine and is now systematically destroying all that is masculine in our schools. Boys have no acceptable male role, no rites of passage. There is no recognition of, or catering to, the essential characteristics of masculinity, which in the past have served our community so well.

A responding argument claims this is not the case, that boys in crisis is a backlash against advantages won for girls after nearly three long decades of educational change and constitutes an attempt to divert attention away from girls’ needs. If anything, boys are perpetrators of their own demise. The problems they now face in schools are self-inflicted, being due largely to their own intransigence. By steadfastly adhering to now irrelevant masculine mores, boys have condemned themselves to an antiquated role in society, a dead-end position that reflects their inability to share power, to accept alternate constructs of knowledge, to recognise the reality of a society that has forever moved beyond accepting that women can be marginalised into a passive and subservient role.

At this level of debate Malcolm’s case can be used to elaborate either of these arguments, as one sees fit. In the former he is a troubled boy robbed of a valued pathway towards masculinity and driven to vandalism through frustration and the lack of opportunity to express his manliness. While regrettable, his violence illustrates how boys in our “new society” desperately need socially appropriate opportunities to exercise their strength, their energy, their capacity for action. Alternatively, in the latter argument, Malcolm is a boy turned vandal by some atavistic desire to showcase his ability to be
violent, by his need to affirm masculine power, and by his desire to bookmark a manly “place” or “territory” amongst his male peers. His experiences in art simply reinforce the fact that boys instinctively seek to be dominant, to use whatever social forces are at their disposal to fortify their own ways of thinking, their own types of knowledge, their own mores of action.

These polarised arguments lack the scope to do justice to the complexity of Malcolm’s experiences. They address gender through the important issues of relationships and negotiation of power and assertion of dominant forms of knowledge, but do so predominately through a binary “us and them”, “winner and loser” context that keeps this debate distant and irrelevant to the immediacy of real life in classrooms. The narrowness of these approaches is best illustrated by the limitations of their subsequent strategies for boys. The boys in crisis approach views them as simply requiring some sort of rescue. If boys have been robbed of valued masculine mores, our schools need to reintroduce such mores by dusting off and implementing into contemporary curriculum many old and trusted methods of “making the man”. After all, these methods have served boys and society very well in the past (see for example, the debate surrounding the Citadel case in the USA, or the rhetoric coming from the International Council of Boys Schools). If boys are in crisis, they need us to throw them a lifeline, and that lifeline is the reaffirmation of essential values of masculinity, based on the atavistic precedents of the past.

The boys as perpetrators of their own demise approach treats boys as requiring treatment to alter their bad habits, whether or not they accept the need to have this remedial attention. Malcolm’s story is illustrative of the way boys are isolationist, yet require the validation of a male order and will go to any lengths – including violence – to
achieve that recognition. Boy culture is built on the success of the individual, and in today's relational environment, one boy's success is not a worthy achievement if it fails to address the injustices to others that are often a consequence of his success.

These simplified descriptions of what are complex and important arguments are elaborated in greater depth in Chapters 2 and 3. However, for now they briefly sketch what I see as the essentialist character of gender discussion concerning boys in education over the past two decades, and suggest where my frustration lies with much of our purported knowledge of boys that is presented in this literature. At this level of analysis this discussion has been little more than an un-winnable academic gender-competition, and has created a discourse that provides more confusion than light. In many ways it has failed to come to grips with the things we do not know but should.

I would argue the existence of a third layer of meaning to this vignette. Within Malcolm's story is evidence of powerful connections occurring between boys, an interchange that has significant meaning for education's response to the myriad of "boys' problems". This has to do with boys' relations and the maneuverings that occur between boys within the school-culture and within subject curricula, as they actively and continuously construct their identities. *Boys Doing Art* will argue that this constitutes their *inter and intra-masculinity negotiations*. Malcolm's story suggests that his academic and social problems were manifestations of a deeper issue. He was a boy who was struggling to establish a relational position in his peer group. He was, also, at the same time struggling within himself, wanting to come face to face with some issues of social inequalities that disturbed him. However, he could not do this in isolation or without help. He appeared to use art to build a skill, and used that skill to explore his own set of beliefs and values. He used his art to negotiate the validity of his beliefs amongst his peer group
and within the culture of his school. These are not the actions of either a boy “being rescued”, nor one being “treated”. They are the actions of a boy wisely and sensibly using the school and the curriculum to negotiate his own gendered identity with his peers.

If this is indeed a “success” story then the success is Malcolm’s, and he is successful due to his own actions. I believe that many boys are experiencing troubles that are distinctly different to the concerns that girls continue to have. I also believe that these problems are largely the result of boys’ own actions. Indeed, boys are not passive victims of a society “gone wrong”, they are in fact actively involved in negotiating and manipulating the factors that affect their position in society. This is the very reason we must turn to boys for answers to how education should be addressing their problems.

Malcolm showed me that if many boys are the architects of their own misfortune, they also have the capability and desire to pursue their own salvation, given favourable circumstances.

In Malcolm’s case, these “circumstances” had something to do with the culture of the school and the nature of the art curriculum. Attempting to identify and facilitate these factors within schools and curricula is ground that much of the boys in crisis and boys are the perpetrators of their own demise discussions have rarely travelled. As I entered Greene’s College at the start of this study, I realised that thanks to Malcolm, I could see this point constituted the gap between our academic knowledge of boys and the reality of what happens in schools. Our ignorance lies in not understanding how schools and specific subject curricula can channel the energy that drives boys like Malcolm to be active in building worthwhile identities. This constitutes a significant gap in our knowledge, because this “energy”, while it may be the cause of boys’ many problems,
may also be (as Malcolm’s story suggests) the catalyst for some of their most significant successes.

**Can Art Unlock Some “Mysteries” of Masculinity?**

Education research has not been blind to the existence and importance of this “energy”, nor for its importance in facilitating boys’ “successes”. For some time, the common assumption has been that the mysterious thing that causes boys problems in schools is, logically, rooted in what makes them unique – their “masculinity”. Thus, education has generally approached boys’ social and academic problems as a gender concern, and has struggled for some time to understand how “masculinity” is manifold in the education process. This literature has recognised that success for one boy at the expense of others is no worthwhile educational goal, but the identification and utilisation of factors that help boys negotiate egalitarian masculinities holds significant benefits for girls, as well as marginalised males. The underlying rationale in masculinity discussion in education, has been the assumption that within the unknown (and often disputed) factors that shape it, lies the cause and antidote to boys’ anti-social, sexist behaviour. By changing masculinity by manipulating these factors, boys (and men) will be redeemed (Connell, 1996; Segal, 1990).

While the goal is clear – greater knowledge of masculinity, and using that knowledge to build tools to change masculinity to a more egalitarian form – we have lost our way. As educators we are by nature rooted in the realities of the schooling process, yet in regards to boys’ education we appear to have become bogged in socio-political theories and strategies based on theory, rather than on practical reality. Masculinity in education remains a mystery because of this. As will be discussed in Chapter 2, we cannot agree on
even its most fundamental characteristics, thus our deeper levels of analysis are becoming increasingly polarised beyond their relevant domains.

*Boys Doing Art* will suggest that the way from this “vacuum of knowledge” lies in our classrooms. Malcolm’s story illustrates that boys engage in complex negotiations of values and beliefs and these negotiations are often carried out within a complicated gender-context we conveniently call “masculinity”. His vignette suggests that boys use the school and specific subject curricula as forums – even vehicles – for these negotiations. So it is possible that there are variables within art education curriculum that facilitate the types of growth we want in our boys. Thus it is possible that boys’ actions in art education can help unlock some of the “mysteries” of masculinity. Art education can, perhaps, provide a convenient window through which we educators can understand the processes in which many boys engage when developing their masculine identities. The possibility exists that art education can provide evidence of the valuable role specific school curricula play as boys develop attitudes and adopt behaviours that are of concern to us all.

**What Issues Does This Study Address?**

*Boys’ Doing Art* is situated at the intersection of contemporary masculinity debate and art education. Malcolm’s story is only a brief glimpse of this complex interplay, but asks a number of important questions concerning masculinity, art education, and to a lesser degree single-sex boys’ schools: Does art education affect boys as they develop their concepts of gender? Specifically, to what extent and in what way does art curriculum help boys facilitate their masculinites, and to what extent can it provide the environment necessary for boys to negotiate those masculinities between each other? How does recognising the negotiation of this range of masculinities inform current
research into marginalisation and inequality in gender relations in schools? What implications does this have for future directions for boys’ schooling? These are far reaching and broad issues that cannot be addressed in their totality in one study. Therefore, some limitations need to be acknowledged.

*Boys Doing Art* looks almost exclusively at art education. This is not to imply other subjects have less significance for boys’ gender-development. The study owns this focus because, firstly, my observations from the classroom suggests art education may have considerable value for boys during this process, and secondly, it is because there is very little information currently available about the interplay of art education and masculinity.

Single-sex boys’ schools receive some exposure within *Boys Doing Art*, but it is not my aim to provide exhaustive data about, or to be either a critic or an advocate of these types of schools. The decision to site the project in one of these schools gives a valuable opportunity to glimpse single-sex schools’ unique contribution to boys’ schooling. Characteristics of single-sex boys’ schools emerge from the data through participants’ comments and my own observations. These characteristics are important in terms of the educational experiences of the boys concerned. However, they are relevant only to Greene’s College and are not intended to constitute judgements about these types of schools in a more generalised context.

*Boys Doing Art* looks exclusively at boys. This occurs not only in the physical sense (being set in a school where there are no female students present), but the study also does not address in depth the important issue of boys’ relationships with girls. The intention is not to ignore the *relational* aspect of gender, a focus which is emerging as the central tenet of modern studies in this field. Nor does this suggest boys’ interchanges with, attitudes towards, or beliefs about girls are not important. To the contrary, they are of huge
importance. However, all research has limitations. The scope of this project reflects my belief that gender research is ready for a boy-specific study. As will be stressed in Chapter 2, within the current climate of gender-relationship focused studies, we need to know more of boys' relationships and exchanges with other boys. We need to understand in greater depth how boys build their masculinities within "masculinity". We need to explore the capacity of masculinity to effect its own change. Successful strategies for boys require as a foundation some understanding of how masculinity operates in all situations, boy to girl and boy to boy. Our knowledge of the former situation has received, and is continuing to receive, considerable attention while the latter has received very little.

The Structure of This Thesis

What follows in this text is a description of what boys, the boys' teachers, the school administrators, and the researcher see as the impact of the school structure and the art curriculum on boys during the process of their gender development. This information is presented in a format intended to both faithfully reproduce the contexts within which it is offered, and to meet academic conventions. As mentioned briefly, the report is organised into three sections. Section I provides the antecedents to the study, Section II explains its methodology, and Section III presents segments of the data, data analysis and a conclusion that examines the issues of this study within the context of future research directions.

This structure serves three purposes. Firstly, it is "user friendly", allowing readers who will have differing interests in this topic to easily navigate a preferred pathway through the mass of information required by scholarly convention. Secondly, this structure serves to systematically draw the reader through the relevant background information, through procedural details, towards immersion in the actual study. Thirdly,
this structure allows the data collected in terms of participant observations and comments to be unencumbered by distracting procedural and theoretical details. Each section and chapter has an introduction and a conclusion, and each chapter deals with one important aspect of this research. Figures and tables have been used sparingly to illustrate concepts, the appendices contain the majority of factual information that would otherwise clutter the text. There are no full copies of transcripts, due to the size of the documents, and to protect the anonymity of the participants. However, quotations carry identifying details that allow verification with raw data where needed.

**Conclusion**

*Boys Doing Art* is a small contribution to a complex debate. What to do with our boys in schools is a rapidly escalating issue, critical to parents and educators due to a seeming lack of direction. What issues are we trying to address, what strategies should we have, and how should we implement them? I am going to argue that boys doing art in schools are also “boys doing gender”, and boys doing gender are young males in the process of negotiating a social role that impacts others – males and females. This is done while participating in, and relating to, the school’s structure and more importantly, specific subject curriculum. This report will argue that at this critical junction of negotiating masculinities and implementing subject curriculum, there exist tools and opportunities for educators to work with boys on building sensitive, compassionate, worthwhile masculinities.

*Boys Doing Art* will detail how art curriculum is ideally placed and well structured to maximise this benefit to boys and to offer guidance to mainstream education concerning this emerging, critically important debate. As such this study is specific and particular.
But its findings open doors to new avenues of masculinity research – using curriculum to achieve what before has been unreachable.
Chapter 2: What We Know About Masculinity and Education

An Overview of the Chapter

Malcolm’s vignette suggests that art curriculum acts to develop boys’ knowledge, it assists in their exploration of relationships, and it provides them with a venue in which they can address issues of social justice. The relevance and importance of these functions on boys’ emerging “manhood” needs to be contextualised within current gender debate. Malcolm’s vignette also suggests that, if we are to better understand whether boys’ actions within curriculum might constitute an active negotiation of gender values between boys, a more encompassing interpretation of the construct of masculinity (than is commonly recognised) is required. What this pluralist interpretation looks like, and how it can be used, requires investigation.

In Chapter 2 I review the images of masculinity that have evolved as a result of much investigation by the various academic disciplines and their associated discourses. The chapter asks how these images might help us to understand boys’ gender experiences within curriculum in schools. In the process, I draw from the literature a pluralist interpretation of masculinity, present it as a model, and specify how *Boys Doing Art* will use this model as a “lens” when analysing boys’ actual interactions within art curriculum.

What is Masculinity?

As a concept, masculinity has been explored through the disciplines of psychology, history, anthropology, and sociology. Its applications have been investigated using psychological models and psychoanalytical constructs, identification of gendered sex-roles, analysis of gendered power structures within society, discussions concerning its political manifestations, and most recently, through post-structural examinations of the “gendering” functions of knowledge and meaning. What, briefly, do these broad and
often diverse approaches and techniques tell us about the construct and nature of masculinity?

**Discipline-based Explorations of Masculinity**

*Psychology.* Psychology explored masculinity by assuming that phenomena observed specifically (originally through therapy) could be developed into generalised principles that apply to all men. This discourse has provided at least two significant genres of masculinity exploration, sex-role theory and psychoanalysis.

With the former, the behaviours and attitudes of men and women came under close scrutiny during the 1970s using psychological testing in an attempt to define essential characteristics of masculinity and femininity. The assumption was that masculinity (and femininity) was "a thing" that could be identified as belonging to an individual, to be one of their possessions (Hearn, 1996). Bem’s (1974, 1977) exploration of androgyny, based on the Freudian theory of representation in all individuals of an "inner" feminine and masculine included a statistical measure to itemise essential masculine and feminine characteristics. Considerably earlier, Terman and Miles (1936) identified sex-roles as a duality of masculine and feminine characteristics; as an example, male aggressiveness, strength and competitiveness was balanced by female compliance, nurturance and tendency towards cooperation. Bem’s (1974) work extended this bimodal concept of sex-roles to suggest an interchange of these qualities between the sexes. Her research supported de Beauvoir’s (1974) notion that while distinct masculine (transcendent) and feminine (immanent) ways of working existed, their representation in daily activity was not necessarily gender-specific, opening sex-role theory to investigating the socialisation processes organised around these perceptions of masculinity and femininity. These investigations were somewhat limited, as will be discussed shortly.
This process resulted in two bodies of knowledge. Men’s behaviour was categorised into “gender personalities”, the definable “manly” characteristics which controlled how they behaved. A classic example of this was Brannon’s (1976) now well quoted “no sissy stuff”, “the big wheel”, “the sturdy oak”, and “give ‘em hell”. Secondly, it categorised attitudes. For example, men were classified as rational and linear (Collins, 1974), tough minded and analytical (Kantner, 1975), individualised and subjective (Pagano, 1988); while women were characterised as communal and group centred (Macdonald & Macdonald, 1988), circular, mystical, unifying and emotive (Mitrano, 1981), nurturing and cooperative (Thompson, 1986). Sex role theory, while opposing essentialist notions that gender is innate, still resulted in interpretations of men and women’s gendered social behaviour as being largely pre-determined with little free agency in their actions. Men, it was considered, were “more like actors on a stage, playing out pre-scripted parts. To be a man, they suggest, is to play a certain role. Masculinity represents just a set of lines and stage direction which males have to learn to perform” (Edley & Wetherell, 1996, p. 100).

A second psychological approach to masculinity was developed through psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis typically viewed masculinity as the product of interplay between the unconscious and conscious. Sexuality and gender were co-constructed through a long process of conflict, rather than being determined by nature. The unconscious and the conscious were gendered and exerted a powerful influence on men through timeless truths and archetypes. These ideas formed the nucleus of an influential genre of scholarship that critiqued education as symptomatic of society’s structure and predominately concerned with “regeneration” of male norms. As an example, Grumet’s (1988) landmark work Bitter Milk: Women and Teaching described education as a process
of “transference”, the act of regeneration of norms symptomatic of the structure of society. This structure was inherently masculine, education was a symbolic, phallic order created by men and pedagogy the act of reproducing the strategy of domination or repression of the feminine. Chodorow (1978) described the “fragility” of masculinity, caused by paternal absence and the role of mothering. With the latter, Chodorow reversed Freud’s (1955) Oedipus complex to describe how a societal requirement on mothering is to “defeminise” the boy, causing her to “drive away” the male-child. He seeks to re-establish the bond through repressing childhood attachments and dependencies on her by displaying overly masculine characteristics thus showing he is no longer like her and worthy to redeem the attachment.

Another genre of psychoanalysis in masculinity exploration has been the essentialist masculinity authors, now increasingly referred to as the “mythopoetics” (Connell, 1995). Although attempting to appeal to some timeless and essential quality of manliness, one example, Bly’s Iron John (1990) was simply another attempt to characterise late twentieth century masculinity. Through metaphor and myth Bly described an archetypal masculinity deep within the psyche; the persona becoming repressed by the feminine anima. He described a “wild man within”, the Oedipus struggling to break from the mother, and in doing so relegated masculinity to being simply the application of atavistic behaviours; long subjugated essential qualities within each man. Bly’s analysis of masculinity has been accused of embodying an anti-intellectual (Messner, 1997) “popularisation” of men (Segal, 1990); if anti-masculinist discourse is No-Phallus, says Tacey (1997), then “the Iron John tradition is virtually All-Phallus” (p. 6). However, despite its “pseudo-academic” reputation (see for instance Connell, 1995), this “atavistic” image of masculinity has proved a popular trend in some masculinity
related discourse, more because of the mark it hits (men's insecurities caused through their lack of knowledge concerning their gender) than any solid theoretical contribution to this field. In addition, its impact is very real in education debate with "atavistic" images of masculinity heavily underscoring arguments calling for curriculum to "school for the man" (Fox-Genovese, 1995; Hawley, 1991).

**Sociology.** Sociology has attempted to describe masculinity within the context of its cultural construction. Sex-role theory, while valuable, had the limiting effect of not contextualising the applications of masculinity, never really coming to grips with it as a set of cultural and historical practices influencing and being influenced by the social environment (Carrigan, Connell & Lee, 1985). Psycho-analysis also viewed masculinity as specific and particular to the individual, again resulting in socially isolated analyses, such as the peculiarities of the "popular" atavistic masculinity politics which supposedly helped 1980s and 1990s "men in crisis", but tried to do so without being expositional of women's needs, thus ignoring social reality. Both psychological approaches have been critiqued as ignoring the cultural manifestations of masculinity, and in particular, the issue of power relations between the genders (see, for example Hearn's, 1987 *The Gender of Oppression*, and Connell's, 1987 *Gender and Power*).

In addressing these shortcomings, sociology argued masculinity as generalised culturally but containing within its structure specific and particular qualities, the generalised form pre-existing the particular (Tolson, 1977). Or in other words, the argument was that there existed a number of masculinities (plural) which culminated in one version of masculinity (singular). The singular has been increasingly critiqued as hegemonic in structure (Kimmel, 1995; Messner, 1997; Segal, 1990), its identifying characteristic being the exercise of power in gender relations (Connell, 1987). The plural
images of masculinity investigated by Hearn and Collinson (1994), Connell (1995), and others, have proved more problematic, as will be outlined shortly. In some ways the sociological discourses, in broadening our view of masculinity, have created a rod for their own backs. They have been required to accommodate within this culturally situated theory considerable ambiguity of historical and cultural manifestations of masculinity. They include issues raised by the other partners in the social sciences, history and anthropology, as well as parallel discourses in social theory dealing with marginalisation of men due to race (Galeson, 1995), class (Willis, 1977) and sexuality (Mac an Ghaill, 1994).

Anthropologists have studied masculinity from a cross-cultural perspective, highlighting its diverse representations and multiple meanings in other than westernised cultures. Mead (1934) in her studies in the South Pacific Trobrian Islands brought to the attention of western academe the cultural diversity of the meanings of masculinity and femininity. Herdt (1981) shocked many with his ethnography of ritualised homosexual practices as part of masculinity rites of the Sambia in Papua New Guinea, while Meigs (1990) described the existence of multiple gender ideologies amongst the Hua in New Guinea, with one version of the masculine form including both initiated males and women who had born three or more children. Such studies that argue applying positivist theories of masculinity across cultures is a futile exercise, have suggested that the concept of masculinity is an “ethnocentric or even a Eurocentric notion” (Hearn, 1996, p. 209); they have done much to question the existence of masculinity as “object”.

While anthropological studies have highlighted cultural diversities in masculinity, historical studies have focused on its multiple representations across time, elaborating an evolutionary characteristic of masculinity. Such studies of the historically changing roles
of masculinity have been useful in illustrating that various concepts of late twentieth
century masculinity have socially constructed origins; there have never been absolute
manly qualities (see for example Seccombe 1986, on the evolving values associated with
the concept of male bread winning; or Rutherford 1996, on the changing role of
fatherhood). Such histories document men’s gendered past, but while the discipline of
history has been about men, it has not been about masculinity (Pleck & Pleck, 1980). An
image of masculinity has been created as both developing across time, but also being
particular to time; while masculinity is often modified according to ongoing social
development (Franklin, 1984) the process is not necessarily a linear one. Terminology
and applications of meaning can greatly differ, an example being the considerable
differences in the use of the term “manliness” between the early and late Victorian eras
(see Hearn, 1996, p. 209).

Mac an Ghaill (1994, 1996) has become a key theorist in articulating the singular
masculinity’s policing of male sexuality and its marginalisation of men of race, class,
and/or disability. The Making of Men: Masculinities, Sexualities and Schooling (1994)
breaks from a heterosexual, white and middle class tendency of past analyses to examine
how masculinised perceptions of sexuality, race, class and physical ability are constructed,
rather than inherited, in this case within a secondary school in England. Lengthy
ethnographic studies, in which Mac an Ghaill (1994) directly accesses gay students’
experiences, discusses how men “become heterosexual”, and the operation of power
relations as central in this process. A central focus is that popular notions of “what it is to
be a man” have not changed as quickly as social changes in employment, social assistance
and the status of women, creating for young men a crisis within the fragile, heterosexual,
hegemonic masculine order.
Some synthesis of these sociological theories has been accomplished in Connell’s *Masculinities* (1995). Connell investigates past attempts to study masculinity as a science and rationalises sociology as the discipline best positioned to account for its myriad representations racially, historically, culturally, and sexually. He utilises a historical analysis of masculinity to construct a theory of it as inherently patriarchal and hegemonic. He notes masculinity has always changed and developed, but always in relation to (rather than in isolation from) femininity. This is a powerful theme running through his work; the notion that masculinity has never been static, it has always been a site of gendered change and continues to evolve, but that change and evolution has always acted in concert or conflict with femininity. Connell’s often aggressive treatment of some enactment’s of psychoanalysis are offset by his acknowledgment that aspects of their theories have preceded modern sociological concepts; sex-role, while limiting, provided some situational based analyses of masculinity, such as Hacker’s (1957) exposition of homosexuality as “men’s flight from the new burdens of masculinity”, or Hartley’s (1959) studies of sex-role pressures on father-absent children. Studies such as these have taken masculinity from an entity composed of certain socially engineered characteristics to being the practices of men influenced by their environments.

Gender, for Connell, is a study of gender relationships, and a study of gender relationships must encompass the power relationships of the sexes. As a result Connell argues men are as capable of introducing gendered change as are women. He argues a limiting (unitary) theory of masculinity hinders change through its associated effect of “demobilising guilt” on men (see also, Connell, 1989). But that is not the primary cause. Men’s resistance to change in sexual politics is rooted principally in their investment in
their institutionalised power advantages and must be addressed by situating masculinity within the social enactment of power.

Sociology has expanded theories of masculinity to discuss its structure as a hierarchy of power enactment within one, hegemonic structure. This theme has been elaborated by a number of authors such as Mac an Ghaill (1994), Hearn and Collinson (1994), and of course Connell (1995), to gain an understanding of men within their lived experiences, a discourse now popularly termed “pro-feminism” which will be discussed shortly.

The contribution of the major disciplinary approaches of psychology, sociology, history and anthropology to our knowledge of masculinity is an enlightening but complex web of theory, a body of knowledge that has described a variety of images of masculinity. These approaches have been quite divergent, from positivist descriptions of masculinity as a set of definable and measurable actions and attitudes, to it being seen as a complex set of behaviours regulated by interactions with other men, women, and power structures within society, multi-layered as it is influenced by sexuality, class and race but ultimately forming one hegemonic and patriarchal unity. These theories are common in that they define masculinity as some type of “entity”. Titles such as Changing Men (Kimmel, 1987), Remaking Men (Tacey, 1997), and Slow Motion: Changing Men, Changing Masculinity (Segal, 1990) illustrate a new wave of gender thinking that is challenging theorists to reconsider the past situation where masculinity was “assumed”, where it was treated as a monolith structure and was utilised primarily to categorise the disadvantages it imposed on women.

The challenge now is to view masculinity as a possible partner in gender reform and how it might be best changed to achieve that aim. Some argue very little change is
needed; the essential qualities of masculinity are sound and simply need “redeeming” (Tacey, 1997). Others feel only a total dissemination of patriarchy can provide the social redemption of men (Stoltenberg, 1990). Whether it is academic theory or the “very essence of men” (Biddulp, 1994) which require the change is a moot point between these polarised discourses, but the fact is masculinity is becoming a key variable in new gender theories and the attention is now on its flexible, changeable image.

Representations of Masculinity Through the Discourses

A number of discourses have embraced these disciplinary theories and utilised them to meet varying socio-political agendas. How have these discourses informed our understanding of masculinity? In what way have their voices reified disciplinary theories into readable images of masculinity?

Feminism. Feminism has been primarily concerned with gender, the breadth of the analysis well beyond the scope of this paper to fully encompass. In education alone, feminism has critiqued the gender-history of education (Butler, 1990a), the construction of gender within curriculum (Grumet, 1994; Miller, 1993), the gender-conflicts of childhood, adolescence and the curriculum (Biklen, 1993; Fine & Macpherson, 1993), gender and public policy in education (Reiger, 1993), school administration and gender dynamics (Blackmore, 1993; Kinnear, 1994; Theobald, 1996), the “feminisation” of teaching (Grumet, 1981; Guildford, 1994; Prentice & Theobald, 1991), gender and post-secondary schooling (MacKinnon, 1990; Stewart, 1990), the intersection of gender and class (Barman, 1995b), the intersection of gender and ethnicity (Carty, 1991; Stanley, 1995), private schooling and gender (Barman, 1995c; McCrone, 1993) and many topics well beyond. These contributions have occurred as part of what Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery and Taubmann (1995) describe as “the reconceptualisation”; the revolution from positivist to
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post-modernist interpretations of knowledge that occurred in western cultures during the latter half of the twentieth century.

Feminism joined the attack on curriculum as a tool developed by technocrats, to explore it "as it is lived, embodied, and politically structure" (Pinar et al. 1995, p. 358).

Primarily concerned with the manifest inequities for women within society, mainstream as well as educationally focused feminists presented complex and comprehensive analyses of the gendered construct of society through two schools of thought. A "liberal" focus of feminism used sex-role theory to undertake an analysis of sexism and gender stereotyping, seen as rampant in education within the school structure, subject texts (Brannon, 1976), patterns of school authority, types of classroom interaction (Sears & Feldman, 1974), and streaming within the curriculum (Sadker, Sadker & Steinham, 1989). The aim of this approach was an equity with men achieved through steady change, change brought about by legislated "equality of opportunity" strategies (in some western countries), applications of androgyny theory (Bem, 1974; Collins, 1977b) allowing availability of all facets of education equally to both sexes, and a general move towards gender neutral schooling as a form of equality between the sexes. Feminism's "liberal" approach to gender issues in education achieved a heightened awareness of institutionalised sexism, both in society and how it was embodied within schooling.

If the "liberal" focus of feminism was a slow and deliberate attempt to catalogue and nullify the qualities of masculinity which created the social inequities surrounding patriarchy, a "radical" approach also existed which directly attacked masculinity, describing it as a patriarchy and questioning how it produced and reproduced gender constructs. A key aim was to explore how power structures, which maintained the patriarchate, could be dismantled. This created a significantly different image of
masculinity from the “liberal” approach. The former relied on gender being a product of
social construction with gendered differences essentially socially engineered through
gendered practices. The “radical” approach maintained an essentialist belief that women
held distinct qualities that were unavailable to men, and these qualities were infinitely
superior to those of men (Chodorow, 1978). This view of masculinity and femininity
concentrated on identifying society as a masculine enterprise, dominated by the
“masculine ethic of rationality” (Kantner, 1975), and described a world dominated by
males, a world split between the private and public spheres. The private sphere
encompassed mothering, emotionalism, “expressivity”, and imagination and was the
domain of the feminine. The public was the world of rationality, competitiveness,
positivism and linear thinking, and being dominated by men (Astin & Bayer, 1973).
“Radical” feminism focused on the differences between the “knower” and the “known”
and aimed for radical social change not through the slow attempts to legislate for equality,
rather by challenging the power structures that maintained one form of knowledge above
another. Within this approach the image of masculinity was as a collective body of men
whose primary purpose was the exclusion of women from practical and noetic power.

Feminism has made significant contributions to our understanding of masculinity
as a concept by critiquing masculinity as hegemonic, in that it seeks to elevate the
masculine over the feminine in all facets of social interaction (Segal, 1990). This
approach has provided a frame of reference for an enlightened analysis of late twentieth
century masculinity and society. However, transferring its theory into situational based
analyses, describing how that “masculine concept” called masculinity enacts this
hegemony, is more problematic. For the majority of activism since the 1970s, feminism
has portrayed society as a patriarchy thus logically, all men as the patriarchs; it has
assumed a holistic privilege of men in society and thus has had little reason to explore masculinity as a complex multi-layered or problematic structure (Martino, 1995).

While the wide array of feminist agendas has provided immeasurable contributions towards a more egalitarian society, one legacy has unfortunately been a restricted monolith definition of masculinity and a non-representational image of men as a unified, homogeneous and privileged body (Jackson & Salisbury, 1996).

The socio-political men’s movements. Feminism has not been the only discourse to attempt to explore the nature of masculinity. Some men’s movements have made contributions also. Messner (1997) in his Politics of Masculinities attempted the difficult task of mapping this political landscape. He catalogued the principle men’s movements such as Promise Keepers, NOMAS, Gay Liberation, Men’s Rights, the Mythopoetics, and many others. These movements, while primarily interested in pursuing political aims, in the process promulgated “ideological” images of masculinity that were commonly recognised within society.

When sorted according to political aims and ideological beliefs, Messner identified that the many men’s movements occupied three polarised sites within the landscape of masculinity discussion. These sites he named terrains, and labelled them “anti-feminist”, “anti-patriarchal” and “racial and sexual” in orientation. Many of the eleven movements that occupied these terrains, through social-activist rationales, represented the overtly political in masculinity discussion.

However, Messner’s mapping can also be translated to the education paradigm; a number of these political movements also perform the function of providing a theoretical platform for educational gender-positions. The rationales supporting arguments concerning all-boy schools (Hawley, 1991), “feminised” schools (Podles, 1995),
“equality of opportunity” measures (Kenway & Willis, 1997), anti-homophobia schooling (Redman, 1996), and many other issues, can be neatly overlaid on Messner’s landscape to remind us that masculinity issues in education are widely varied and are deeply rooted in social politics.

Messner’s (1997) view of these masculinity discussions as inherently political is a useful (if rather simplistic) tool in categorising such a diverse field. However two problems emerge. Firstly, it neglects to position these actions into actual experience. In theory his work is a neat job of alignments. However, the reality is that the images of masculinity created by his model have limited practical applications when working with actual boys. Their complex sets of beliefs and actions, set within a constantly changing social phenomena are more a fluid “sea” with confusing and unpredictable cross-currents and waves, than solid and unchanging terra-firma. Secondly, in designing such a rigid taxonomy Messner allows little room for mobility of individuals between groups. The possibility exists that, for example, a man aligning himself with the Promise Keepers may also support NOMAS principles. While enlightening, Messner’s thesis is in danger of being overly prescriptive and deterministic.

None-the-less, Messner’s work benefits contemporary gender discussion in at least two ways. Firstly, it highlights the fact that the contribution some of these groups make to our overall picture of masculinity is questionable. Many of them, while “popular”, cannot be credited with a similar positive impact on society as feminism, which has based its ideologies on a more comprehensive critique of society. Many of the movements described by Messner, by being overtly political, tend to be largely self-serving and are aimed at meeting specific agendas or the preservation of selected attributes of masculinity. In the process, many have contributed little towards addressing relational inequities
between the sexes and the future formation of a more egalitarian society. The images of masculinity created by these movements, of masculinity being in crisis, or being essentially violent and nihilistic, or constituting the rightful leadership role in society, accurately portray only some men’s beliefs concerning masculinity, seen under certain circumstances. The “men’s movements”, as voices in masculinity discussion, are fragmented, and are, it could be argued, not representative of most men’s lived reality.

A second benefit of Messner’s work is its careful description of a fourth terrain. This terrain contains discourses that overlap, to some extent, all three of the otherwise polarised terrain. He terms it a “coalition” of progressive attitudes to masculinity, so named because it draws together many elements of the other discourses to build a “middle ground” where pluralist interpretations of gender can be recognised. Its existence is, for Messner, the recognition that within the political machinations of social-activist masculinity debate, there is a trend away from the essentialist images of masculinity that have dominated for so long. Central within this fourth terrain, this “middle ground”, are the Social Feminist Men, or in academia, “pro-feminist” scholarship.

Pro-feminism. Pro-feminist scholarship has become the predominant vehicle for the elaboration of the contemporary sociological theories of gender described earlier. This genre of discussion has navigated a challenging course between the essentialist defensiveness of mythopoetical, anti-feminist (and anti-intellectual) masculinity politics, and (again largely essentialist) anti-patriarchal radical feminist politics to create a “middle ground” where a wider, more pluralistic vision of masculinity could be elaborated.

Pro-feminism is identified by two predominant characteristics; an acknowledgment of patriarchy and power constructs as the central functions of masculinity, and secondly, a
view of masculinity as not one body, rather a complex social construct organised in multiple, hierarchical levels.

Pro-feminism has its roots in both the discipline of sociology, with its wish to elaborate a cultural construction of gender theory (rather than sex-role or psychoanalytical); and in feminism, acknowledging their ideology of the domination of patriarchy and the centrality of issues of power within gender issues. Pro-feminist authors such as Jeff Hearn (1996), Bob Connell (1987, 1995) and Mairtín Mac an Ghaill (1994, 1996) have included feminist power theories to construct an image of masculinity as multiple in construct. Because the work of this group greatly informs this study, it will be discussed in more detail (together with its shortfalls) during the second part of this chapter.

Pro-patriarchy. The pro-feminist vision that masculinity is, in essence, a support structure for patriarchal hegemony over women (and marginalised males) is countered by arguments that patriarchy constitutes a stabilising force for good in society. Men’s unification into a patriarchy by adherence to “manly” codes of behaviour, it is claimed, is a necessary and natural social phenomena that has been weakened through anti-male social politics (Tacey, 1997). While Lynne Segal (1990), or Jeff Hearn (1996), or many of the other more radical forces amongst feminists and pro-feminist men seek a total dismantling of the institution of patriarchy, many men’s movements, particularly those with strong roots in Jungian psychology, view the disinheritance of the “great father” as also spelling the death knell for masculinity as a whole. This is seen as something to be avoided at all costs, to the extent of accepting that, paradoxically, masculinity must change (Tacey, 1997). However, it is the nature and the extent of that change which forms one of the topics of current masculinity debate. Some say patriarchy’s redeeming features
should be kept while exorcising those elements (the result of radical gender politics) which are destructive to women, men, and society (see, for instance Podles’, 1995, arguments for segregated schools for boys).

Tacey (1997) in his book *Remaking Men: The Revolution in Masculinity* argues that Jungian theory has been appropriated and misrepresented by the “mythopoetics”. Archetypes of masculinity, he affirms, contain the key to the redemption, rather than the destruction, of patriarchy. However, Tacey feels masculinity is being swamped by “the rising feminine”, a combination of the “killing discourses” (radical feminism and radical pro-feminist men) who spread negativity concerning the father image in modern society. Patriarchy, he says is both necessary and irreplaceable as a “force that binds” and can be modified to accommodate significant change.

**Representations of Masculinity: A Critique**

What is masculinity? How does this variety of academic disciplines and discourses explain the construct that is supposedly common to all men? And how does it help inform a greater understanding of boys’ actions in school?

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**Figure 1. Model of Current Theories of Gender**

**Figure 2. Orientations of current gender theories.**
The academic disciplines present a number of confusing rationales for studying boys. Jungian theory explains some boys' poor behaviour and sexist beliefs as the product of repressed archetypes; therefore, Podles (1995) would argue, we must examine boys from the perspective that they are confused and misbehave because they no longer have clear masculine roles. Sex-role theory qualifies and quantifies masculinity as a set of attitudes and behaviour; therefore, we must examine boys from the perspective that their sexist preference for school subjects, their tendency to discredit things deemed feminine (Thompson, 1986), and their propensity for violence (Skelton, 1996), among other things, are the enactment of gender roles. Sociological theories present masculinity as an investment in male-dominated historical and cultural social power structures and boys' behaviour as defending that system. Therefore, we must examine boys in order to understand men's aggressive oppression of women (Connell, 1996).

Common to this literature is a negativity about boys: It has presumed a mandate to identify what is wrong with masculinity, ignoring the possibilities that many boys are "okay" and that certain schools and curricula encourage boys to develop egalitarian concepts of gender. Few researchers have looked for what is good in boys' actions in schools. Three assumptions in the current literature limit this research.

The first is essentialist thinking which assumes that masculinity is unchanging and common to all men. Essentialist thinking supposes that masculinity is an innate and inseparable part of men's psyches. A monolithic view of men as privileged, women as oppressed, requires gender to be a static, pre-determined system of sex-role enactment. The genders, however, do not form harmonious wholes; they are not pre-determined entities constructed of particular behaviours, actions, and beliefs that are automatically adopted according to sex. Consequently, this binary structure of gender precludes
investigating the complex structure of masculinity and has largely ignored problematizing men as part of the solution to gender problems.

Secondly, this shared essence is assumed to manifest itself in precisely the same way in all boys. The “essential” characteristics of gender just discussed are useful as theoretical distinctions in academic debate but often inaccurate and lacking in scope when applied to specific boys. To relax in the assumption that boys exhibit identical gender characteristics is to create monolithic stereotypes applicable to very few individuals. Such categories are of very little practical use when dealing with boys in schools on a day-to-day basis and extremely difficult to apply in research in schools on actual boys. But they are widespread, and the accompanying value assumption can be quite damaging in peoples’ lives (Connell, 1989; Jackson & Salisbury, 1996).

Third, contemporary masculinity discourses have largely failed by constructing images of masculinity that are removed from men’s actual practices. Hegemonic, patriarchal theory is effective for explaining the oppressed status of women, and men “on the street” may perhaps acknowledge hegemony over women in theory. But few would agree that they live it. This makes the theory difficult to use in ethnographic research because it diverges from participants’ perceptions. Men’s movements have also created images of masculine behaviour that are idealistic, focus dangerously on men’s issues in isolation from women, and are removed from what men actually do. This is apparent in the Jungian stereotypes of an archetypal male, in mythopoetic movements’ search for an inner essence or deep manliness, and in the espousing by single-sex boys’ schools of a formula for schooling “the man” (Hawley, 1991). These are not informative interpretations of masculinity but abstractions from practical reality—or, at times, quite simply political manoeuvrings.
These theories presented by the disciplines and discourses have dominated gender discussion since the 1960s. Clearly, there exists no definitive account of masculinity or a singular discourse which embraces all interests and opinions. However, collectively they provide a rich diversity of knowledge and constitute in broad terms the intellectual environment for any study of boys in schooling.

Each of these different theoretical perspectives has its own contribution to make in understanding men and their experiences. For no single theory or academic approach can hope to capture and account for every facet of even a single man's life, let alone the lives of black men and white men, gay men and straight men, and men of all different socio-economic classes. Yet while it is important to encourage an interdisciplinary perspective upon men and masculinity, this does not mean that all of the available approaches will be equally useful or insightful. Instead, it is more likely that some theories will carry a heavier explanatory burden than others. (Edley & Wetherell, 1996, p. 97)

Certainly that is the case for Boys Doing Art, which relies on the interpretation that masculinity is the embodiment of boys' actions and beliefs, not a clinical or psychological entity. This study investigates if boys should be given opportunity to articulate how they inhabit a variety of masculinities rather than one, and explores how they might negotiate their own interpretations of masculinity rather than simply, passively, accepting their gender as a set of pre-determined roles.

To allow this exploration, Boys Doing Art requires an image of masculinity that is located somewhere between the two essentialist positions shown in Figure 2. In other words, it challenges the notion – supported by both the biologically created and socially determined interpretations of gender, that masculinity is a single entity that is common
amongst all boys. The image required of this study is one that recognises that each boy’s masculinity is unique to himself, and that each boy is responsible for its structure.

Much past masculinity discussion does not have this degree of flexibility, with the possible exception of what Connell (1995) calls the emerging concept of “multiple masculinities”, situated within that ill-defined and unstable pluralist interpretation of masculinity shown centrally in Figure 2. As will be argued in the remainder of this chapter and indeed in the remainder of this text, for Boys Doing Art this image of masculinity is the interpretation that will be required to carry Edley and Wetherell’s (1996) “burden of explanation”.

How is Masculinity “Multiple”?  

While a number of polarised interests are strongly represented within contemporary masculinity literature, it is apparent that a genre of post-modernist writing has also emerged (Pinar et al. 1995; Soerensen, 1992) to theorise a change in masculinity discourse and to link many of the divergent gender ideologies into a rational “middle-ground” of contemporary masculinity discussion (Messner, 1997).

This “middle ground” has championed a problematisation of masculinity on the basis that past assumptions, which have tended to categorise men into a “unitary” definition of masculinity (Soerensen, 1992; Martino, 1994) not only have limited our knowledge of men, but have also disadvantaged our understanding of gender as a whole by restricting any comprehensive analysis of the complex gender structures which operate in society (Connell, 1995).

Connell (1987), Martino (1995), Hearn (1996), and others have argued that we need to view masculinity as being multiple in construct. This approach recognises that a number of masculinities exist. Some say each of these masculinities operates in a state of
continual, active hegemonic contest against other masculinities and femininities (Hearn, 1996; Mac an Ghaill, 1996). Others see boys and men mediating an infinite variety of masculinities (Imms, 2000b). Either way, the view is of boys and men continually engaging in “gender relations” with other males and women (Connell, 1995). While the dominant pro-feminist masculinist writing on this topic has been criticised for being illogical in demanding an extinction of patriarchy (Tacey, 1997), for continuing to support what is in effect still largely a monolith definition of masculinity (Imms, 1998b), and for failing to recognise many men’s attempts to counter dominating and oppressive behaviours from both other men and women (Jackson and Salisbury, 1996), the central thesis of men constructing their own versions of masculinity, rather than passively accepting one patriarchal form, has been enthusiastically accepted by many theorists (Hearn, 1996).

How does this “reconceptualisation” of masculinity translate into the educational forum and what does it mean for Boys Doing Art? The answer to this question is that it has begun discussions on the evolving nature of masculinity, and how schooling participates in that process. What began as a broad, largely sociological analysis of men’s power and gender relations with women has spawned a genre of writing in education that problematises boys and their schooling experiences; “what to do about the education of males, particularly heterosexual males, (has) emerged, since maleness and masculinity (are) increasingly foreclosed as sites of possible insight and change” (Pinar et al. 1995, p. 373).

Connell (1987, 1989, 1995) has for a number of years been concerned with deconstructing categorical views of masculinity to explore how it actualises hegemony. In Masculinities (1995) he used data from field research of groups of men to layer
masculinity into a hierarchical structure. The men, from working and middle class backgrounds, were interviewed at length from 1985 to 1988 to produce a life-history analysis of the influence of social structures (including schooling) on their enactment of gender. From this study Connell posited that not one but four layers of masculinity existed and labelled them as hegemonic, subordinated, complicit, and marginalised. But rather than being actual men, these categories represented sets of values and actions exhibited by males in various socio-cultural circumstances; for Connell masculinity is a hierarchy of relationships between men.

For Connell (1995) these categories represent a multiplicity of masculinity, the "relational" aspect of masculinity being the interactions of men struggling to achieve or maintain dominance over other men and women. Masculinities (Connell, 1995) represents the culmination of a number of years of development of the theory of masculinity having within its structure a multitude of layers, or masculinities (Connell, 1985, 1987, 1989, 1990, 1993).

This process of opening masculinity to detailed examination has been continued by a number of other authors. Haywood and Mac an Ghaill (1996) follow in a similar vein to Connell when investigating enactment of masculinity within the staff of an English secondary school. They describe schooling as facilitating "a process of negotiation, rejection, acceptance and ambivalence" of masculinity between boys (p. 59). The hierarchy of masculinities, they say, is "never secure but must always be won. Collectively they form a hegemonic order mediating oppression and domination of women." (p. 52. My emphasis.)

New foci have also emerged. McMahon (1993) drew attention to the fact that "unitary" versions of masculinity allow men to escape accountability, to regard their
actions as a product of a separate entity. The concept of multiple masculinities, for him, serves to focus on men’s material practices; in other words, how masculinity relates to what men actually do. Hearn (1996) elaborates further, noting in his succinct critique of multiple masculinities that the problem all this time with many past discourses was that they looked for “it”, the political, identifiable, structured phenomena of masculinity, when in fact they should have been focusing on “who”, the actual actions of men as constituting “masculinity”. An understanding of masculinity might more obviously lie in men’s actual practices, within the complexity of their daily relationships with each other and with women, than in trends and theories.

The Construct of Multiple Masculinities

The concept of multiple masculinities has five key characteristics. 1) Firstly, it recognises that masculinity exists as a multiple entity, not homogeneous or necessarily consistent with a range of simplistic characteristics. 2) Secondly, it views gender as something constructed by its participants as well as by societal forces. Individuals do not automatically adopt a pre-determined gender role; rather they are continually active in building, negotiating and maintaining perceptions of their gender. 3) Thirdly, gender is a relational construct. Boys/men do not construct their versions of masculinity removed from the influences and effects of femininity or other men; rather, the opposite gender and other men have considerable influence in the framing of individual perceptions of “manliness”. Likewise, family, school and society in general exert considerable forces during this continual process of gender construction. 4) Fourthly, to multiply masculinity is to diversify hegemonic structures of power, rendering them more assessable to rehabilitation. 5) Fifthly, a “multiple masculinities” approach links polarised dialogues
with a shared concern for males not adequately addressed in previous discourses, in the
process focusing on gendered power imbalances in society.

A “multiple” interpretation of masculinity has a number of advantages for this
study. Firstly, it has potential to provide an uncritical environment for the investigation of
masculinity. While many essentialist positions on masculinity collide “head on”, this
theoretical framework represents an intersection of many disciplines and discourses in
gender, achieved by focusing discussion on the relationship between boys and boys, and
boys and girls, rather than on their differences.

Secondly, it sets a positive agenda. Past studies, basing their research on the
notion of “masculinity as an entity”, have been bogged in an un-winnable gender-war. By
pitting all men against all women, essentialist gender theories have frustrated any real
progress towards identifying “change” (Segal, 1990). The acknowledgement of gender as
a pluralist construct allows room to acknowledge boys’ attempts to change masculinity
from within masculinity.

Thirdly, multiple masculinity theory provides a lens through which research can
more closely interpret the interactions of men with men, men with women and men with
society. While many past studies have lacked credibility by regarding them as a unitary,
homogeneous body (see for example Addelston, 1996; Reay, 1990b; Skeleton, 1994), this
approach frees boys from a limited definition of gender and gives them credit for their
attempts to negotiate their own versions of “manliness”. Finally, a benefit of this
approach is that it is friendly to ethnographic inquiry, a methodology relatively free of
positivist interpretations of knowledge (Pinar et al. 1995) and able to focus on men’s lived
experiences rather than theoretical categories and over-deterministic ideological
abstractions.
Notwithstanding these advantages, it needs to be recognised that there are also limitations to this approach. The overall scenario from what is very much a discourse in its infancy is the impression that while masculinity should be viewed as multiple in construct, the hierarchy of those masculinities has been critiqued only as far as a few generalised layers; categories which can be utilised to explain the majority of men’s experiences. However, it is impossible to fully articulate or classify the range of masculinities that may exist. We simply don’t know enough about how men live when viewed through this theoretical lens. There has been little raw data gathered to date – a shortfall because theorising can not encompass anywhere near the range of masculinities that may exist if they are truly flexible and in a continual state of change. One current limitation of this multiple masculinity concept, then, is a lack of ethnographic data to further the theory.

A second limitation is a current tendency to treat males as owning or enacting a masculinity. The categories that are offered in the literature (for example Messner’s or Connell’s or Mac an Ghaill’s) need to be more fully articulated through ethnographic portrayals of men’s actual lives, that seek to describe them as being representative of sets of values, beliefs, not actual men. To be fair, this new field has begun to document how this range of masculinities are flexible, with men transferring from one “type” to another depending on prevailing (and constantly changing) socio-environmental conditions (Edley & Wetherell, 1996). But the field seems to have remained fixated on identifying the hierarchy of one masculinity over another, rather than the more productive outcome of exploring the nature of these masculinities.

An example is Mac an Ghaill (1994) who categorised male teachers in a school as being either “professionals”, “the old collectivists” or “the new entrepreneurs” according
to their actions and opinions (from interviews) on a range of topics such as labour
relations, school organization, and educational reform. Such attempts to restrict to a few
layers the complexity of a social situation creates a view of the phenomena which is very
limiting, because it promotes the assumption that men's responses to varying stimuli are
pre-determined. Such hierarchical approaches do little to account for the mobility
between masculinities that must occur over time and place in reaction to varying stimuli.
In short, multiple masculinity theory is currently limited by the absence of an articulated,
formulated theory of intra-masculinity mobility. In effect, such discussion constitutes the
very type of monolith categorisation of masculinity that this literature is trying to
disseminate.

This aspect of pro-feminist masculinist theory that describes all boys as
participating in hegemony, should be contested. The possibility exists that many boys
construct versions of masculinity which recognise girls and women as their intellectual
and social equals and react strongly to incidents of both masculinist and feminist
oppressive behaviour. To classify these males as part of a hegemonic order over
simplifies the complexity of the structure of contemporary society and fails to
acknowledge a powerful force within masculinity which is active against the "mediation
of oppression and domination". Literature in this field is still to come to grips with both
the concept of the true range of masculinities which exist and the possibilities of the extent
of mobility between masculinities.

An aspect of Boys Doing Art will be the extension of pro-feminist masculinity
theory to incorporate a view of the tension of ideas and values between men, so far
interpreted as the enactment of hegemonic masculinity, as also constituting negotiation
between the many types of masculinity. A myriad of masculinities, many with differences
away from the “norms” of hegemonic masculinity, are constantly negotiating and re-negotiating for recognition as being valid and worthwhile. But rather than constituting only a state of conflict, as described by Connell (1995), Haywood and Mac an Ghaill (1996), Hearn (1996), and others, many masculinities to the contrary operate within a framework of active mediation with each other. This intra masculinity negotiation represents an acceptance of “the other” between men. Boys Doing Art explores the notion that art education is a site which facilitates anti-hegemonic practices within its epistemology and curriculum.

Multiple Masculinities and Schooling

In what way will a “multiple masculinities” approach be used by this study to interpret boys’ construction, maintenance, and negotiation of masculinity in a school? There are some instances where multiple masculinities theory has been used to rationalise pedagogical gender strategies.

Wayne Martino (1995) utilised student responses to characters portrayed in set texts in English lessons, to get the students to explore how these responses contained gendered subjectivities. The characters presented a variety of often ambiguous gender traits, allowing students to reify their own beliefs on sexuality, masculinity, and femininity. Martino identified a variety of “positions” between the boys, some situating themselves in overtly hegemonic stances to the scenarios given in the text, while others identified a range of gendered responses that were not stereotypical.

Pam Nilan (1995) used another the English classroom to examine how male and female students constructed characters that embodied stereotypical gendered identities. Text written by some of the students, and the characters portrayed within the play, were later de-constructed to explain that popular culture inevitably demarcates a unitary
Boys Doing Art

femininity and masculinity. Nilan concluded that the interjection of feminist principle into such a classroom scenario, while acting to multiply gender constructs, is prone to outright rejection. This is because it is perceived to be "imposed"; or the opposite response is possible, where it is re-articulated by the students in an empty and meaningless way because it is seen as "the right" response and necessary to pass.

David Jackson and Jonathon Salisbury (1996) used a Personal Development program in a school to explore the construct of sexual identities and relationships between boys and with girls. Using role plays, boys put themselves (as a woman) in the position of the sexually intimidated in a variety of settings; in a bar, in a crowded bus, as the recipient of an obscene phone call. Boys were faced with the reality of feelings caused by such harassment, the injustice of the situation, and the power of gendered identities to perpetuate such behaviours.

Robert Smith (1995) used life histories of a group of young male pre-service social science teachers to explore how masculine gendered identities are created and maintained. Over a period of five weeks the men participated in a men’s group, aimed at sharing how each participant’s ideas of masculinity were shaped by life experiences, the influence of popular culture, and relationships with parents, siblings, and school friends. A result from the study was an awareness (identified through follow up interviews) of the comparison between the debilitating and limited nature of unitary masculinity, and the freedom afforded by an acceptance of a variety of masculinities.

The scarcity of such studies indicates that although schools and the curriculum have been sites of considerable gender studies, masculinity as a multi-variant has rarely been the subject of specific attention. Perhaps due to the "infancy" of this multiple masculinities approach, the studies which have been done to date display a limited
mandate. They have largely been either feminist or pro-feminist masculinist studies centering on identifying and elaborating those characteristics, behaviours and attitudes which are deemed, by the mainstream feminist ideologies, to perpetuate male oppression of women, and they have subsequently focused on the deconstruction and reconstruction of masculinity within the classroom.

While providing some valuable information, these attempts need to be recognised as still operating within quite limiting parameters of all boys exhibiting and enacting a homophobic, sexist, hegemonic masculinity, young patriarchs in the making, with little accommodation being made for those males who may not fit this mold. While reading these accounts (Jackson & Salisbury, 1996; Martino, 1995) I sometimes feel sympathy for the many boys whose day-to-day existence have not included active oppression of the feminine. By leading these boys by the nose to recant their guilt as partners in hegemony (see Reay, 1990b), or for being homophobic, or a perpetrator of the “male gaze”, or being a potential sexual predator (see Skelton, 1994), many studies have failed to be realistic about how masculinity is enacted in a multitude of ways that differ male-to-male. To the contrary, relatively unreported in this literature has been the possibility that many young men enact masculinities that may in some way reject theoretical hegemonic norms. This literature also fails to take account of the debilitating, even marginalizing, effects on such males as such diatribes unfairly treat all boys as toxic (Pollock, 1998).

Unlike many of these studies, Boys Doing Art is not focused on the rehabilitation of masculinity. One aim of the study is to illustrate that a range of alternative, egalitarian masculinities may be represented in schools and might operate in the real sense removed from perceptions of “subordination”, “compliance”, “marginalisation”, and “hegemony”. This questions the necessity of recantation and focuses debate on more realistic strategies
which may serve to strengthen elements of curriculum which help boys reject hegemony, in the process embracing a diversity of race, class, and sexuality in gender.

**Using “Multiple Masculinities” as a Research Lens**

Connell’s (1996) analysis of the goals of a number provides some clues towards the way a multiple masculinities approach can be used by the educator and the researcher as a lens to more fairly assess boys’ actions in schools. Connell uses programs currently operating in Germany, England, and Australia to identify some common goals, and concludes that three foci exist in programs that seek to identify and encourage the concept of multiple masculinities with boys.

**Relationships.** The first is the need to focus on boys’ relationships. While schooling is centered on building relationships, our gender culture can see it as a feminine trait. Aspects of education, such as the fostering of competitiveness and the culture of school sports, perpetuates this assumption. What “good” programs undertake, is to break stereotyped concepts of relationships with boys and encourage the growth of relationships that accept alternative beliefs and values. While Connell’s points are quite problematic (males also enjoy considerable relationships from schooling, academic competitiveness is not necessarily only masculine, current research suggests girls are now thriving in this environment, and sports have always been mooted as being “team building” rather than the opposite) the focus is pertinent. Subject curricular is ideally suited to pursue this aim. Curriculum can provide boys with an opportunity to explore and mediate differences on a common ground, within defined parameters. This in turn builds communication and conflict resolution skills – the foundation for healthy relationships.

**Knowledge.** A second aim of “good” boys programs in schools, is to develop boys’ levels of knowledge. “Academic” knowledge is, again, perhaps a non-gendered
schooling aim. However, for some time, there has been concern for boys’ schooling performances. In Australia boys’ inferior academic performance has lead to various parliamentary inquiries and, a national conference on boys’ literacy (Alloway, Davies, Gilbert, Gilbert & King, 1996) and analyses of their overall academic achievement (MacCann, 1995). Similar concerns have been expressed in British Columbia, Canada (Clarke, 1997; Kilian, 1998) and in many other countries (see, for example Bushweller, 1995, for the US; Soderman and Phillips, 1986, for England). In art education, boys have been identified as having significantly lower academic achievement than girls (Imms, 1997a). The need to address with boys the importance of pursuing academic knowledge is important, if only to circumvent a future distraction from masculinity issues caused by images of boys as somehow disadvantaged.

However, Connell identifies the “academic” as only one form of knowledge that should be addressed. Of equal importance is “cultural” knowledge, the acknowledgment of alternative form of representing truth, of understanding cultural phenomena from the perspectives of others. This is a common theme now in many subjects, particularly art education where pluralism and multi-cultural issues significantly influence the study of art history and art criticism; two of the four curriculum “disciplines” (Chalmers, 1996).

**Issues of social justice.** “Good” boy programs in schools encourage them to address issues of social justice. Boys need to discuss and evaluate their role in building an equitable and just society. Connell recognises that hegemonic masculinity imposes severe restrictions on boys through the agencies of “marginalisation” (often self-imposed through “protest masculinity”), through “oppression” (leading to inadequate opportunities for self-expression) and through “domination” (where boys restrict other boys’ free participation). Such restrictions must be overcome, and this needs to be a central focus when working
with boys. Undeniably, some boys regulate and police a dominant masculinity against other boys. The resulting loss of opportunity for boys forced to submit to this hegemony is an educational concern.

**Figure 3.** A model of the application of multiple masculinities principles to boys’ studies.

Connell’s work provides educators with a mapping of some very relevant areas of concentration when developing and implementing masculinity strategies, by directly addressing the three broad areas of concern discussed in Chapter 1 (Figure 1); that is, their academic, social, and relationship concerns. Whereas in Figure 1 these culminate in a supposed “crisis of masculinity”, from a multiple masculinities perspective they are used to implement strategies that culminate in an acceptance of a multiplicity of masculinities (Figure 3). In practical terms Figure 3 constitutes a framework for foci when conducting classroom observations and interviews.
Where previous studies of boys in schools have failed them by identifying only those behaviours typical of a hegemonic masculinity (Addelston, 1996; Browne & Fletcher, 1995; Kenway and Willis, 1997) *Boys Doing Art* will seek to observe boys negotiating a multiplicity of masculinities. When asking how this will be done, some directions are becoming more clear. The study must rely on describing and documenting what is seen and said. The study must avoid being over-deterministic, by looking for the “goodness” in boys as well as evidences of hegemony. The study must identify instances of recognition of “the other”, the acceptance of other representations of masculinity as being equal to one’s own. The study must look for boys’ willingness to talk and negotiate, for boys’ willingness to be accountable for actions and personal epistemologies. The study must search for those actions that indicate boys’ wish for broader interpretations of academic and cultural knowledge. In doing so, *Boys Doing Art* will attempt to capture a view of young men that has somehow, so far, evaded our critical gaze.

**Conclusion**

No one “model” of masculinity is provided by the academic disciplines. The socio-political agendas of the discourses that have used these images of masculinity have created a confusing situation. Is masculinity an “entity” to be put on by boys like an overcoat? Is it a part of boys’ physiological pre-programming, constructed of essential characteristics that forever distance the masculine from the feminine in the same way sex differences distance male from a female? Or is masculinity somehow integral to boys’ very “beings”, locked within archetypal structures within our society to the extent that attempts to remove these archetypes from our society will deprive boys of the fundamental foundations of their existence?
Education’s reluctance to deal directly with boys’ schooling concerns stems from this confusion. Should we treat boys as misunderstood, misrepresented, or toxic? Feminism has limited explorations of masculinity by adhering to a “men as oppressors” hegemonic ideology, due in part to the fear of any “backlash” against girls’ hard won advances in educational equality. Gender programs in schools aimed at boys are not widely successful, often meeting resistance from boys (Kenway & Willis, 1997). Despite the best intentions of skilled and committed practitioners and researchers, our ignorance of boys’ concepts of masculinity results in “strategies for boys” that assumes their guilt in hegemonic practices, that hold few benefits that boys can see, and that have little relevance to their actual gender-experience.

The field is moving slowly towards recognising a plurality of gender, having arrived – with considerable caveats – at the position of acknowledging that multiple masculinities are preferable to the “singular” interpretation (Soerensen, 1992). The time is ripe for a study that will explore how this reinterpretation is manifest in the classroom. The importance of Malcolm’s story is that while, on its own, it cannot re-define masculinity, it does begin the process of identifying the existence a negotiation of masculinities between boys, and provides a window into boys’ active construction of gender concepts.

The truth is, considerable gaps still exist in our knowledge of gender in schools. Education remains unsure of its aims when working with boys. What characteristics define an “acceptable” masculinity? Who determines these characteristics, according to what criteria? How do boys define their masculinity, or the qualities that create an acceptable form? If boys are such problems, are they all at fault? If not all, then of those “acceptable” masculinities, what do they look like, how do boys form them, and do
schools and curriculum play a part in their development? Little consideration has been
given in the past to boys' understanding of what their masculinity is and how it is formed.
If we don't know how boys view, apply, and live within "masculinity", how can we ask
boys to change it? Past "gender" programs aimed at boys appear to have held little
relevance to the reality of their day to day lives (see, for instance, Browne & Fletcher,
1995). Little consideration appears to have been given to how the values being "pushed"
at boys fit the reality of their lived existence.

The application of essentialist gender theories has limited our understanding of
masculinity in schools and has "turned off" many boys from actively pursuing egalitarian
gender relations. What is exciting is the recent acceptance of a plurality of gender within
these otherwise traditional gender theories. This "reconceptualisation" sheds light on
complex actions in which boys engage when negotiating masculinities with other boys; a
critical juncture that is a natural and logical site for education, through curriculum, to
facilitate "egalitarian masculinities". Education must begin the process of examining how
curriculum (in its realistic state, that is, when it actually engages with students) influences
boys development of masculine images, and how it is used by boys to undertake this
process.
Chapter 3: What We Know - Art Education Curriculum and Masculinity

An Overview of the Chapter

The previous chapters argued a pressing need to explore how individual masculinities are negotiated using subject curricula. While this is an important step towards a more complete understanding of masculinity, the significant outcome for education will be knowledge concerning how schooling helps the development of egalitarian versions of manhood amongst boys. Malcolm’s vignette suggests art education may, inadvertently, already be achieving some significant successes in this direction. The possibility exists that art curricula are already addressing to some degree the needs that recent gender research into masculinity has set as goals for education. While some subjects have begun the process of articulating such contributions, what progress has art education made?

This chapter will focus on identifying current knowledge in art regarding its role in facilitating pluralist interpretations of gender between boys, in two stages. Firstly, I will provide a definition of “discipline-oriented art curriculum” and will outline this curriculum model’s efforts to incorporate gender issues within its actual curriculum. The second part of this chapter will discuss understanding of masculinity in art education and will assess how one form of curriculum is positioned to work with boys. The purpose of this chapter is to situate boys within art education’s “gender gaze”.

What is “Discipline-oriented Art Education Curriculum”?

Historical Antecedents to Art as a Discipline of Study

The origins of discipline-oriented art curriculum lie in the social-political manoeuvrings of the United States’ post-war attempts through education, to consolidate at home the country’s international status as a world power (Freedman, 1987). During the
1950s education became a political tool which was utilised as a treatment for an ill society, far too important “to be left in the hands of professional educators.” (Rickover, 1959, cited in Efland, 1988). The “Sputnik incident” in 1957 spurred significant educational changes in curriculum development, characterised by the call for a “return to the traditional task of formal education in Western civilisation, the transmission of cultural heritage, and preparation for life through rigorous intellectual training of young minds to think clearly, logically and independently” (Rickover, 1959, cited in Pinar et al. 1995, p. 154).

Far from isolated in his opinion, Admiral Rickover’s statements reflected a general social and political belief that education should be utilised to facilitate technocratic advancement. This punctuated a period of discipline-oriented curriculum development, primarily within the fields of mathematics and science (Pinar et al. 1995). Art education was not left out in this process. The Penn State Seminar in 1965, a forum sponsored by the US Cooperative Research Act, began to formalise a “new art education”, one that would meet the needs of a rapidly changing society (Efland, 1988). During the conference Manuel Barkan drew on Bruner’s (1960) theory of disciplines as structures of knowledge to posit that such a disciplinary approach was also suitable for art education. He suggested there existed

in art the structural equivalent of the knowledge forms that existed in science.

Though he knew that they were not the same, he assumed that something akin to the structure of concepts in science could be found that would serve as the rational underpinning for curriculum in art. [Based on] David Ecker’s notion of the artistic process as qualitative problem solving Barkan conflated artistic activity with scientific activity. (Efland, 1988, p. 267.)
This new vision of art curriculum advocated that art criticism and aesthetics should be integrated with the traditional areas of studio production and art history to construct "a way to engage in inquiry about art" (Efland, 1984, p. 211). As such it was hardly an original approach; Kern (1987) noted that antecedents to the concept of teaching criticism and history as partners (although, not necessarily equal partners) to studio production had historical ties to practices dating from as early as the 1870s in the US, while Efland (1988) and Smith (1987) viewed the findings of the seminar as the culmination of over twenty years of art education curriculum development. The Penn State Seminar was unique, however, in advocating a paradigmatic shift in art education curriculum theory. One of its most persuasive themes was

the notion that art or art education [was] a discipline in its own right. Seminar participants concluded that the curriculum in art can be both structured and disciplined, with the goals of art instruction determined from the characteristics of the discipline rather than that of children at various stages of development. (Efland, 1984, p. 205.)

What was historically new from this seminar was the proposition that art was a discipline of study, a body of knowledge capable of being imparted extrinsically through a sequential curriculum (Greer, 1984), rather than an experience, a predominantly intrinsic interchange between the individual and a predetermined cognitive development schema, largely unaffected by external factors such as systematised instruction (Brittain, 1979). The latter, a Lowenfeldian legacy (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987) was the accepted educational approach to art both in the USA and internationally prior to Penn State. The former was to become the dominant theory towards the new century.
During the Penn State Seminar, Bruner's (1960) notion of a "discipline" being a structure of knowledge was utilised by Barkan to model an artistic discipline based on structures of concepts similar to science. This was expected to bring "rationality to the task of curriculum development" for art education (Efland, 1988, p. 272). This disciplinary status of art was not unanimously accepted. In its broadest sense MacGregor (1985) debated whether the four components of a discipline-oriented art curriculum, when combined to a single entity, were technically compatible with any of the contested definitions of "a discipline". Aesthetics and criticism, he suggested, perhaps more properly belonged to the field of philosophy, while art history was logically a branch of history. This clearly was how these areas were viewed prior to the mid-1960s, during which time art education was predominantly studio production (Freedman, 1987).

Critics of the new art curriculum argued the discipline label did little more than impose a fixed structure on educators which mechanised and systematised art education and conflicted with its core strength; that is, catering to intrinsic creative qualities rather than extrinsic learning schemata (Efland, 1984). Others viewed the construct of art as a discipline as enabling art to establish itself as a bona fide academic subject within the school curriculum (Eisner, 1988b). Certainly in its pre-1980 form it reflected socio-political pressures to provide "substance and rigor" to art education (Delacruz & Dunn, 1995). Whether or not this approach constituted a true discipline, it still represented a model of curriculum that successfully responded to historical, socio-political and art education pressures to provide theoretical structure to contemporary instruction in the visual arts (MacGregor, 1985). The influence of Broudy (1987) added aesthetics to this hypothetical structure (Greer, 1992b), the philanthropy of the J. Paul Getty Foundation provided powerful political and financial support, and Discipline-based Art Education
(DBAE) emerged in the USA during early 1980s to argue art as a bona fide discipline of study and to claim a position within the core educational subjects (Eisner, 1988b).

The Construct and Function of a “Discipline-oriented” Style of Art Curriculum

The structure of the discipline-oriented style of art curriculum was not complex. This model proposed that “four parent disciplines – aesthetics, studio art, art history, and art criticism – are taught by means of a formal, continuous, sequential, written curriculum across grade levels in the same way as other academic subjects” (Greer, 1984, p. 212).

How Canada responded to this style of curriculum by incorporating it into provincial programs, will be discussed in Chapter 5 when describing how art is taught at Greene’s College. However, respond it did, largely because it recognised that the advantages of this approach were quite clear.

Activities and skills presented in sequence produce an evolution from a naïve (untutored) to a sophisticated (knowledgeable) understanding of art, taking into account children’s level of maturation and tasks ordered from simple to complex. When art is taught with this kind of structure, it answers critics who maintain that art education has little to do with art. The artworks of children become examples of concepts learned, in addition to being expressive efforts. (Greer, 1984, p. 212.)

Criticism and support for the discipline-oriented model. DBAE did not receive unanimous embrace from all art educators. The early years of developing discipline-oriented curriculum into syllabi for implementation in schools saw a wide debate characterised by often-conflicting opinions. Much of the literature that emerged through the 1980s and into the early 1990s reflected the developing status of DBAE. For a number of years an interpretive genre of literature sought to describe and explore how this model could be taught. Greer (1984) emphasised DBAE as being “a formal, continuous and
sequential written curriculum” (p. 212). Lanier (1986) described these fundamentals within an historical context. Rush (1987) and Dobbs (1989) interpreted a systematic discipline-oriented approach to art production as representative of the way artists manipulated imagery. Crawford (1987) was enthusiastic of the (overdue) recognition of aesthetics as integral to art curriculum and DiBlasio (1985) saw this discipline as helping to formulate Barkan’s “structures of knowledge” theory to practical fruition. In art criticism Anderson (1993) posited students would be challenged to recognise the subjectivity of opinions and the need to identify value orientations. Because DBAE presented a structured, sequential curriculum, it would allow a wider variety of assessments in art than ever before (Day, 1985), in both qualitative and quantitative methodologies (Gentile & Mumyack, 1989), and would allow for standardised assessment with a subsequent increase in academic credibility within the school (Hamblen, 1987).

The optimism for DBAE within these examples from the literature was heartening. This approach was viewed as the model of art education that would heighten student motivation in art, thus improving learning (Silverman, 1988). DBAE, it was argued, would also place art as the subject within the school curriculum to complete the development of the “all-round” individual (Eisner, 1987), and would provide the context to help students better understand a post-modern (Moore, 1991; Parks, 1989) and communications-based society (Spratt, 1987). A strong view was that DBAE’s benefits were of such significance it was worth the effort of overcoming obstacles to see it entrenched as the predominant model of art education curriculum (McMurrin, 1989).

These “obstacles” were presented through a critical genre of literature that focused on DBAE’s conceptual assumptions. Some saw a significant, unexplained, gap existing between how DBAE viewed the way students learned in and through art, and the practical
reality of the art classroom. Arnstine (1990) believed this model of curriculum was not politically or structurally refined, that it contained inherent obstacles that far outweighed any advantages. According to Stinespring & Kennedy (1988), one of those obstacles was its degree of analytical abstraction in all areas except studio, abstractions that would serve to confuse students and teachers alike, and lead to difficulties in imposing the curriculum into syllabi. Pittard (1988) lamented its failure to explain pedagogical practices, while DiBlasio (1987) questioned if it could carry its theoretical strengths into actual practice. With “pedagogical popularisation”, she said, original goals and objectives would be diluted or even lost negating DBAE’s advantages. MacGregor (1985) drew institutional control of public curriculum into the debate by questioning if Getty would impose sanctions in order to protect DBAE from such an unravelling. Eisner defended DBAE on the grounds that it was misunderstood rather than inherently flawed (Eisner, 1988a).

Others accepted the challenge of “fleshing out” DBAE (Greer, 1987) by researching the effects of many versions of DBAE on classroom practice (Berry, 1995; Erikson & Stein, 1993; Kindler, 1992).

One Canadian province’s response to discipline-oriented art curriculum. As an "outside viewer" (MacGregor, 1985), and more realistically, as a partner to the US in discipline-oriented curriculum development reform, Canada during this period instituted changes to its national art education curriculum that redefined the nature of art in its schools. A study of Canada’s national and provincial curricula indicate it also pursued development of a discipline-oriented style of curriculum. Figure 4 provides a description of the provincial art education model that guides the art program at Greene’s College.
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<th>PERCEIVING/RESPONDING</th>
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<td>Image Development</td>
<td>Students perceive and respond to images in ways that demonstrate awareness of the</td>
<td>Students create images reflecting their understanding of a wide variety of image</td>
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<td>and Design Strategies</td>
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<td>Materials,</td>
<td>Students perceive and respond to images from a variety of different types of</td>
<td>Students create images that demonstrate their ability to communicate effectively</td>
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<td>Technologies and</td>
<td>artworks in ways that demonstrate their understanding of how the choice of</td>
<td>using a variety of materials, technologies and processes.</td>
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<td>Contexts</td>
<td>Students perceive and respond to images and the ways these images reflect and</td>
<td>Students create images that communicate understanding of and appreciation for the</td>
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<td>affect social, cultural and historical contexts.</td>
<td>influence of personal, social, cultural and historical contexts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visual Elements and</td>
<td>Students perceive and respond to images from a variety of different artworks in</td>
<td>Students create images that communicate their understanding of and appreciation for</td>
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<td>Principles of Art and</td>
<td>ways that demonstrate their understanding of the visual elements and principles of</td>
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<td>Design</td>
<td>art and design.</td>
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**Figure 4.** Provincial model that guides the Greene’s College art education curriculum.

Correlation to the “disciplines” in parentheses.

While more complex in structure to the US version just described, the models own significant parallels. From an epistemological perspective they both identify the student’s individual engagement of art using a variety of intellectual skills (not just through studio activities) as their most important feature. This contrasts to previous curriculum that tended towards treating students as receptors of a curriculum. In addition, both models are exactly that – models. They provide a structure for art programs, but avoid being prescriptive, leaving the development of specific syllabi to the classroom teacher.

Significant commonalities exist on a pedagogy level as well. They are both structured around the four key disciplines of studio, aesthetics, history and criticism.
While the provincial model utilises differing terminology, and incorporates "criticism" across the other three disciplines rather than treating it as a separate area of study, the essential structure remains identical. In addition, both models place emphasis on sequential, accumulative learning. These points are strongly reflected in the curriculum statements produced at Greene's College (see Appendix B and C). What is important to note is that these moves in the US to "discipline" art education curriculum, significantly impacted the way art was, and continues to be, taught in schools such as Greene's College.

The maturation of the discipline-oriented approach. As the 1990s approached there appeared a general acceptance that discipline-oriented art curriculum was well discussed and understood and had, still with some contest, matured into the dominant curriculum theory in North America (Pearse, 1992). This was indicated by the emergence of research which began to examine the Getty model from a widening perspective (Hamblen, 1986). Amdur, (1993), Muth (1988), and Thompson (1995) began to conceptualise it within a co-curricular context. Hamblen (1988a) posited it as potentially anti-sexist, its discipline structure supportive of attempts to identify the elements inherent in texts, curriculum and pedagogy that nurtured sexist epistemologies. Stroh (1989) noted the similarities between design education and DBAE and the correlation between the successes they were enjoying. Silverman (1988) identified a strong democratic tendency as inherent to DBAE, while Zeller (1989) and Hamblen (1988b) began to look at it as a generic curricular instrument extending into the humanities and beyond into general education. Greer (1992a) used drama and music education's interest in DBAE as a sign of its immanent recognition as the arts curriculum model. Perhaps most indicative of the advancement of DBAE discussion was the beginning of a trend around the early 1990s to
utilise it as a lens through which art education's position in the "paradigmatic confusions" of the post-modernist age could be investigated (Pearse, 1992). Delacruz (1990) suggested it was a movement towards addressing critical social issues that motivated the controversies remaining in DBAE. For example, Risatti (1987) wanted DBAE to investigate how it communicated social and personal values, McFee (1991) felt art education and DBAE needed to look towards the social sciences to provide a broader, deeper understanding of the interplay of curriculum and cultures, and Chalmers (as early as 1987) called for a reconceptualisation of how DBAE interpreted culture (Chalmers, 1996).

These "post-modern" discussions situated DBAE within a critical sociological framework and included a small but significant gender discourse. The trend towards more critical analysis of art's concepts and assumptions (Wolff, 1990) using broader theories in ascendancy in the social sciences (McFee, 1991) saw some sophisticated gender critiques by feminist of art education and curriculum. These discussions were situated within art curriculum theory (McRorie, 1996), the contexts of art education (for example, Freedman, 1994) and art pedagogy (Calvert, 1996), often utilising contemporary critiques of empowerment to call for a broader definition of the structure of power within art education curriculum (Hicks, 1990). One practical example of this was Wolff (1990), who noted that sociological analyses of society were highly relevant to art education but rarely used. She believed DBAE had focused on shallow interpretations of complex social issues such as class and gender. DBAE appeared rooted, she said, in simplistic "sculpture for girls" strategies without looking to the limiting underlying assumptions of art education.
As will be discussed more fully in the following section, this trend, encouraged by Wolff (1990), Hicks (1990), Freedman (1994) and others, reversed modernist assumptions that art curriculum manipulated its participants, to argue that participants used the curriculum to arrive at their own determinations concerning gender, but were restricted in the range of those determinations by society's sexist construct.

While this concept has been explored predominately through feminist analysis of the impact of art curriculum on girls, Boys Doing Art argues that examining the complexities of masculinity is also part of this agenda. Curriculum equally impacts boys and girls, and the nature of that impact is not always negative one way and positive the other. Malcolm's story suggests that the prevailing social mores of gender represented in art curriculum are more complex than we imagine. When its curriculum possesses particular characteristics, boys directly challenge those social mores. They can use art to accept, reject or modify established concepts of gender. Art can be a workshop of gender mediation. Wolff (1990), Hicks (1990), and Freedman (1994) are correct – it is more accurate to view participants manipulating the curriculum rather than the reverse. As relationships between boys are negotiated within art curriculum the result can often be that the acceptance of other's opinions, and the acceptance of those with difference, becomes part of their negotiated concepts of "masculinity". No boy-specific study has explored this accuracy of this conjecture. So how does art's gender research "set the scene" for such investigation?

Art Curriculum and Gender

When discussing gender, the prevailing sensibility (as outlined in Chapter 2) is that there exists a system of social constructs that maintain a dominant patriarchy throughout society. This occurs through the institutionalisation of male power privileges, and comes
at the expense of marginalising and oppressing women (Segal, 1990). In education, feminists have been able to identify a pattern of hegemonic practices by men entrenched within the history and structure of schooling and the design and enactment of curricula (Gray, 1987). Education, it is comprehensively argued, is inherently gendered. Such is the widespread institutionalisation of sexist bias in schools, the plausible assumption is that all facets of education act to maintain this privilege. Logically, subject curriculum is one active agent in this process (Sadker, Sadker & Steindam, 1989). These are not rash assumptions made from superficial analyses. They result from decades of feminist research; an immensely broad agenda of inquiry covering the many significant fields briefly described in Chapter 2. How is art education represented within this dominant body of knowledge? And how does art education, as one of the “agents of oppression”, enact sexist bias through its curriculum?

Trends, Issues and Methodologies in Art Education Gender Discussion

These questions are significant for Boys Doing Art because this study is situated in art education’s gender discourse, and it seems reasonable to assume that this subject’s previous explorations of gender may well shed significant light on the issues raised by Malcolm’s story.

The stages of gender research. To conduct such a review, it is relevant to first note that mainstream education has followed a particular pattern of research into gender. Pinar et al. (1995) argues that this pattern is constituted of four stages. The first stage was the focus on inequality of opportunity between the sexes. This line of enquiry examined the way schooling deprived women of the educational advantages enjoyed by males. The second stage used sex-role theory to “flesh out” the nature of these differences. Within this stage, a more radical feminist approach developed a contrary (essentialist) argument
that women owned unique ways of “knowing” and “being” (Chodorow, 1978). A third stage focused on sexism’s widespread institutionalisation in society and education. Finally, a fourth stage consisted of feminist and pro-feminist scholarship which analysed gender’s permutation into concepts of knowledge and ways of knowing throughout society; a discussion that has lead to a critique of the way masculinised knowledge has historically maintained a patriarchal hegemony in society and schools (Pinar, et al, 1995).

These stages spanned thirty or more years of scholarship and contributed to a significant reconceptualisation of curriculum. Originally, curriculum was treated as a tool, designed by technocrats, for the implementation of knowledge. From research such as feminism’s analysis of power constructs, curriculum is now acknowledged as being an educational phenomena “which is lived, embodied and politically structured and is enacted to and by and on the individual” (Pinar et al. 1995, p. 319). We will return to this important achievement soon. Firstly, though, it is useful to catalogue how art education used these stages of research when dealing with its own particular gender issues.

The stages of art education gender research. Art education consistently followed similar themes of discussion to those identified by Pinar et al. (1995) as being characteristic of mainstream feminist research. Inequality of opportunity in art education was a popular subject in the 1970s. The predominant focus was the exclusion of women from art academe, seen as representative of the subjugation of females in education and schooling (Glenn and Sherman, 1983; Lovano-Kerr, Semler & Zimmerman, 1977; Michael, 1977; Packard, 1977). The challenge was for women to be more visible at this level in art education (Collins, 1978; Collins, 1979; Sacca, 1996; Sandell, 1979; Whitesel, 1978). A second phase examined the differences between males and females – Pinar et al.’s (1995) second stage. A variety of studies investigated ways the sexes differed in art
production (Collins, 1977; Salkind & Salkind, 1997), art viewing (Neperud, 1986), and how sex differences could be identified through children's art works (Dalton, 1996; Duncum, 1997; Flannery & Watson, 1995). The third theme, critiques of sexism, were undertaken in art education through an historical perspective (Efland, 1985; Erikson, 1979; Korzenick, 1990; Stankiewicz, 1982), through the questioning of how gendered viewing preferences might be socially engineered (Chalmers, 1977), and through an examination of how children's art works are useful when identifying socially engineered sex stereotyping (Feinburg, 1977; Zurmuehlen, Sacca & Richter, 1984).

The fourth theme in gender discourse, the analysis of the way gender permeates concepts of knowledge, has been addressed through appeals to recognise women's "ways of being" in art production (Hamblen, 1988a; Helgadottir, 1991; Sacca, 1989), in art criticism (Garber, 1996) and through art history (Hagman, 1990). A synthesis of discussion around this latter theme appeared in Collins and Sandell's (1996) Gender Issues in Art Education: Content, Contexts and Strategies, which strongly argued the need for women's "ways of knowing" to be recognised within the art curriculum (Garber, 1996), in the processes of forming that curriculum (Sacca, 1996), and to be supported within art education's pedagogy (Attenborough, 1996; Wyrick, 1996). Within the context of questioning masculine hegemony of knowledge, Check (1996) addressed homophobia and Honeychurch (1995) the institutionalisation of sexualities within art education.

The methods used in art education gender research. Further examination of art education's gender research shows that similar methodological tools to those used by mainstream feminism were employed to argue these topics. Sex-role theory argued that masculinity and femininity were not biologically determined but were gendered identities created and reinforced by structures within society. As an example, the Bem Sex Role
Inventory (Bem, 1974, 1977) measured an individual’s sense of him or herself on masculinity and femininity scales. During the 1980s considerable attention was given to using this methodology to identify and discuss essentialist elements of men and women in terms of attitudes and behaviours.

Of the art education gender studies cited previously, a considerable number used this approach to argue that many characteristics of an individual’s art production reflected the existence of socially constructed gender-roles. For example, Feinburg (1977) found there was a clear sex-related evolution of themes in children’s drawings. Boys’ aggressive qualities were seen in their propensity for war themes, images of violence and conflict. They contrasted this with girls’ “helping themes” of cooperation and nurturance. Another example comes from Salkind and Salkind (1997) who found that gendered differences existed in children’s unsolicited choice of topics of art works. They concluded children were influenced in their choice by environmental rather than biological variables. Boys’ experience gained by playing with three-dimensional toys, war games, and construction sets developed favourable spatial skills. In contrast to the boys, girls experiences were more circumspect. They played quietly in small groups, which provided training in social skills.

A third example was Dalton (1996) who argued that children’s drawings reflected the “genderising” nature of society. He identified that at “gender constancy” (the stage of maturation where we realise our sex is permanent) children utilised their art to make statements about their gender with their peers. He also concluded that children used their

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3 To reiterate from Chapter 2, it was argued men owned specific characteristics such as being rational and linear in their thinking (Collins, 1974), they prized being tough minded and analytical (Kantner, 1975), and they wished to be individualistic and subjective (Pagano, 1988). If men owned these characteristics, women had their own. They were communal and group centred (Macdonald & Macdonald, 1988), circular, mystical, unifying, and emotive (Mitrano, 1981), and nurturing and cooperative (Thompson, 1986).
art works to experiment and express their own interpretations of gender roles. Flannery and Watson, (1995) found no gender differences in terms of artistic ability in tests on children's art, but noted that boys' drawings were less realistic and more aggressive than girls. They found a pre-disposition to violence in the art work of those with supposed "masculine" traits.

Feminist power analyses have constituted the most recent trend in gender analysis in art education, Pinar et al.'s (1995) fourth stage. To reiterate, Grumet (1988), Chodorow (1978) and others used and adapted Freudian psychoanalytical theory to argue the process of education being that of "reproduction" of gendered qualities, the "mothering" role supporting a "fragile masculinity" (as discussed in the previous chapter). Pagano (1988) argued that women had no ownership of curriculum, and were complicit in supporting a patriarchal curriculum. She was joined by others who identified how the disparate masculine and feminine spheres operate in education. Within art education, a great deal of the ground work for such feminist power analyses occurred as early as 1975 with Nesmer's (1975) and Chicago's (1975) challenge for the need for women artists to display masculine attributes to be "successful", and Collins' (1977, 1978) use of androgyny theory to argue that the rising feminine in contemporary art production came at the expense of compliance with "the masculine", rather than as a genre of expression in its own right.

A number of other art studies have developed this theme. Sacca (1989) arguing from the position that sex differences were socially created, posited that art was a tool that could be used to deconstruct perceptions of "feminine" and "masculine". The repercussions of such a strategy would be a total reorganisation of the value system within art and art education to alleviate any essentialist notions of gender. Hamblen, (1988a) viewed the practice of art as being based on masculine interpretations of art and inculcated
Boys Doing Art

with masculine value systems. Art curriculum, she argued, had the potential to challenge this archetypal image of the “male artist as role-model” by breaking the focus from predominately studio production to place equal value on areas of art curriculum such as criticism, appreciation, and aesthetics. This would allow the introduction of new interpretations of what was good in art that differed from the masculine values that had dominated the field for so long. Freedman (1994) addressed the dilemma for women of either becoming masculine in their ways of producing art, or remaining marginalised. “Men intended to draw women into their professional communities [but] in the process recreated women to be more like men” (p. 156). She advocated a broader definition of art to include “visual culture” (or manifest images). Her reasoning was that historical representation of art were rooted in masculine values of “greatness”, “progressiveness” and “independent genius”. Visual culture, on the other hand, was inclusive of cultural artifacts, mass media, designed objects, and other representations of art in which women had a long and close association, and provided them their own art history.

This brief foray into what is a rich field of research indicates gender has been an important focus for art education for many years. What it also suggests is that gender research in art education has closely paralleled mainstream feminist research. This has happened in terms of its progression (or stages of development of ideas), it has happened in terms of the issues it has addressed, and it has happened in terms of the methodological tools that have been used to conduct this broad array of analysis. Why is this significant for Boys Doing Art?

There are two points of issue. Firstly, this body of research is all we have to describe how art is perceived (in terms of gender) by its participants, something I will call art’s “gender image”. Is this gender image of art, rooted as it is in feminist research,
accurate for boys? Can it be used to help us analyse boys’ experiences in the subject? Secondly, this body of research is all we have that describes (in gender terms) the impact of art’s curriculum on its participants. Is this description inclusive of all students who study the subject? Does it give us the room to examine how, in gender terms, students engage the curriculum, and more particularly, how boys might explore a plurality of masculinities operating within the curriculum?

The Resulting “Gender Image” of Art Education

A consistent conclusion from the body of literature briefly outlined in the previous section has been that art education is not dissimilar to the rest of society; art has gender values that underlie its most core practices, and these values are inherently disadvantageous to girls. In art education the claim is that women are excluded (professionally, in art making, and in types of knowledge inherent to the subject), and that there exists a privileging of masculine values in art education to the detriment of women and girls.

One method of exclusion of women in art was by making a distinction between art as a profession and art as a craft. Bernard (1981) described how society and men created a male exclusivity to its professional occupations by demeaning feminine art forms. According to Bem (1993) this practice is

the privileging of male experience and the “otherising” of female experience; that is, males and male experience are treated as a neutral standard or norm for the culture or the species as a whole, and females and female experience are treated as a sex-specific deviation from the allegedly universal standard. (p. 41)

Women’s exclusion was based on the assumption they created art differently to men, and that theirs was the “deviation from the universal standard”. Women’s very natures
prevented them from producing art in a “professional” manner; that is, their art was not original, creative, imaginative, individual, or unique (see Collins, 1977). Instead, they were restricted to a world of “simple expressive scenes and homely virtues” (Congdon, 1996). Chalmers (1996) gave an account of such beliefs in action with his description of Fanny McLan’s attempts to open an art school for women in Victorian England. McLan was a tireless advocate for the inclusion of women in art’s professional ranks, but was continually opposed by institutionalised patriarchy; in her case a male run board voicing sexist stereotypes of the feminine in art. If women were to undertake art, it was to be within the “feminine” realms of decoration and craft.

A second method of gender division in art was through the privileging of a “male aesthetic”. The literature has consistently argued that the types of knowledge and value hierarchies that underlie art education derive from male values surrounding art’s operation as an occupation. Any other functions of art – for example for enjoyment, decoration, or collaborative inquiry – were secondary to its operation as a profession (Collins & Sandell, 1996). One of the methods of maintaining this domination of male values in art was the elevation of the academic. McCrone (1993) describes the division of masculine and feminine as the separation of the aesthetic from the academic, the clear alienation of subjects such as art and music to the “female alignment” and part of “the only legitimate vocation for respectable ladies” (p. 34). These subjects were supposedly vital to women when seeking to develop and exude a refined and cultivated patina, important to a successful family and social life, and the positive and useful expenditure of leisure time. In contrast, “hard” applications of art was a male domain, such as the professional career and the application of art skills to logical and linear fields like technical drawing. These were elevated in status because of their economic purposefulness.
Another gender division was cultural. Congdon (1996) describes how historically women's art world's have been created to be different than men's; the rarefied, cultural and "high art" world of "fine" art, shut off from women's storytelling, traditional, identifying and autobiographical art world, set within their (and their families) lived experiences. This is an image of men's "museum" art as distinct from women's "home and folk" art.

The research that has followed these trends and investigated these issues has effectively created a gender image of art education. Girls are excluded within curriculum because they must either conform to male dictated standards of high art – something that is counter to the feminine ways of engaging in the subject – or be relegated to "the other" (Park, 1996). Efforts in curriculum development and pedagogy practice are now aimed at acknowledging that a feminine "sensibility" exists within (and in spite of) a masculine hegemony of art history (Chicago, 1975); that girls own a legacy within art practice and art aesthetics that is unique to them and is equally valid to the masculine (Congdon, 1996).

Women's unique ways of doing art has been increasingly used as a rallying point for women to redress their exclusion from the dominant world of men's art (Collins, 1978). This has created significant implications for art education with calls for strategies to help girls counter the historical domination of masculine values that have consistently degraded "women's art forms" (Calvert, 1996, p. 156). The field has consistently argued that art's gendered history (as a profession, and generally in society) means it has a similarly gendered image in art education. That is, the types of knowledge and value hierarchies that dominate art have a recognisable parallel in art education.
Shortfalls, Omissions and Strengths of Art’s Gender Research

As mentioned, in arriving at such a gender image of art education, the subject’s research followed a largely feminist led research agenda. While impressive in scholarship this discourse represents only a small genre of discussion in art education (Helgadottir, 1991) and is recognised as having limitations in terms of the range of issues addressed (Packard & Zimmerman, 1977), and in terms of its ability to research in depth the implications of many of the “conjectures” it highlights (Pariser & Zimmerman, 1990). I make this point simply to stress that art education’s gender research is far from complete, that it owns significant shortfalls that impact Boys Doing Art, and that this study can help to address these omissions.

Has art education fully explored its gender image? The first of these shortfalls is that the gendered image of art education created by this body of research is particular to girls and does not articulate many boys’ perceptions, or experiences, in the subject. For example, this gender image of art education that argues it is rooted in masculine values does not adequately explore why art education owns a “feminine” image in schools, and what effect this has on its participants.

To explain, it is necessary to look briefly at education as a whole. If gender discourse in general has a history of examining differences between the sexes, it comes as no surprise that subjects within education have also been identified as owning gender images. Some subjects are perceived as “feminine”, some are “masculine”. How these images came into being we will discuss shortly, but it is important to note how they are used. Pinar et al. (1995) describes education having a history of utilising such images to regulate gender. This happens in two ways. Firstly, by supporting these gender stereotypes of subjects, education has streamed students into a masculine/feminine divide.
For example, boys "did shop" (industrial arts) while girls did home economics. Secondly, it used subject curriculum to regulate gender through policing students' concepts of sexuality. The most obvious example of this has been the homophobic and highly masculinised sub-culture generated around school sports (see, for instance, Mangan, 1981; Skelton, 1993) but has also acted to overtly "sexualise" other subjects within feminine terrains (see, for examples within art education, Check, 1996 or Honeychurch, 1995). Thirdly, by maintaining an academic hierarchy of subjects, education has regulated concepts of gender. Hierarchies of subjects have been constructed based on masculine forms of knowledge; the "academic" subjects being those which were rational, logical, linear, and cognitive, while the "non-academic" constituted the subjects which were emotive, circular, expressive, and other supposed "feminine" traits.

Anne Sorensen (1992) notes that girls, for the best part of this century have accepted gendered stereotypes and reacted to the "unfeminine" by avoiding "hard" subjects.

Female rejection of the sciences and of technical subjects is now seen as opposition to the male symbolism of the subjects and a masculine educational culture. Studying mathematics or physics, for example, is felt by girls to be unfeminine. To go to technical schools/courses is seen as similar to adapting to a masculine form of learning i.e. performance, competition, control, subject fanaticism. (p. 207)

Sorensen makes a distinction between school subjects that are "technical" or "welfare" in orientation; the former are male oriented in that "work proceeds in a single-minded fashion in a controlled environment" (p. 209). Similarly Grant and Harding (1987) identified boys avoiding "the soft" subjects and preferring the "technical", because these subjects were "geared towards those, chiefly male, who are not primarily interested in it in
terms of its contribution towards meeting human and social needs, this being an area which is generally of greater interest to girls” (cited in Stables, 1990, p. 223).

Other examples of the division of subjects between the masculine and the feminine abound. Helgadottir, (1997) noted that the “feminisation” of technical subjects and the “masculinisation” of home economics did little to improve enrolment and participation from the “opposite” gender and while a masculinising of home economics not only failed to attract consistent male participation it also reduced its attraction as a subject for girls. Omerod (1975), when discussing boys’ and girls’ choice of subjects identified a number of subjects as either strongly female or strongly male in preference. In his study the feminine subjects of choice were art, biology, English, French, history, music and home economics; while the “male” subjects of choice were chemistry, geography, mathematics, physics, sport and technical subjects. Stables (1990) in a similar study a number of years later concurred with Omerod’s findings. Reay (1990b) made the observation that students within co-educated classes were less likely to choose subjects with “gendered stereotypes” than they were when removed from the discerning gaze of the opposite sex in segregated environments. Henningsen (1988) identified the “feminised” subjects as “strongholds” which feminism should protect from masculine participation on the ground that they provided a power-base for girls’ future expansion into previously masculine dominated subjects; these “stronghold” subjects were the “welfare” or humanities subjects identified earlier by Soerensen (1992).

Gendered practices over the years in education have consistently demarcated school subjects between the feminine and the masculine. At the most basic level, subjects own a gendered label, and at more complex levels their epistemologies and even the pedagogy used to teach subject content somehow promulgate manly or feminine qualities.
Current researchers who argue art education is masculine, can be countered with the argument that to many boys its gender image is unquestionably feminine. This suggests the assumption, rife in feminist research, that what exists in society must also be the case in art education, is quite problematic. While the masculine aesthetic may be dominant in the wider art world, within education a more complex situation exists. Certainly this is suggested by those who have touched on student perceptions of gender stereotypes of school subjects (e.g., Henningsen, 1988; Soerensen, 1992). The image of art as inherently masculinist has been well documented, supported by sound feminist gender analyses. But alternative images exist. Boys may well see the male artist as eccentric rather than logical, as anti-social and nihilistic rather than the policeman of the male-dominated public sphere. The male artist might well be seen as an erratic genius rather than being subjective and single-minded. He may well be emotional rather than rational, he may well be the poor and unmanly non-provider rather than Brannon’s (1976) “sturdy oak”. These images are counter to popular, dominant, stereotypes of “masculinity”. They contradict the list of masculine values that supposedly construct art’s “gender image”. Yet the possibility exists that boys “doing art” are aligning themselves to a subject whose gender characteristics run counter to that which “real men” should be seen doing.

If art is based on masculine values, it is difficult to see why it owns an image of being, at best, a “soft option”, an alternative to serious academic or vocational activities (Eisner, 1988b), and at worst, the streaming option for those intellectually incapable of the “rigorous” subjects, the fragile eccentric and feminised; and, as an attack on male participation, often the sexually suspect. In brief spurts the 20th century saw art education defending its position in North America against such perceptions, attempting to portray itself as a viable area of study for boys, part of which was the defence against a
"feminised" image by advocating its "masculine" nature (see for instance, d'Amico, 1931). Predominant arguments focused on art's utilitarian attributes, arguing that art was a tool for future professional occupation. This literature fought art's image as an ornamental frills subject within the curriculum that was only associated with an effeminate sub-culture within schooling and society (Bradley, 1986). But the reality is, studies have repeatedly alluded to visual art, ensconced together with the other "artsy" subjects, as part of a non-academic, thus feminine domain in schools (Omerod, 1975; Reay, 1990b; Stables, 1990).

While the dominant values inherent in art curriculum may arguably be masculine, the reality in schools is that it is oriented toward Grant and Harding's (1987) "soft", or Soerensen's (1992) "welfare", or feminist's feminised principle. At the very least, we need to accept that dichotomous images of art exist between it as a profession "in the real world" and as an educational subject. The assumption that what is true in society automatically is the case in education has been a shortfall in art education gender discussion due to the missed opportunities this has sanctioned. If art holds a feminine image in schools, boys who undertake the subject do so against the dictates that "real men" do "hard" subjects. What does this say about the supposed dominant nature of that stereotype? What does it say about the character of the boys who oppose it? What avenues of research does this defiance of hegemonic masculinity by boys, open to gender researchers? Do boys who choose to "do art" own concepts of gender that are an aberration from what was assumed to be an all-powerful masculinity? If so, are these not the types of change from patriarchy that feminist study has been calling for? Is art education a site of progressive gender development? Indeed, an erroneous or incomplete
"gender image" of art education has limited the potential of art education's gender exploration.

Has art education perpetuated essentialist interpretations of gender? A second shortfall of past gender research in this subject is that it has fostered an ignorance of what "gender" means to boys. Because art education gender debate progressed through similar trends, and used similar methods as mainstream feminist debate and as a result arrived at similar conclusions, it comes as little surprise that gendered images of masculinity similar to those identified within broader analyses of education and society have been applied to boys within art education. This leaves art education vulnerable to the criticisms that are now being levelled at feminist treatment of masculinity in the broader social sciences (Jackson & Salisbury, 1996; Smith, 1995; Tacey, 1997).

These criticisms focus, in part, on the limited nature of these images of masculinity (discussed at length in Chapter 2). Art education has been party to alienating boys from gender discussion by confining them within a "unitary" interpretation of masculinity (Martino, 1995). Their beliefs concerning gender and masculinity have been assumed. Few have bothered to ask the boys what they believe (Imms, 1999). If the broader social sciences are moving towards problematising masculinity into a plurality of masculinities (for example, Jackson & Salisbury, 1996; Smith, 1995), so should art education. This plurality of masculinities contains infinitely varied concepts of gender, some of which are certainly misogynistic and hegemonic. Others, however, can be quite egalitarian in that they attempt to recognise the equality of others regardless of race, sexuality, class, and gender. To date many efforts have been made to identify and modify the former, hegemonic, masculinities (Reay, 1990b; Browne and Fletcher 1995; Kenway and Willis,
1997), but little effort has been spent on what may prove to be a greater advantage, identifying and reinforcing the latter, more egalitarian masculinities.

Art education can make a significant contribution by exploring the existence of non-conformist and previously unexamined masculinities operating within its curriculum with the aim of determining how they are negotiated amongst boys. The “male-as-the-privileged” assumption has stopped us exploring what masculinity really means to boys. Malcolm’s story suggests that many boys are using schooling, and art education curriculum in particular, to pursue the very examples of gender that we are attempting to facilitate. Therefore, it is critical that we begin to document what “gender” really means to boys within the context of art education.

Has art education sold itself short in terms of its advantages for gender reform? A third shortfall in current gender research in art education is that it leaves many of its special curricular qualities in relation to gender still to be explored. By automatically adopting from mainstream gender debate a limiting interpretation of masculinity, a predetermined agenda of issues, and established methods of investigating those issues, art has made itself vulnerable to the accusation that it has limited the scope of its research. In conforming to mainstream agendas it has not objectively considered the ways art education may differ to other subjects in terms of how its curriculum impacts the gender development of its participants. For example, the predominant focus recently has been on advocating changes in the values implicit in art education (Freedman, 1994). The aim is to make art more inclusive of feminine principles (Collins & Sandell, 1996), to make “feminine friendly” what historically has been masculine, much the same as is currently happening, for example, with girls in science (Kelly, 1981), or girls in technical studies (Helgadottir, 1997; Henningsen, 1988; Soerensen, 1992). But science and technical
studies are making “girl friendly” curricular that has historically had predominately male participation. Art education has not experienced the same problem – quite the opposite (Imms, 2000a). The call is to de-masculinise its epistemology when it is already the domain of the girls. What current art education gender politics is attempting to change its curriculum from, and to who it is addressing these changes, is open to question.

Because of the exclusiveness of its gender-critical gaze we cannot justifiably claim to understand how change will impact all participants in art education. While it remains important to identify how art education has gender concerns similar to mainstream education, it should also be actively examining how it may be unique within the schooling system. Malcolm’s story suggests that masculinity development may well be one example. However, a cost of the preoccupation of addressing girls’ concerns in art education has been to be blind to boys’ experiences in the subject. Somehow, in some special way, “doing art” can have a significant and positive impact on boys, but it is a feature of the subject that remains largely unexplored or even acknowledged. This is part of art education’s “vacuum of knowledge” concerning gender (Pariser & Zimmerman, 1990). Our lack of knowledge concerning the implications of “doing art” on boys’ gender development is perhaps the single greatest impediment to any claim of comprehensive understanding of gender in art education.

These three issues – that art education has not adequately identified the range of “gender images” it creates for its participants, that it has not examined the influence of its curriculum on boys’ gender development, and that it has not adequately explored some of its special characteristics – make the point that Boys Doing Art can help fill some significant shortfalls in the subject’s gender knowledge. This is not an attempt to re-define boys as the “new disadvantaged” (Thompson, 1986) or as victims of some anti-
male conspiracy (Men: Tomorrow's second sex, 1996). They are areas that require further development and will allow art education to gain a greater understanding of gender through a broadened viewpoint.

However, if Boys Doing Art will address a void in the subject's knowledge, it will do so by utilising some of the strengths of past gender research. Feminist research has problematised gender to the degree that boy-specific studies are warranted. Pinar et al.'s (1995) forces of "reconceptualisation", discussed earlier, are becoming increasingly represented in art curriculum debate through the use of more complex yet refined social theories (Greer, 1992a). Studies are moving beyond simply investigating how art is practiced through the disciplines. Now an increasing focus is on how students learn to understand through art (Efland, 1990). Cowan and Clover (1991), for example, explored students' enhancement of self-esteem facilitated by this type of art curriculum. The result has been to help make girls cognisant of gender inequities inherent in society and, in a variety of ways, empower them to contest the institutionalised structures that maintain this imbalance (Calvert, 1996). I have little doubt these authors would champion similar outcomes for boys, but this does need to be articulated and pursued.

Luckily the "reconceptualisation" of curriculum these researchers are promoting will correct past assumptions that students form some sort of generic entity. The status of the individual is now more widely acknowledged and accounted for in gender debate. Students are recognised as individuals, with a wide variety of needs from the curriculum. These needs are individually pursued by students using the structures and processes of "doing art" to build sets of values and beliefs that often contradict past essentialist theories of what children should think, or should learn from curriculum (see, for instance, Kindler, 1994, regarding a child's individual interpretation of "art multiculturalism"). Feminism,
through progressive scholarship, is opening the door for the inclusion of boys’ issues in art education. The acknowledgement by feminist discussion that a fundamental outcome of curriculum is its ability to help develop individual consciousness, while encouraging questions concerning girls’ development of gender mores, also throws into light past totalistic ideas of gender – the “us and them”, “winners and losers” bind (Soerensen, 1992), that has limited exploration of masculinity within art education.

**Art Curriculum and Masculinity**

**How is Art Positioned to Work with Boys?**

This progressive scholarship, the re-examination of privilege in gender (Soerensen, 1992), together with wider educational trends (Pinar et al. 1995) indicates that a reconceptualisation of gender to include boys is immanent in art education (Imms, 1998d). Enquiry about how curriculum serves boys’ development of masculine concepts is both necessary and feasible due to the work of Connell (1996) and other pro-feminist authors. As discussed in Chapter 2, Connell (1996) identifies three areas that curriculum must address – boys’ relationships, boys’ acquisition of knowledge, and boys’ involvement in issues of social justice. The discipline-oriented approach potentially facilitates these areas of activity by boys within art curriculum. By imparting studio, historical, critical, and aesthetic skills through a structured, systematic curriculum the “academic” qualities of this model pursues not only a transmission of knowledge but also has inherent to its pedagogy, opportunities to consistently challenge boys to be critical of where that knowledge comes from and whom it privileges. The increasing cultural focus of discipline-oriented models such as DBAE (Chalmers, 1996), and the Canadian provincial model relevant to Greene’s College (Figure 4), allows opportunity for not only multiple representations of masculinity in other cultures to be explored, but also for boys to explore alternative masculinities
within their own culture. The focus by discipline-oriented art curriculum on critical thinking and discussion between students provides the environment for building interpersonal relationships. The use of art criticism sessions, the discussion of aesthetic components of their own and other's art works, and peer-assessment sessions facilitate unique relationships between boys of widely divergent interests and opinions (Imms, 1998c).

Finally, it can be suggested that a discipline-oriented art curriculum model may be particularly suited to meeting Connell’s (1996) aim of addressing justice issues with boys. Within the broader arts, Gaskell, Binkley, Nicholl and McLaughlin (1995) identify the possibility of a correlation between the arts and students’ acceptance of “the other”, studies specific to visual art suggest a discipline-oriented curriculum model may accentuate this positive outcome. For example, some qualities of DBAE’s operation may attract greater rates of boys’ participation (Imms, 2000a), allowing them increased opportunity for “self exploration” and providing a forum for them to express individual reactions to issues of social inequity. Hamblen (1988b) suggests that the focus on specific disciplines within art inherent to the Getty model encourage students to be critical of how knowledge about art and society was formed. Handled correctly, DBAE has the potential for students to isolate and deconstruct the sexist bases on which our values concerning art history, aesthetics, and studio practice have been based (Hamblen, 1988a).

The potential exists for discipline-oriented art curriculum to positively impact boys’ masculinity development. Our poor response to this potential does not indicate that

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4 While rates of participation by boys in art education remain less than one third that of girls in 57 countries, representation of males in art education in the US and Canada - where versions of DBAE are widely practiced (Parks, 1989) - is as high as 50% (Imms, 1997). DBAE can be hypothesized as providing a structure which encourages boys’ participation, negating what Connell (1989) terms the suffocating limitations of “protest masculinity” where boys avoid supposedly feminized subjects such as art because it is “unmanly” (Omerod, 1975; Reay, 1990; Stables, 1990).
Boys’ use of art curriculum to develop gender concepts has not been happening in the past – Malcolm’s story (and many others like his) disproves that. Rather, factors such as those identified earlier in this section limit art education’s understanding of the powerful and significant impact of its curriculum on boys as they struggle with the complex issues associated with growing into “a man”.

“Doing” Art is “Doing Gender”: Art Education’s Significant Potential for Gender

Discussion

The fact is, art education has made little attempt to elaborate Connell’s (1996) notion of boys “doing gender” into an exploration of the gendering effects on boys of them “doing art”. As indicated by its place within the title of this study, this is considered an important expression. “Doing art” refers to the fact that students engage the subject – not the reverse. They are not just passive receptors of the art curriculum who obligingly act and learn within its designed parameters. Instead, they interpret it, react to it, and learn from it in infinitely varying ways that often are incongruous to its expected learning outcomes.

Deeper interpretation of boys’ “doing art” refers to the belief that one of the “things” boys learn, interpret, and react to in the art classroom are messages art gives concerning masculinity. One of the key messages from feminist critique of curriculum is that its gendered biases directly influence attitudes and beliefs of its participants (Grumet, 1991; Hamblen, 1988a). The term “doing art” emphasises that when a boy is “doing art” he is not just producing artwork, he is, like a girl, being subjected to the gendering qualities of the subject. But their gender experiences are certainly not the same. The

To reiterate, art’s “gender image” is ill-defined and possibly ambiguous, it has failed to account for boys’ beliefs and needs, and it has failed to explore how many of its unique attributes facilitate egalitarian masculinities.
impact of curriculum – both positive and negative – is quite different between most members of the sexes. For boys, what is significant is that the processes and types of knowledge inherent and particular to art in schools act to instigate and maintain certain gender qualities that affect boys’ self-esteem, influences their position in peer groups, and impacts significantly on their perception of “reality”. These are important influences on boys, yet have received little specific attention.

At a third and perhaps most personal level, “doing art” refers to the fact that a boy uses his art work to build, modify and express his interpretation of gender with others. He is interacting with the gendered images inherent in art, what Connell (1996) would term cathexis rather than praxis. This is done by either openly embracing the gendered images of art for others to identify as part of his version of “manliness”, or modifying or rejecting these gendered images through the work he produces, the discussions he has with others, and his actions within the classroom. A boy’s masculinity in art is negotiated not only through the process and product of the creating of an artwork, but also by his interaction with the subject itself. At the most basic level, the fact that he chose to do the subject in the first place and accepted to be identified with its gendered stereotype, or “gender-image”, is significant. Art’s gendered history, its gendered image, its stereotype, reflects on those who select it. When a boy is “doing art” he is also “doing gender”.

As Connell (1989) would argue, educators must better understand the nature of this gender interaction between the boy, his peers and the subject; what he terms the “interplay of masculinity and education” (Connell, 1989, p. 291). Art education’s role is to analyse boys’ interaction with its curriculum. How does the art studio, the art lessons, and the art teacher engage boys in the process of building worthwhile relationships, of pursuing a variety of types of knowledge, and of allowing them opportunity and encouragement in
addressing issues of social justice? As shown in Figure 3 (page 59), this process is the negotiation of gender and culminates in an acceptance of multiple masculinities. As argued by Connell (1996) and many others, the acknowledged existence of a plurality of masculinities is the cornerstone to a more equitable society.

Conclusion

Malcolm’s vignette suggests that for boys, gender experiences in art education differ to some extent from what is currently understood. What is possible is that art gives many boys quite different gender experiences than other subjects. The reality is that “doing art” makes a gender statement. That statement includes strong messages concerning personal expression, attitudes to difference, and the types of knowledge that boys wish to pursue. Art education has failed to capitalise on the possibility that it may provide boys with tools to acquire unique forms of knowledge, build relationships, and tackle issues of social justice. Current research and strategies concerning gender in art education have yet to recognise and act on this. Art education cannot claim any comprehensive knowledge of gender without research into boys’ unique experiences. Art education is also, possibly, missing an opportunity to advocate itself as a valuable tool in school curriculum for gender reasons. Boys “doing art” are making strong gender statements, and these gender statements can help researchers unravel some of the complexities – or “mysteries” – about the ways boys engage in negotiating their individual concepts of gender.
Conclusion to Section I

What We Don’t Know. The Need for Qualitative Inquiry into Masculinity and Art Education

Personal experiences teaching boys in schools indicate that our knowledge of masculinity and education as represented in the literature is inadequate for meaningful understanding of boys’ schooling problems to occur. This literature shows that, to date, the identification of issues that impact boys’ experience in schools, and the design of strategies to attend to those issues, have been limited by a need to suit dominant political agendas. As a result, little objective consideration has been given to the full scope and nature of these problems, and there has been poor identification of possible avenues for addressing them. This is apparent in both mainstream masculinity exploration and in art education research into gender. Consequently, what we currently have is a worrying lack of knowledge. What is the nature of masculinity as boys see it? How do they negotiate these masculinities? What use do they make of the schooling process and specifically, particular subject curriculum to do this?

We need to break from conjecture based on theory, to build a body of knowledge that is founded in the reality of the interplay of masculinity and art education. To do this we need a model of masculinity that views it as multiple, non-static, individual, and relational to other males and girls. We need to use this model as a lens to investigate boys’ actual experiences in art education. We need to make judgements about how these experiences amount to the types of growth in boys – from a gender perspective – that research has been advocating.
Research Foci

These are perhaps some of the most pressing needs for gender research at the moment. Malcolm's vignette indicates that art education is a rich site for such exploration. We need to design and implement a study that goes into schools, and asks boys for their own view on how masculinity is constructed and how it operates. We need to use this knowledge to advocate realistic, workable strategies. *Such a study should have three foci.* What range of masculinities exist in this school? Does the art curriculum help boys negotiate these masculinities? Does the school impact this process?
SECTION II: METHODOLOGY

Introduction to Section II: Framing the Study

When addressing questions such as these, education has at its disposal a diverse range of scientific research methods. Normally divided into quantitative and qualitative categories, they share the common aim of systematic investigation to find answers to a problem (Eisner, 1998). However, nomothetic quantitative methods assume social reality can be understood by identifying particular laws and generalising them across a population, while ideographic qualitative methods consider social reality to be constructed by the individual’s perceptions of that society (Burns, 1990). The former seeks to define and quantify supposed laws that govern behaviour to provide a basis for prediction and control. “Truth” becomes singular and fixed. The latter views social reality phenomenologically, and seeks to understand it as particular to the individual’s own perceptions of the social environment. Objectivity is an illusion: “truth” is multiple and non-static (Pinar et al. 1995). While at time appearing quite polarised, many researchers often successfully merge these approaches, because ultimately the type of knowledge being sought dictates the most appropriate method/s to be utilised (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993). However, because such variety exists, this does create the requirement that reasons for choosing a particular methodological approach must be made clear. This task is the focus of Section II.

From Section I it is clear that Boys Doing Art pursues some very particular types of knowledge. Firstly, it seeks non-generalised information regarding masculinity; it wishes to move away from the limitations of past research that has restricted boys to a particular definition of manhood. The study wishes to hear from individual boys how they personally interpret and enact their own version of masculinity. Secondly, it wishes to
document how boys view their experiences “doing art” in terms of its impact on the decisions they make as they negotiate their masculinity with other boys. *Boys Doing Art* must use a method of research that embraces the “importance of the subjective, experiential ‘life-world’” (Burns, 1990, p. 9) of boys like Malcolm.

The forms of knowledge generated by phenomenological research are not nomological (i.e. facts, laws, scientific theories) but rather meaning situationally understood and communicated. Reality is no longer “out there”, separate from the observed. Reality becomes an intersubjective construct to be formulated and negotiated intersubjectively. From this perspective the reality of classroom life is viewed as the construction of those who dwell within those situations. (Pinar et al. 1995, p. 412)

It is clear that this study’s central focus of boys mediating masculinities situates it within the qualitative, phenomenological paradigm. Section II will proceed to “frame the study” by describing in some detail the design of an ethnography that will fulfill this function. This is in itself problematic. Some (for instance, Smith, 1984) believe detailed planning runs counter to the inductive nature of this type of inquiry which is essentially a “practical activity requiring the exercise of judgment in context; it is not a matter of simply following methodological rules” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p. 23). These authors comment there exists a “go out and do it” (p. 23) mentality evident amongst some ethnographers that contrasts with those who view constructing detailed designs a priori important in establishing “validity”; the criteria used for assessing research. This latter position argues that thoroughly documented and well articulated research designs “assure confidence, authenticity, cogency, and soundness” of a study, and enables researchers to “present the results convincingly to their publics” (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993, p. 323).
I have presented these two positions as being more divergent than they are in reality. No one seriously suggests ethnographies must be utterly spontaneous. Nor conversely, is it argued that every aspect of a study’s execution must be meticulously pre-planned before field research can begin. Any such suggestion on my part is to stress that authorities often approach the design of ethnography with varying degrees of structure. LeCompte and Preissle (1993) prescribe a very formalised, almost scientific methodology, which they believe situates it as a mature, scientifically valid method of conducting educational research. In contrast, Geertz (1973) laments that such approaches have lead to the emergence of a “tidy positivism” within ethnography, while Eisner (1998) believes such over-indulgence in defining its method has restricted ethnography to the extent that it now “constitutes a limited repertoire of meaning structures” (p. 229).

Clearly, there exists in the literature concern of both under-planning and over-planning ethnographies, the issue of authenticity centering on methodological validity versus the protection of the spontaneity and fluidity of data collection. This lack of agreement on a “happy medium” indicates that no single, definitive ethnographic method exists. As a result, studies undertaken under its banner vary widely in terms of methods of planning, collection, analysis, and reporting of data. Clearly, writing a design for ethnography carries with it a considerable burden of justification. I believe that those who use ethnography must describe its method succinctly to allow its readers to judge the context within which data was collected and analysed. A major distinction between “good” and “bad” ethnography lies in finding the appropriate balance between the need to let the study proceed unencumbered by restrictive barriers, against planning its implementation and procedure to the extent its results can be seen as “valid”.
Ethnography's literal definition is "writing about people" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993), something that generically describes most qualitative research (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). This can be seen as a broad style of qualitative inquiry together with "naturalistic", "interpretive", and "practice-guided" research (Eisner, 1998, p. 5). However, Boys Doing Art chooses to identify itself with ethnography as a specific methodology (Pinar et al. 1995), within which enquiry progresses through certain phases and initiates certain practices during those phases.

In spite of the concerns briefly described above, conservative, relatively structured versions of ethnography as a methodology best suit the research needs of Boys Doing Art. The study wishes to use the long tradition of this type of ethnographic enquiry as a precedent concerning how Boys Doing Art should be structured and conducted, and will use its traditional, established, conventions to structure a robust and entirely suitable research design.

Section II will describe how ethnography was used as a methodology in Boys Doing Art. Its two chapters - Chapter 4 clarifying my interpretation of ethnography, Chapter 5 placing that methodology within the context of the issues being addressed in this study, are intended to help readers understand why certain methodological decisions were made, to allow them the information necessary to judge how the research design impacted the data collected, and to consequently provide them opportunity to make their own conclusions from the presentation of that data.
Chapter 4: The Nature of Ethnographic Research and What it Contributes to This Study

An Overview of the Chapter

This chapter argues that the ethnographic method best addresses the research issues central to Boys Doing Art. A brief overview of its origins will illustrate that ethnography has historically focused on the type of inductive, situationally based knowledge sought by this study. A description of the theories that comprise ethnography's structure will be seen to be supportive of this study's goals. A summary of its operating procedure will both clarify how the I interpret the logistics of implementing ethnography, and how this process facilitates the objectives of this study. The chapter will conclude by placing ethnography into the educational setting.

Origins, Structure and Implementation of Ethnography

Origins of Ethnography

Ethnography evolved from the fieldwork practices of anthropology and sociology. Initially, anthropology sought to place meaning on other cultures through, the construction of Darwinian social hierarchies (Pinar et al. 1995). In an attempt to "discover what the non-Western non-European world was like" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 4), anthropologists sought that understanding through journal writings, examination of artifacts and verbal accounts of practices as witnessed by visitors, with only brief forays "into the field" themselves (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982).

Two problems became apparent from this approach. Firstly, the inadequacy of second hand information limited data collection and the inductive analysis of that data, a problem which encouraged the evolution during the early twentieth century of techniques aimed at gathering data directly from social settings. Secondly, interpretation of that situational-based data became problematic. Malinowski (1922) and others argued that
Western viewpoints distorted the researcher’s understanding of other cultures, something that could only be negated through lengthy fieldwork, through detailed explanations of data collection and analysis, and through focusing on “learning how the culture was understood by its members” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 9).

Sociology stemmed from late nineteenth century survey-oriented research concerning the social problems that occurred as an aftermath of the industrial revolution. For example, LePlay, 1879 (cited in Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995), utilised “participant observation” methods by living with, and participating in, the lives of working class families in an attempt to better understand the conditions affecting their lives in urban London. Booth (1903) used a “complete participant” method to quantify and describe the number and the living conditions of poor inhabitants of London. While some statistical methods were used in these and other studies, they included substantial qualitative data in the form of descriptions of lives and conditions, photographic documentation, and interviews. This mix of “unsophisticated and rudimentary techniques” (Adler & Adler, 1987, p. 8) that were “midway between an expose and the scientific study” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 8) characterised early attempts to resolve the difficulty that traditional natural science methods experienced when attempting to describe the routine ways in which people made sense of the world.

Influential during the early years of this century was the “Chicago School”, the department of Sociology within the University of Chicago. Although much of the research produced from this institution utilised a confusing mixture of quantitative and qualitative methodologies (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995), it none-the-less displayed the “rudimentary techniques [which] served as the foundations of field research” (Adler and
Adler, 1987, p. 8). The Chicago School marked the beginning of concerted ethnographic study, with

Park and Burgess emphasising to their students the importance of using the city of Chicago as a laboratory, within which they might study human nature and society. They urged them to seek the subjective point of view of the actor by abandoning the detached observation of the journalist and striving for empathy and an imaginative participation in the lives of others (Adler & Adler, 1987, p. 9).

These historical origins of qualitative research are very briefly described here to stress the similarities between its foundations and the methodological needs of *Boys Doing Art*. Malcolm’s story challenges this study to deal with knowledge that is difficult to access, that is reliant for its relevance on the context in which it is situated, and that is open to a variety of interpretations. Such information must be sympathetic to the need to create an interpretation of “reality” based on the views and beliefs of the participants of the study, and its analysis of the data must allow for definitions of masculinity that might diverge from the unsympathetic academic theories described in Chapter 2, and from dominant social stereotypes. Its conclusions must paint a picture of the way that boys like Malcolm utilise art curriculum to negotiate individual gender identities. These needs are provided for within ethnography; they are the qualities that were the impetus for the earliest development of ethnographic techniques, and that are now cemented as the central tenets of its methodology.

Subsequent development over the years refined what is now seen as ethnography’s early rudimentary field-research techniques, into a theoretically and pedagogically sound research methodology. There is little need to further catalogue this development historically as far as *Boys Doing Art* is concerned. Of relevance is the end result of this
development. How does modern ethnography facilitate sophisticated methods of collecting subject-relevant data? How does it enable context-sensitive methods of analysing that data? How does it allow researchers to question the nature of the meanings they (and others) derive from that information? Ethnography’s maturation into a methodology came with the development of theories that support pedagogical techniques that serve these needs. Often termed “phenomenology”, “symbolic interactionism”, and “hermeneutics”, these theories form the core structure of ethnography as a methodology.

**The Structure of Ethnography: Its Underlying Theories and Perspectives**

**Phenomenology.** Core to the belief that researchers can subjectively understand cultural situations lies the theory of phenomenology. Van Manen (1988) defines it as having five characteristics. Phenomenology researches social interactions as they are “immediately experienced”, not as they are reported after contemplation; it is only interested with the nature of that experience – not the reasons why it occurred; it attempts to be “in tune” with what it is like to live that experience; it is interested in building awareness of “living” rather than compiling theory-based knowledge; it does not (or cannot) seek conclusions because it recognises a phenomenon is greater than the sum of its parts. In this, its purest sense, phenomenology attempts the “careful exploration of densely textured moments which point beyond the immediacy of the context in which they occur” (Pinar et al. 1995, p. 407). When used within ethnography it enables the researcher writing about people within a particular setting to understand how and what meaning [people] construct around events in their daily lives.

Phenomonologists believe that for human beings multiple ways of interpreting experiences are available to each of us through interacting with others, and that it is
the meaning of our experiences that constitutes reality (Greene, 1978). Reality, consequently, is "socially constructed". (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 32)

**Symbolic interactionism.** If phenomenology addresses the situation, symbolic interactionism deals with the person within the situation. Mead's *Mind, Self and Society* (1934), Blumer's *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method* (1969), and other texts develop the concept that human experience is mediated by interpretation, and that all humans interpret and re-interpret phenomena, actions, events, and objects in unique ways. The symbolic interactionism perspective challenges researchers to accept that subjects interpret social phenomena using their own perceptions of reality, rather than according to pre-determined meanings. In contrast, positivism depends on fact and observable phenomena and subsequently allows for only one external interpretation of symbols (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). For ethnographers, the "reality" of a phenomenon is gained only through "understanding [the] definitions, and the processes by which [the meaning of] symbols are constructed" by the participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 33).

Symbolic interactionism allows the ethnographer to view the individual as a participant within the culture; as types of actors who defines "self", their situations, and the events that impact on themselves, not through a pre-determined stimulus-response to the environment, rather according to their own interpretations of that environment. This approach questions the existence of causal relationships in human behaviour by rejecting the positivist assumption that human beings respond to stimuli in predictable ways (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). Instead, situations and events are attributed meaning by participants according to ever changing values and beliefs.

People act not on the basis of predetermined responses to predefined objects, but rather as interpreting, defining, symbolic animals whose behaviour can only be
understood by having the researcher enter into the defining process through such methods as participant observation. (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 33)

Symbolic interactionism stresses that researchers can not filter from the research site elements that supposedly are not relevant to the phenomena being studied. Factors that construct the environment in which the study is sited are critical to that phenomena thus must be acknowledged methodologically. Ethnographers must view the subject or phenomena within, rather than removed from, the environment. Rather than isolate variables, the ethnographic researcher is charged with recognising them as part of the complexities of life and is expected to keep them within her or his gaze.

Hermeneutics. Hermeneutics deals with the meaning being gained from a situation by focusing on discourse, viewing it as “an essential constituent element of textual understanding. Understanding sets free what is hidden from view by layers of tradition, prejudice, and even conscious evasion” (Pinar et al. 1995, p. 638). Polkinghorne (1988) notes that as early as the late nineteenth century divisions between the “natural” and “human” sciences’ interpretations of reality existed within sociological research and were exemplified through hermeneutic philosophy.

Dilthey (1883) stated that the natural sciences have as their objects facts that enter into the consciousness from the outside as appearances of objects and individuals, whereas the objects of the human sciences enter consciousness from the inside as reality and as living relations. He acknowledged the legitimacy of formal science for developing knowledge of the natural realm but held that the distinctive method of hermeneutics was required for the study of the human realm”. (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 38)
In contemporary qualitative research, hermeneutics "is concerned with ways to explain, translate, and interpret perceived reality" (LeComte & Preissle, 1993, p. 31), and within ethnography (and this study) it legitimises the use of the participant's voice. Later chapters of this thesis will make extensive use of direct quotations from boys and teachers to provide opinions undiluted by the researcher's interpretation of that voice, and it is from the theory of hermeneutics that this is rationalised.

These theories and perspectives legitimise in theoretical terms the methodological tools to be used in Boys Doing Art. Phenomenology supports the practice of situating a researcher amongst boys in a school over an extended period with the intention of understanding something of the situation within which they build their gender identities. Symbolic interactionism provides the mechanisms through which the actions of the boys observed in the school can be interpreted as constituting significant meaning for the participants of that environment. Hermeneutics allows the comments and actions of the boys to be attributed meaning according to the context in which they occur. Collectively they can be seen to constitute the theoretical foundations of ethnography. How these theories and perspectives are taken to the next logical level – how they are made practice-specific – is achieved through application of the concepts of reflexivity, relativism, and triangulation.

The Structure of Ethnography: Concepts Central to its Practice

**Reflexivity.** Reflexivity stresses that the research procedure must consider what the researcher brings to the study environment (van Manen, 1988). Qualitative researchers need to be conscious of the impact the researcher’s presence has on the participants in a study and on the environment in which the research is being conducted. Additionally, it must also allow for the influence of the site on the researcher. We all have
pre-suppositions about the world and these biases influence our perception. "Reflexivity thus implies that the orientations of researchers will be shaped by their socio-historical locations, including the values and interests that these locations confer upon them." (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p. 16). Reflexivity negates positivist assumptions that a researcher can access an environment in an isolated, objective state of mind.

Relativism. Relativism (Bernstein, 1983) argues that the ethnographer must consider that values and ways of knowing are not absolute but are often conditional on one's own situation (Eisner, 1998). The ethnographer is charged with the collection of credible evidence which allows the drawing of conclusions that are not necessarily true to any universal belief, but are robust to review by both academic peers and the actual participants (as an example, see Gaskell et al., 1995).

Triangulation. Triangulation is the procedure of accessing phenomena via a variety of sources (Sevigny, 1979). When data from a variety of sources overlaps, a common trend in a phenomenon can be argued. Equally useful, the opposite applies if divergence is noted. Sevigny (1979) suggests that triangulation can be achieved through "multiple case study investigations, multiple strategies for data collection, multiple strategies for data processing, and multiple strategies for data analysis" (p. 7). Denzin (1978) widens the scope of this technique to suggest a variety of triangulation's can be employed, including methodologies, data, theories and even investigators. His thesis is that triangulation serves to not only support claims of a higher level of validity, but it also establishes sociology as a mature, self-aware discipline.

The concepts of reflexivity, relativism and triangulation do more than guide the practice of field research for the ethnographer. They constitute the practical framework for implementing phenomenology, symbolic interactionism, and hermeneutics, the
theories that scaffold good qualitative research. Reflexivity requires the researcher to consider his influence on the study, and the environment's impact on his observations and perceptions. Relativism challenges the universality of concepts and beliefs, and requires the researcher to consider participants' beliefs, in terms of how they were formed and the context in which they were made. Triangulation requires the accessing of a variety of sources of data, to balance and compare that information, and to account for the reasons why differing (and similar) perceptions of a phenomenon exist. These concepts form the nucleus of the ethnographic procedure from which, over time, a range of methodological conventions have been refined.

These established practices provide Boys Doing Art with the methods required to investigate at great depth the topics, discussed in Chapters 1, 2 and 3, that are considered critical to the research issues being addressed. Boys' concepts of knowledge, their attempts to address issues of social justice, and their efforts to develop relationships all contribute to what is becoming seen as a "range" of masculinities (Connell, 1996). These are areas of their daily lives that have traditionally remained unexamined in the literature because they are particular to individual boys, and they fluctuate according to the social environment that influences boys' actions (Imms, 2000b). The ability to become "part" of the environment that houses these interactions (reflexivity), the ability to interpret each boys' masculinity as individual to each boy, yet very real in spite of their differences (relativism), and the power to compare responses and identify similarities and dissimilarities, in spite of considerable variability (triangulation), are all critical requirements of the research needs of this study. The theories that underlie ethnography and the concepts that facilitate its implementation complement the aims of this study.
Ethnography is without doubt, in theory, an eminently suitable methodology for *Boys Doing Art*.

This description of ethnography's underlying theories and concepts suggests it owns an epistemological foundation that is sympathetic to the goals of *Boys Doing Art*. However, what is more relevant to this study is how these theories and concepts provide actual research methods that will allow me to address, at the *practical* level, the issues I wish to investigate. How are these theories and concepts reified in a school setting by the ethnographer? To what degree will the processes of the methodology allow me access to the types of information I believe I require, and allow me the opportunity to suitably analyse and draw conclusions from that data?

**The Structure of Ethnography: Its Implementation**

Ethnography owns a set of well-established methodological practices. Directed by the concepts of reflexivity, relativism and triangulation, they have been developed over the years to become “conventions” of the ethnographic process. These conventions are researcher-based, and focus on three aspects of his/her behaviour. First concerns the *role* of the researcher. She is placed within the site, the researcher’s role within the study is fully described, and the researcher attempts to account as much as possible for her influence on the lives and behaviours of those being studied when reporting collection and analysis of data. Second is the *focus* of the researcher. He attempts to think and construct meaning through the values and norms of those who are being studied, always mindful of how participants attach meaning to a situation, an environment, or a phenomenon. Third are the *actions* of the researcher. She continually monitors and defines the “situation” in an attempt to help her to act in appropriate ways.
The role of the ethnographer. The role the researcher adopts is critical in an ethnography. Junker (1960) describes three alternatives. As a “complete participant” the researcher is “incognito”, his role remaining secret from the other participants in the setting. This approach provides the opportunity to become accepted as part of the group resulting in high internal validity for the study. As a “participant-as-observer” the ethnographer declares himself to the participants. The overt status of the researcher provides legitimacy to the data collected. However the study must account for the impact of the researcher within the site in terms of actions she observes and responses by participants to her queries. “Observer-as-participant” requires the researcher to acknowledge he is not part of the social environment. While observations are done in the classroom, the researcher in no way participates. Finally the “complete observer” operates completely separated from the environment, “behind the glass” as it were. His removal from the activity provides (supposedly) the opportunity for complete objectivity. At some point on Junker’s (1960) continuum a situation exists that allows the ethnographic researcher to conflate subjectivity and objectivity, theory and practicality. For Boys Doing Art that optimum position exists within the participant-as-observer model.

The reason for this is because I am mindful that I bring to the study many experiences of art education and boys; I bring prior knowledge of the site gained from prior readings, from preliminary visits to the site, and from discussions within the community about the school. Importantly, I also bring many pre-suppositions concerning masculinity to the study that influence my vision and judgement. Clearly, I cannot disassociate myself from my prior knowledge of issues that permeate the study. Nor can I hope to be removed from the mechanisms of the study. My place in the art classroom
cannot be disguised. Unlike a traditional classroom\textsuperscript{6} where a researcher can observe from a relatively neutral position at the rear of the room, art students move around the room and interact continually. I fear a foreign person will interfere considerably with the nature of those interactions. To my mind, the only realistic avenue is to declare my interest and attempt to account for the impact of my presence as much as possible.

As a participant-as-observer the researcher must develop and maintain rapport with fellow participants in the study. A number of conventions exist that facilitate this. One is to adopt the role of the acceptable incompetent. "A naturalistic investigator, almost by definition, is one who does not understand. He or she is 'ignorant' and needs to be 'taught'. Thus the investigator who assumes the role of the \textit{socially acceptable incompetent} is likely to be accepted" (Lofland & Lofland, 1984, p. 38). Another views the researcher as "an apprentice". Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) liken the researcher's initial foray into the site to that of any novice who must, through observation, "learn the ropes" to become "an old hand". The researcher needs to project a "front", saying less than he or she knows, encouraging subjects to talk to him or her rather than the reverse, and avoid positioning the researcher as an expert or a counsellor. He or she needs to project an identity of an agreeable and non-threatening observer within the site, but also remain active in explaining the project and protecting the research design.

\textbf{The focus of the ethnographer.} The ethnographer works from the broad to the specific and from the clear to the abstract (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). In ethnography the researcher is not located solidly within any one focus. Instead he is always conscious of the existence of a question within a situation but is never sure what

\textsuperscript{6}That is, a non-workshop based classroom. In this type of classroom it is the norm that students sit at tables and the teacher instructs from a single position.
that question is. To capture what is natural in the setting, the initial sensitising concepts can not “capture” the researcher, or be treated as *a priori*. The questions that drive the research must be as inclusive as possible by starting with general classifications and slowly progressing to the specific to the degree the data allows.

**The actions of the ethnographer.** Ethnography follows a procedure common to most research; sampling, data collection data organisation, and data analysis. LeCompte and Preissle (1993) describe two stages in ethnographic sampling, selection processes and subject sampling. The former determines the selection of the population to be utilised, the latter the specific methods of selecting the actual participants. Selection processes offer a wide range of possible techniques, such as opportunity or convenience sampling (participants or sites which occur naturally for the researcher), network/snowballing sampling (making use of participants’ contacts to recruit similar subjects), criterion sampling (utilising specific criteria to select participants), typical sampling (choosing those cases that are seen as typical to the phenomena), comprehensive sampling (attempting to get as comprehensive a sample from the populations possible), extreme sampling (taking those cases which are polarised extremes of a phenomena), unique sampling (that case which stands apart), reputation sampling (relying on experts), ideal sampling (setting a profile and attempting to match the case), and comparative sampling (where criteria are established by a previous study the researcher is attempting to replicate).

Subject sampling requires the construction of a sampling frame, a model that takes into account all practical variables within the study, specifically in terms of time, place and context, and people. While the sampling frame identifies who will be included in the
study, choices often need to be made in situ as well, influenced by on-site determinations of those subjects sensitive to the concepts being investigated.

Data collection. In ethnography data sources are primarily the subject's narratives and behaviours, and observations of the environment and actions within that environment (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). These are recorded by the observer in note form, through photographic or video format, or through audio tapes. Subjects are observed in any of the four ways described by Junker (1960). The data that is collected is empirical in nature; Berger and Luckmann (1967) argue we should record what people say about their experiences and the world around them to use as evidence in analysing their perceptions of the cultures they inhabit (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). Data is collected in a variety of ways; LeCompte and Preissle (1993) delineate two categories, interactive methods which include surveys, interviews, and participant observation; and non-interactive methods, including non-participant observation, documents, artifacts, chronicles (or minutiae recording of behaviours), and analysis of space (proxemics and kinetics). They stress researchers in ethnographic situations rarely remain static within one method. Instead, they tend to move from one style of data collection to another. “Only after they have left the field are ethnographers and qualitative researchers able to specify all the strategies they actually used in a study” (p. 158).

Data organisation. The field diary is the primary method of organising data in the ethnographic method. This is a reflexive document, within which the researcher conducts a dialogue with him or herself. The field diary is also the main organisational tool, recording dates, times, records of visits, interviews and all information pertinent to the study. This includes notes regarding the developing research design, theoretical frameworks that develop throughout the life of the study, and it reflects back on the
theories that inform the study. The diary’s function is to formalise what we do on a day to
day basis, showing how we are conscious of those perceptions and how we use them to
provide concrete descriptions of people’s behaviour and those behaviours’ social contexts.
Through the field diary we rely on ourselves, the eye of the interviewer and researcher, to
collect and organise data in a manner that is self conscious and transparent to the reader.

The ongoing task of organising data as it is being collected can be done in a variety of ways. LeCompte and Preissle (1993) describe Clifford’s (1990) 3 stages of inscription, transcription, and description as being a continuous notation of observations from the rough mental notes to a sophisticated analysis, or “comprehensive account of all that has occurred” (p. 224). While reluctant to provide labels, Hammersley & Atkinson (1995) discuss two types of organising data. They say the initial notes taken during the early stages of the study tend to be “very wide”, with some attempt made to select which recordings are to be made while acknowledging the “truly inexhaustible” variety of potential “scenes”. The “second version” is “much more concrete in its treatment of events” (p. 182), preserving large amounts of participant’s speech and action. Lofland and Lofland (1984) provide an uninspiring description of field notes, viewing them as a mundane procedure; an unfortunate but necessary step to allow access to the analysis section “the overwhelming portion of [field notes] consists of running descriptions that are mundane, uneventful and dull. Indeed, if they were otherwise people would simply publish their field notes” (p. 67). Spradley (1980) organises data into three stages, the descriptive, the focused, and the selective types of observations.

Each of these descriptions of the reality of ethnographic data collection follows a layered pattern. The field diary collects generalised, informal observations. These lead to more focused formal observations, which in turn lead to transcripts of actual conversations
or interviews. They allow subsequent accountability of any analysis and findings based from these documents through observing the basic procedure of the "broad to the specific" which is inherent within the many layers of this ethnographic method. As Spradley (1980) suggests, the field diary and informal observations act as the "descriptive" stages; "formal" observations focus attention on key factors, issues, and concepts identified from the first stage, and finally interviews allow a "selective" exploration of these themes with the subjects. These methods have the common feature of a progressive funnelling of the scope of the data to be collected from the wide to the specific. This is in keeping with the theoretical foundations of the ethnographic tradition; the belief of utilising phenomenology, hermeneutics and grounded theory to observe behaviours and continually modify theory to practice and practice to theory. The layered approach (see, for instance, Goffman's, 1959, "frames within frames") allows questions and theories to be sought from within the data (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). For Boys Doing Art, such an approach allows boys' voices to describe their concepts of masculinity. This is preferable to many past approaches that have limited our knowledge of the reality of boys' gender experiences by applying often irrelevant theories of masculinity to their actions (see Chapter 2).

**Data analysis.** In general terms, data analysis is an ongoing procedure in ethnography; the process of collection is not separated from the process of analysis. However there does come a time when data collection ceases and only analysis occurs; "[ethnographic] research involves almost continuous and certainly progressive data analysis the final phase of data analysis is somewhat different, however. This takes place when the researcher has left the field and sits alone" (Ely et al. 1991, p. 140). At this stage the researcher follows a procedure of transforming the data into a manageable form, in the
process selecting focusing and reducing data to draw inferences from the text through key words, phrases and labels, and to create a display of relevant material that allows conclusions to be drawn.

Becker and Geer (1960) identify this procedure as constituting three phases; “(1) the selection and definition of problems, concepts and indices; (2) the check on the frequency and distribution of phenomena; and (3) the incorporation of individual findings into a model of the organisation under study” (p. 271). Similarly, Glaser and Strauss (1967) describe their “constant comparative method” of data analysis as “(1) comparing incidents applicable to each category, (2) integrating categories and their properties, (3) delimiting the theory, and (4) writing theory” (p. 105). These basic structures remain roughly consistent with many authors over the years (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). They follow a sequence of analysing data according to sensitising concepts that have been utilised throughout the study, coding the text into data displays, constructing a model of the phenomena as it is represented from the evidences displayed, testing the model through triangulation, and finally making conclusions based on these processes. In this way a great deal of data is pushed to one side, in the process abstracting from the evidence those parts that are most significant and that allow the researcher to address the foci of the research.

In specific terms (something that is applicable for Boys Doing Art) data analysis can be undertaken using a five step procedure. Firstly, some “sensitising concepts” are established. These are developed from the research queries and from the theoretical framework of the study. They represent the most encompassing labels for the concepts that drive the research.
Secondly, the data is coded. Coding requires a number of sweeps through the data, attempting to identify representations of the sensitising concepts evident in the text. This represents a reflexive immersion into the whole body of data collected during the study and forces the researcher to "live the evidence". Coding involves recognising patterns, inconsistencies and exceptions that exist in the data and labelling them with key words and key phrases which are sympathetic to the setting. During this process codes are elaborated or simplified, or whole new schemas are developed; a process of upgrading and refining, pursuing more meaning through simplicity. Evidences are checked for credibility, narratives are assessed to determine if they can be represented by a particular code or if meaning is transformed by that code. Sources are validated; was a segment of data volunteered or solicited? Was it a direct observation or hearsay?

Thirdly, a model of the phenomenon is developed from the codes. Model building has three components; the data is analysed for instances of frequency, distribution and typicality. Frequency indicates the representation of a code within the data, useful in some analytical senses but not to the quantitative degree of determining significance. Distribution of the codes allows us to evaluate their representation in all protocols, degree of overlap of specific themes and indicate to some degree the importance of those codes. Does each of the sensitising concepts occur in each segment of the data? If not, why not? This represents the interaction of the theories underlying the data and the evidences obtained during the study. Typicality attempts to identify how typical to the data are the sensitising concepts. Were they represented as an aberration or as coherent to the themes? Does one dominate, or perhaps occur only once or twice but in very important contexts? Model building is the process of drawing these components together. If ideas are frequently observed, if they are identified across many sources, and if they are seen as
typical from a variety of perspectives within that environment, a theoretical model can be built to explain the phenomena.

Fourthly, the model is analysed using triangulation. Triangulation investigates how the key concepts of the model converge or diverge. This is a process of cross-validating data, using a variety of sources such as documents, interviews, observations from a variety of sources, such as teachers, parents, and students. From this analysis a strong sense of a community of ideas may emerge that conflate the extremes of objectivity and subjectivity, theory and practicality, the internal and the external.

Finally the findings of the study are investigated in light of other theories. “Theory linkage” is the conclusive statement drawn on evidences from the preceding stages. Becker and Geer (1960) describe this phase as generalising the specific instances of a phenomenon found during the study to the organisation or site. This stage generally recognises complicated relationships between many variables through the constant refinement of a theoretical model, by taking account of contrary evidences and searching for extreme or negative cases. (p. 277). “When the researcher is convinced that the analytic framework forms a systematic substantive theory that is a reasonably accurate statement of the matters studied, and that it is couched in a form that others going into the same field could use - then [the researcher] can publish [the] results with confidence” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 113).

Reliability and validity. Reliability concerns achieving some consistency in results across studies in a particular setting (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). This involves aspiring to both external reliability (the degree to which studies can be replicated) and internal reliability (the degree to which multiple observers might agree on an interpretation of a phenomenon).
Researchers are agreed that reliability is problematic for qualitative studies, which rarely experience similar phenomena, often have subtly differing foci, and are undertaken by researchers with training in a range of methodologies (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). However, while impossible to achieve in its pure sense in qualitative studies, ethnographers address reliability in terms of “the accuracy and comprehensiveness of their data” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p44). Seen this way, reliability is not an unworthy goal as it places an onus on the researcher to provide a clear and accurate description of research aims, methods and procedures. It requires the researcher to report significant quantities of raw data, and it requires the researcher to accurately report his or her methods of analysis.

Validity refers to the extent to which the methods used to gather data do so in ways that accurately reflect the actual situation (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). This involves external validity (which protects the study in terms of any comparison with other studies, and its ability to have its results translated to other contexts) and internal validity (the accuracy of analysis techniques). In terms of qualitative studies, researchers focus on ensuring external validity by ensuring that “the components of a study, including the units of analysis, concepts generated, population characteristics, and setting, are sufficiently well described and defined that other researchers can use the results to compare to other studies addressing related issues” (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 348). Internal validity is assured by satisfying the reader that critical concepts have similar interpretations between the researcher and the participants.

Why use Ethnography?

I mentioned at the beginning of this section that the types of knowledge being sought usually determine the choice of a methodology. In light of the descriptions given
of the structure and implementation of ethnography in the previous pages, I feel I must now come back to my experiences with Malcolm. There is something very particular and special about his circumstances; something that can only really be understood from within the environment that created it. The messages contained within his story are important and have significance for policy decisions within education and within wider gender debate. His story has, at its core, the interrelation of boys, and the meditative qualities of art curriculum. How can we best understand this?

The secrets of how boys develop their concepts of masculinity lie with boys themselves, not in existing sociological theories. While *Boys Doing Art* aims to extend these theories, it will do so by basing that new knowledge firmly in boys' actual experiences. Field research provides the best opportunity to do this, by allowing me to be present in the classrooms and hallways as boys enact their masculinities, and it provides me the tools to make sense of their world. As Burns (1990) explains, it is ethnography that best allows this type of access.

An ethnographic approach to the everyday tasks of teaching and curriculum planning does not define curriculum simply as 'a relationship between a set of ends and a set of means', as a statement of intended learning goals together with methods for goal achievement. We can view curriculum, as a process in which there is constant interpretation and negotiation going on among and between teachers and students. In this sense, a curriculum is the everyday activities in the classroom. The conceptual and methodological tools of ethnography get at this aspect of curriculum planning and teaching. (p 224)

Ethnography acknowledges that the researcher exists within the parameters of the study, that she must reflexively address her impact with the human and physical aspects of
that environment. Ethnography allows the study to take into account the social and cultural factors that impact its participants, and it accommodates the participants’ opinions and actions. However, while some “classics” have established underlying principles for ethnographic research (for example, specific to education, Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; or Denzin, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Spradley, 1980) an underlying message from this literature is that no single methodology exists within ethnography. The fact is, ethnography is a style of research that is continually in a state of refinement. As such, there remains a requirement on studies such as Boys Doing Art to stipulate carefully the conditions under which data is to be collected and analysed.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to partly fulfil this requirement. Due to the varied interpretations of ethnography, I felt it was important to describe some essentials of field research; its historical origins, its development over time, and its structure in terms of methods of data collection and analysis and theory building (as far as can be generalised, as it has no singular form). Without these explanations, what follows in the next chapter would lack context.

“Good” ethnographic research requires a fine balance between the need to stipulate a design a priori (to ensure that methodologically it is suitably grounded in established theory), while at the same time it must not be over-planned, so that room is provided for the participants to direct data, not the reverse. The following chapter will outline how Boys Doing Art fulfils this balance.
Chapter 5: The First Phase, "Conceptualising the Boundaries"

Overview of the Chapter

Two things are required to move *Boys Doing Art* from a theoretical idea into actual research; I need a site for the study, and a research design to implement it. This chapter will describe how a project for a university course provided the first, and how information from that project facilitated the second, the construction of a preliminary design. This chapter describes the act of moving *Boys Doing Art* from conjecture to the reality of a school setting. In the first part of Chapter 5, I will provide a description of the physical characteristics of the school, outline its curriculum, introduce its staff and the boys to the reader, and begin to portrait the art program. In the latter section of the chapter I will explain how the information gathered during these weeks of my first access enabled some "conceptual boundaries" of the study to be located. As a result preliminary decisions regarding sampling, data collection, and data analysis begin to fall into place.

When writing this chapter I face one major obstacle. The majority of the text is written in the present tense because the study design "unfolds" as a natural consequence of my initial access in the school, and my knowledge of ethnography (as described in Chapter 4). But occasionally, when writing, I am faced with the situation of reporting where my intended plans for the design change significantly during the study because the participants react in a certain way, or the data leads me towards a different set of conclusions than what was expected. This is quite normal in ethnography. But my problem is how to report this fluid methodology? I am reticent to have dry and factual information on methodology spill into the reporting of the participants' voices in Section III. Instead, I have decided to juggle the descriptions of the intended and actual research design during Chapter 5. As a consequence a type of omniscient voice intrudes
occasionally to say “What eventually happened was…”. For me the jump in tense is an unavoidable but worthwhile consequence of ethnography’s flexible and changeable nature.

**First access**

During the early part of 1998 I was enrolled in a research subject at the university where I was undertaking my graduate studies. As a course requirement, I was asked to conduct a “mini-ethnography” in a school. This included negotiating entry to an appropriate site, it required me to use participant-as-observer techniques to gather data on a topic of my choosing, and it asked me to analyse the data and complete a report of my findings. Naturally, given my desire to understand better some of the issues Malcolm’s story highlighted for me, I chose as my topic the issue of “boy’s use of the art curriculum to develop their beliefs about masculinity”.

A visit to the library showed me only two all-boy schools existed in this city. The first, a Catholic institution, required lengthy application process to be undertaken before I could enter the property and discuss my research with the art staff. While the necessary paperwork was being prepared, I telephoned the second school. Called Greene’s College, it was an independent non-denominational school. Putting aside the Catholic application forms for a minute I dialled their telephone number. The switchboard operator forwarded my call to Victor who was acting as the head of art for the year. Not too far into a nervous and bumbling introduction of who I was, Victor took pity and politely interrupted, “Would you like to come on in and have a look around?” This was, by all accounts, a dream beginning. With a one-minute conversation I had a “foot in the door”, within a week I was observing in the school, and within a few visits I was comfortably discussing extending my class project into a major research study.
The class project was only intended to give a brief overview of the ethnographic procedure, but some graduate students found it extended into a type of “pilot study” for their dissertations. This certainly happened to me. What was planned to be three or four visits over that same number of weeks became once-a-week full day visits for three months. However, what happened over those weeks I prefer to call my “first access” into *Boys Doing Art*, rather than a pilot study. In some ways the numerous visits and the mass of data I collected represented a pilot study in that it foreshadowed on a small scale what I would like to replicate in depth as my full study. Certainly it provided me with considerable knowledge about the boys and the school and allowed me an opportunity to develop my research foci and to plan how my study might address those foci. However, I don’t feel “pilot study” is an accurate description because this period represented the beginnings of my research rather than a unit of activity with a start, with a middle, and with a neat and conclusive end. My final report at the end of the term reflected this.

Analysis of the data began with a diagram showing the three areas of interest that my study seemed to encompass\(^7\) – art, masculinity, and the school, and went on to identify many themes that linked these concepts in a confusing way. My conclusion was little more than a declaration that, while I had identified some broad parameters to my research interests, the reality of what I saw in the school had defied any attempt to categorise them into neat themes and codes in the short time I was there. There were few results to report other than an acknowledgment that this first access had provided me with my initial impressions of Greene’s College, which in turn allowed the study to move to its next stage.

\(^7\) They would become my “sensitising concepts”.\n
Initial Impressions

My Expectations

Even before my first visit I had some clear expectations of the school, its version of “masculinity”, and the type and quality of its art program. Entries into my field diary at that time build an image of a school familiar to me because of my own experiences as a student and a teacher. Conversations with colleagues at my university also helped paint a picture with their accounts of the school’s reputation in the community. Added to this, the books I read prior to my first visit offered a rich description of the school’s long history. Founded in the 1940s the school had developed numerous approaches to schooling young men, before evolving into the place I would visit. However its past was not easily forgiven, and by all accounts Greene’s College was still “traditional” in a British public-school sort of way (Barman, 1984). I realised it would be difficult for me to be totally objective about where I was going; Chapter 1 has already described some of the “baggage” I carried to the site. However, because expectations are clear it doesn’t follow they are accurate. Chapter 1 also described how surprised I was by the actual buildings and how they did not at all fit the expectations I owned of the place. If I was so wrong on this detail, in what other way would my pre-suppositions be inaccurate?

Description of The School

Greene’s College is situated in a Western Canadian city famous for its natural beauty, relaxed lifestyle, and temperate (for Canada) climate. This medium sized school is significantly different to most institutions in that it is one of only two remaining all-boy schools in Western Canada (Barman, 1984), and one of only a handful of such institutions in North America (Riordan, 1990).
Greene's College is a non-denominational, independent school that charges a mid-to-high level of fees to its 1,000 boys. The school accommodates grades Kindergarten to twelve on two sites. These campuses are separated by about a kilometre of tree-lined suburban streets. The original school building now houses the Kindergarten to grade seven Junior School and is the site of a boarding facility for 157 ten to eighteen year old boys during the time of this study. An impressive bluestone "castle" set within the shadows of some huge elms and oaks, its architecture is so close in style to the British public school stereotype that on my first visit, when I witnessed a class of students jogging its perimeters, Tompkinson's School Days and the scene where boys were forced to do the "ten mile school hop" sprang to mind. Although totally erroneous, it would be a mental image I could not erase and caused me to chuckle each time I drove past. The Senior School is in direct contrast to this place. A modern facility built in the mid-1980s it is free of gloomy pine trees and has access to the daylight. The buildings are placed on the fringes of a natural reserve, and it has the luxury of being surrounded by the open spaces of a number of playing fields.

The school's administration is centred at the Senior School campus. This includes a Director of Studies, a Bursar, a Director of Development (who is also the school's Admissions Officer), the Summer School offices and a group of secretarial staff. While the Junior School has some duplication of these offices and its own head, the overall school operates under the control of the Headmaster situated in the Senior School. He is responsible only to the Board of Governors. My study focuses on the Senior School, so from this place onwards when I mention "the school" I am referring to this grade eight to grade twelve campus. That is not to suggest the Junior School doesn't have considerable influence on the nature of what happens to the boys post grade seven. During interviews
some boys do reflect on their time there as a legacy that impacts their current situation. However, Boys Doing Art concentrates on the senior campus for three reasons. Firstly, the participants themselves direct this focus; not enough attention is placed on the Junior School by the boys in the study to warrant its detailed investigation. Secondly, to include examination of masculinity issues across two campuses, and across such a wide age bracket of participants, was considered beyond the scope of the research. Thirdly, the motivations for Boys Doing Art in terms of my own experiences teaching (discussed in Chapter 1), and the trend in what literature exists on this subject, suggests that it is the senior years where the most relevant data will emerge. For these reasons, I regretfully decide I will have few opportunities to re-visit the Junior School’s magnificent site.

Some additional descriptive information concerning the school has been included in Appendix A. While possibly quite relevant and useful to some readers, it is dry and factual and doesn’t help to paint an image of what the school is like in reality. The truth is that from my first contact, Greene’s College impresses me a great deal. This is partly because of the way everything is understated, something briefly mentioned in Chapter 1 when I describe my first approach to the site. I don’t think this impact is an accident, but rather the product of conscious architectural decisions that reflect the focus of those who initially commissioned the new school. The degree of contrast between the Junior and Senior campuses is so extreme it is surely intentional, evidence of a deliberate decision to make a clean break from “the old”. The double storey bluestone walls have been replaced by a low building of simple wood. The grand entrance that is dominated by carved stone icons, gargoyles, brass plates, and massive oak doors has been replaced with a modest and

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8 In an effort to provide anonymity for the school, the information in Appendix A provides an accurate "portrait" of the school, but it is not exact in all details.
functional driveway, by an entrance difficult to identify on first visit, and by a polite welcome to visitors pasted to simple glass doors. The trees, majestic but overshadowing have been replaced with open light filled spaces and playing fields. All this may be no more than an result of simple economics, but having spent a year in the school witnessing its culture they symbolise to me the difference between the stigma of Greene’s College’s “traditionally British” history (Barman, 1984), and the reality of its contemporary attitude to schooling boys.

If one favourable initial impression of the school is the way it architecture appears understated, another is its functionality. I’ve had a great deal of contact with many independent schools and almost without exception they seem focused on gaining part of their reputation through the eloquence of their architecture. But here, at the Senior School campus, the building seems to stress learning rather than image. I enter the school through a relatively small lobby where Madge, the ever-cheerful receptionist who never seems to go off-duty, beams a smile hello. By signing the visitor’s book that hides on her desk I am partaking in a ritual to be undertaken almost every school day this coming year.

Now officially admitted, I take a few steps and face an interior wall composed almost entirely of windows. This transparent barrier to the depths of the school provides a view of a large common hall that I will soon discover is physically and symbolically the centre of the complex. Named Newton Hall it is a space that is long and high and capable of holding every boy in the school at one gathering. At one end is a huge fireplace that supports a ghastly school coat of arms. At the other end, double doors open to a hallway. Many polished wooden tables with high-backed chairs with padded seats fill the space, all so neatly organised that the overall effect is that of a well-kept suburban dining room.
Opposite my position looking through the windows from the lobby is a wood lined wall that holds the portraits of long dead Headmasters. They smile benignly over the space, seemingly smug and comfortable in their frames, enjoying rest from the servitude of headmastership but also perhaps confused at finding themselves in a space that did not exist during their lives. Under the portraits are framed student artworks, knocked askew during some youthful frenzy, I imagine. Set into this wall are closed double doors that I later discover open into the library – an equally spacious place that parallels the hall in the centre of the school. Canteen windows to one side of the fireplace and the muted clank of cooking in progress behind the walls give one indication that the hall has a very utilitarian purpose. Another is shown by the fact there is a class in progress. Boys sit at half-a-dozen of the tables near the fireplace as a female teacher walks amongst them, occasionally stopping to comment. At the other end of the room a group of senior students socialise, their chatter and laughter is clearly heard where I stand in the lobby but to all appearances the class-in-progress remains undisturbed.

I step into the hall through a third set of double doors from the school lobby and two further features of this space make an immediate impression. First, even though building surrounds it on all sides, the hall is filled with light. Looking upwards I see the source of this light is a clerestory window that runs the full length of the hall. This is the feature that I noticed standing high above the otherwise flat and inconspicuous roof when I first approached the school (Chapter 1). Back then it struck me as out of place in an otherwise understated design. Now from the inside it is not “architectural whimsy” at all but a quite necessary component of this space, something that ensures its livability. A second impressionable feature is the quality of the furnishings. The lovely tables and
chairs are matched by monographed carpet, by a marbled paint finish on those walls not paneled in wood, and by framed students works on various walls.

The concept of this central hall captivates me. The space appears to be many things; an eating place for students, a forum for catching up with gossip, a venue for assemblies of some type, a classroom, a site for displaying student's work, a study space, a less formalised "companion space" for the adjoining library, and I am sure, many other functions besides. What is more, its physical placement in the school is interesting. By exiting the hall through the double doors at the rear I find I have re-entered the hallway I had stood in earlier, only now around a corner. I realise this passageway must circumnavigate the hall and library; this "heart" of the school. As I follow the corridor, Newton Hall and then its parallel and neighbouring library stay on my left. On my right signs on doors show I am passing administration areas, the offices of heads of departments, school counselors, the Headmaster, and the Assistant Headmaster, a staff room, a number of classrooms, a student shop, and stairs to a floor situated under this level. I eventually arrive back at my departure point. The hall and the library nestling beside it form the hub of this school, its heart. Everything else surrounds and radiates from it. You cannot get closer to the centre of Greene's College than this community room.

By now I am ambitious. I wander outside, through some glass door on the rear side of the building I had noticed during my circumnavigation. I am under a covered walkway, which I find it leads to two buildings that on this level can only be accessed externally. But they don't really look separate from the main building I had just left. I find out later that hallways on the lower level provide sheltered access, a necessity even in these temperate Western Canadian winters. One of the wings turns out to be a theatre with
enough seating to double as a venue for school assemblies. An adjacent space, its function given away by the sound of music and loud youthful voices, is the grade 12 common area. With my head poked through the door I can only catch a glimpse of what is inside but it’s no surprise to see old couches scattered haphazardly, food scraps on tables and vivid music posters sharing wall space with a Coke machine. I withdraw quickly; it feels like a private space and besides, there is a dozen large boys doing something with a rubbish bin I’m not keen to witness.

The second building is labeled as the arts wing, a much more familiar and welcoming environment for me than the rowdy senior-student common room. Its upper level is light filled, the wide hallway quiet and empty as I stroll along looking in the rooms. A general-purpose classroom and a well-equipped, neat science laboratory sit empty waiting for their next group of clients. Likewise a large art studio space is empty and I sneak in. It’s an interesting space, not overly large or expensively fitted out. Large, high tables fill the centre of the room and a supporting pillar creates a recessed area off to one side that in reality is about a third of the floor space. Some still-life arrangements are set up against this pillar with old picture frames and fabric hanging off a ladder, surrounded by bowls of fruit and various rustic knick-knacks. Against the walls are storage racks for paintings, many pin boards showing off student’s work, and hand-made instructional posters. There are easels scattered everywhere with paintings in various stages of completion. A wash station for silk-screens completes the furnishings. The place feels like a class has suddenly been called out and will return en masse at any time.

Looking for them I discover the room opens into a second studio space with an office separating the two. I only glimpse quickly – I feel like I’m far enough into someone else’s
space so I retreat, but as I do I realise these rooms combine to use a large portion of the building.

Back in the hallway I find some narrow stairs guarded by fire doors. They twist through 180 degrees to a lower level, which immediately feels more like a rabbit warren than the spacious facility upstairs. The hallways are narrower, there is no natural lighting and lockers and some unusual structural features intrude. The rhythmical foghorn drone of a tuba draws me to peek through a small window in a door. I spy an orchestra practicing in a large ensemble room where a dozen instruments harmonise, their voices not as successful as the tuba at penetrating the walls. Opposite the music room is a well-equipped ceramics room with wheels and sculptural areas in a happy state of messy disarray. Shelves of half finished work stack the walls, a pot is sitting in a spray booth waiting for its glaze, and a senior boy sits alone working on a clay sculpture. I nod hello and move off to find three computer laboratories and an underground access to the theatre.

The bell rings and suddenly the hall is full of students. This always surprises me – I can’t think of many times that boys operate with such concert as when escaping a classroom. Their energy encourages me to happily go with their flow and I watch groups of them peel off into a gymnasium, an indoor pool, a weight room, a second gymnasium, and many classrooms. By now, being totally lost, I gravitate upwards towards the light and, surprised, exit the stairway into the hall that circumnavigates Newton Hall. The school is surprisingly big given its compact external appearance so I decide to test its \textit{Tardus}$^9$ qualities with an external inspection. The windows passed during my exploration have been tempting me with a view of cedar-lined streets and green playing fields so it is

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$^9$ Lovers of science-fiction will remember that The Tardus is Dr. Who’s ingenious transport device. On the outside it is a common telephone box; inside it opens into a seemingly unlimited number of rooms.
pleasant to finish my walk outside in the autumn air. Circling the school I realise that the whole lower level I have just exited is mostly underground and this maintains the building’s low profile. And with some surprise I realise the school has no façade to speak of. Almost all the external walls are quite bland. The building definitely looks inward to the large hall and the library complex. I feel encouraged that there is no ostentatious display of the school’s privilege. As I walk, however, I notice there are soccer, rugby and cricket fields on two sides of the school and the thick forest of a huge natural reserve on the others. Across the lush grounds sit the modestly affluent houses of this neighbourhood. For a little mental exercise I calculate how many five hundred square metre house blocks at $500,000 a block would fit into the sports grounds alone, and realise that in this neighbourhood, any outward display of wealth is perhaps not necessary.

The School Curriculum

Before any words are spoken I have some clear ideas about the curriculum at Greene’s College. The school’s reputation in the community is that it has a strong academic focus. My preparatory reading in the library tells me it wasn’t always this way. Originally Greene’s College was the place where Western Canadian gentry sent its wayward boys for discipline (Barman, 1984). The Director of Studies, Laurie, agrees. He tells me in the late sixties it was a “rough and tumble” school where “British discipline was used to satisfy parents who were unable to provide that environment at home”. In the seventies it had the reputation of being the place where “rich parents send their problem kids”. For a number of years it worked to change that image and succeeded to the degree that today, in the competitive market of contemporary independent schools, its main selling point is its success at preparing boys for university – “We send more people to Yale than the rest of Canada” (Laurie). For this reason I expect to hear the academic
curriculum is particularly important to the school compared to any sports, arts, or personal development agenda. During my first access I watch and listen for signs that this is the case. From the boys’ conversations I work out there is a system of compulsory and elective subjects. They define the former as being the “academics”, subjects such as math, English, and science. But I also hear that sport is compulsory, as is career and personal planning (CAPP) and some other subjects not usually given the “academic” label. So not all compulsory subjects are academic. To confuse things further, in grade eight all subjects including the arts are mandated.

I talk to Laurie to get a description of the curriculum. He tells me the students are assessed externally in years eleven and twelve through the provincial examination system that applies to all public and private schools in this part of Canada. This means the school must follow provincial curriculum guidelines in all subjects from grades eight to twelve. But Greene’s College modifies its curriculum to meet the needs of its unique population. These unique needs exist because of the school’s enrolment policy. The school screens its applicants for, amongst other things, their academic ability. As a result it has an “enriched student population by virtue of our selective entrance requirements”. The curricular modifications he speaks of are extension courses in the “academic” subjects across the years, custom subjects written by the staff, and the opportunity for grade nine and ten boys to work at higher-grade levels when needed. In the earlier grades (eight and nine) the curriculum is largely fixed, there are no electives. To accommodate the wide range of subjects being offered some are full-year and some half-year subjects. Full year subjects are math, social science, a range of sciences, English, computer technology, one language (Japanese, German, or Mandarin), physical education and CAPP. The half-year subjects at these year levels include music, art, drama, and woodwork. All boys must participate in
one winter and one summer sport, but there is a huge choice available, from skiing and ultimate\textsuperscript{10} to the traditional choices of ice hockey, football, and basketball. Vestiges of the school’s traditional English roots are still seen by the fact that rowing, rugby, and cricket are available as options, despite Greene’s College being situated in a city where these sports are not strongly supported.

In years ten, eleven, and twelve the “electives” come into play. From this time on boys are expected to focus on their university entrance. Some subjects like art, while without doubt important for the development of the “all-round” individual, have few benefits when applying for university entrance because their scores are not included in the university-entrance scores. While some subjects not included in the university entrance score are pre-requisites for courses such as a bachelor of fine arts, few boys at Greene’s College take this direction. Laurie mentions the statistics of the school’s graduate’s course choices to elaborate this point – a sheet I saw posted on the Headmaster’s notice board outside his office during my circumnavigation. Clearly the majority of boys from this school pursue careers in Economics, Law, Medicine, and other such fields. The arts subjects carry a stigma of being “non-academic” because they don’t contribute to these goals. In spite of this I notice the school supports significant sports and arts programs. The facilities I have already seen show that a large amount of the school capital is invested in these areas, and the boys’ timetables show that art, music, drama, technical studies, languages, and other “electives” have a healthy allocation of time. I eventually learn the school has its own graduation certificate that is much respected both within and outside the school and among its criteria is the need to study one of the arts to grade twelve.

\textsuperscript{10} A mixed-sex team sport; a type of “keepings off” using a frisbee. The boys join with a sister school to field a team. Such occasions, where girls are invited to participate in school activities, occur infrequently.
There appears to be genuine curricular efforts to accommodate all needs across a wide range of subjects while maintaining a focus on those most critical to a successful transition into university.

The Boys

While the school and its curriculum are important, it is the boys I have come here to better understand. My earliest impressions of the school, written in my field diary, include the observation they are very alike to each other with their tidy uniforms, well cut hair, and polite expressions. And I mention how similar they are to the boys I taught in my own days in schools like this in Australia. There seems to be factors common to boys in these types of schools that stereotype them as private school boys. I can easily think of a number of them. First, they nearly all come from higher socio-economic homes; not surprising considering the fees in 1998/1999 are between $10,000 and $15,000 a year. Fred, the Director of Development, tells me there are bursaries and scholarships and "hardship allowances" to help less privileged boys to attend ("Having the money to attend here is not one of the pre-requisites!")\(^{11}\). In spite of this the amount of money many boys have at their disposal is quickly apparent. As one example it is normal for grade eleven and twelve boys to drive to school and I am impressed with the array of Mercedes, BMWs, and even a beautifully restored 1950s classic that I walk past in the driveway each morning. The quality of their cars cause the occasional caustic remark over recess coffee as staff makes comparisons to their own, often quite modest, vehicles. Not all boys enjoy this advantage, and like some staff they feel annoyed with the way this wealth is sometimes used. In a discussion about the school uniform that I have later with two grade

\(^{11}\) In the same interview Fred reminds me the school is a business and must target wealthy local and international families for its survival. He flies regularly to Asia to "recruit" even though the school has a waiting list in all but the "full-boarder categories". "We have to 'protect our market share'."
twelve boys, they tell me a few boys wear $300 shoes and have school shirts that cost more than some people earn in a week.

A second similarity between the boys concerns their home lives. Some teachers tell me that a large majority of boys live at home with both parents. A third similarity is in intellectual ability. Fred, who also acts as the admissions officer, tells me all boys are required as part of the application process to sit a three-hour examination that uses standardised testing to judge English and mathematics skills, and scholarship potential. A fourth similarity is attitudinal. The entrance exam is followed by an interview with Fred. During a three-quarter of an hour session he must judge if a boy's is "compatible" with the school's aims and its operating structure. I am told this interview is more important than the exam. "It does neither party any good to accept a boy who will later need to be asked to move on because he doesn't fit in." Fred stresses that "different" boys, boys who have something "special" to offer like a lad who showed off magical skills during his interview, are often selected. He tells me the unique contribution such boys can make to the school is valued, but as he speaks I wonder if the opposite also applies – if the school accepts it has a responsibility to offer something unique to these particular children? The discussion leaves me feeling that these "different" boys constitute a minority group of eccentrics, a token effort to make more complex the profile of a population of boys selected by an uncompromising screening procedure. A fifth similarity is in appearance. Physically the boys look much the same, the compulsory school uniforms and a moderately enforced "haircut code" creates the feeling of a cadre. And their common poise, confident, comfortable and assured adds to this impression.

There exist obvious dissimilarities between the boys as well. Most obvious is the fact the school has a wide ethnic mix. Roughly fifty percent of the boys are of Asian
background\textsuperscript{12}, and while some have lived in Canada all their lives (as have their parents),
many are very recent arrivals who are still coming to grips with the language and a
different culture. A few only live in this city to attend Greene’s College and fly home at
the end of each term. These latter students are the group the staff call “parachute” kids.
They are dropped in to take advantage of the school’s reputation for success at gaining its
graduates entrance to good US universities, but for all intents and purposes they live in
Asia. As a teacher tells me\textsuperscript{13},

Oscar: Some of these kids haven’t been any further east than Main \textsuperscript{14}, or any further
south than the airport. They get a ride from the airport to the school, spend the term
here not going out of this “comfort zone”, then ride at the end of the term back to the
airport and fly home.

During my walk I also notice Sikh students and boys from middle-eastern and
other geographical areas. In the hallways the boys hang out in groups so I try to see if
there are characteristics that create categories. Most obvious is race. Asian and Caucasian

\textsuperscript{12} One teacher tells me this is a relatively new phenomenon. But it is not surprising because since the mid-
1980s this city has seen significant immigration increases from Asia, particularly citizens of Hong Kong
concerned over their future after the reinstatement of Chinese rule. The teacher’s opinion is that the school
has not made a similar change willingly. An “unofficial policy” of preference to Caucasian students was in
force for many years and the change from mainly white to roughly fifty percent Asian has happened as much
for economic reasons (the new immigrants tended to be wealthy business people) as for any multicultural
reason. The Director of Admissions denies any racist “unofficial policy” ever existed. He says the school
has always given equal opportunity to all students during the selection process. Today’s figures accurately
reflect this city’s demographic profile in terms of race. In response the teacher suggested a comparison of
figures from “fifteen years ago to today show an increase from two to fifty percent” which is greater than the
increase in immigration during that time. His or her point is that the school has a racist legacy that it must
acknowledge if it is move on. While today that may not be the case, she or he reserves the right to be
cynical that the current enrolment profile reflects a policy of equality and isn’t simply the school “following
the buck”.

\textsuperscript{13} In the following text, direct quotations from participants will be indented and will be preceded by the
name of the speaker (except where, as per APA requirements, the quotation is less than 40 words. In these
cases, the quotation will be included in the normal paragraph). Quotations of my own voice, direct from the
Field Diary, will be indented and presented in Italics.

\textsuperscript{14} In this city Main Street represents a significant socio-cultural divide. To the west of Main, where
Greene’s College is situated, are some of the highest mean houses prices in North America. To the east of
Main Street exist some of the worst drug-affected suburbs in North America.
students appear to mix freely, but occasionally there are large groups of exclusively one race or the other. Sometimes I hear a language other than English being cheerfully spoken as boys congregate to socialise between classes. Other than race, I begin to notice other more subtle differences. Boys in one group seem to all have a spiky or dyed hairstyle. Boys in another group wear their uniform neatly. In contrast, other boys have their shirts hanging out and their trousers are worn low on the hips. A group near the canteen has long heavy key-chains and Walkman radios and their bags are somehow not the same. But definite categorisation eludes me because as soon as I identify a particular commonality, I look again and the boys are mixed up in another grouping.

I have to accept that on the surface the students of this school represent a reasonably narrow cross-section of today’s youth population. The majority of them are scholastically strong performers. They attend the school because they want to do well academically. Their parents wish them to do well and are prepared to pay for that to happen. They mostly come from well-settled, financially privileged homes. They are here because they have been selected; not one has simply walked in, all have undergone the testing and interview process. Each of them has been judged to be the type of boy who will fit the mould the school has determined to be correct, and each has survived in this school so far by showing conformity to this mould. But I also get the feeling that there exist within the culture of the boys many subtle differences that the boys have taken great pain to develop; a particularly impressive effort considering the constraints that the strict school protocols impose. The little things I have noticed may amount to nothing but I’m not so sure about this. My feeling when watching the boys is that the little things I’ve seen constitute attempts to be different and that they suggest that underneath the patina of

15 Even those in transit from the school’s Junior to Senior campuses.
commonality, a strong desire to be individual exists. I think to myself that if this is so, from what I’ve seen it must be a fluid and flexible phenomenon and one that will be difficult to corner.

The Art Staff and the Art Program

The art staff. The school has four art staff, three of which work full time. Meg is the head of department. She’s been in the school for twenty years. Victor has been here only two months less than Meg so these years together have let them evolve a partnership that is seen by the Headmaster and others to be the core of the success of the subject in the school. I won’t get to meet Meg until the full study\(^\text{16}\) but when I do, I quickly see she and Victor have a special professional relationship where each person’s skills complement the other’s. Meg is the energetic person who can’t help but show excitement for her subject even after 20 years at it. Victor is quiet and reflective, a gentle and attentive man. He possesses the often-rare skill of being able to listen to others and give credit to their opinions. Both Meg and Victor are knowledgeable and skilled in art and art instruction. Theirs is a partnership that is acknowledged by the administration and their colleagues as a “gem” of the school, a rare and valuable asset. Even though Meg is the head of department she and Victor appear to collaborate continually on procedural and strategic decisions concerning the art department. During the year to come I will watch them making joint decisions, I will listen to them contribute equally to policy direction and I will witness them both engage in often laborious administration tasks. Art appears to be very much “their” department.

\(^{16}\) During the “first access” stage Meg was on teacher exchange in the UK. She will return for the 1998/1999 school year when I am in residence as a participant-observer.
The other staff members are, in comparison, quite new to the school. Francis has been at Greene's College for two years but I won't get a chance to know her very well. I'll observe some of her classes and talk with her a few times about the school and her teaching, but a hint of dissatisfaction she expresses about issues not necessarily connected with the school will culminate in her resignation early in the year of the study. Erica will benefit from this. She is a new graduate who fills a very part-time temporary position for the first weeks of the year and will "fall on her feet" by being offered the vacancy made by Francis' resignation. A bright, cheerful and enthusiastic person, Erica has the disarming habit of being entirely open regarding her feelings. A number of times during the year she will approach me, make some quite frank comments about her performance or thoughts, laugh, then move on. The other art teacher is Miles, a part time computer graphics and photography teacher. Miles will not be highly visible to me during the year. He teaches in a room removed from other art studios and being part time; he will often not be in the school when I am observing. At staff meetings Miles is articulate and enthusiastic, and I notice that he and Erica have a good rapport, perhaps because they are younger than Meg and Victor and their new status in the school gives them some common experiences and interests.

An overview of the art program. This group of teachers has developed and maintains a successful art program that has been acknowledged by their fellow staff, the boys, and the administrators as holding a special place in the life of the school. All boys in grade eight study art two hours a week for half the year, after which they undertake a

17 Erica and I will discuss her fortunes at coffee one day. She tells me that, for a new graduate, gaining a position in the comfortable inner Western suburbs is an almost unheard of occurrence. In addition, for Erica it has happened at a school like Greene's College. Independent schools are highly attractive to teachers as they often pay generously, have motivated students with few discipline problems, and are well funded.
different subject. Basic skills development is the focus at this stage – what the staff call their “Art Foundations” program, with the time shared equally between two dimensional (drawing/painting with Erica) and three dimensional (clay and sculpture with Victor) studio disciplines. Here, the focus is on basic skills development and on introducing students to the principles and elements of art.

Art is an elective in grades nine and ten at Greene’s College. Two-hour classes twice weekly for the entire year allow students an opportunity to extend their skills in a number of major studio areas. Offered during grades nine and ten are ceramics (both wheel work and sculptural) and wood and metal sculpture (Victor), painting and drawing (Meg and Erica), architecture (Meg and Victor), and computer graphics (Miles). A feature of these years (in all but the computer graphics course) is the increasing focus on not only studio skills, but also on students building (and articulating) links to historical artistic precedents (art history), on engaging others in critiques of their works (arts criticism), and on attempting to “engage” others in their work by expressing an idea or personal meaning in their art.

At grades eleven and twelve students may study art as a matriculation subject. Content is prescribed by the provincial curriculum, which stipulates that students must produce a specified number of artworks that are displayed for end-of-year assessment. They must also produce a sketchbook that illustrates their development of ideas across the school year, and the sources of influence on their work (for example, other artists). A short student statement is included in their final display. Although it doesn’t own university entrance status, at this level art has equal timetable allocation as other subjects. Students study three “double” and one “single” lessons per week for the full year. The
options available to students remain the same as with the grade nine and ten classes, but with increasing freedom of choice.

**Continuity and transfer within the art curriculum.** One day over coffee Meg describes to me how the program at Greene’s College aims at sequential, structured learning. The early years (grades seven and eight) are intended – by focusing on the basics – to develop key skills and confidence at art making in students. As they progress into the grades nine and ten elective years, boys use those foundation skills to engage in the provincial curriculum outcomes of making images with personal meaning, and perceiving and responding to art works in cultural and historical contexts. By grades eleven and twelve, boys who follow this process of development should be capable of engaging the curriculum in a sophisticated manner. An added feature, Meg tells me, is the possibility for boys to focus on specific studio disciplines as they progress through the program. This enables them to develop “a personal suite of skills”, and it also enables them to align themselves with teaching staff for whom they feel some affinity.

**How does the Greene’s College art curriculum relate to the provincial curriculum?**

Laurie, the Director of Studies, has already informed me that the school has an obligation to meet the requirements of the provincial curriculum. The curriculum documents that Meg provides for me (a sample of which are included in Appendix B and C), indicate strong correlation between the aims and objectives of the Greene’s College program, and the aims and objectives of the provincial curriculum (see Figure 4, page 70).

It is important to note that no singular curriculum document exists for Greene’s College. The provincial curriculum serves as a foundation for how art is taught in the school, and supplementary documents (that are written directed to students, a type of course outline) catalogue the aims, objectives, and assessment requirements for most
courses. One day, after I ask Meg for a copy of her curriculum, she hands me a number of these papers collected in a binder. They are succinct and well organised. These documents synthesise three levels of curriculum – the underlying epistemological foundations of art education that drive the program, the actual curriculum (in terms of aims and objectives), and syllabi for staff (in terms of pedagogy). Selections of these documents are included in Appendix B and C. These documents offer epistemological (Appendix B) and pedagogical (Appendix C) evidence that the program in this school addresses the provincial requirements. It also reflects a DBAE-style approach to curriculum. The process of making art (considering aesthetic judgements, basing the work in historical precedents, engaging in art’s criticism) carries equal weight to the final product (see Appendix C). In the process, it focuses on the individual, using a flexible and loosely structured program. The documents state a number of worthwhile goals for its students, including encouraging them to find “individual visions” and developing the “ability to realise ambitions” in a “creative community where everyone learns from one another” (see Appendix B). These goals are pursued through building “inventiveness”, “problem-solving ability” and, “perceptual awareness” skills that culminate in a “clarification of individual styles” (see Appendix C).

Features of the art year. Highlights of the art year include a school-wide Arts Week extravaganza, an Art Show and Sale, a Graduation Exhibition, and a bi-annual Independent Schools Exhibition. Art students are given the opportunity to participate in District Scholarship Examinations, the Advanced Placement Program, and the school’s Scott Scholarship competition. Many ancillary projects stem from the visual art program, such as the graphics work for the school yearbook and drama presentations, and participation in a national video production competition.
The School Year

Events and procedures throughout the year at Greene’s College are very similar to other schools of this type, being largely regimented by the curriculum and the academic needs of its senior students. Structured into three terms, one leading up to Christmas, a second starting two weeks before that break\(^{18}\) and the third beginning in March, students sit exams each term and “finals” in May. For grade eleven and twelve this last set are provincial examinations. Although scores from provincial examinations are used to confirm university entrance, students actually sit a separate entrance test for specific universities earlier in December. This is for them a major focal point of the academic year.\(^{19}\)

Sporting events feature strongly in the school year. The cycle of winter and summer sports and the school’s successes in them (in particular the senior teams) are a focus of many student meetings, awards sessions in assemblies, and even staff meetings. Training requirements often intrude on classes as some teams are required to take afternoons off to accommodate their preparation for important games. One indication of the importance of sport to the school’s administration happens during the year; the whole school is given an afternoon off and taken by private bus (630 boys, 20 coaches) to attend a finals basketball game.

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\(^{18}\) This will be the first year of this new arrangement. Previously second term has started after the two week Christmas break, but in 1998/1999 attempts have been made to avoid the relaxation that has happened leading up to this holiday. By beginning second term early it was hoped the boys would re-focus on their studies after the first term exams more quickly. This arrangement will lead to some discontent from both boys who want to “chill out” after a long first term and the teachers who are duty bound to try to re-energize boys so soon before a break.

\(^{19}\) Another point of discontent for teachers. By holding these exams so soon in the year, the universities are undermining student’s focus. I’ll be told that many students never re-focus after this time – they pretty well know they are into their university, and the provincial exams are too far away to be a worry and all they do is confirm their entrance. And if they have missed out on their choices in university it will be too late then to do anything about it.
Cultural events occur regularly. Arts Week is notable, being a week where assembly times and lunch hours are used to provide drama, visual art, and music events, and to conduct poetry and scrabble tournaments. At other times of the year there are art exhibitions and sales, major drama productions, and music ensembles. Community events occur frequently. One major event is the Country Fair that is organised by parents and raises many thousand dollars for the school. The school runs a Summer School during the long break, organised from a dedicated office in the front foyer, which allows the public some access to the school.

The year concludes with ceremonies. There is a large speech afternoon held on the lawns under a huge marquee and attended by family and the School Board. Other equally important but less grand school community assemblies are held for the lower grades. In all it is a full and varied timetable that leaves the participants relieved when the summer break occurs. But the rigour of the year is also part of “it”, the qualities that make the school attractive to clients. “The fact that we are always busy, always doing something suggests to the parents that quality is what we are about” (Laurie). The “work hard and do it well” message is a marketable feature of the school, but perhaps goes deeper than that. In all, the entire academic, sporting, cultural, and community events that make up the school year create a sense that the boys are continuing a tradition. For decades these things have constituted boys’ rites of passage through the school. They have evolved to become a dimension of the life of Greene’s College; the participation in, and survival of, a crushing workload. This is a feature of the school that exists parallel and equal in importance to the grind of daily studies.
Preliminary Study Design and Procedure

Following the first access I retreat for a number of weeks from the school to formalise important elements of the study design and its possible procedure. This time is spent making decisions that will launch the study, but are not considered necessarily binding. Given my experiences during my first access, what questions will guide my research? How much time will I allow for the study? Through what stages will the study progress? On which broad categories of events and people can I focus? How might the procedure of data collection and analysis be improved? What “claim to knowledge” will I hope to make; a thesis, a theme, or a topic (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982)?

Time Allocation

Figure 5 (Preliminary Sampling Framework) illustrates how the components of the study will be divided across the time span of the school year. My first access convinces me to put aside a year for the fieldwork. The first reason was, I confess, that I want to come back for a long time. The school is a happy reminder of the environment I’d grown to love as a classroom teacher, the staff and boys create a vital and energetic atmosphere I find addictive, and my observations awakened a number of dormant questions from my teaching days that I want time to work through. Most importantly I realise that the issues I am most interested in hearing from the boys and teachers are ones deeply rooted in their personal experiences. I will need to take time to gain their trust, to learn what questions will best draw out that information.

Some more practical issues exist as well. There are many activities planned across the full school year that will be of interest to me. Also, as a teacher, I have often acknowledged the mystical cycle of the school year, its peaks and troughs, the way
students’ moods and activities change as the academic year and school program develop in a manner unique each time around. To me this is worth observing – from the freshness

Table: TIME

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<tr>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>OCT</th>
<th>NOV</th>
<th>DEC</th>
<th>JAN</th>
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<th>APR</th>
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<tr>
<td>INFORMAL OBSERVATIONS</td>
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<td>FORMAL OBSERVATIONS</td>
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<td>INFORMAL INTERVIEWS</td>
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<td>FORMAL INTERVIEWS</td>
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<tr>
<td>DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND WRITING</td>
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<td>PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK</td>
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Figure 5. Preliminary sampling framework for a year-long ethnography in a school

and enthusiasm of the start of a year, to the relief and nostalgia of the last day. Thus a full year will ensure the time needed to gather the data I feel is important. I hope I can become a “part” of the school in that time. I hope I can get to know something of the school and the boys’ culture during this full cycle – anything less seems inadequate.
Data Collection

General and specific foci. I plan to think about my data in terms of general and specific foci. General foci are the "sensitising concepts" of masculinity, the school, and the art curriculum. These categories, developed from my previous experiences (Chapter 1), and from the literature relevant to Boys Doing Art (Chapters 2 and 3), are considered to be the concepts central to the information being addressed by this study. They will help me identify the broad categories that interviews and observations can encompass (as considered part of the ethnographic procedure, see Chapter 4).

Specific foci (the lenses of "relationships", "justice issues", and "knowledge") will be used to help interpret data as it "comes in". Borrowed from Connell's (1996) analysis of the goals of contemporary boys' strategies (see Chapter 4), these lenses can be used to direct questions and focus observations on issues particularly relevant to the core interests of the study. While not used exclusively, they are invaluable in acting as a filter. Rather than absorb everything that emerges, an impossible task, I hope information can be filtered to some degree through these concepts in a way that does not exclude data but highlights the elements pertinent to the study. Constantly in the forefront of my mind as I collect data on schools, masculinity and art curriculum is the question "How is what I'm observing helping boys acquire academic and cultural knowledge, helping them tackle issues of social justice, and enabling them to build worthwhile relationships?" Through this line of enquiry I will be able to directly address the research focus of this study – Does art curriculum help boys negotiate a plurality of masculinities?

The field diary. Four levels of data collection are used, informal and formal observations, and informal and formal interviews. The field diary is the most important method of organising, collecting and reflecting on this data. In it I am to conduct
conversations with myself about developments, possible avenues of exploration and immediate impressions of what I see. The diary is to become an inseparable friend, to the point that participants comment if it is ever absent. I develop a system of organising the volumes of widely varied data as it comes in so that this information remains accessible and reflects the circumstances from which it originates (see Appendix E). The field diary is my first layer of categorising incoming information, and is used to log possible future avenues of investigation. The diary helps me to organise administrative details, and it is used to record all informal observations, formal observations and informal interviews.

Observations. Two types of observations are used, "informal" and "formal". Informal observations attempt to capture the essence of a period of time or place. I find that early experiences in a situation are best recorded using informal observations because they give a broad and general view of the phenomenon. During transcription late at night, the informal observations often highlight interesting ideas that went unnoticed during the actual observation. These suggest to me where more in-depth formal observations should be conducted. Formal observations attempt to accurately record the phenomenon being observed. Typically one will have a particular focus, such as "how X interrelates with Y and Z", or "how much movement is there by boys during this lesson". Occasionally a much broader focus will be required such as "what is a formal school assembly like?" In these cases, I will be forced to continually make decisions about which of the multiple actions before me I should record and these decisions will frequently be based on the specific foci described earlier.

Interviews. Two types of interviews are used, "informal" and "formal". Informal interviews are conversations that occur during observations in the classroom or in other areas of the school. In some cases these interviews, in reality only small sections of
longer discussions, are recorded on a small tape player and transcribed later. In other cases, the conversation is recreated later into the field diary either from short notes scribbled during the conversation or in a few cases summarised from memory. Their informality often provides some quite significant information. Formal interviews are those conducted under controlled circumstances, usually in an office or space that the interviewee suggests or approves of as “comfortable”. They follow a planned format that, while changing from interview to interview, still covers the three broad areas of inquiry relevant to the research issues (the sensitising concepts). Occurring as they do within the “natural” flow of conversation they are in some ways naively honest in their content.

I am keen to avoid giving the impression that I am an eavesdropper or that I collect data without consent. In every instance I record information only after having my purpose explained by a teacher or myself. But boys (and adults) often ignore a “stranger” in their midst after a few minutes and act quite naturally, and it is often within this unique and valuable situation that I collect insightful and honest opinions.

**Sampling/selection**

**Participants.** For triangulation purposes I require at least three distinct categories of data from interviews. Initially I choose “Boys”, “Staff” and “Parents” from which to sample. I am originally concerned that even these varied sources will not be sufficiently unique as groups to allow their similarity (or difference) of opinions to be evidence that a justifiable phenomenon exists. In practice, the group “Parents” soon disappear, and “Staff” become divided into “Staff”, and “Administrators”. This occurs for three reasons. First, the participants consistently identify staff and administrators as distinctly different. Second, during interviews it is quickly apparent to me this division influences participant’s opinions on a number of issues. Third, the data I collect from students, staff
and administrators is so rich and extensive, I am able to keep my data collection within the confines of the school. I quickly realise that parental influence on boys' masculinity development is significant, but does not carry the same significance and relevance for the curriculum focus of *Boys Doing Art* that separate staff/administrators groups provide.

After the first access I decide to introduce new/experienced and art/non-art sub-groups to provide a balance to the data collected. Table 1 provides a summary of the categories used to sample students, staff, and administrators for formal interviews, and the number of participants I eventually used. Many staff can be seen as administrators, including year heads and subject coordinators. However during the course of the study this group becomes very much self-defined. Participants in interviews often provide themselves or others the label of "administrator", and all those so defined are interviewed as such. Interviewees are chosen using "convenience", "network", and "selection"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewees (male, female)</th>
<th>Involvement in School</th>
<th>Involvement in Art</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>&lt;2 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3 (3,0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4 (2,2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 (1,0)</td>
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*Table 1. Sampling for interviews: Summary and profile of interviewees.*

procedures (LeCompte & Priessle1993). Of these, "network" sampling becomes the predominant method. A characteristic of the entire study is the willingness and enthusiasm of participants to be involved. On a few occasions students and staff actively
petition me to be interviewed. I become used to boys or a member of staff to say "you ought to talk to X about that...", and I follow up on these suggestions whenever possible.

The number of interviews is largely dictated by the time I have available. Organising and conducting interviews, transcribing the interviews, passing transcripts back to interviewees, and making subsequent alterations, all require a great deal of time. The final number of interviewees reflects a need to focus predominately on boys (19), a wish to adequately sample the administrators (there are only 6 categorised as such), a need to interview all art teachers (4), and a desire to gain a fair range of comments from other teachers (8).

**Events.** Events that warrant observation are chosen using “convenience” and “network” sampling. I am interested in whatever aspects of the school life I can access, and I actively seek participant opinions on what I should observe. All possible art-related activities, classes, and events are used. These include pottery, drawing, painting, sculpture, architecture, and graphics classes. Apart from art, I observe English, personal development (CAPP), French, science, and mathematics classes. I attend most normal and "special" school assemblies. I watch sporting events and attend staff meetings. I observe lunch hours and recess activities in the staff-room, in Newton Hall, along the hallways or in classrooms. I sit in on end-of-year functions, I attend art sales, I “hang out” during library sessions and drama presentations. I help adjudicate scholarship examinations and I assist in assessing senior students’ work. I observe in classrooms, in the Library, in hallways, in the canteen, in the staff room, on the sports grounds, in the driveway, in offices, and on the streets surrounding the school. In all over 170 observations are conducted in twelve different classrooms and ten other sites (see Appendix D).
Data Analysis and the Actual Study Procedure

It is impossible to separate my intended and actual data analysis from the way the study progresses. The two are closely linked. I find that by November 1998 my preliminary sampling frame and method of collecting and organising data is well developed, and my guiding questions are sketched out. I enter the school with some focus but am still unsure how, in reality, the study will proceed and how I will make sense of what I am collecting. As it turns out, the study progresses through five stages that I will call Phase I to Phase V (Figure 6). As already discussed, the first Phase is called “Conceptualising the Boundaries”. This is done during the weeks of my initial access and provides me with the sensitising concepts I will use as the broad parameters of the study.

![Figure 6. Phases of the study](image-url)
Phase II is my “Immersion” in the school where I become accepted in the environment, where I continue to identify key personnel and important school events, and where I begin using informal observations to broadly identify attitudes to the research issues. From this phase, I begin to identify patterns by creating and applying codes to the incoming data.

In Phase III, “Emerging Themes” I begin to use informal interviews and formal observations to look at the frequency distribution and typicality of the data to consolidate codes into “family codes”, or broad themes. From this stage a model of the phenomena begins to appear.

In Phase IV, “Making Sense” I make use of very specific formal observations, formal interviews, and repeat interviews to investigate those places where some data converged or diverged from other data. During this phase triangulation occurs.

In Phase V, “Wider Contexts”, I use the findings from these activities to reflect back to the original sensitising concepts and identify how the data informs academic knowledge in these fields. This stage represents my theory linkage.

It is important to note that while in Figure 6 the phases are quite explicit, during the actual study they often overlapped, and were not so easily identified as the figure suggests, as separate periods of time. However, this figure is accurate in showing there is a steady convergence of information – from initial planning, through broad information gathering, into specific data collection, with analysis occurring throughout most of this procedure.

Appendix F contains a line plot of frequencies of different methods of data collection and shows that this intention for convergent observing and interviewing is carried out in actuality. The data collection and analysis model is simple and works well,
allowing a slow but steady focus from the broad to the specific, directed largely by the data being collected.

Data Analysis Software

The qualitative data analysis computer program ATLAS.ti was purchased to aid the organization and analysis of data for Boys Doing Art. While capable of “theory generation” (Muhr, 1997), this program was only intended to act as a vehicle for organising data according to codes and themes, and to enable quick recall of quotations and memos pertinent to any particular topic.

ATLAS.ti does this through three major functions. Firstly, it collects data into a “hermeneutic unit” where an infinite number of codes can be attached. Secondly, it allows these codes to be grouped or merged into emerging themes. Thirdly, it allows memos to be attached to the text.

ATLAS.ti proved invaluable for ensuring that data was consistently reviewed throughout the data collection phases. While this will be discussed in greater detail during Chapters 6 and 7, the program encouraged me to transcribe information from my diary on a daily basis, it allowed me opportunity to engage in a “first level” of data analysis while I did this, through its “coding” function, and it provided a valuable site for ongoing conversations to myself about emerging themes and issues through its “memo” facility.

Ensuring The Accuracy of Data Collected

The reliability and validity of the study will be assured through a comprehensive description of proposed and actual procedures, through the extensive use of participant voices, and through using the well established ethnographic data analysis procedures described previously.
In addition, it is important to me that data collected should be checked for its accuracy. Throughout the study I am keen that what I record is an accurate portrayal of what is said and seen. With this in mind, a three-stage procedure is integrated into the study design.

Firstly, tapes from interviews are transcribed and returned to participants as soon as possible – in most cases within the week. Participants are encouraged to read their comments, make annotations if they feel they are needed, and return the transcript to me so I can note their alterations. Changes could be needed either because errors occur in transcription, or because the meaning changes in some way during the process of transcription. A copy of the covering letter for this procedure is included in Appendix G.

Secondly, once the draft of the thesis is prepared, the intention is that participants will be encouraged to review the parts relevant to their participation and offer comment. This should occur before the public view the text in its entirety, giving participants some chance to ensure their anonymity.

Thirdly, a late draft of the whole thesis will be made available to the school. Participants will be encouraged to review the text, make comments where they feel they are necessary, and they are invited to submit in written form comments for inclusion in an appendix. This procedure allows a degree of confidence that analysis is based on accurate data collection.

Secrecy. I make considerable effort to keep specifics of my research questions hidden from all the participants. My reason is simple; if staff or students know I am interested in a particular phenomenon, their actions in my presence, or their responses to my questions might be unintentionally biased. I have no wish to conceal or trick the people who are so generously helping in my study. As a result during the year I tread a
fine line between providing enough information concerning the study to remain honest in my dealings with participants, while keeping hidden exactly what I am attempting to view.

**Conclusion**

During this first access I am finally able to “conceptualise the boundaries” of my study by placing the theories of ethnography I have learned and the hypothetical research design I have formulated into a real setting. These boundaries give me an idea of what I can and can’t achieve in the place and time I have available to me. I satisfy myself that ethnography is suited the goals of my study. Boys’ own voices can be heard, and ethnography’s procedures are sympathetic to the theoretical needs of the study.

Secondly, I am able to refine my research directions. For example, the original list of prescriptive and limited research questions are replaced with three foci that are broad and reflect the fact that I am not after any specific “answers”. Thirdly, important “baseline” data is gathered. This includes information about the social and physical environment of the school and its operating procedures, it gives profiles of the intended study groups, and it identifies the “gatekeepers”. I learn about the events and issues that are significant in the cultural life of the school, and I become familiar with the daily tasks and routines that make up the “normal” life of the school – akin to LeCompte and Preissle’s (1993) “shagging around”, or Hammersley and Atkinson’s (1995) “casing the joint”. Fourthly, I feel I am able to articulate some parameters for the study. Within the data collected during this time I find categories of information that highlight three concepts I believe to be central to the phenomena I am studying. Nominated as my “sensitising concepts”, they form the “internal units from which researchers further sample or select” (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 113). My plan is to use them as general
Foci in the following phases to guide and help focus my observations and interviews and during my data analysis to structure the coding procedure and general data analysis.

Fifthly, I am able to tentatively select where I should observe and whom I should interview and some of the questions I could ask (my specific foci). For some people ethnography is fluid and the directions of the study and its research questions are generated only after immersion (Ely et al. 1991). Perhaps it is my qualitative research experience, but I feel uncomfortable entering a year of observation and analysis without some idea who, what and when I should observe. I feel I need a degree of structure otherwise I fear I will become bogged in minutiae and lose sight of the picture I seek. For this reason the baseline data that I collect during my initial access lets me construct the tentative “selection and sampling” framework shown in Figure 5. Sixth, I come to realise that I need to analyse my data continually and that I require some idea of how to do this. In the model I develop during this time the cyclical nature of ethnography is recognised where data is analysed regularly, leading to fresh foci for data collection, which I can then analyse, the pattern repeating until some meaning is determined (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). While tentative in nature and potentially disposable, this theoretical model of analysis is useful to me at this stage to make order of what I see and to organise how I will proceed in the future.

Finally, I make some critical links with the school. A common point of discussion in ethnography is the issue of negotiating successful entry to the site. “Successful entry” is characterised as immersing oneself within the site in the least disruptive manner, as gaining access to those areas of the site seen as most important, and as gaining the freedom to let the study develop where the data guides (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). This is

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See Chapter 5, Data Analysis and the Actual Study Procedure.
an issue of trust, and trust can’t be assumed just because entry is provided. I believe these
weeks of casual interchanges help assure the school that my motives (and ambitions) are
sound. In spite of my continual questioning and intrusion into their classes I like to
believe a warm rapport develops between the staff the boys and myself during this time,
and that this positive relationship eventually will ensure the smooth introduction of *Boys
Doing Art* into the school.

These factors – refining my research foci, gathering background information about
the site and the participants, deciding how the design will be applied, constructing a
preliminary sampling framework, thinking how the material will be analysed as the study
progresses, and negotiating entry – they all constitute what I see as establishing the
“conceptual boundaries” of the project (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). But it is a fleeting,
insecure type of concept. By late May of 1998 I feel I know the school and its occupants
reasonably well. I believe I have a grip on the phenomenon I am addressing. But where
this study will take me remains a mystery to me. Eisner (1998) speaks of *prefigured* and
*emergent* foci in qualitative studies. As evidenced in the first three chapters I believe I
have the former well considered. But I am not confident I can predict which influential
issues will emerge during the study to deflect its expected passage. What I have seen is
that facts I assume prior to the initial access sometimes become quite problematic once I
began to watch and listen. But with this preliminary design I am able to place some
boundaries around where I am prepared to go, even if they are only temporary and even if
they are only used to allow progression to the next stage of investigation.

Conclusion to Section II

This overview of my methodology describes an approach to ethnography that
while traditional, is not overly prescriptive and helps to locate *Boys Doing Art* within the
conceptual boundaries of the research needs described in Section I. The actual reality of “doing it” will cause changes and deviations from this preliminary plan, but I enter the year of observations and interviews confident I have some focus and purpose.

Section II leaves us placed within the school with considerable background knowledge and a plan for the study developed from that knowledge. The past few pages have described how data will be collected and analysed. As such it provides the basis for the “validity” of the results to be judged. But in the case of Boys Doing Art the methodology section has increased significance. This study is situated in a position where the knowledge being sought precedes any established theory that can be used to interpret that knowledge. Therefore, the methodology must allow for knowledge to be developed from the data, not the reverse.

While Section I provided the antecedents to the study, the problem I wish to address, what we know from the literature, and what specific issues need examination, Section II provided the means of exploring these issues. One can be forgiven for thinking that Section III will be where the study really begins. There is some truth in this assumption. But it is important to note that Boys Doing Art is indebted to the wealth and quality of the scholarship in gender and art education that was contained in the previous two sections. As too, it must be seen that it has been the skilled development of qualitative inquiry done by so many researchers over the years, that will allow the boys’ voices in Section III to be heard so clearly. In this regard, all the text of Boys Doing Art to this stage has been critical in ensuring that the voices that are to follow are acknowledged as making a valid and valuable contribution to our knowledge of art education and masculinity.
SECTION III: THE STUDY

Introduction to Section III:

**Boys Doing Art**

The first phase of the ethnography ("Conceptualising the Boundaries"), contained in Chapter 5, describes the interests and parameters of what I wished to investigate, and places these elements of the study methodologically within the school. Section III describes how I as the researcher in this school engages research issues that Malcolm’s story highlights. This section contains four chapters, each describing one of the remaining phases (see Figure 6) through which the ethnography progresses.

In Chapter 6 I deal with the second phase of the study, my immersion as a researcher in the school and amongst its population, describing my first attempts to engage the boys and staff with my research questions. What is masculinity? How do boys negotiate masculinity? Does art help this process? This chapter concludes with a range of "issues" that, through coding, I tease from the mass of data collected from informal observation and discussions.

In Chapter 7 I describe the third phase of the study, the "themes" that begin to emerge from this data. Here, the issues that my coding has highlighted are examined in greater depth through interviews with students, staff and administrators. This does not mean the material in this chapter is simply a collection of reports of conversations with participants. Rather, it collects opinions from the wide range of people in this school and presents them as being typical, well distributed, and frequently cited. A result of this chapter is that a preliminary model of the phenomena is constructed.

In Chapter 8 I describe the fourth phase of the study, a period of analysis where I triangulate the information participants have given me to "make sense" of the themes that
have emerged. This chapter addresses the research questions directly, asking how the data informs these areas of inquiry. By looking at the convergences, divergences and commonalities in my findings, I describe the range of masculinities in the school, I discuss how the art curriculum helps boys negotiate those masculinities, and I reflect on the ways the structure of this all-boy school impacts those processes.

Chapter 9 deals with the "wider contexts" of the findings from the study, the fifth and final phase. Because the critical aims of the study have already been accomplished, it is a brief chapter. However this task of making "theory linkage" between Boys Doing Art and the wider fields of education and gender discussion is an important end-product of the study. In this chapter I am concerned with hypothesising the significance of what was found back to the broader sociological theories discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, and to suggest which trails gender and art education researchers concerned with masculinity might travel in the future.

Section III is constructed largely from boys' voices, from staff voices, and from my own interpretation and analysis of their comments. Its discussion is cyclical in nature. Data is collected, reported, organised and analysed, and is then re-presented to the participants (in a more focused form) for them to verify the relevance of my analysis. It is a section that tends to be inwardly focused. Each of the phases helps to take the study from the general to the particular, lead by participants' voices.
Chapter 6: The Second Phase, "Immersion"

An Overview of the Chapter

Immersion refers to that phase of the study when I become a part of the school and am enveloped by a mass of data concerning boys, their masculinity, and art in this institution. According to my plans I should be a well-organised researcher, systematically observing and recording key facets of the school's operation critical to my research. The reality is, however, that I am more like a child doing an enthusiastic but spontaneous piece of drama, stumbling haphazardly from one interchange to the next. I struggle to be comfortable in my role as a researcher and I feel pressured to record as much of what I see and hear as possible. As the year progresses I will continue to identify more "new scenes", those other facets of the school that are important and need identifying yet were missed during the weeks of initial examination and recording. As a result, I feel my immersion can only be sketchily given in seemingly random segments.

This chapter provides some of those segments. Although inadequate in giving a full impression of the school's people, spaces and events it does present something of the "feel" of the place. The chapter jumps from a classroom to an assembly to a conversation with a staff member or student, and describes in some detail lessons and initial impressions of people. Verbatim entries from my diary (indented in italics) are often presented, both those observations carefully recorded while something is happening, and also thoughts written on the trot down a hallway or hurriedly re-constructed in a corner after some "useful" interchange. The chapter begins with my first day in the school and goes on to describes a number of people, events and situations that typify the school and many aspects of its operation. The chapter concludes with my first layer of analysis where
the codes I create from this data on an ongoing basis describe the panoply of issues my research questions encompass.

Immersion

The New Boy

It seems unduly egocentric that the first piece of observation centres on myself but the fact is, on my first morning, I’m not a researcher but a “new boy”. Standing at the intersection of two hallways I’m not sure which direction I should go. Everyone is moving with purpose, secure in their environment while I feel displaced. I’m not just physically lost (I have forgotten the way to the art studios) but I’m also mentally in a wilderness. In spite of my planning, at the moment of launching this project I am at a loss to know where to begin.

This feeling of being physically lost is something I’ve felt before. As a boy my family moved every few years and I was continually in a state of finding my way in new schools. I remember in grade eight at a new school, standing just like this, faced with two doors from which to choose, unsure where I should be and not wanting to stand out. Of course, I chose the wrong classroom and as a result, for most of my first year in the school, I was known by the occupants of that class who were delighted in my discomfort, as “the new boy”. So, standing here now, I am at least familiar with my unfamiliarity. To add to this feeling, these hallways have a look and a smell and a sense of activity that I recognise from my years as a student and teacher in all-boy schools. The notices on the walls (“Shropshire Boys Must Enrol In Their House Sport By Friday”, and “Lost Property Will Be Sold If Not Collected”) come straight from my own experiences elsewhere. I am a stranger in a setting that is strangely “home”. But in the here-and-now I again know virtually no-one and few know me; I have to begin the task of familiarisation yet again.
For a shred of comfort I tell myself I’m not the only new boy. In this school the entire eighth grade and some boys in the other year groups are also quite new. I wonder if, despite my newness, to the boys I look like one of the “regular” staff, much the way any new boys are invisible to me? My instinct is to find something safe and secure, to grab something I know to act as a foundation. I stop a senior boy and ask him to remind me of the way to the art rooms and head off to begin my data collection.

The “Foundations of Art” Class

The art class is full of new boys. It’s a grade eight, and they are tightly packed around a central table that holds an assortment of art materials and postcards. The teacher is speaking quickly with some passion in her voice and the boys are attentive. “Let’s reflect on last lesson. Comment on each other’s work in language that reflects the art “things” we were covering. Can someone show us where a boy has used line and tone?” Their previous works are displayed on the wall and the boys make sensible comments. “George did well, he has tones from light to dark.” “Sean’s tones makes his picture look spooky.” “Why?” “They are blue and dark.” After a little time the discussion swings to today’s lesson – texture. The teacher demonstrates what she wants by using the materials on the table, including how to apply the media, how to select an image from the postcards using a viewfinder, what size to do the image, even where to begin and how to progress with the exercise. These instructions are reinforced as the lesson progresses, with the teacher continually stopping the boys to use a student’s piece as a way of approaching this task. This is a highly structured lesson.

I circulate the room and ask the boys some questions. Do they enjoy art? What do they get from it? Lachland’s answer surprises me. “This is good because you can do whatever you want. In other subjects you have to do things, like from books and stuff.
Here you can get to things that are all your own." Lachland's attitude isn't atypical. Sean tells me he likes art because it's relaxing. Simon wants to do art until grade twelve, not because he's going to be an artist but because it is something to look forward to in the week. Samuel sees art as giving him the skills to draw better and make things. Brian differs.

Brian: Art can be fun, like, this is okay because it's teaching me a skill, but sometimes it isn't doing much for me. I want to design aeroplanes, and I need maths and science for that. Computers do all the work. Art isn't any use to me.

I ask him how he sees art compared to other subjects. "As opposed to academic subjects?" he asks. "Art isn't academic?" I ask.

Brian: No. If you do well in art there aren't a lot of jobs out there for you, as compared to maths and science. And if you want to go to university, courses like this one don't help you. An academic subject is one that first, you need it to graduate, and second, it's a subject that you need to succeed.

Bemused, I leave the class, writing in my diary that;

...these are interesting comments. For this lesson the teacher gave very direct instructions about EXACTLY what the boys had to do. Through a long demonstration she showed them how to do the task (techniques), what to use when doing it (media), even the manner of selecting the image (viewfinder). Yet still the boys consider they are in control, doing "their own stuff". They see their art exercise as very individualistic, very personal and "free". For some boys that has no relevance on what they feel they have to do to succeed at school. For others, it is a subject they want to do because it somehow balances "academic" subjects.
This episode was very typical of my early engagement of my research issues in the school. During my immersion most data is collected through informal observations, driven by the need to "get a feel" of the school, the boys and the art curriculum. I watch and engage boys and staff in conversations with my questions following a similar pattern, or rephrased appropriately. "Why do you like art?" "What sorts of boys do art?" "What are your plans?" "What do you think of the school?" "How is this school helping you?" "What's it like not having girls here?"

**Victor's Class**

I spend a number of my early days in the clay room. Victor has been my mentor to date. I hardly know Meg, Erica or Miles so during these first sessions I concentrate on his rooms and he tolerates me with grace. At Greene's College the art teachers "own" a studio and Victor's is downstairs where he teaches sculpture and ceramics. I enter a spacious room dominated by two large tables where four boys sit working quietly on hand built clay sculptures, two with sketchbooks open in front of them showing working drawings of their projects. In an alcove separated from this space by a sink, four boys in overalls and plastic bags covering their shoes work on pottery wheels, occasionally chatting to each other or getting up to collect clay and water. If it is quiet in these areas it certainly isn't somewhere else. Loud talk and laughter comes from an area hidden behind a partition of storage shelves and sinks where a number of boys lounge about chatting while doing some work in sketchbooks or on small sculptural models. My entry is obvious and intrusive. The boys go quiet and their curious eyes follow me making me uncomfortable.

> It is very easy to feel like a pimple on a log in this scenario. My teaching instincts tell me I should be mingling with the boys, helping them with their work. Instead I am
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hanging around with a diary, asking questions and watching and writing. This makes me stand out. The boys are wary of me. I just moved over to where a conversation is taking place and the boys suddenly lapse into silence. I try to quietly write in my diary, but the silence continues. I get up and move to do a little “observation”, and the conversation continues in my absence. I feel false, a pretender. I’m invading someone’s turf on false pretences.

The boys certainly aren’t rude. There are no apparent whispers and giggles at my expense and neither is my presence ignored. They meet my gaze and say “Hello” respectfully, but my tentative questions (“What are you working on here?”, “How are you planning to fit these pieces together?”) are not inspired attempts to gather data from these older boys.

It’s going to be difficult to get information in these types of situations – I will need to catch the boys in smaller groups.

I retreat to a free bench to write up notes. Nearby a boy in overalls is spraying glazes in a fume cabinet surrounded by a cloud of atomised silica and oxides. As he works a tall lanky boy enters the room. I have already noticed a steady stream of traffic in and out of the classroom as well as between its inner spaces. John’s entry makes little impression in this mobile atmosphere. With a comment to the boy spraying glazes, he drags out a sketchbook and sits near me. Victor walks past and challenges the new boy with a question that seems to lack commitment. “What are you doing here, John?” “Mr. J. is away so I thought…” “No. No. Does that make it OK for you to come in here and disturb these boys? Jim, turn on that fan. You’re breathing in all those neat fumes and they’re doing wonders for your lungs”. Distracted, Victor leaves John and moves over to turn on the fume cupboard. Another scene then attracts his attention. “Kent, what happened to that pot? Looks like you went too close to the bottom.” “How do I stop
that?” “Try using your hands this way to regulate depth” he demonstrates. After a few minutes rising chatter from the isolated third space draws Victor away and John takes this opportunity to ask Jim if he can glaze one of his pots. He is given a piece and takes it to the sink where he wets it and moves to the spray area. Victor walks past on the way to another boy and glances at John but says nothing.

As John uses an electric drill with a long attachment to stir a thick, dark glaze the boys talk about the relative merits of dip or spray glazing. Jim suggests a particular pot should be sprayed but John disagrees and dips it instead. Eventually John packs his bag and leaves so I ask his friend about him. “He’s in another class, but he always comes in here. He did ceramics a while ago. He keeps coming back.” “He likes it here?” “Yeah, he likes to know what’s going on. He comes in all the time for a few minutes.”

Victor’s voice interrupts us “Boys, twenty minutes left”, then moves over to a student building a clay sculpture. “Now your men here...” says Victor pointing to a clay figure that is part of the sculpture, “…how high should they be?” Victor’s voice is low key but has a tone that suggests mutual exploration is happening rather than any direct instruction. “If you make it too high how will it look?” The boy mentions he wants to give the figure a pool cue. “That’ll look great. Keep standing back from it. Look at it from every angle. Think about how other people will see it. You’ve got to put yourself in their shoes.”

The boys have begun cleaning up. The banter is in keeping with the relaxed but purposeful atmosphere. “Sir, Marcus is doing an awesome job on cleaning his wheel. We’re having a competition (laughter from the other boys)...a knob cleaning competition.” “Ah, I’m covered in Windex.” “Look at this wheel. Spotless!” The boys
are enjoying a cleaning competition. “Who’s going to do that stuff?” “I’ll do it – it’s not mine but I’ll do it.”

It is interesting but the chatter the boys make is at times almost indecipherable. The conversation is fast with lots of colloquialisms and slang. But also it is very eclectic, jumping from one topic to another extremely quickly. I only start to get an idea what they are saying and they change the topic, or rather it blends into another. It seems the words act as cues to concepts which the boys understand, so the conversation steers from one idea to another with little more than an elaborating sentence to mark their passing. It is the language of a common culture of which I understand little.

Soon most boys are in the “drawing” space waiting to be dismissed. Collectively they constitute a hulking group of young men lounging around on benches and stools, adjusting jackets and ties for re-entry into the more formal parts of the school. Victor has a few quiet words to them concerning their progress and the time they have left on the current project. He then dismisses them and turns to Randall, one of the pottery boys, who has been waiting with his sketchbook. Randall is agitated, and Victor appears to settle into a well-practiced routine with him. I can only hear a part of the conversation. “I don’t like unilateral decisions”, says Randall. Victor grins, “It wasn’t unilateral. We all decided together. Drawings, we need to do drawings.” Randall goes off in a huff, “What’s drawing for anyway?”

The remainder of the class is shouting comments to each other in their typically truncated fashion. “Fucking Shaun, he’s nerked…” “A fucking orgy…” “…two year olds!” “…fucking shut up!” “What does your mother do?” (And for once a

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21 I find out later Randall refuses to draw his ideas - he just likes to make things. He and Victor have been arguing for four years on this topic. It has almost become a ritual.
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comprehensible interjection; “Anyone with $100.”) Hoots of laughter follow the boys as one chases another up the corridor. Someone calls out to Victor “A great class, Sir” (not sarcastically) and suddenly the room is empty.

Victor sits beside me at the bench where I am writing up my diary. He wears a bemused expression, not tiredness related but rather the look of the habitually busy person who unexpectedly finds himself with no immediate task. “Well, what did you think of that lot?” These summative conversations after a class are a pattern that first emerged during my initial access, and fortunately will continue throughout the year. When all is quiet we will reflect on the boys and the lesson. I mention that I’d noticed that Victor keeps introductions and conclusions to lessons very brief. “Yea, I do that on purpose. Do it fast, get it done, and get them down and working.” “Are girls the same?” I wonder aloud. Victor’s answer is that he doesn’t think so. During the past summer school he took a pottery class which was composed only of girls of a similar age to the group I’d just watched.

Victor: I was able to talk to them longer. My demonstrations were more comprehensive. The girls were more focused. I guess it’s a maturity thing. Boys don’t mature as fast as girls and when they get close together they nudge and distract each other. And girls are more meticulous and seem to memorise instructions better. So they get more instruction and they can do the techniques better. But that’s funny, because it means boys become better problem solvers. They have to work it out for themselves. Its almost like they are more inclined to just “go for it”. When I teach girls I feel like I’ve died and gone to heaven (laughter).

I make the comment that during the past class a number of the boy used the time to socialise. Also, the ones who were actively engaged seem to enjoy the latitude Victor
gave them. They take advantage of this freedom to have fun while still working. He agrees.

Victor: Some boys in that other space really are not all that productive. That’s only at the moment, though. It’s my strategy with this group to give them that space, that room. It’s no particular clique that “goof off” like that. It’s just these boys at this time. In the most part they’ll get themselves motivated, given that space. The few that don’t, well… I’ll get onto them soon when the deadlines start to loom.

In my diary I observe that;

...there was no formal procedure to the class. Victor’s pedagogy was very much an act of getting students immersed into individual projects, then moving quickly and effectively from place to place. He provided instruction where requested or where a student was obviously experiencing difficulty (this is usually done by asking questions and eliciting observations from the boy, rather than any didactic instruction). Little of his time was spent exercising control, although he later lamented the “lack of maturity” in some boys that means he feels he has to play the teacher too much at this senior level.

I ask specifically about the transient student, John.

Victor: Oh, he’s a past student. He doesn’t do art any more – it didn’t fit into his overall study plans, but he can’t keep away. You have to realise a lot of boys use art as a “haven”. They come to the class and treat it as an expressive forum; both in art production and in developing ideas and in interchanges. Its like, once they’ve done a bit of it, its addictive and meets some need that they can’t fulfil elsewhere, so they keep coming back. They come in lunch hours and even before school. I arrive at 6.15 am every day and often they are here, wanting to do something. With John coming in
today, that’s just normal for him; he often pops in. Apparently a lot of boys sneak off from lessons to go to the art rooms. I send them back, but with the senior years and their “free lines”, it’s not always easy to tell if they should be elsewhere.

We speak for a few minutes about the range of interchanges that occur between the boys. I’m thinking about the cleaning up, and about the joint efforts at glazing.

Victor: A boy will ask me for help and someone will say...’I’ll help you with that...’ and I won’t be needed. And often I won’t even be asked. And these are the boys who’re so different from each other, who would normally be at each other...

We finish our conversation with Victor asking me if I noticed Randall working amongst the pottery boys? “He’s an interesting kid. We’ve been together for a long time. He keeps coming back to my classes even though he disagrees with the way I teach. He knows how to push my buttons. We argue a lot (laughter).”

Meg’s Class

Early one morning I am sitting in one of the upstairs studio room waiting for assembly to finish, when I am “Megged”. To understand what this is like you have to realise that there is little that is half-hearted about this remarkable woman. Today she enters the room at full speed, sees me vulnerable, and immediately issues a challenge.

Meg: I have a class coming up, some grade tens, all the trouble-makers in the school, all rolled into one class. Smoking, disobedience, bad behaviour, kicked out of other schools, you name it. In this school, they are the problems. You must observe them. They are wonderful. A handful, but doing such great work.

Our following conversation is so intense I fail to keep notes as we go. Later I attempt to reconstruct the essence of it into my diary.

Meg feels these boys do well in art. Why, I ask? Because they are risk takers. They
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do better in art because they want to push the boundaries, but with art it feels like a safe environment to do this. It's part of the creative process to go further, to do the unexpected. Art challenges them in this way. There are other grade ten boys who are rebellious, grounded continually, who come in to the art rooms when they can. She gives them freedom; they can have music on whenever, and the type of music they listen to is their own choice. She hears the occasional "F" word but turns a deaf ear. That's the type of atmosphere that exists in the art room and it suits these boys. But they are here to work.

As she speaks Meg illustrates her comments using a number of woodblock prints that are lying around. From my quiet contemplation of a few minutes ago I am suddenly caught up in the visually remarkable woodcut prints this class is producing, and through them I find myself understanding the progress the boys have made and the problems they are experiencing and how the exercise will be finalised ("A grade ten exhibition. In the hall. It's going to be a real knock-out").

She explains to me the woodcut process the boys are following. As she talks she grabs a sample block to illustrate the way the wood has accepted the cuts, how the ink has helped define boys' individual drawing styles into a workable design. By pulling out the whole class folio and spreading the art works across a large table I can see how the technique she describes has been re-interpreted by the boys into a wide range of visual responses. The results are quite spectacular. Meg explains the quicker boys are now in the process of refining the image. Today they will re-cut sections the proofs have shown to be underdone.

As her class enters Meg collects the prints and blocks, now spread far and wide, into one pile. I study the class for evidence that they are "trouble makers". There are few
outward signs this is the case. Their uniforms are in line with school policy, their hair is neat, and they have quietly expectant faces as they wait on Meg. After being introduced to the boys, they turn to their work with no further comment from Meg. She calls to me “Now you can help with naming Bruce’s print”, and in this way I am drawn into the lesson, moving from boy to boy as they print. Occasionally I am approached for help.

The class is a mixture of grade ten students and some grade twelve boys who are trying to meet an upcoming deadline. There is a sense of urgency and tension in the way some of them are working. The tape player is churning out rap music with, sure enough, the occasional “fuck” being one of the few intelligible words. I watch as Meg discusses a piece with a boy. “What is it about it that makes it so good? The boy replies, “I like this part here, the depth that it has is good. But I’m not so keen about all this flat area”, then the music and chatter take over as his voice blends with the busy sounds in the studio. Two boys are talking as they work. “Isles owns you.” “Nah.” “He does, and he’s small.” “No way, he can’t take me. In grade five we scrapped all the time and I beat him then and I can now.” “Nah, he owns your butt!”

Meg has moved across the room and is demonstrating to a boy how to take excess ink off a print talking through the procedure as she works. The boy watches and listens and hands her materials as needed. Within seconds Meg is at another table showing a grade twelve student how to use a paper stub to manipulate his charcoal sketch. “It’s working, it’s working. Can you see it’s working?” The boy agrees. “This part here is really strong, don’t you think? Why?” “The tonal contrast?” “Yes, the tones are so strong, and you manage them well. Now, where else could that work well?” “What about here?” “You try it...yes, that’s excellent”, she says, and moves off.

*The environment is one of busy exchange. Meg moves rapidly amongst all the students.*
She is very energetic, but in an efficient way. Her teaching style is to go from boy to boy, spending a few minutes with each one. Often it is hands-on help, giving a demonstration of a skill then moving on to the next boy. She maintains an ongoing dialogue in a strong voice as she “works the room”. In this way, her comments to a particular student act to inform and instruct the whole class. Meg stops briefly every few minutes to shout, “Is everyone OK?”

By now Meg has done a complete circuit of the room and is back with Bruce, demonstrating a wood cutting technique, calling a reminder to a third boy as she works. A grade twelve boy calls out for help and she seems to immediately know what section of the painting is relevant. She points and talks. Then a boy holds up a print and calls out. Meg says “Let’s look, Charles… Wow that looks way better. What works so well is the solid black. See how effective it can be (pointing to another boy’s print). Don’t slip into the habit of cutting away all the shapes. The solid can work well. Bite the bullet and really get into it.”

Meg’s enthusiasm is infectious. Boys are working efficiently. I watch as three boys gather around a student who is peeling the first print off his block. “Good one.” This draws her attention, and she moves over to watch. The whole class gets praise, “You guys, these prints are wonderful.” Greg approaches her with a sheepish look on his face. He’s made an error. “What happened Greg?” Quieter now, “What did you do? How did you do that?” Greg has hidden behind a pillar. She continues to assist another student but pursues Greg in a caring voice. “Where are you young man? Show me.” He holds up his print. “I think I’ve cut away too much there.” “It’s OK”, is the answer. “I think you can get away with that, don’t you? What do you think Bruce?” Bruce is standing by watching the episode with Greg. “Yea, it’s fine, it still balances OK.”
As the lesson draws to a close Meg washes rollers in the sink. The boys are putting
dried prints into folios, and some are milling around. With her hands deep in the sink Meg
addresses the class over her shoulder. “I don’t get you on Monday so that means I won’t
see you until after the exams. I think you have done some excellent prints.” The bell
goes. “Alright, good luck on your exams gents, and I’ll see you whenever they’re over.”

A group of boys come back in again. They look at the prints left out. One says, “It’s
‘grood’”. Meg says, “Isn’t it beautiful, its ‘grood’. I like the contrast. The composition is
beautiful.” Other boys come in, some leave. The lesson is finished, but the traffic is
steadily in and out. Newcomers and students leaving the lesson pause in informal groups
to comment on the work that is left out on desks, displayed on the wall, or is still in
progress even though the class is finished.

Meg and I chat. “I need to challenge them, so I do, but if you challenge them face to
face they shut down. I need to channel them. Most are my son’s best friends22. He tells
me ‘get out of their face’ (laughs). They are an interesting group.” I remark that I like the
class, that it has spark. “Yes, at least they work.” Meg laughs and turns back to the sink
full of rollers.

_The lesson has been energetic, focused, and profitable. The boys show no signs of
being “a handful”...the impression is that they would do absolutely anything Meg
says. She has moved rapidly between boys, often carrying on three conversations at a
time. Her teaching has been 100% focused on attention to boy’s actual works. There
have been no class lectures or attempts to teach the boys as a group, other than
requests to tidy up. It has been a one-on-one lesson. Meg’s energy and organisation_

22 Meg has a son at Greene’s College in grade ten.
and practical skill make this work. By their reluctance to leave, it appears the boys enjoy their art.

After the class we walk towards the staff room. Meg has an appointment with the Headmaster, something she isn’t looking forward to. It won’t be antagonistic, she tells me, but there’s a point that needs making to the administration. Although art has received considerable support she feels there are problems with the way the subject is often treated within the school community.

Meg: Three boys won an external art scholarship; one hundred applications, fifteen winners, three from this school. Quite an achievement. It is announced in assembly in a way that suggests the boys simply had to apply to get it. At the same time a whole sports team gets presented on stage for winning a game. And there are other things, like the way we get senior boys transferred into our subject mid-year. Would that happen in another subject? No.

The Staff Meeting

Staff meetings provide a window into staff-student and staff-administration relationships. The room is packed with staff in all the easy chairs and the latecomers sit on coffee tables and stand around the walls. At a meeting early in the year I count 40 staff. The Assistant Headmaster, the Director of Studies, and the Director of Admissions sit at the front of the room behind a long table. While this seating arrangement is most likely normal at such meetings, it strikes me as divisive. Eventually the Headmaster enters and sits centrally at the table. He has an antipodean accent that is striking in this environment as he follows what feels to me to be a well-used agenda. Weekend events, sporting successes and failures, issues that might arise in the upcoming week. There are two points he raises that are certainly not mundane or ordinary. The senior basketball
team's match was tragically marred when the referee suffered a fatal heart attack on the
court. "It was an emotional experience and they are still probably feeling the effects of it.
The episode was very traumatic for the boys." A second important matter involved a
small group of grade ten boys who were caught stealing from lockers. They have all been
suspended – one expelled. His point is that the boys will need some help when they re-
enter the school "The boys need understanding and help." He apologises about the lack
of information passed to staff as this event unravelled last week, but there was a need to
move quickly.

The Assistant Headmaster has his turn, addressing the staff in a careful and
measured tone from a list on a clipboard that is pedantically ticked off after each
comment. Topics are all routine based – the need to tighten up on grade ten uniforms;
litter continues to be a nagging issue; changes to the bell times; three grade tens are on
interim reports and need to have them signed by their teachers; the teacher substitution
roster for the week is posted.

The third person to stand is Laurie, the Director of Studies. A hierarchy seems to be
in action here. Laurie speaks of a change coming up between electives, and dates for staff
to submit the results of the latest round of assessment. While all this is happening, the
Headmaster sits in his chair seemingly deep in thought.

After Laurie, Pat who is the "Discipline Master" joins the front table to talk about
the grade ten stealing episode.

Pat: We all have done it, I know I have. I had the police at the door for stealing golf
balls. The boys are going to face extraordinary pressure from the other boys when
they return. But the school does not tolerate theft; it has a clear policy; stealers are
suspended, but it can show mercy. You need to realise the administration has had as
much difficulty over this incident as the boys. The boys are contrite but will the others, the other boys, will the school body forgive these boys? The boys will need the staff to be sensitive to their predicament when they return. The matter is closed, it’s a fresh start for them and you should encourage the students to adopt a similar perspective. They have served their punishment, we must minimise comments from other boys. We want to avoid punishing the boys too severely. When they do come back, please don’t let the other boys bad-comment them as they have been known to do in the past. Most of them arrive back on Wednesday.

Much of the remainder of the meeting is for “odds and ends”; contributions for the school magazine; seventy-five grade eight applicants will be interviewed this coming week; senior boys’ will need to leave class ten minutes early on Wednesday for a basketball game; where is the list of boys academically “at risk”? The Headmaster introduces me to the staff and I chat for a few minutes about my research in very general terms. The bell rings and finishes the meeting.

The School Assembly

At school assemblies I’ve found an excellent place to sit. It’s at the back, to one side, where I can watch nearly everything that happens and can write freely in my diary by the light of a door that is usually left a little ajar for ventilation. The darkness of the place is partly because the auditorium is windowless and painted black for drama presentations, and also because the lights often are dimmed for assemblies. I suppose this is to create a certain mood. The space has a utilitarian, messy feeling with equipment stacked against some walls. Copious wires dangle from exposed metal beams across the

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23 Later, staff comments indicate this comment refers to the difficulty the administration had in informing the staff of what was happening. Both the Headmaster and Pat have gone to some lengths to apologise for not being more informative.
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Speakers and spotlights are installed in a variety of places. In a tiered arrangement, comfortable padded seats form an amphitheatre looking down onto a stage. There, a podium and a table, both liberally bedecked with school coat-of-arms, take pride of place. Some staff, about half the number who were at the staff meeting on Monday, sit on chairs placed in the wings of the stage. The last few (and most populated) rows are so far back they hide amongst the curtains giving the impression the teachers aren’t really there. On a large flat area just in front of the podium are half-a-dozen rows of movable seating, consisting of chairs and some uncomfortable looking low benches.

I notice that the students are seated hierarchically. The senior boys, distinctive because they wear deep red grade twelve jackets that contrast with the normal black blazers, slouch nonchalantly in the rows at the very back of the auditorium. As I look towards the front I can see the grades get younger, from grade elevens down to the lowly grade eights perched on the benches in front of the stage, seemingly under the gaze of the whole school.

The ceremony begins as the “school captain”, a boy in grade twelve, walks to the podium and asks the school to stand. Teachers and students obediently rise, the lights dim, and on cue the Headmaster, dressed in his academic robe, sweeps in theatrically through the curtains. He talks for a number of minutes; the debating team is congratulated for a weekend win; the basketball team are called onto the stage where they self-consciously line up to accept some applause and shake the Headmaster’s hand; upcoming scholarship applications are mentioned; groups heading off to China and South America and the Galapagos are wished bon voyage.

I will notice that this format is an established trend in assemblies, something I come to feel is aimed at building school community. Highlights of the past week are celebrated
and upcoming events are promoted. The comings and goings of groups on camps or trips are acknowledged. Often sporting events receive considerable attention with whole teams displayed for adulation. But key actors in a drama presentation or scholarship winners or boys who do well in a music performance are also paraded. For today the list is not too long and with a reminder to the grade tens to stay behind after the assembly the Headmaster disappears into the curtains with his academic robes flying behind him like a superhero’s cape.

The lights come back up to full strength and we all wait to be dismissed by the school captain (staff first, then the twelves, elevens, etc.), and another weekly school assembly is completed. Not, however, for the hapless grade tens. They appear quite small sitting in a tight group in the otherwise empty auditorium. The Headmaster has returned and is chatting to Pat, the “Discipline Master”. Also remaining are the Assistant Headmaster and a younger teacher I later find out is the year head. As I sit alone in the gloom at the rear, the Headmaster begins the session. The boys are quiet and a little apprehensive and sit very still.

Lance: Boys, there is some tension in the grade and a lot of suspicion about the thieving last week. Everyone here gets a second chance if they are truly sorry. These boys broke into lockers; it was foolish, stupid and pre-meditated. To their credit they owned up to it and I admire that. When they come back their slate is clean. They are able to look me in the eye, and I am able to look them in the eye. I want you to think about Greene’s College and what it has to offer. This school must act to protect everyone, and that includes these boys who are sorry. When they come back I want you to realise the slate is clean. The respect between these boys and myself is now re-established. You are a good grade and not far off being leaders. You need to keep
striving for dedication. To high standards, school-work, and dedication on the sports-field. These boys are going to need your support and friendship, now they need to be accepted back into the school. That is all I have to say.

Again the Headmaster leaves the room, and Pat steps forward – it is his turn. What he says is almost word for word what I heard at the staff meeting, and on reflection I wonder if that address was aimed at informing staff, or simply rehearsal for this performance.

Even the "golf ball" anecdote was included. He finishes with little originality.

Pat: If you are contrite, admit you made a mistake, admit you are wrong and say you are sorry, you can get over it. The school is merciful, it always gives boys a second chance. Being contrite helps the school to forgive you.

With a feeling of déjà vu I watch Pat make an exit. The head of grade ten steps forward, and I sense his contribution to this tag-team approach to discipline is going to lack punch simply because the boys seem to be getting a little confused. I wonder if the boys think they are being allied with the actions of those who stole, and if this is the case, the sermonising might need to take a new turn or they will completely turn off. Another possibility is the speeches are designed to role-model "forgiveness", to say to the boys "this is how the school deals with letting someone back in, you need to do it as well". I do not really find out, as John's short talk provides little more than a dedication.

John: So we move forward. Turn the page on this part but put a bookmark in to let us come back to it so we can see the significance of the lesson. We need to support one another, build spirit, and make this grade ten into a strong, supportive leader group.

It is not the only time I watch the end of a school assembly used to confront groups of boys on an issue. Another day it's the grade eleven's turn. The issue that has demanded they stay back after the assembly is attendance at classes, and their academic
results. Again, discipline falls to Pat.

Pat: There are no surprises here. If you miss class your parents will be informed.

There are Saturday detentions to be given out. This is a fine group and next year it
will be a creative graduation group with many fine leadership ideas for the school.

The Assistant Headmaster provides some comments he hopes will help focus the students.

Millington: Well done on some fine academic performances from many of you. But
with some there are some problems. You must be aware this is a university-oriented
school. We expect all our boys to be serious about that aim. It’s what you are here
for. So by this time of the year we expect you all to be on track. Otherwise you get
disappointed and distracted. Everyone going from grade eleven to twelve has a fine
chance to get to the university of their choice. So those who can’t do that need to get
their act into gear. Come on, sort yourselves out.

Arts Week

Arts Week rushes upon us amidst a flurry of expectation. The boys, staff and the
administration have mentioned it many times to me; it clearly is a tradition of which the
school is proud. Each year one week is put aside for a school-wide focus on “the creative
process”. Organised mainly by the arts staff, it comprises both after school and lunchtime
hands-on arts activities, and the appearance of a wide range of visiting guests at special
assemblies each morning.

It is without doubt a popular time. The week begins with the first assembly. A
teacher sits beside me and says “Arts Week – the best week of the year.” I ask why?
“Because the kids get to see and show how good they are. The school is so science,
science, science and math, math, math, and then this...BOOM!”.
Again a hierarchy is observed as first the Headmaster and then Assistant Headmaster speak before passing over to Meg to introduce X, a Canadian Visual Artist with over 95 solo exhibitions to his credit. X speaks very well, describing how he does art “to express how he feels”. He believes his paintings “make a comment, they are riddles with form.” Some of the artworks displayed in the slides are “intellectual, difficult to read and understand.” Others address social issues directly, such as pornography; “They are seen for their bodies, not what they think. This is what we’ve done to women and isn’t it ridiculous?”; or homophobia; these are me when I was young (the nude male figures that flash up are self-portraits and they cause a titter in the audience) “these angry colours – I’m not very happy am I? Why would that be?”

His unscripted address and the accompanying visual images weave a spell over the audience. When he finishes a number of boys, standing amongst 600 of their peers, ask intelligent questions (“Why do you mess around so much with the edges of the paintings?” “It’s like science where you contain something to bring the pressure up. My borders do the same.”) One member of staff asks what message he’d give these boys who are exploring visual art? “It was inside me all the time. You are lucky to have the resources and staff to teach you. Just do it.” Another teacher near me adds tension to the session. I gather from comments by teachers later in the staff room that he is offended with the male nudity and inferences to homosexuality. “Why do you do so many paintings of the bad side of life?” “I see painting like literature. There are serious events in our lives. We

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24 Meg tells me that the decision who to invite as a “keynote” artist is made by parents, staff and students alike. “It seems the more involved the school community becomes with Arts Week (including the planning) the more successful the week is. The criteria for selection is loose and unstructured, and largely depends on the boys’ interests at the time. For example, one year the artist was a body builder, and other times a comedian, a Rap artist, a watercolourist. “They always say ‘yes’ when I say we want them to talk about ‘their creative process’” (Meg).
must address them.” The boys’ attention and the enthusiasm of the staff made me think it was a successful presentation.

The Assistant Headmaster moves to the podium and overviews the remainder of the week. An internationally renowned watercolour artist will do a workshop, as will a lino printer from China who is visiting the city. An equally skilled violinist will be working in the music faculty. Four students will be playing a quartet. A writer will address some students. An all-female contemporary dance company will be performing at an assembly in the gymnasium. An ex-student who is now a film director will be showing one of his short works, and discussing his career. There will be a Scrabble tournament and a poetry competition (called Mini-Sagas). As a special event a New York-based Hip Hop group popular with the boys will perform. This is considered a coup, and not only by the students. According to Meg the group fulfil a need for the boys; “They speak [the boys’] language, their rhythm. They’re part of their culture.”

The week goes well. A type of holiday atmosphere exists, even though all the activities happen away from class times. I attend as many sessions as I can. At the woodcutting workshop Y, a resident of China, is asked if his prints tell a story? “Why else make an image? These are all messages from my life, they express things that have meaning for me.” One set is based on S11 protests against globalisation. (Recently, students in a university almost next door to Greene’s College were pepper-sprayed and arrested while protesting a Heads of Government meeting.) His images parody the Prime

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25 Afterwards I overhear Allan, a student counsellor, mention to X how pleased he was to hear advice being given to the boys to address their anger. Another teacher from the science faculty loudly voices his anger that the assembly went overtime and intruded on his upcoming lesson.

26 Meg has managed to book them at minimal cost. “They’ll do it because they started in this city, and they support us focusing on the creative process”.

Minister who mocked the protesters. Other prints are “analytical”. “You have to plan the effect, the mood you will create; a very intellectual process, a very conceptual process.”

About mid-week the school meets in the gymnasium to watch some contemporary dance. The director introduces himself and the company. “I did four years of engineering then found dance and it’s been my passion ever since.” The performance is about “balance, finding and losing balance. The performance is built on trust with the performers relying on each other’s strength and skill to catch and support each other.” Only girls perform. The boys, seated on the bleachers of the gymnasium and spilling like a sea onto the polished floors, at first titter at the sight of the nimble members of the opposite sex. But as the piece progresses, that mood develops into a sense of awe. The dancers are skilled. They climb ladders supported by one colleague; they build impossible looking human structures; they manage to explore balance in every possible permutation with the props they have at their disposal. All this is done with carefully choreographed movement, and is spellbinding. The session supports the director’s challenge to the boys that dancing “isn’t sissy. It’s athletic, you need to be strong.” Later, staff are amused by the boys’ reactions. “It was good for the boys to see athleticism and prowess and storytelling like that.” “The grade twelves were fixated!”

The week ends with an assembly where congratulations are handed out to organisers and a proclamation is made that it has been a “rewarding and enriching week for the students. It opened our eyes to so much of what art can do for us and what is happening in this school”. Having said this the Headmaster immediately moves into a number of sports reports and an announcement that as a “new tradition” there will be a special banquet and prize giving this year to honour the school’s sporting stars. “So now we will have a School Captain, a School Scholar, and a School Sportsman.” I look around
to see how people are reacting to this comment at this time. No one seems surprised that sport has moved into what the Headmaster told me was “a week in the life of the school that the arts own”. This is an interesting way to give closure to this wonderful arts week.

The CAPP Class

Allan is an intense teacher who often appears worn out, and with good cause. He is one of three counsellors who deal daily with a range of boy-related crises. Today he is sick but insists I still attend, as planned, a grade ten CAPP\textsuperscript{27} lesson he is teaching. While the lesson has an agenda\textsuperscript{28} I realise early that he is letting the boys direct a large amount of the conversation. The topics range widely. Who controls or has influence over you? (The government? Your friends?) What do you do when a friend tells you that dying is an easy way out? (Silence.) What is confidentiality? (Your parents aren’t involved.) Where does shyness come from? (Rejection?) Anything else? (Low self-esteem? A sense of not belonging?) What is the difference between self-esteem and self-centredness? (Puffing out your chest, strutting.) “We all need to belong and what often stops us is how we perceive ourselves.” An exercise, “50 things I want to do before I die” is done individually and some results are shared. Allan ties boys’ ambitions in with some of the issues discussed earlier. The lesson is very energetic, with many interjections and changes in direction. The time passes quickly. On the bell Allan concludes that this has been an important learning exercise.

Allan: You need to be aware of what’s going on with your friends. Be aware and sensitive. This is all about exposing yourself. To your friends, no less. You are showing what you want to become. It’s your sacred flame in life.

\textsuperscript{27} Career and Personal Planning

\textsuperscript{28} On entering the room Allan writes on the board “(1) Suicide Prevention. (2) 50 things to do before I die. (3) Shyness/getting started/procrastination.
Later, I ask a boy what he thought of the lesson? “One thing about that class is that you always take something away from it. That’s the worst thing about this school. Too many boring classes. This one is usually great!”

Sometime later I sit in on another CAPP class. Allan is talking to some grade nines about suicide. He uses an anecdote about a friend who died, to introduce some points for conversation. “Why do people kill themselves?” “How can their friends prevent this from happening?” They do some group work and re-convene to discuss their answers. Some responses are serious, some are frivolous but the mood becomes more focused as Allan rolls with the punches and keeps attention on the topic.

He goes on to discuss a grade eleven boy at the school who committed suicide only a few months previously. I find it a very gut-wrenching story. The boy, Vincent, an outstanding athlete, artist, and scholar, suffers a debilitating soccer injury. Over time his grades fall, he retreats from his friends, and final pleas for help (dressing like Holden from *Catcher in the Rye*, completing a particularly powerful art work, writing a significant final English essay, making a phone call to a past girlfriend, aren’t recognised because “that is just how Vincent is at the moment.” Vincent walks into a lake and dies of hypothermia. “After his death the school went into the saddest, strangest period I’ve ever known. There was a lot of recrimination. All the signs were there. Why didn’t we see

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29 For example, to the question “Why do people kill themselves?” one boy gets some laughs by saying “Having a small whang?”. Allan answers, “Hmm. A common reason is sexual impotence for sure, but having a small whang isn’t part of that. Female biology teaches us women’s satisfaction comes from the clitoris which has nothing to do with the size of her partner’s penis.” With some boys now better informed, the conversation continues in a more focused atmosphere without the wisecracking boy feeling that he has been slighted.

30 Being studied in English that year.

31 Allan dwells on Vincent’s art for some minutes. “Finally the spookiest part. Vincent was a top art student, a Scott Scholar. His last art piece was a sculpture. It has four pillars with grotesque figures representing aspects of societal authority on each. Finally, chillingly, when you looked down from on top there in the centre was a tiny white figure alone and unprotected from the forces around it. It was his unprotected soul. A powerful piece.”

32 Left unmarked on the teacher’s desk for the weekend.
them?” Allan’s summation to the quiet class is that we have a responsibility to communicate with each other.

The boys leave quite subdued, but Jacques stays behind to ask course advice. Should he do art in grade ten? “It’s a cool thing,” says Allan. “Everything in this school gets very wound up. Art is like a therapy, a chance to do something creative. It relaxes you, lets you say things.” We walk back to Allan’s office but he is drained and we don’t talk long.

Allan: I should have marked that essay; it sat there on my desk over the weekend. It had suicide written all over it. The guilt in the school after he died was palpable. We all thought we should have seen it. I was going to see Vincent on Monday.

I wondered how many of these lessons I could teach, and went home a little quiet myself that day.

Chance Conversations About Art

Informal conversations are a typical feature of this period of data collection. One such is with Nick and Al. The hour is late, and I’m tired and would like to go home. But Victor passes me in the hallway and says that two grade twelve boys are in the clay-room and I should talk to them. “They’re different, one is morbid and the other is a bit wild – or was. Drugs and stuff.” I walk in and find them working on their art works in the back area. Al is half-heartedly working in his sketchbook and Nick is immersed in a painting at an easel. The painting shows a figure on a plinth surrounded by flames in a crucifix pose. The red background and dark looming sky create a Dante effect of hell and damnation. I ask if I can talk and they agree to the conversation being recorded. We chat for a few minutes as the boys continue to work and I leaf through Nick’s sketchbook. Al tells me this is his first year of non-compulsory art.
Al: I haven’t had time for it in all the other years but now I have a free elective space so I’m doing it now because I always liked doing art, but I didn’t take it as a course. It just didn’t seem like school. Y’know you just ‘do art’ because its fun to do. It’s what you do in your spare time. But now I can take it as part of my schoolwork.

I ask why he enjoys doing art?

Al: Because it’s fun creating things. It’s making your own work. You create things and people look at it and say ‘Wow, you did that?’ You get a chance to make your own stuff. You have all the equipment here, right, so why not?

I repeat my question to Nick.

Nick: Well I drew a lot when I was a kid and I started developing that way but they were really just simple drawings. As a kid I’d chose really odd things, things I didn’t see enough of in art. But I could sketch it out because I actually had the skills to do it. And it looks really good from doing it, really free flowing. It really excites me. Y’know, its like poetry, it’s a lot of fun. It’s great.

I ask how many boys do art in the school. Nick answers;

A fair amount of people choose art. There’s a bunch of people who choose art just because they want an easy subject (“Yea”, from Al). But I don’t know, there’s still the large amount who actually really want to do art (“Yea” again from Al). Like Peter (pointing to an artwork on the shelf), you’ll probably be talking to him later cause he’s a ‘hard core’ art student (laughter). He’s a Scott Scholar.

There is a silence that I break by asking what other boys in the school think about boys who do art? Al continues to dominate the discussion.

Al: Y’know, I was actually thinking about this the other day. I would have thought the jocks would say ‘art is for the pansies’, or whatever. But at this school, and I don’t
know why, but everybody’s very tolerant of whatever everybody else’s skills are. It’s cool because...

Nick takes over.

Nick: Everyone wants to do art. I mean like in our class, I can’t really think there’s one sort of type of person doing it. I gotta say though more of the jock people actually go on the pots\textsuperscript{33}. It’s certainly an interesting phenomenon. There’s the boring people that just like sketching. Then there’s the people who aren’t, like incredibly artsy but enjoy it, would do a sculpture type thing, like that (pointing to some sculptures stored on a shelf). And then there’s bohemians that get like, psycho artsy and do the collages or work with photographs and make up ideas.

I make the observation that they are saying boys doing art come from all the different types of boys that are here ("Yea" from both boys) – a cross section of the population. Al extends the visual arts to include the other art forms.

Al: Its not only visual arts, there’s like computer graphics. Everyone likes to do computer graphics. And music and drama. There’s so many people involved in the music program, and everybody likes to get involved in drama productions in some way. Like doing set design or acting. Every one in this school gets involved.

I am keen to hear why these boys think this happens at Greene’s College. Is it a feature of the single-sex school? Al is the first to reply.

Al: I think it actually has to do with the single-sex aspect. I mean that is a major thing that sets us apart from other schools. I guess at co-ed schools, at least this is what I read in the newspapers, the male students are doing the science’s and the

\textsuperscript{33} "On pots" refers to choosing to work on the pottery wheel in preference to two dimensional work, or ceramic or metal sculpture.
Boys Doing Art

math’s ("Yea" from Nick) and female students I guess are more encouraged to do English and art and stuff. That’s just the way it works, right? But here you don’t have to go into the pigeonhole because you don’t have the whole feminine half of the student body that stops us exploring the feminine side of our mind.

I want Al to extend this statement but instead the boys keep talking about the school structure. They are talking to each other as much as to me; in a way I may as well not be in the room. I ask if these comments mean they believe the all-boy school is a unique environment? Does it make a difference to what people choose to study?

Nick: Here you can’t really say ‘this is for girls and that’s for guys’ because there are no girls. I mean technically everything that is here has to be for guys, right? So you can explore things. If there was a club and lets say it was a sort of a feminine thing to do, right? There’s still going to be people in it, right? Because the club exists. I think the biggest thing about the school is the fact that everyone wears a uniform so you can’t really tell much about people from the clothes people wear. I think that’s the thing that keeps (Al in the background says “Right”) ah, keeps the people from being different. If you see people wearing certain type of clothes its naturally implanted in your mind to follow your set of clothes, right? But if everyone’s wearing the uniform it’s easier to talk to someone, right?

Al says that he agrees.

Al: Yea, to expand on that, in public schools clothes are the way people express their individuality. You see people wear funky retro clothes or something. They also wear their track pants and jerseys and Nike stuff. But here they try to keep us as uniform as possible and we do try to stretch the way we wear our uniform to express some sort of individuality. But mostly you gotta be different by the way you are. Like you let your
personality shine through because you have to express yourself through something other than the visuals, right? ("Yea" from Nick). That adds up to character. That’s how you get really distinct characters in this school. But it’s interesting to watch the uniform thing. The school wants to make us all the same. It sounds pretty Orwellian but it doesn’t work. Right now I should be wearing grey pants not black and I’m not wearing a tie and I should be. While I was in art class today I had to get a book from the library and one minute after I stepped out of the art room I was getting into trouble for not wearing a tie!

Other boys coming into the room interrupt us and Nick and Al seem to quieten down. I take it as a sign to finish up, regretting I can’t follow up Al’s comment about boys having a “feminine” side. But conversations like these make me realise the boys and I are slowly getting to know each other and, with this familiarity, is coming more personal responses, particularly when in small groups.

Chance Conversations About Masculinity

A conversation I have with Ishmael supports this view. We run into each other in Meg’s studio one morning. The room is empty and Ishmael is working on an art work for a different subject. We talk for a while, then he asks me about my research. I feel comfortable enough to mention that I’m interested in what boys believe about masculinity.

Ishmael: Masculinity? In my personal life I don’t think about it much because that is not very important to me. In context to the rest of my gender, it’s an unnecessary characteristic that we feel we must have. There is basic masculinity, rites of passage, all that sort of stuff. It is necessary, but I would say ‘masculinity’ has a lot of awful characteristics of men in general. Obsession with sport, disrespect for women. I don’t have much respect for that in general. It’s very intolerant. In my life I can’t see it
Brings me much good. I mean, my Dad wishes I was more masculine and forces me to do after school sport. I hate that, but he thinks it is very important. Especially in a school like this where the very buildings smell of testosterone. Did you notice when you came in the smell? (My mind jumps back to the “unfamiliar yet familiar” sensation I had on my first day, and I say a quiet “Ah ha!” to myself.) And I can’t express the level of homophobia here. I’m not gay but it annoys me. The most popular phrase in the school is “that’s so gay”.

I mention that another boy began to tell me that this all-boy environment, which smells so much of testosterone, actually makes the “feminine” more accessible. Ishmael’s reply is interesting. He straight away turns to art education.

Ishmael: I admire those kids, the select group of kids who are really into ‘it’, into art in the school. They are turning out some fantastic stuff that everyone loves. But still it’s defined as ‘fag art’. The ‘fag artist’ - that’s the feminine thing. And it’s wrong.

I ask Ishmael how he would respond to the idea there isn’t one type of masculinity in the school but a range of masculinities?

Ishmael: I would like that. I wouldn’t mind it. There are people who are excluded from parts of the school, and that would let them in. I know that if you generalise masculinity I hate it. But there are certain parts that are wonderful. Rite of passage, father-son relationship, the physical aspects. The ability to physically achieve something. Those are wonderful things. There are wonderful parts of masculinity, the fact that you are attracted to the opposite sex, which is absolutely wonderful. If you could cut out the bad stuff and have the beautiful parts of being a guy that’d be great. And there are individuals who I can see that in. There are many that I don’t, but there are the others too.
Chance Conversations About Boys and the School

As we were talking a boy I recognise as Neil, one of Victor's "good" sculpture boys, enters and appears to be annoyed at something. When Ishmael leaves I ask him why he has come to Meg's room? His answer is that the boys in Victor's class were distracting his work with their immature behaviour. We talk for a short time about the way similar aged boys display quite different levels of maturity.

Neil: As you get older you realise things about that. I don't know. I've always been ahead; sort of older than my peers. I think maybe I look at situations in a different light. Childish things seem so silly. You realise how much you can affect other people's lives by doing that. You don't really think about anything you do when you are in that kind of state...like when you are a kid. But when you grow up, you definitely look at things with a broader view. How do my actions affect other people? What effects do I have on other people? It's to do with dealing with self-centredness.

I move downstairs quickly to identify for later those boys who are most likely to have driven Neil away. I have to wait a number of days before I can catch one of the "suspects" alone. Scott is a tall skinny boy with an air of self-assuredness about him. He is open and keen to talk to me, and as we look at a sculpture he is assembling I ask him about the social groups that exist in Victor's class. "There are a number of us in my grade who are fairly strong socially, so together we have no grief." "What do you mean by 'grief'?"

Scott: Well, a number of my friends are physically bigger, so if others are being stupid then we can just knock them. Everyone is pretty respectful of each other. When we were in grade eight and nine and ten we were very immature, everyone was
mocking each other, their choice of music or whatever. That was just part of it. But now we have grown up and take fewer shots at each other.

I ask why boys want to do that, to “stir” or as Ishmael put it, to “give stick”? “Why do we do it? I don’t know. It’s for a laugh, a cheap laugh. We joke around, Y’know, and knock the brown kid or knock the native.” “So you pick an attribute of the person and concentrate on it?”

Scott: Yea, just knock them. I got knocked for my father’s job. Whatever. That’s when you are really young though. I guess when you are that age, a young teenager, you are self-conscious and you aren’t as strong emotionally, so I guess knocking is meant as a shield to your real emotions. It’s easier to express yourself when you are mocking someone. The new kid is a scapegoat so you make fun of them for a few months then you realise he can take it so you let him in. This went on until half way through grade eleven but not now. The kids are growing out of making fun of each other. Where’s the point now? There is more intelligent humour. It’s because of the pressure. It escalates at exam time. But also we are all in grade twelve now and everyone knows we have to enjoy our last year at Greene’s. It’s not the easiest school to get all the way through. It’s a pretty demanding place. I think everyone respects each other for it now that we’ve gone through to grade twelve. A lot have left. Of the ones who have fought through, everyone respects each other now. Some of them still get trouble, the ones who don’t chill.

I ask what “chill” means? “Chill. Relax, take it easy. I’m not the greatest artist but the reason I take art is to chill out. It’s being cool.” In these earlier interchanges I hear a lot about being “cool”, but only one other boy can be cornered on the topic. Olaf, a grade ten boy, reluctantly gives me a definition.
Olaf: Being cool means being popular and being accepted by other people who are
viewed as cool. The 'cool' people are the people, I'd say, who everyone gets out of
the way of. Let's say walking down the hall, people get out of your way because the
respect is almost fear. If you go up against someone who is cool you'd be mocked,
made fun of. Sometimes beaten up after school. If they see them in the halls they
push them aside and point at them or laugh at them. That's what'd happen.

Reflections On My Immersion

These excerpts and anecdotes are only a small proportion of the information I
gather as I immerse myself into the school. But they suggest something of the scope of
my data collection. They show that the hundreds of hours of data collection focuses on a
variety of situations and issues, some of which might appear unrelated to art and
masculinity. However, to me it is important to ensure my research questions are examined
from within the context of the whole school, rather than from a collection of material that
is selective and particular to a small segment of it. While a noble aim, one direct effect of
this strategy is the problem of dealing with a large and diverse quantity of data.

Each evening I go home tired from gathering data to be faced with the task of
doing something with it. I know that because of its volume there is a need to keep on top
of keeping the data organised. So each night I work at the task, thankful I have the
ATLAS program to help me. After a family dinner I retire to my desk, open my field
diary, and transcribe the comments made that day into my computer. This second reading
of the data is interesting. Often issues and points of view written only a few hours earlier
take on increased meaning in the quietness of my room. But even at this early stage of
managing the data I feel that simply organising it isn't enough. I also need to begin to
look for how it is addressing my research foci. For this reason, after transcribing, I transfer the text into ATLAS.ti. and begin to code

I apply codes freely, knowing I can group them into representative groups at a later stage. As a code recurs or is thought significant I attach a definition, which is the first time I place formal meaning on what I see and hear. The codes are sometimes very simplistic and don’t require much explanation (for example, “boy’s subject choices” or “teachers’ roles”). At other times they label concepts that typify significant issues in participants’ lives (for example, “marks grubbing”⁴⁵, “skids”⁴⁶, or “passion”⁴⁷). Codes with no attached definition often become subsumed into ones that are more descriptive.

As I work at the task of coding, and as I re-read previous entries, I attach memos. Memos are notes to myself, pauses in the process of categorising data where I ponder themes that link what is coming out of the text. This process constitutes my first immersion into the data, where I make sense of what I am experiencing and witnessing.

At this stage very little data is ignored, so the range of codes becomes formidable. I end up with more than 150 across the three sensitising concepts (Appendix H). In some cases one code is repeated across the sensitising concepts (“safety” or “expression”), and in other cases one code appears to be in direct conflict with another (“art as intellectual” versus “art as non-academic”). This does not concern me as these divergences and

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⁴³ ATLAS.ti can be used to organize data on at least three levels. First, an almost infinite number of codes can be applied against the data. Second, definitions can be attached to the codes. Third, memos can be written and linked to key parts of the text. Once this is done, codes can be freely merged with other codes to make “family codes”, yet retain their exclusivity.

⁴⁵ “Marks-grubbing” was a term used by staff, students and the administration. It referred to many boys’ (and boys’ parents) pre-occupation with grades, it referred to boys’ determination to do all they could to maximize academic performance, and it referred to boys’ unwillingness to undertake any task that did not have a grades reward attached.

⁴⁶ “Skids”, an acronym for “street kids in distress”, identified a group of boys with particular tastes in music and a similar “alternative” attitude to social issues.

⁴⁷ “Passion” was an oft-repeated word, used to explain where interest in something went beyond what would normally be seen as logical.
similarities suggest rich fields of exploration to come. For now I am mainly focused on using the coding function to come to grips with the growing mass of data. But during the later part of this Immersion phase I worry that it all seems to be superficial. In my diary I express frustration; I’m not engaging the research questions as extensively as I had hoped. However, my experienced committee members tell me I am immersing myself effectively into the school and boys’ experiences doing art, and I am building a foundation for more particular investigation. This is appropriate for this stage.

Now that I reflect on my efforts, I see the wisdom of their comments. I realise the codes show me my research interests don’t easily condense into a neat package. What is more, with the codes’ extensive and haphazard coverage of topics, I am witnessing the reality of my research issues as represented in the school setting. The codes don’t provide actual answers. But as will be shown in the following pages, when the codes are elaborated and organised by the sensitising concepts of “masculinity,” “art education” and “the school”, they begin to identify where I should go for my next layer of understanding. (For a summary, see Appendix H.)

The following pages are organized with the codes represented in the shaded column on the left, and the elaboration of those codes, based on my observations during this phase of data collection, presented in the text top the right. In this way, the process by which I identify patterns and inconsistencies in the data become apparent.

Masculinity

During the Immersion phase I find it difficult to engage boys with the question about the range of masculinities in the school. I can observe the different “types” mentioned by some boys, for example the “nerds”, “jocks” and “skids” – whose definitions will be explored further during Chapter 7. But these distinctions tell me little
because they rely on the types of stereotypes I am keen to avoid. I need to gain insights into boys’ beliefs about masculinity to get any sort of picture of this phenomenon.

In informal conversations with boys like Neil and Ishmael some patterns begin to emerge. Initial descriptions of masculinity tend to be very predictable and follow stereotypes popular in society. With persistence participants begin to discuss more detailed accounts of manhood. For instance, Ishmael eventually articulates attributes of masculinity that differ from stereotyped definitions. When this happens boys place values on these attributes, and will attempt to describe what actions represent these values. In effect they are beginning to describe the qualities that makes one boy different from another. I feel it is reasonable to state that while these boys have definite concepts of masculinity, *for some reason they do not personalise them and apply them to their daily lives*. If I am to better understand the range of masculinities in the school I need to separate boys’ stereotyped responses from those that describe their values and beliefs about manhood.

At this stage I feel that the most important negotiations happening between boys occur within a complex culture that is particular to them, their “boy-culture”. Within this construct a number of interesting concepts exist. A need to mark out an “identity” seems critical. Al’s comment that boys work to portray “character” to others, and Scott’s and Hun’s need to meet some ill defined pre-requisites of being “cool” are somehow manifestations of this process. As some boys suggest,
manipulating the uniform and being associated with particular types of
music are only some of the tools boys use to determine status within
their cultural groups. Few boys can describe the nature of this culture,
suggesting it has transient and flexible mores. However, from Ishmael’s
comments, I suspect that within this negotiation boys are also pursuing a
deeper need that is far more personal. I feel it is reasonable at this stage
to suggest that a characteristic of boys’ culture is a need to define
themselves, and part of this process is exploration of individual
masculinities. I feel I need to better understand how this boy-culture
limits or facilitates boys’ exploration of masculinities.

How boys go about defining themselves with their peers is of interest.
Some, like Neil and Ishmael, need to be active in solving problems rather
than following pre-determined pathways. They need to express original
thoughts, something that they suggest is considered a risk in their
culture. They actively seek venues where these risks are negated as
much as possible. Others apparently choose “safe” activities that require
little deviation from established pathways, such as Nick’s description of
the “jocks who do pots”. The boys have varying goals, but common is a
preparedness to be “involved” (as Al stated), and the drive to succeed in
this environment. However, for some this success is in terms of
academics, for others like Scott it is a more social ambition. This creates
conflicts within the class as boys either embrace the curriculum, the
social mores of their peer group, or choose a difficult path between. The
variety of these responses seems to be determined by something that is deeply embedded in boys’ perceptions of themselves. Their actions constitute their enactment of their masculinity. I feel it is reasonable to suggest that data to date show that boys enact their masculinities in the school in a variety of ways, according to their own personal agendas. I need to explore what agendas are in operation, and what attitudes are common to each, if I am to better understand the range of masculinities in this school.

During the Immersion phase I become aware that the interactions boys have with each other may describe much about the masculinities they own. The school dictates many “admirable” masculinity traits boys should pursue. Tolerance, respect, responsible leadership, role modeling, acceptance of duty, adherence to an honour code are but a few. While the administration preaches these qualities (for instance, directing boys to forgive those who stole), subject curriculum appears to more directly challenge boys with these values, and others that seem more relevant. For example Allan makes very real the need to be open with, and concerned for, your friends, and Victor (when working with the boy on his clay sculpture) demonstrates in a practical sense the need to consider other people’s points of view. However I feel that boys’ interactions within the curriculum most accurately indicate qualities of boys’ masculinities. Bruce supports Greg’s artwork. The assembly of boys accepts in a mature fashion artist X’s presentation of challenging
material. Neil, frustrated by some boys whose actions are what he considers immature, stresses his belief he has to consider how his actions affect others. These types of occurrences reify boys' masculinities.

However, what is often stated is that many interactions are superficial, and boys' true beliefs are hidden behind a façade. This is needed because there are few "safe" environments in which to "be yourself" and express what you truly think. Socially, a "brotherhood" provides that security, but it has many caveats attached to how free boys can be. In the context of the school, Art lessons and CAPP classes are supposedly two such venues, but only under certain conditions. I feel it is reasonable to suggest that the data to date show boys' interactions only occasionally describe their masculinities, but under certain curricular circumstances boys feel safe to "be themselves". If I want to understand the range of masculinities in the school, I need to explore how and why these curricular circumstances have such an impact.

During the Immersion phase I came to see that boys' masculinities are influenced by the way their individual needs are met. Teachers such as Meg or Victor or Allan either intentionally or inadvertently suggest boys require particular types of knowledge, and consequently have specialised instructional needs. Apart from the more obvious examples such as having open discussions (seen in Allan's CAPP class) and using short instructional sessions (adopted by Victor and Meg), I also suspect from my observations that some subjects and teachers have evolved a style of
curriculum and pedagogy to meet these needs. For example Victor allows “free movement” within the sculpture class, he provides a range of options for each project, and he lets boys interpret these projects in highly individual ways. Meg has the boys active from the time they first enter the room, and she instructs in a loud voice (to “channel” them) rather than interrupt the boys’ work. Allan uses many activities interspersed with discussion that culminate in an identifiable conclusion. Boys like Brian or Jacques stress they need outcomes from a lesson that suit their own needs before these outcomes can be seen as worthwhile. A student, Ben, said that every boy needs a “passion” and for him it is art. Other students emphasise that to “reach them” teachers must be passionate about their subjects. Meg believes boys work well in her class because they are “channeled”; they are left free to work so they can develop a passion for their activities. While on the surface these may appear superficial pedagogical accommodations, the data suggests such recognition of boys’ needs is important because boys take advantage of these strategies to negotiate masculinities within the classroom. Neil and Ishmael are quite open in saying their need to be creative and to express are not whims, they are things they “must have” and art gives them a forum for this. I feel that it is reasonable at this stage to suggest that boys have particular needs that must be met if they are to explore and negotiate their masculinities in a meaningful way. Certain school curricular sometimes meets these needs. I need to explore further what
aspects of the school curriculum are needed by boys to allow them to negotiate masculinities.

Art Curriculum

Immersion data on art curriculum shows the program is respected by the administration and staff and is enthusiastically embraced by many boys across the age groups. There are a number of reasons why it enjoys such a healthy status. They include the quality of its instruction, the excellent facilities it owns, and the fact it has a tradition of successfully running a range of boy-relevant programs that also extend the school’s curriculum. When considering if and how these factors help boys negotiate their masculinities the data suggests a number of possibilities exist. Firstly, boys indicate art teaches them skills that have benefits for them beyond simply making art.

For some, like Randall and Scott, technical ability is most important as it lets them just “do it”. But in “doing it” they are developing abilities that are poorly catered for in other parts of the school curriculum. The competence they achieve allows them “creative expression” in a way that is safe and is suitably admired and accepted by their peers. For others like Neil, Nick, and Al, art teaches skills in a range of cognitive areas. They extend their studio activities into conceptual pieces that express ideas and thoughts in a way not possible in other subjects. These skills allow them to “go out on a limb” and engage intellectually with their peers in a secure and safe manner. I feel that it is reasonable to say that at this stage, the data show many boys consider the skills art teaches are important tools to be used for defining themselves amongst their peers.
To consider whether this might be interpreted as art helping boys negotiate masculinities, I need to explore the diversity of motivations for boys to do art, and if they agree their skill development is a way of defining to their peers their unique individual characteristics.

Second, the data suggests art curriculum might provide boys with a rare opportunity to communicate with their peers in a safe environment. Art is a popular site in the school where boys congregate; a therapeutic environment (Allan), which boys use as an haven that is expressive compared to the academically insular life of the school (Victor). This might be explained by the fact that many see art as “non-academic”.

Boys tell me academic subjects are devoid of personal opinion or any form of individual interpretation. By definition, art must facilitate these qualities. Boys agree. Art is seen to be a “safe environment” for people to “make a comment” (Ishmael). Boys take pride in their art, it is totally individualistic, and it is immediately visible to all to see. As a result art says much about the person who created it. Boys use these features to communicate with others about personal beliefs and values (Neil). Boys often comment that art, for some unknown reason, is beneficial to them even if it has few academic rewards. I feel it is reasonable to say that these rewards are that boys use art to communicate personal values and beliefs with their peers. I now need to explore the depth and content of this communication to determine how it impacts boys’ negotiation of masculinities.
Third, during the immersion phase data suggests that certain qualities of art's curriculum helps boys negotiate masculinities. One consistent observation is that boys see art as operating a flexible curriculum that allows them to engage topics in highly individual ways. Two styles of curriculum are described, which offer either an intellectual or skills focused program of study. These approaches suit particular needs, as discussed earlier.

Boys consistently cite art's "free" curriculum as allowing "expression". They compare this to formalised or procedural approaches that dominate most other school curricular and that create a knowledge hegemony they cannot penetrate and utilise. I feel it is reasonable to say that art legitimises, within an otherwise rigid and academically focused school curriculum, a flexible and divergent way of exploring individuality. I need to find out from boys if art does indeed allow them to build their own interpretations of knowledge, and if these individual interpretations empower them to acknowledge differences in others' beliefs.

Fourth, art is taught in a way that accommodates a variety of needs. Some boys, for example those identified by Neil as "bohemians", need teachers to engage them at a conceptual level, while others, such as Randall's 'potters' group, want to simply make art and require predominantly technical help. Whichever the approach, the art teachers are skilled at using historical exemplars, the discussion of aesthetics, and
art criticism to engage all styles of learners in comparative and reflective
dialogue with their peers. I feel that it is reasonable to say that the data
suggests art pedagogy accommodates a variety of learning styles and
creates situations where they must negotiate values and beliefs. I now
need to have boys either support or reject the notion that the art
classroom environment fosters dialogue and negotiation between boys.

The School

It is understandable that the school is present in virtually every observation and
informal interview, sometimes as an omnipresent force and on other occasions it features
as a direct influence concerning specific issues. The question is, to what extent does the
school impact art's ability to work with boys as they negotiate their
masculinities?

First, the structure and operation of the school creates a unique
educational environment. Participants suggest that its single-sex status is
both a disadvantage and a benefit. With the former, some teachers such as
Erica and boys like Neil feel the absence of girls creates a false
environment that breeds immaturity and a lack of tolerance. With the
latter, participants such as Al and Meg suggest that boys have freedom in
this environment to "be themselves" and not be forced to act a "macho"
role. Other benefits of the single-sex environment that are cited include
how it encourages participation in a range of activities (Nick), and how it
creates a positive atmosphere (Oscar). The unique environment of the
single-sex school also impacts the styles of teaching. Teachers and their
performance are mentioned frequently by boys. They are seen as having certain responsibilities as agents of the school, they are viewed as having roles they must play, but most often they are discussed in terms of their individual teaching styles. Jacques and others believe the teacher’s pedagogy totally controls students’ learning outcomes. Part of the success of teachers like Allan is the ability to create a “safe” forum for students to discuss important issues. Another requirement is small class sizes which, according to Ishmael, provide students security from “getting stick” or harassment because of their opinions. While the school attempts to meet these needs through compulsory CAPP lessons and by creating a sense of community using assemblies and other such events, these efforts seem to be limited to large scale issues and are perhaps ineffective in addressing boys’ more personal needs.

The school’s structure and operation places strong expectations on boys. Most obvious is the requirement to do well academically, to be active in sports and other “extra-curricular” programs, and to participate in “the life of the school”. The uniform and haircut code, the daily home group meetings and weekly assemblies, the mass lunch each day in Newton Hall, are all manifestations of a routine established by the school to build a community of boys. Few criticise these expectations. In fact many boys openly support them because they create a “positive atmosphere” in the school (Oscar). However, other less overt expectations exist that are subtly contested by the boys. These expectations appear aimed at “character
development”, at establishing moral standards, and at refining boys according to some “Greene’s College” mold. There is, for example, the administration’s effort to make the locker thefts a “learning exercise”, and the admonition to some grade elevens that their grades don’t meet the school’s expectations of “excellence”. The pressures brought to bear are significant; the history and tradition of the school; parent’s sacrifices and expectations; an unwritten gentleman’s honour code; the need to be “leaders” and “role-models”; the need to build respect; all are powerful tools I see being used by the school (and in particular the administration) to manipulate boys’ values and beliefs on a range of issues. I suspect that boys’ manipulation of the dress code, some homophobic and racial taunts, and other variations away from the social norms that I occasionally see happen within their cultural groups, are perhaps protests against these expectations. This creates a sense of conflict between “us and them”. Boys (and their culture) against the school (and its culture) is one representation of this. Staff against the administration and sport versus other subjects, are others I witness. Because of this, it is perhaps no surprise to frequently hear the school environment being compared to battle and war. When the school fails with a boy, he is a “casualty”; a teacher’s office is “a command centre” (Pat); to be competitive is to be “combative” (Headmaster); hierarchies in the school are “the ranks” (Assistant Headmaster) the Asian influx is “an invasion” (Headmaster); and so on. Other metaphors are that the schooling process is a fight to be fought
(Scott), and that school is like a sporting event where teamwork and commitment produce the desired goals (Headmaster). These tensions indicate to me that the structure and operation of the school creates an environment within which many expectations compete. I feel that it seems reasonable at this stage to say that boys compete with the school for opportunities to explore and define their own, individual, masculinity. I need to better understand where boys find space and opportunity in the school, to define and then negotiate with their peers, aspects of their individuality.

Second, the school’s interpretations of knowledge and learning has some impact on art’s ability to work with boys on masculinity issues. Most obvious is seen in participants’ ready distinction between academics and electives. Boys and many staff define academics in ways that make it mutually exclusive to “the electives”. The school’s treatment of learning endorses some subjects over others. As a result there exists a fixation by students on grades and marks in the “academic” subjects, considered by many participants across the three groups to be endemic. By contrast, electives are free of didactic instruction, are less stressful as a result, and allow boys to explore alternative (non-academic) knowledge which often focuses on aspects of their own culture (Nick). The tendency is to discuss subjects in terms of potential rewards they offer rather than by knowledge they facilitate. I feel that it is reasonable to say at this stage that the school encourages boys to adopt a limited and restricting interpretation of
knowledge. I need to investigate how the school’s endorsement of art as “non-academic” limits or helps its potential to work with boys as they negotiate masculinities.

If the school demands things from the boys, boys also have expectations of the school. As boys grow they must, at least partly, draw on the school for some definitions of masculinity against which they can compare their own beliefs. Boys are able to articulate many of these qualities – what I increasingly hear as being “the Greene’s College man”. Sadly, boys acknowledge this model is unattainable to most, it is an “ideal” that has many similarities to social stereotypes of masculinity. Boys largely accept the academic focus of the school is another worthy aspect of masculinity. A work ethic is accepted universally throughout the school, and this creates a competitive environment amongst boys. Grades appear to be the common currency in the school. Boys trade in this commodity to create a façade of success. They use it to build their own self-esteem, and to marginalise competitors. They use it to build identity based on strengths and abilities. They use it to define their goals and ambitions. However commendable, the focus of the school on helping boys achieve academic knowledge seems to come at a cost. Boys complain of the pressure and stress caused by the need to meet high standards. They identify a “social divide” that exists in the school based on attitudes to academics. They complain of few opportunities within the busy school day to discuss issues

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This is largely ethnically oriented. Many “parachute kids” from Hong Kong, and also local Asian students pressured by their family for top grades, keep largely to their own group and are rigorous in chasing marks.
that are important to them. They feel the large class sizes that suit academic instruction are too intimidating to let them be open about their feelings. They feel the pastoral care system is overwhelmed with demands for career advice and not available when needed for personal issues (Ben).

Without doubt the school cares very much for its students. But some administrators tell me that to survive the school must, above all else, be a successful business. To achieve this it must produce a particular product. I feel that it is reasonable to say that the school *gives a clear image to the boys about what sort of man they need to be*. I need to explore how the school’s definition of masculinity impacts art’s ability to work with boys as they negotiate masculinities.

**Conclusion**

When the data is coded and attributed to the sensitising concepts in this way (also, see Appendix H), I begin to see how some themes are appearing in boy and staff responses, and through my observations. To summarise, they are as follows.

My analysis of data to date suggests that while boys have definite concepts of masculinity, they rarely “personalise” them, or apply these concepts to what they actually do. The data also highlights the persistent need for boys to “define” themselves, although the way this is done and what it really means varies widely. From what I have already seen, boys enact their masculinities in the school in a variety of ways and according to their own personal agendas. Their interactions only occasionally describe their masculinities, but it is interesting to consider that under certain curricular circumstances
boys appear to feel safe to “be themselves”, and this, it can be argued, gives them the opportunity to explore and negotiate their masculinities in a meaningful way.

The early data suggests that these curricular circumstances can often be met in the art program. Boys are suggesting that this subject gives them skills and tools that they can use to define themselves amongst their peers. A common point is that boys use art to communicate personal values and beliefs with their peers. Apparently, art legitimises, within an otherwise rigid and academically focused school curriculum, a flexible and divergent way of exploring individuality. This is partly because art pedagogy accommodates a variety of learning styles and creates situations where boys must negotiate values and beliefs.

What is also emerging from the data is that boys compete with the school for opportunities to explore and define their own, individual, masculinity. The school has high expectations of boys in terms of the time they must spend on “the academics” something that encourages boys to adopt a limited and restricting interpretation of knowledge. Another emerging point is that the school gives a clear image to the boys about what sort of man they need to be, an image that appears to use the metaphor of sport to emphasise the competitive nature of boys’ existence, and this may possibly be in conflict with personal values.

Much of my analysis from this phase is conjecture. While it is built on first-hand observations and comments directly from boys, it requires collaboration. My analysis of this data is undertaken by looking for patterns, inconsistencies, and exceptions, the meanings I subscribe to this data, but it still requires substantiation. The next chapter describes how I go about doing this. As part of the cyclical nature of ethnography, I will
take my developing themes back to the boys and the staff, and through interviews and more formal, focused observation, explore in greater depth these important issues.
Chapter 7: The Third Phase, “Emerging Themes”

Overview of the Chapter

During the analysis of my Immersion phase, I attempt to understand what participants see as the range of issues contained within my study. I do this by placing explanatory codes on the data and conflating them into the “issues” described in the conclusion to Chapter 6. The Immersion data suggests to me that the time is right to conduct interviews to explore these issues in greater depth.

I interview as many people as possible over many weeks of the second and third school terms. The interviews prove exhausting, both because I wish them to be relaxing and non-intimidating for the participants while being informative for my research, and also because the work involved in conducting the interviews then transcribing, coding, and analysing the data is enormous. But it is also a most rewarding period. In retrospect I now see that this process constitutes an “Emerging Themes” phase of Boys Doing Art. The interviews help me identify where opinions are typical, frequently cited, and are distributed across the three groups of participants (students, staff, and administrators). This in turn helps describe themes that exist in the data. By the end of this phase I gain a better understanding of boys, masculinity and art, and a model of the phenomenon appears.

Chapter 7 begins with a description of how I structured interview questions to address the issues that participants highlight during the Immersion phase. The bulk of the chapter is verbatim comment from the interviewees as they address my questions. These quotations are interspersed with my own analysis as I see themes beginning to emerge in their responses. In this chapter I finish by presenting a preliminary model of the ways
boys engage with masculinity, constructed from participants' observations of boys' behaviours.

**Structure Of The Interviews**

As mentioned during the conclusion to Chapter 6, the comprehensive list of codes from the Immersion phase can be summarised into a number of issues. These issues constitute a loose but informative overview of the research queries being addressed (Appendix I). However, they are extensive and need translating into a simpler form before they can realistically guide my conversations with participants. An immediate task at this stage, therefore, is to conflate these issues into questions that will act as an agenda during the interviews.

The temptation is to write a comprehensive list; in fact, initially I do this (see column three, Appendix I). But I worry this strategy will stamp the interview with my own prejudices and will limit participants to pre-determined pathways. Instead after considerable thought, I develop nine questions designed to give participants room to discuss from their own unique perspective the issues identified during the Immersion phase (see column three, Figure 7).

What I will eventually find is that the questions (actually, more topics than questions) shown in the shaded boxes in column 3 of Figure 7 will become common to most interviews. In many cases they are all that is needed in terms of a formalised agenda. They introduce participants to a particular field of interest, and as interviewees interpret and discuss these topics I often slip in more focused questions.

During the interviews I come to feel that this process allows the issues identified from the Immersion phase to be well covered. Some new topics arise and a
Figure 7. Interview questions resulting from the Immersion data.
few “die a natural death” through lack of attention. However, this is a feature of ethnography and the actualisation of Glaser and Strauss’ (1967) grounded theory. By the end of the Emerging Themes phase I will come to accept that the key themes resulting from these interviews are arguably those most pertinent to the participants in regards to the research questions.

It is impossible in this text to fully account for all the opinions that are expressed during the thirty-seven interviews, but I will try to provide a fair summation of the main points raised. In the following passages I present a selection of responses to my questions from all three groups of participants (administrators, teachers and students) as well as the “sub-categories” from within these groups (art and non-art, Asian and non-Asian, new and experienced\textsuperscript{39}). Some participants are more visible than others. However, supporting or contrary comments from all thirty-seven interviewees are included. In this way a reasonable representation of the nature of the interviews and range of responses is given. As I give the responses I will begin to tease out themes, as they become apparent.

**The Interviews: Art Curriculum**

Inevitably, because art is the focus of the study, it is here that our discussions begin during interviews. During the Immersion phase three issues emerge that I now wish to pursue. First, the data to date suggests that art gives boys skills that help them define themselves with their peers. I want to know what attributes of the art curriculum help them to do this, so I ask questions under the general topic of “Why do boys do art?”

Second, data from the Immersion phase indicates that art helps boys to communicate values and beliefs with each other. I now need to explore the nature and extent of this benefit, so I ask questions under the general topic of “How does art help boys?”

\textsuperscript{39} See Sampling, Chapter 4.
Third, the data suggests that art’s curriculum provides boys with a quite different forum from most other subjects for exploring individuality. I now need to better understand if/how art helps boys develop their own interpretations of academic and cultural knowledge, and what benefits this may have for their negotiation of masculinities. I approach these questions under the general topic, “How is art different?”

Why Do Boys Do Art?

Art is fun and a release! Most boys are positive about the subject, which is not surprising. I have already seen it is well taught, it has excellent resources, and it enjoys a high profile. Also, in this school art is arguably less disadvantaged by gender stereotypes (Chris, a grade eleven student recently transferred from a co-educational school, says that “art is feminine, and so in co-ed you get ridiculed if you do it. You have to act macho to avoid trouble”). At Greene’s College art is embraced as a natural part of the school curriculum (“After all,” Nick tells me, “whatever is offered here must be for boys, right?”). As one administrator says, “The only boys who will turn their backs on the arts courses here are those who feel themselves bound by university aspirations”. In this academically oriented school the overwhelming majority fall into this category. But participation rates in art remain high40, aided by a provincial requirement that a certain number of arts credits must be studied by grade twelve41.

The reasons why boys participate in art in such a solid number vary. For most, one reason is pure enjoyment. “It is relaxing, it’s a break. You can do what you want” (Chris). “Art is fun. I like construction. I’ve always loved making things with my hands”

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40 Approximately 300 of the 700 students in the school study art.
41 Meg explains why this is the case. “I talked to our academic director and asked him why this rule came in”, she tells me. “He said the Schools Board were worried that so many of the students emerging with math and sciences were good at rote learning. But they don’t know how to be quick and immediate thinkers in a brand new situation. This is a situation where art is good in helping them be creative thinkers, creative problem solvers.”
Boys Doing Art

Boys Doing Art

Randall). "In art you can try out a lot of stuff" (Brendan). "It is so satisfying, you can do your own thing" (Simon). "I do art to balance the academics, the rigid subjects. Art is 90% enjoyment and 10% just letting go" (Ben).

Art provides me opportunity to explore who I am! These are typical of the immediate and spontaneous responses I receive about boys' motivations for doing art. While being genuine and noteworthy (there is, after all, something to be said for doing a subject because you enjoy it), the reasoning appears fairly superficial. Such motivations support what are often condescending perceptions about art that exist in the school – art may be fun, but it has little worth. (One day Victor tells me, "I get it over coffee from the old guard; 'Why don’t you go back to your room and play more games.'")

As I question further, however, boys begin articulating more meaningful motivations. "Well, I suppose art for me is another way to define myself. I couldn’t handle the pressure here without it. I’d argue with others all the time. Art lets me find another side to myself" (Neil). "Art is so open, you can incorporate it with anything. You can incorporate it with sports, you can incorporate it with what’s happening at home. You can incorporate it with what’s happening outside. It’s just so open and free" (Bruce). Art, it seems, has a relevance to boys’ lives beyond the boundaries of the school.

As the interviews progress it is common for boys to talk about doing art because it fulfills some "inner need". "Art is a way of expressing my creativity, my thoughts, my feelings" (Kurt). "It’s one of the ways I define myself creatively. I need that to stay sane. I have to have some way of expressing my creative process" (Peter). "It’s all about expression. It shows something about myself that I can’t do any other way" (Samuel).

I become conscious that doing art to explore, and then express, individuality is a theme throughout many boys’ responses. Some comments from staff add substance to this
observation. "Art gives boys individual expression", says a physical education teacher.

An administrator extends this idea further; "In the arts a boy can discover talent that makes him uniquely different to other people. He comes up with things that are entirely original. The arts lets him discover who he is and what he is" (Millington). "It's all about the joys of self-discovery" (Allan). Victor is quite sure that exploring individuality is a key reason boys do art.

Victor: Many do it because it gives them a venue, an avenue to explore things about themselves. Art gives them a chance to take steps to break the stereotypes that surround them. Well, maybe not necessarily breaking away from stereotypes but exploring if they fit in the stereotype. Like, "I feel really comfortable with that kind of definition [of myself]" I have found that more and more kids do art because it opens their feelings and reactions to things. I think they realise that their art is an extension of themselves; an emotional psychological, spiritual kind of response to things. [In other subjects] they haven't had an opportunity to see that side. To them it's an untapped facet of their personality that they really don't know. Art makes it available to them.

Art holds personal significance for me! At this stage, while discussing in an almost theoretical sense their motivations, boys have given some commonality in responses. But marked differences occur as boys begin to describe what it is about the actual practice of doing art that brings them to art. Stuart voices some strong opinions about the value of doing the subject.

Stuart: Once you've done some art you'll always have the ability to do even simple things. Honestly, people who don't do art can't even draw to be able to show the
simplest ideas. Whereas, for me, after doing some art, and I’m not that good at it, at least I can communicate some of my ideas that way.

Like Brian in grade eight who wanted to be an aeronautical engineer, Stuart represents a group of students with motivations that seem to differ from Bruce, Peter, Simon, and others. He needs to have a tangible reward from art. Another example is Randall, the committed potter who vigorously resists Victor’s insistence he should articulate messages about his pots through drawing in his folio. When I ask why he refuses to draw he tells me he does art because;

Randall: It is something you can see and hold, as compared to writing an English essay which you can read but it isn’t really there. I like pottery because it’s using your hands to make something from nothing. I tried sculpture but nothing I made turned out how I wanted it to look so I threw it out. There are some that don’t know what they are doing and usually end up making something that could be called “abstract” at best. To me you either make something that looks good and you keep it, or you break it.

There is a very open and unsophisticated quality to this reasoning and it says something about Randall and other boys who articulate such ideas. By rejecting conceptual motivations for doing art and endorsing the “product”, that is, art for its pragmatic advantages, many boys are stating that learning is not always “academic”; it can often be pursued in a tactile way. Unfortunately this is sometimes misinterpreted. Oscar, a non-art student, looking from the “outside” observes,

Oscar: Well, it is a shame but art is seen by many students as an easy course. A lot of students who don’t think originally or aren’t creative or interesting choose to do it
because it’s an easy way to get marks. But there are also the others who think creatively and are original. So there’s two groups.

Oscar reinforces my growing awareness that there are divergent motivations why boys in this school do art, and boys can be “typed” according to these motivations. This is a view I hear repeated often. There are “non-creative” and “unoriginal” students and they do art to have an easy time and perhaps develop technical skills. Then there are the students who are “inspirational” and form an intellectual elite. They do art because of its expressive qualities.

Either way, during my conversations boys have not at any time attempted to remove themselves from their art. While their motivations differ greatly, none claim that art is not important to them or that it is “just another subject”. Possessive ownership of “their” art is common, whether it is because it gives them joy to make it, or because it opens intellectual horizons; what is clear is that their art is relevant to their needs.

Art gives me opportunities to communicate! However, the more I talk to boys from these seemingly divergent groups, the more I realise the motivations are not as polarised as Oscar states. Arnand is a self confessed “technical” student. On the surface he sounds like Randall.

Arnand: Kids do art because it has two components; visual art when you actually create the art, and the thinking part where you work with the creativeness or the originality of your thing. I like art, but not the “creative” part, just the drawing and stuff. I just like doing art.

But as he talks further, Arnand uncovers some very personal motivations.

Arnand: I need it as a person. Because when you are trying to communicate to other people, you have to always be straight and happy and pretend that’s how you always
are. In art you can express yourself. Sometimes in society you don't want people to see that you are angry, you don't want people to see you are sad, you don't want people to see that you are afraid. In art you can project those views. Sometimes people can't see it, but you can and you feel better for having let it out.

I ask if boys do art to communicate with each other?

Arnand: Yea, they can express their abstract stuff, and communicate with other people. They can draw something and their friends can understand it. With that you can build on and work on your communication skills.

There is little doubt boys do art for varied and complex reasons, but there exist some motivations that seem to be common to the many "types" of boys who participate in the subject. While some boys do art because it allows expression, and some say they do art because it helps them define themselves, and a few admit they do art because it can be a "relax" from the other subjects, a common motivation is that it provides opportunities to communicate. Boys suggest that art provides access to methods of presenting their skills, beliefs and values to others.

Art gives me freedom to express! This sense of "ownership", created by art's ability to be relevant to boys needs and to help them communicate, indicates that the subject can be many things to many boys. This is a quality that I will identify as its curricular freedom. Victor identifies this as being when "two different boys do the same exercise in totally different ways". As Vince, a grade twelve student says, many boys do art "because of the range of possibilities it offers. You can explore the ones most meaningful to yourself". Art's flexible and multi-layered curriculum can accommodate the range of motivations that drive boys to do art.
Part of that flexibility is in the design of its curriculum, and part is in the opportunities to “do it” that art offers to boys. Art owns an ability to provide a variety of practical ways for boys to engage in the subject, and with each other. For some, this is intellectual in nature, and for others it is technical.

For Randall, Arand, and even Samuel, the range of available art studio disciplines gives them a choice of methods through which to express themselves.

Samuel: I started off doing work on the wheel. OK, I could make a nice looking pot but then they started to all look the same. I found doing sculpture a lot more interesting. It was a lot more expressive, like you could show something a lot better with sculpture than you could with a pot. When you make a sculpture it kind of shows something about you, and what you are thinking. I guess being able to express yourself is important to me and I find sculpture a better way of doing it.

For others like Bruce, Simon, and Peter they benefit from art’s conceptual qualities.

Peter: Art is one way of expressing myself creatively. I need it to stay sane. I have to have some way of expressing my creative process. Art recognises the individual. If you have a concept and you want to reach that concept you have to go through a process of problem solving in order to get there. It’s risk taking and exploring. Where in math, in my experience, you aren’t necessarily taking risks. You just go through paths that have already been established. In art if you are trying to do something new and creative and you have to find it your own way. It’s risky, trying something and hoping that it works. If it doesn’t work then you try again some other way. It’s pushing the boundaries of what’s traditional in regards to the way things are done.
Some answers to why boys do art. I identify in responses three major themes why boys do art. First, it is because it allows opportunity for expression and communication. Boys engage the art curriculum at both a technical and conceptual level. Regardless of which approach is adopted, boys consistently state they view art as a release from a school curriculum that in general (apparently) limits personal involvement.

Second, art holds personal significance for boys. When they communicate with others, this communication has relevance; it is based in their own beliefs and values, it centers on issues and topics in which they are daily involved, and it can be used to explore and extend their own beliefs. Boys apparently use art as an outlet for ideas, feelings and opinions. Their art is an act of "self-definition", as they define their opinions and beliefs with their peers.

Third, boys do art because it has a curriculum that allows them freedom. This freedom is curricular (boys can re-interpret projects to suit their own perspective of the problem), this freedom is intellectual (boys can work at a "concrete" or a "conceptual" level), and this freedom is physical (boys are free to move between groups, between studios, or even between teachers). Boys are free to engage the art curriculum on these many levels which, in turn, provides them with equal mobility to engage their peers.

Does Art Help Boys?

Art "levels the playing field"! What is interesting in many answers is the way participants consistently identify the wide range of boys who do art as a positive feature of the subject. The coming together of a diverse population of males is, it would seem, a significant reward of participation in art.
Christian: A wide range of kids do art. All the kids from sport or whatever. It may not be like that in other schools but here sports kids and academic kids all do art. It makes no difference.

Chris, a non-art student says;

Chris: It’s a range of kids who do art. From what I’ve seen, pretty well people from the whole field. Some people who are, like artists, down to people who are real academic scholars. Science people, and people who enjoy sports too. I’ve seen so many people do art I think it’s universal.

The art teachers agree that a variety of students benefit from participating in art, but they are more discriminating when categorising the boys. For them the range includes not just “jocks” and “academics”. There are also students with many styles of learning.

Meg: We have the industrious workers and they do well. But also we have the sporting ones. In fact, many boys who do art and do well are also athletes. But I think what’s common is that they are all risk takers. That’s common among many of the kids. They do things that have them “out there” and “doing it”. Kids who do well in art are always questioning; they are always asking “What happens if I do this, or this?”

The art staff also identifies a wide range of intelligence. Victor tells me they “see a full gamut of intellectual abilities in art. From the ‘honours with distinction’ students to those who barely pass.” I ask why is it significant that art attracts students who are unalike? Victor suggests it indicates that one powerful effect of art is that it negates many differences between boys.

Victor: Do you know what? Art tends to level the playing field. Boys see others doing something well and they say, I can do that just as well but I’ll do it this way.
And they do and do it well! Boys of every type and intellectual ability find a way of succeeding in the subject. They say “I can do something really well, and I can do it my way, therefore I have value”.

So not only does art sanction a variety of approaches to its curriculum by boys, it also provides a forum that apparently equalises many of the differences that exist between boys. Students agree with Victor’s observation.

Samuel: In art you have the people who do straightforward pottery just because of the fun of doing it. And then you have the people who are into taking more risks, trying to do it differently by saying things. It’s great. In art there are more exceptions and more interlinking not interlinking but interplay, I suppose, between the groups of boys that are out there.

The suggestion is that art creates opportunities for sharing and communication to occur, and it creates an environment where boys can “open up” and engage in dialogue with their peers.

Victor: In a lot of instances I think kids don’t respond or react to each other because they can’t find a common denominator that they both feel comfortable with and which gives them a common language that they can use to start some kind of relationship. With art they can get beyond the “chit chat” to include emotional responses like “I really like this because” or “I feel this because” or “I react to this in this way”.

Interactions in art are very in-depth and personal and I think at times more intimate than they would be generally.

Art provides me a “safe forum”! While providing a variety of approaches to its curriculum, and equalising many differences between boys, respondents also suggest that art also offers a safe environment for expression. “Kids use their art to go out there and
express an opinion on something. But it’s neat because they don’t have to say ‘I know all about it, I read up on it’ like some nerd.” The way Chris sees it, expressing an opinion is displaying understanding of something. This is being knowledgeable, and being knowledgeable is dangerous because it impinges some unwritten rules by which boys live.

I will come to identify a “boy-culture” that has significant control over boys. One of its characteristics is that it sponsors a fear of expression, or more accurately *katagelophobia*, the fear of ridicule. In one conversation Victorreminds me that katagelophobia is a significant obstacle for individual boys. He argues it is human nature to want to express thoughts and to get feedback from others on those thoughts. Adolescent boys share this need with us all, but they are often prevented from expression by their boy-culture, which frowns on “openness”. Art provides an acceptable way to share ideas and receive feedback from others.

Victor: Boys are driven in the sense that they have things that they want to say and express, but it has to be done safely. They want to communicate. I see them all the time in my class. “What do you think about this?” “Hey guys, have a look” and they’ll go on and on and on. They want to know that they have communicated their idea and that people have responded to it.

Boy-culture in this instance impacts boys negatively by limiting them to what is deemed to be “normal”. Ishmael says “You have to be careful you don’t go too far from what is normal, otherwise you get your head chopped off. You don’t want kids ragging you.” James, a non-art teacher, uses a similar phrase. “[Boys] have to know where to go that is safe. It’s a skill.” He tells me that when boys do art they “are weaving through an environment that isn’t the norm for many people. It’s risky for them.”
It appears that risk-taking or pushing the boundaries of the culture within which they live is a cost they must pay if boys want to express themselves. Meg sees art helping them at this point. “In order for them to be able to take risks we develop an environment where they feel safe. With their art they say ‘OK I’ve got good grounding [art skills] here, so I know I can do this.” Peter agrees. His art gives him safe opportunity to extend the depth and content of communication with his peers.

Peter: You have to let people relate in some way with your ideas and your art. And once someone is relating to your art, they are relating to you, it’s a connection. But guys have trouble being personal. I think art has a place in helping that. Exposing their emotions to other guys is seen as dangerous. But if they do a piece of art that cryptically exposes themselves, people look at it and appreciate it. That’s better than saying straight out “Right, I’m feeling like this”. It’s safer. It’s not going right out and saying something too different.

Victor agrees.

Victor: That’s the thing. They recognise that the responses they make in art are very personal and they are all putting themselves on the line. “This is who I am, what do you think?” Sometimes I find it really gutsy what some of the kids say. I also find that in the responses of others there is empathy that a lot of them feel when someone says something. They learn it’s OK to say things that are personal, or to respond in an open way or to express themselves and show others that side of themselves. Here they learn it’s not showing a weakness or something that people will take advantage of. For me to sit and watch and listen to those things, the rewards are in knowing that these things are happening and these kids are opening up and starting to explore not only their art but also who they are. Having dialogues with people who are so
different to them and who they might never speak to otherwise. And make the
dialogues meaningful. I find that amazing. It breaks down a lot of the structures that
make kids conform to a single way of thinking.

*Art lets me be an individual against the trends.* Victor has also raised a third
benefit boys receive from art. Art’s curriculum creates a “safe” forum where tolerance of
other’s ideas is developed, and which in turn empowers boys to “speak out” and to
challenge hegemony. Brendan appreciates watching this happen; “I love watching the
guys take chances. They head off on their own tangent to see if it works. In art there is
no right or wrong answer.” Oscar, one of my “outside” observers, sees art as mandating
multiple viewpoints between boys. He says that he thinks art students “… view the world
differently. They develop analysing skills, and because art is about expression, they use
those skills to explore their world and express their ideas and thoughts with others.” Peter
believes this sharing of ideas builds tolerance.

Peter: Once people mature and become open minded they learn to accept other
people’s ideas and they really learn about other people. Because art really is about
communication. Kids can make a piece that represents who they are. You can look at
that and you start to understand a bit of who that person is and what they think which I
think makes us more tolerant.

Tolerance is also bred by mutual experience.

Kurt: Once you’ve done some art you have tried to express your ideas and you can see
what it’s like for others, so you are much more tolerant. If you can figure out where
your stance is, it’s a start to figuring out what others think.

Peter makes a similar comment.
Peter: If you see a piece of art that you don’t understand, most people will want to try to understand it. And once they want to understand it, they are thinking in a different way. Because the solutions in art are manifold. [When a teacher sets a project] you’ll have someone who will take it to an abstract point of view. You’ll have someone who will take it to a concrete point of view. And you start to understand how these people work by seeing how they express and the work they produce.

Samuel sees expression as a cornerstone to less hegemonic practices.

Samuel: I think it is important to express ourselves, to let yourself and others know what you think. That is how society works. If we don’t give our opinion then we end up with one way of thought, and it’d be lightweight because there is nothing to go against it. Society is really based around that. By people giving their opinion we end up with different and better ways of doing things. I know some guys are afraid of expressing their opinions because they might feel stupid or might feel that other kids will think their opinion is stupid. But it is important to express an opinion, to know how to express, and to know that you can. Kids need to know they can stand up and say ‘this is what I think’. Everyone needs to have an opinion and they can be as right as each other’s.

When I ask Victor if he thinks art breeds tolerance, he gives a good conclusion.

Victor: Definitely. Clearly. I see them in art and I see tolerance of each other. They see art as their way of self-expression, a chance to do (for a change) their own ideas. As a result openness occurs, they start to believe they can’t judge on their own terms other people’s art, rather they need to view the work through the artist’s eyes. The type of comments I hear these boys, who are so different from each other, saying goes along the lines of “just because I think this doesn’t mean its what you have to think”.
Some answers to how art helps boys communicate values and beliefs with their peers. Responses to questions regarding the benefits that boys receive from art stress three themes. Art levels the playing field between boys in that it encourages a variety of “types” of boys to participate, and allows a variety of methods of participating in its curriculum. Second, art provides boys a safe forum for the exchange of ideas. This happens because art acts as a “common denominator”, and because it’s very function is to get boys to present opinions and get feedback from peers. Third, art curriculum allows boys to challenge hegemony. This happens through art as boys recognise that others have different but equally valid opinions. They see that others can work in ways that differ from their own, but still result in equally successful conclusions. Hegemony is also challenged through art as tolerance is built. This happens as boys develop empathy with others who wish to express themselves (Kurt), as they develop a greater understanding of how others work (Peter), as boys broaden their awareness of the ideas that are “out there” (Samuel), and as they begin to view the world through other’s eyes (Victor).

In What Way is Art Different?

Art isn’t academic because it’s personal and relevant! Boys immediate responses to the question “How is art different?” are spontaneous and given with feeling. “In the other subjects, all you do is computation” (Lachland). “It’s all notes, notes, notes in other subjects. Oh, that sucks. You are stuck in your seats and can’t do anything but listen” (Armand). “In math and science and those subjects, you can’t make any mistakes. It’s all right and wrong answers. You can’t bend those rules. You can do that in art” (Kurt). Art is seen to be different because it makes learning personal and relevant.

Simon: In other subjects everything you do in class is teachers telling you, telling you, telling you things. You just memorise all they tell you. But in art you are doing
things for yourself. It’s your own expression, not something for a teacher. I know you learn things in art, but it is different to everything else we do.

Similarly, from Ben;

Ben: Art is definitely unique. In other subjects you can’t express yourself. You are programmed to learn what’s in the planner. In art there’s a planner but the teacher gives you the project and you can branch off from that. It’s virtually expected that you do.

In this academically focused school, students’ experiences focus heavily on the mundane but necessary “academics”. Art is an environment that provides relief from this pressure; “The stuff we do is so different, you see kids coming in all the time to see what we are learning. They come in during the lunch hours and after classes” (Andre). To many boys, art provides them with a variety of experiences.

Art lets me “do”! One manifestation of this is that it lets boys “do it”. Boys apparently need practical accomplishments. Louise, a language teacher says boys must be physical. “They have to interact. Because they are physical I have to get them to do physical things, like projects.” I watch a Socials class where the teacher, Solomon, stops the “lecture” approach after twenty minutes to play a rowdy, interactive, and competitive quiz game. “It’s needed. They need to balance working with doing something physical.” (Solomon).

Boys agree, if in a more literal way. Samuel; “It’s the actual making of art I find fun. Thinking of the idea then making it.” Ben; “I’m a hands-on sort of person. I love thinking of an idea then designing it and making it and sitting back and saying, ‘I did that. Wow’.” Calvin; “Art is good because teachers don’t just lecture. They mainly do interesting activities.” Randall; “In art we sit down and actually make something. We
can’t do that in other subjects because of the pressure of work”. Brendan says art lets you “build things, which gives you confidence.” His point is that art is special because it makes you actually “do it” rather than talk about it or theorise it. To him this is relevant, it’s “just like life” where you learn things by actually doing it.

An administrator agrees with these observations. He defines a successful person as someone who “is happy and comfortable with himself”. Success isn’t always to do with “narrow, academic success. Success arises through a sense of achievement. Some boys don’t get a lot of that through the normal classroom. But they do through art” (Millington).

Art is exploring, a different way of thinking! Another manifestation of the variety of experiences that art offers boys is that it is an alternative way of learning, a different interpretation of knowledge. “It’s not like any other class. It’s a totally different kind of learning. It’s all about exploring” (Chris). “You don’t have to think as much. Well you do, but it’s a different sort of thinking. It’s more like a creative kind of thinking” (Andre). One student tells me that the question “What types of knowledge does art cover?” makes him realise “academic” subjects don’t have a monopoly on intellectual development.

Peter: When I think of the intellect, art has taught me to think about problem solving.

Art challenges the mind this way. In art I have to think and think and think about a project. I have to position things in my mind in a way that is so different.

Art frees student-teacher relationships! The way the art staff teaches the subject becomes a recurring theme. Supposedly, art teachers have a different “focus” than other teachers. According to Brendan, art teachers teach differently because the subject is so different. “Well, art isn’t competitive like the other subjects. I’m not being made to compete against other people”. The teachers accommodate “the personal” in boys’
responses to subject criteria; “Art is free of judgment. You can express anger, or whatever and the teachers don’t judge you on that” (Ben). The teachers construct what boys’ see as a unique environment for learning; “It’s all about the way it’s taught. It’s different in art. The basics of art aren’t rigid and controlled. The teachers don’t have to discipline you. You can move around and discuss and things like that” (Simon). A language teacher agrees.

Louise: In art the teacher can develop a much stronger sense of empathy with children. Art is relaxed, and open, but most important, boys are working on their own personal pieces. Its so much less structured than when teachers stand and lecture. I wish I could be an art teacher.

Art allows a variety of approaches to learning! According to art teachers, it is the unique nature of the subject that makes their pedagogy successful. “We don’t have to teach to a set curriculum and be assessed on it all the time” (Meg). “That’s right. It frees us to make things happen. We don’t have the same restrictions as other teachers” (Victor). Meg jumps in; “There’s no way you could teach it the same two years in a row, anyway, because the kids are so different year by year.”

This acknowledgement of boys’ differences impacts their planning, according to Victor.

Victor: We’ve set the curriculum up deliberately to do that. We recognise there are so many different personalities. Art gives these personalities a setting where they can plug into something they feel comfortable with. Meg’s class and my class are so different. They are different types of kids. So we cater for their differences.
According to Victor, many teachers have to teach a regulated, prescriptive, and didactic curriculum because of assessment needs. In art, he explains, the teachers are free to teach boys a number of alternative methods of acquiring knowledge.

Victor: Our emphasis is on developing alternative strategies that students can apply to art and even to their academic areas. We foster a different way of thinking. It’s all creative problem solving. We use divergent and convergent thinking, we stress lateral thinking. We get the boys to decide whether one is right or wrong for what they are doing (actually, often there is no right or wrong, it’s just that at certain times one is more appropriate). I think that what we teach and the way we teach helps boys realise that there are a lot of ways to solve problems. Hopefully they will internalise that knowledge and transfer it to other areas. I think that is one of the “biggies” with us, being able to access a number of different forms of knowledge. The fact is, even here in this academic school, some people are very “visual” in the way they learn. It’s important for them to discover there are other ways to leap when it comes to the academics. Art gives them a strategy to go with the facts and figures.

Victor stresses that not all boys benefit from this. But art does have some worthy successes. “Parents have spoken about this. They say, ‘I don’t know what has happened to my son, but as he has become better at art he has become better academically and his relationship with others has improved’. Isn’t that great?”

**Some answers to how art is different.** While *Boys Doing Art* never intends to pursue the notion that art may be alone in its benefits to boys and masculinity negotiation, the consistent identification of its special curricular qualities by participants suggests it owns some powerful characteristics that advantage boys in this regard.
First, the participants suggest that in this school art provides a less restrictive learning environment to most other subjects. Art is beneficial because it isn’t academic – to be academic appears to mandate rote-learning, lack of personal involvement, didactic classes and rigid obedience to particular ways of thinking. Boys appreciate being free to determine how they will approach, explore and solve a problem in art.

Second, the participants suggest that in this school art provides opportunities for practical accomplishments. Art is hands-on. Boys appreciate being able to “do” it, something they see as relevant to the way real life happens. To achieve physical, practical outcomes on tasks that are so rooted in personal meanings is, to them in this school, unique.

Third, the participants suggest that in this school art provides opportunities for divergent ways of working. Art is different in that it challenges boys to explore. While other subjects also expect this, they – unlike art – can’t match this with a curriculum structure that allows it to happen effectively.

Fourth, the participants suggest that in this school art provides opportunities for quality teacher/student interchanges. The structure of the art curriculum, and the environment of the art classroom builds a special relationship with teachers, where individual learning styles, individual interpretations of problems, and individual needs to express can be nurtured.

Fifth, the participants suggest that in this school art recognises individuality in how boys approach the curriculum. Art allows a variety of approaches to learning. The technically focused, or the conceptually inclined can coexist within the same program of study. Those who learn best in a convergent manner can be taught simultaneously with the divergent thinker.
Many of the special features of the art curriculum listed above are summarised well by the Headmaster.

Lance: The way the subject is taught is different to the normal curriculum. So that is good for kids. The ability to go in there and move around freely and interact freely with the teacher. To work at your own pace; it’s something that they just don’t get exposed to in most other subjects. To suddenly develop an idea that they can carry through. To be able to accept advice and criticism which they don’t always do very well on the sports field or they tune out to in other classrooms. There are a myriad of things happening in an art class that are quite unique. Really, they are all the things that the great educators would love to bring into other programs. The freedom to say, the freedom to take advice and criticism in a constructive way, the freedom to explore some of your own beliefs and ideas and perceptions. The ability to be able to work at your own pace. The ability to be able to set a goal and achieve it (the end product). For the first time in their lives they suddenly say ‘Wow, this is brilliant! There is no pressure on me, yet there is. I’ve got to work, there are things I have to achieve, I have to explore, and if it fails? Hey its not the end of the world; I can rip it up!’ Now all that becomes absolutely catastrophic in other subjects. I think people vastly underestimate art. When you step back from it, the whole environment, the way the subject is delivered is extraordinary.

The Interviews: Masculinity

During the Immersion phase I identify a number of issues emerging from the data concerning masculinity. First, boys seem to have difficulty giving any definition of masculinity other than those prescribed by dominant social stereotypes. I now need to
explore what are their personal interpretations of this concept, so I explore this issue through questions grouped under the general topic of "What is masculinity?"

Second, their boy-culture seems to demand that boys define themselves in some way to their peers. I need to better understand the implications that this act of definition has on attempts boys may make to negotiate their own masculinity. I explore this topic by posing questions grouped under the general topic of "How do boys see themselves as being grouped, and how do they negotiate these positions within their peer structure?"

Third, while their boy-culture appears to support a number of masculinities, I now need to investigate under what circumstances boys feel safe to "be themselves", and how this need to explore individual masculinities is met by certain subjects. I will do this by asking questions grouped under the general topic "What do boys need to live out their own ideas about masculinity?"

What Is Masculinity?

Masculinity is living a stereotype! When asked, "What is masculinity to you?" interviewees confirm my previous suspicions; immediate explanations of masculinity are rooted in stereotypes. The following answers are typical. "Masculinity is being powerful and strong and impressive" (Scott). "It's being protective, being honourable, having pride" (Randall). "Masculinity is testosterone and being involved in sports and girls and all that" (Bruce). "Masculinity? It's aggression. Being able to be aggressive" (Olaf). "It's being manly. Y'know, being aggressive" (Andre). "Masculinity is being tough and strong. When I think about it, it's like guys not letting their emotions go" (Lachland). "It's the male ego. How some girls want guys to be strong and brave and all that. Y'know, being a guy. Saying 'I'm not afraid of this' or 'You do that to me and I'll do
such and such to you” (Armand). “Reclusive. Independent and willing to do things by themselves. They depend only on themselves” (Oscar).

Staff will also often define masculinity at first by stereotype. “Well, society wants us to be tough and strong and to not show emotions. Act on our logic and all will be OK” (James). A physical education teacher tells me “There’s two ways of looking at masculinity; the uneducated view is a strong, muscle-bound tough guy who’s always right. The educated view is someone who is strong and tough but at the same time very caring.” A woman teacher says, “I don’t think a man should feel he has to fulfil any criteria, but the reality is ‘out there’ that to be a man you have to be athletic, have a deep voice, be physical. You can’t cry at movies” (Janet).

When answering this question I notice that the administrators tend to be more reflective. “Masculinity is, first, being very conscious you are a male. Second, you realise that one day you will inherit the mantle of fatherhood” (Lance); or “we discover masculinity by discovering excellence in ourselves” (Millington). But even here unitary descriptions prevail. Lance ties masculinity to “the delightful English term, to be a ‘gentleman’ [which] generally encompasses the values I hold very dear a combination of grace, good manners, of bearing, of courage”. For Millington, masculinity must be won, on a mountain, or in front of an audience, or on a sports field (“There are various brands of courage; you’d call them masculinity but I call them courage”).

From these exchanges it is clear participants are hesitant to discuss any intimate qualities of masculinity. Initially I suspect this is because it is a very personal topic and that boys have already told me that expressing opinions on some matters is “dangerous”.
Later I find they open up considerably once we have put the topic into some context although I suspect they have very little vocabulary at their disposal. I ask them if they can see they are providing very stereotyped answers? Some disagree. “If these are stereotypes they have been developed over many years, they are in our culture, so for the most part they are true. To be a successful man you need to have some of these characteristics” (Oscar). But most of the boys willingly agree they define masculinity within a stereotype. “Yes, it’s a stereotype but most people will conform because that’s what is comfortable. You see others do it and it’s thought to be cool so you join in because it means you’ll be accepted” (Chris). Another student laughs; “Of course it’s a stereotype. But it’s real too. That’s how it is” (Kurt).

This need to conform is something we adults can sympathise with. One teacher tells me, “In high school I felt the same pressure. From other boys, or maybe it was the girls? It was pressure to be manly and not engage in feminine activities” (James). Another teacher says, “Yes it’s a stereotype. It’s not just in the school, it’s everywhere, in the popular culture, in the media.” To her, many boys “aren’t likely to test what masculinity is because they are handed such a clear definition if they can’t fit this construct it would be very frightening, they would be ostracised” (Janet).

Masculinity can be personal! Having come this far in the interviews, I find it possible to encourage the participants to provide more personally relevant definitions by asking them questions like “What attributes will make you a good man?” Some boys (interestingly, mostly from amongst the grade ten students) remain firmly embedded in stereotypes. “Well, my ideal man is being able to beat someone up but you don’t. That’s

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42 An example of this – putting masculinity into context – will be given shortly when I describe a conversation I have with Ishmael.
pretty mature, I think. It’s a step towards manhood” (Stuart). “For me, being a successful man will mean getting a high income job, above average. And a reasonable sized house on this side of the city. That’d be pretty satisfactory for me” (Olaf).

However the majority of boys give more sophisticated answers. “The stereotype of masculinity is fading. A more androgynous thing is replacing it. There are guys that are physically male but are guided by the feminine, and the opposite too, with girls” (Peter). Another student, Arnand, is clearly uncomfortable with the topic. He fidgets in his seat but makes an effort to answer the question.

Arnand: Ah, well, masculinity to me is, like it’s how you like to help people. I kind of like to help people, even though it does me no good. I guess that’s the way I am, liking to help people, and it’s something I’m good at. I guess for me masculinity is the talents that we have.

Simon turns to the literature to provide a model that helps describe his interpretation of masculinity.

Simon: My ideal of a ‘good man’ would be Finch out of To Kill a Mockingbird. He is an intelligent person, he’s not influenced by anyone else. He is independent, he’s intelligent. That’s what I want to be. Not someone who is easily swayed by mass opinion or someone who is just “brawny”.

I mention that these personal values of masculinity mostly contradict the definitions made only a minute ago. Does this mean they don’t see themselves as “manly”? This often brings a laugh and a quick denial. “I’m not saying that! (Laughter.) No, I guess my original answer about masculinity was the first thing that came to mind” (Bruce). Another boy also finds his contradiction amusing; “Of course I’m a man! (Laughter.) It’s all about being true to yourself. Not being confined to simple categories
by society, to a stereotype” (Neil). “Well if masculinity is y’know, the standard answer
most people would give, the rugby playing guy; well, I’m not like that and I’m obviously
a guy. So obviously there are masculine things about me that aren’t included in that
definition” (Simon). And Lachland gets defensive and a little angry. “Why do I have to
follow those guidelines? Why can’t I set my own? Who’s to say that being tough or
whatever is right for me? Just because I’m not strong and tough that doesn’t mean I’m
not a man!”

I ask boys which is it to them? Is masculinity acting out these stereotypes, or is it
following their own values? Randall replies “It’s trying to act out your own values. I
know I said ‘stereotypes’ before, because that’s what we see in our mind as the ideal
person to be. What we see as perfect. If we are going to achieve that ideal to one degree
or another we need to go by our own beliefs.” Andre agrees. “It’s pretty well up to
yourself to judge how you must act. You need to decide that for yourself. You can’t let
others determine what you should be. You need to set your own goals.”

Masculinity can be multiple! At this stage the interviews often begin to tap
significant thoughts as the boys reach some conclusions. When I ask the next logical
question; “So you are telling me that masculinity is not the same for all boys?” they often
begin to articulate that they see plural masculinities in operation.

Arnand: That’s right. Masculinity is probably the special trait’s you have. What you
yourself like to do, like a talent or something. That’s what it is. Our talents are our
masculinity. And everyone has different sorts of talents and different ideas about
masculinity.

Oscar agrees. “People out there have different ideas on what it is to be a man. Everyone
is so incredibly different you can’t come up with general ways to see how boys work with
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their stereotypes and deal with their masculinity.” Randall makes the point that boys have ownership of their masculinity; they actively pursue goals they set for themselves.

Randall: Everybody has their own sense of what they think masculinity is and they are probably living it out to the best of their ability, trying to fit their own ideals. Which is fine because if they achieve that then they are self-confident and see themselves as a “real man”.

And Peter notes that their masculinities are not static; they are in a process of continual change.

Peter: [Masculinities] are different for everybody. Because each person’s perception of the world is different. Each person’s condition is different. So I think that what we have inside of ourselves that are construed as masculinities and femininities, they progress through time and through experience. They can’t stay the same.

Is this my masculinity? Some answers to boys’ seemingly limited perception of their gender. My aim with these questions is to have boys explain if their concepts of masculinity are dissimilar to the powerful cultural stereotypes that exist in our society.

There are a number of trends in the responses. Boys’ most immediate responses are often quite removed from what they later articulate as their actual beliefs. They go from “removed” descriptions using limited stereotypes, to strongly personal descriptions of individual masculinities. For most, stereotypes of masculinity bear little resemblance to the reality of their own beliefs. What is more, their individual interpretations often conflict with images of manhood sponsored by their culture, suggesting many boys unwittingly lead a double life; they outwardly portray characteristics that are harmonious with cultural stereotypes, while simultaneously developing personal, often contradictory, beliefs. This occurs for a number of reasons.
First, these passages indicate that boys do not spontaneously articulate any sophisticated knowledge about masculinity's construct or representation in their culture, beyond the stereotypical. However, as is shown in past few pages, boys can be quite impressive in their insights about masculinity. The problem is, this seems to have occurred with the guidance and support of the interview process. Many boys indicate that this is a novel; experience in the school environment.

Second, boys don’t appear to have the tools (that is, a vocabulary) to articulate their thoughts, a hypothesis supported in passages where boys are very forthcoming when given some avenues to discuss masculinity. The following extract from my field diary provides an example of this phenomenon.

I run into Ishmael in Newton Hall. We talk a lot about his art and how it makes him both fit in and be different at the same time. We discuss aspects of masculinity.

“What does “masculinity” mean to you”, I ask? “In my personal life, not much because that is not very important to me. It’s an unnecessary characteristic we feel we must have. Obsession with sport, disrespect for women. I don’t have much time for that.” We talk about stereotypes of masculinity, and his values and how the two can be so different. Eventually I ask, “What would you say if I suggested there is an unlimited range of masculinities?” “Yeah, I’d like that. There are so many people who don’t fit in. If you could choose the parts you wanted - that’d be great.” “Do you think you are building your own version of masculinity right now?” Ishmael responds with enthusiasm. “Let me get what you’re saying straight. My ideas are my masculinity and by sticking to them I’m asking others to be more tolerant of a different masculinity? Jeez, I’d dig that!”
A third explanation for why many boys instinctively disassociate personal values from their concepts of “masculinity” is that boys experience considerable pressure from their boy-culture to conform to safe stereotypes of gender. As one teacher explains;

Janet: Boys’ notion of being men is linked to their concepts of self. And this concept of self is influenced by their physiognomy, by their family, and it’s a product of their maturity. But mostly, mostly, it is linked to their culture.

The face or “image” boys want to portray to their peers motivates how they behave and what they present to others as their beliefs. The influence of their culture is such that boys automatically align themselves with powerful stereotypes of masculinity and choose to downplay their more individual beliefs. This act of conformity comes at a cost.

Janet: The issue for boys in this school is their culture, and their masculinity is simply a symptom of that culture. I see masculinity being part of a bigger picture. Based on what boys talk to me about, not in school though. They don’t bring up masculinity here, never, never⁴. It’s far too touchy. It’s all based in their culture and that culture is all about autonomy and choice.

Wanting autonomy and choice typify what I have already heard from boys. I have witnessed that beneath a façade of lassitude about gender lie some wonderful concepts of masculinity; “recognising diversity”, “being your own person”, “acting out your own values”, “understanding other’s situations”. These are theoretical values that are based on the assumption that they are free to pursue such goals. Many of the boys that I speak to appear to want to be free agents, to have autonomy and choice, but in their culture they must face the reality of ostracism if they deviate too far from the norm. They want to be free to decide for themselves what to believe and how to act, but this must happen within

⁴ Janet has a teenage son.
the fluid and indecipherable limitations of their culture. How boys pursue "autonomy and choice" while showing allegiance to a seemingly limiting boy-culture is baffling, and forms the context for my next set of questions.

What "Types" of Boys are There, and How Do These "Types" Contribute to the "Identities" That are Being Built?

I ask a set of questions that intend to explore how boys manipulate the mores of their culture to pursue their private agendas about masculinity. More often than not these questions will begin with a conversation like this. "You are telling me your culture is an important thing to you. What do you mean? Tell me what it is like." "Well I can't really." "Why? Is it too difficult?" "Well, it's just hard to put your finger on something that is so" Silence. I try a different tack. "Tell me about the boys then, and how they get along." "Oh, that's easy. I am a 'skid', that's the type of person I am. So that means" and off the conversation will go.

Your group defines you! The fact is, "typing" boys, and the allocation of these "types" into "groups", is the most immediate and obvious manifestation of boys' culture. Boys readily categorise themselves. "I'm more artsy than English'y, y'know. I'm more that type" (Al). They categorise each other; a table of grade eight boys introduce themselves to me in this way; "He's a scientist, and those two are artists, and we are swimmers. And he's basketball and he's hockey". And they categorise the student body within the school. "We have all types here, from the 'jocks' to the 'nerds' to the 'skids'. All the groups are here but you can't always recognise them as you walk around" (Kurt). Within their culture, groups go beyond superficial categories such as "academics" and

44 The term "typing" has been used previously and now becomes a concept. It refers to the allocation of boys into categories based on inherent physical and cognitive characteristics.
“jocks”, to include sub-categories within each, and sub-sub-categories within each of those.

Peter: Well there are the jocks, the sports crowd and basketball players. I guess that’s seen as the popular crowd. Then there are the academics that are more or less from Chinese backgrounds. They don’t actually live in Canada. Then I guess there are “geeks”, guys who don’t fit in anywhere. They really don’t have very good social skills. Because of that they may work hard and may get good grades. Then there are “skids”. They are people who associate themselves with alternative culture. Then there are those who have different tastes in music and stuff but still fit in a crowd because they are cool or whatever. It’s quite confusing.

I ask Samuel, a grade ten student, to elaborate further.

Samuel: The group I hang out with are called “skids”⁴⁵. That is just what we are called. We are made fun of because we are different than others. Of the other groups there’s the “majority” group in the school... We are different from the other people. We don’t want to wear all the same clothes. We call the others “whiggers⁴⁶”. They are the white guys trying to be black because black is cool. They listen to Rap, wear overalls, all that sort of stuff.

Another boy Kurt, admits that he is not sure about the nature of all the groups (“Who does?”) but provides me with some limited definitions.

Kurt: Well, there are the skids and the cools. We’ve talked about those. Then there are the jocks and the nerds, and they are pretty much self-explanatory, like we all hear about them all the time. But there are also those ones you only see a bit of. Like

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⁴⁵ An acronym for homeless youth who have evolved their own alternative culture. “The term doesn’t really have anything to do with us, we aren’t really ‘street kids in distress’”.
⁴⁶ Provocative slang meaning “white nigger”.

there's the metal heads - they are part of the skids group, but they lock themselves away in the auditorium at lunch time with their guitars and don't let anyone in and turn off the lights and stuff. And the skateboarders are also a sub-group of the skids. Then there's the grunge type kids, who are into deadlocks and clothes like that, but they can't do it here at school. And there's the parachute kids. They come from overseas and simply don't get into anything to do with us - they just come and go and you hardly see them. There's also the populars - they are like the cools.

This division of boys into types, and then types into groups, is so widely accepted as a practice throughout the school that it becomes a recurring theme. This is not a practice that is exclusive to the boys; it is possible they take their lead from the school. For example I am told that when boys first enter Greene's College the administration allocates them to "home groups" according to sporting prowess. This creates "a yellow group that tends to be the academic kids, and blue and green groups that tend to be the 'jocks', and so on" (Wendy). A physical education teacher tells me how this system works:

Dilbert: Some boys are very aggressive and very strong athletes. And some are very timid and very weak athletes. And there are boys who are somewhere in the middle. We tell them 'You can go into the black group if you want, which is with the boys who are highly aggressive, who like to get very rough, very physical. Or you can go into the white group, the boys who are there to have fun, not get too dirty or get too roughed up. And then there are the boys in the middle, the red group who fit somewhere in between'. We try to explain to them that there is no social stigma according to the group they go to. It's just much easier for a boy who is weaker skilled to be with boys who are weaker skilled.

47 In which they stay for many years.
Dilbert defends the practice on the grounds that “science and math stream for ability as well”. But in this case, the streaming is based on the physical, and it goes beyond just physical education classes. This practice unites boys as a home group for a number of years, within which they will do CAPP and some other subjects. Teachers perceive that his practice has an impact on the curriculum.

Wendy: There tends to be a natural gravitation of certain boys into certain sports. That puts them in certain groups. It makes a difference to the class rapport. We [some female CAPP teachers] use these groups to anticipate how a class will go. Teachers acknowledge that “typing” boys is useful when manipulating teaching approaches for maximum effect. This certainly applies in art.

Victor: Well, we may get a course where we get all the “jocks”. They have a certain way of looking at things, certain interests, and certain fears. So you look at that group and you say “we are certainly not going to paint flowers in the first period!” So what we have to do is teach the language for this approach so that they won’t feel threatened. Whereas someone might come in who are from the humanist side of things, the writers and the linguists, and they might say “Wow I love that bouquet of flowers, can we paint that?” That is really extreme but it can happen.

Groups let us build “identity”! This practice of typing and grouping has considerable ramifications for boys. The most immediate impact is that it appears to legitimise a certain (limited) range of masculinities. The categories of “jocks” and “academics” that are so openly acknowledged by the whole school community are, coincidentally, two of the dominant groups that exist within boys’ culture. According to the culture, “your group defines your type” (Samuel).
For me there is little point in attempting to map and understand these groups if, indeed, the whole system is in a constant state of transition (Oscar warns me “Our culture is a very ephemeral thing. It is always changing”). I am more interested in the manoeuvrings that occur between and within these groups. This is the site where boys negotiate or reinforce differences. I feel this should be my focus because participants are suggesting a second ramification of the typing and grouping phenomenon is that it dictates behaviours. Because their culture is a difficult world for them to comprehend, the capacity to understand how it operates creates a sort of “cultural currency” for boys. Their ability to navigate within it provides them with “identity” (which we will discuss shortly), but more importantly status, power and protection; “Learning the rules is part of being cool. No-one messes with you if you are cool” (Olaf). I have difficulty understanding how the groups represent different behaviours, so I ask Samuel to explain.

Samuel: It’s more attitudes. Skids are the non-conformists. They are kids who have alternative views on music or whatever. Our music, it defines us. It shows the differences in our groups. The music we relate to is the attitude we relate to. It doesn’t say this is our lifestyle, but it’s how we feel, how we relate to different things.

Being cool appears to be an important part of this process. I remember from my Immersion phase that Olaf was a connoisseur of coolness, so I hunt him down for more information. I’m not that sure afterwards if I’m any better informed.

Olaf: Being cool means being popular and being accepted by other people who are viewed as cool. The cool people are the people, I’d say, who everyone gets out of the way of. There are different kinds of cool people I guess. Some are more silent. They are not very easy to approach. While others call out names and make fun of people all the time. Usually the cool people are the people who can play sports to a certain
degree. Or, yea, have friends who are physically large. Part of being cool is if you can get enough back up. Say, there'd be two groups of cool people and they'd dislike each other. And then they'd try to "out back" each other up, and so that's what would happen.

I ask if it's possible for people who are cool to come from different types? For instance, kids who are good at academics? Can they be cool as well? "It'd be a lot harder. Any cool person who is good at academics was actually cool before they were good at academics." "Cool because of other things they were good at?" "Yea." I think I've hit on a key to this riddle. "So to be cool do you have to be good at something?" "Not necessarily. You just have to have that kind of attitude. The 'right' kind of attitude."

It's not me, it's just an image! The purpose of these machinations is, it would seem, to create an "identity" for yourself. One administrator describes how boys' exploits under adversity during outdoor education programs help them define their identity. He says they come back filled with stories about "how they endured and survived and all the brave things they did. This creates 'identity', and gives boys a sense that 'when my back is to the wall I discovered a resource within myself'" (Millington). To the school "identity" is a product of character development.

However, boys view it differently. "Identity" has little to do with surviving an ordeal with aplomb. While it is something that must be earned, this occurs through complex negotiations within their culture; in essence, by showing difference while remaining within the constraints of the culture. And the identity that is created does not necessarily have anything to do with personal values or beliefs. Being "cool" is one facet of this phenomenon.
Oscar: Being cool means being able to project an image of superiority and being able to uphold it. It’s about being in on the trends of the time. It’s having a style. Coolness is about style, whether you can project an image of being different from others. Having an identity. I think when you are younger, your style, expressing your individuality, isn’t as important. But as you grow older, your style is important because it shows you are different. But you can’t set yourself up as different in a way that totally conflicts the trends. The truth is you are just projecting an image. That doesn’t necessarily mean that you actually think that way. It just means you have mastered the ability to have an identity. (My emphasis.)

It is a confusing statement. Having “style” or “identity” seems to be the act of simultaneously attempting to be different, while not “conflicting the trends”. This must be a difficult path to tread. Oscar’s third last sentence particularly interest me. “So that image is not really ‘you’?” “Yes. It’s often not true.”

This is a very important point, and other boys will confirm much of Oscar’s opinion. Some boys pursue an “identity” by being “alternative”, others will show allegiance to a group showing that they meet the complex criteria of that group, such as being “cool”. Whichever, boys’ concept of “identity” differs from the school’s. To them it is a façade, it is all “image” or “attitude” or “style” or “character”, that in the long term will bear little relevance to “the real you”.

What this emphasises is that developing an identity is a skill, a mastery or understanding of the complex nuances of the boys’ culture. So while on the surface typing and grouping appears to offer protection, a part of what Pollock (1998) simplistically describes as boys’ “tribal” mentality, it is actually a stage of significant negotiations by boys. What is more it has a transparency that allows boys a high degree of
autonomy and choice. Oscar's description of "coolness" suggests he can see through its superficial and transitory construct and use it to negotiate a position with his peers without impinging his own values.

Some answers: Using typing and identity construction within boy-culture to initiate negotiation of individuality. Three important trends appear in this data. First, boys indicate that while "types" are largely predetermined, individuals mostly choose the groups within which they will be categorised. This, their most immediate definition of their masculinity, is largely self-determined. "If you hang out with a group, you are one" (Samuel).48

Second, I become aware that boys often choose their group because on the whole, it represents characteristics with which they wish to be identified. The fit is rarely perfect, but the overall statement adequately expresses his general values and beliefs. For example, the clumsy typing by the physical education department described earlier must carry social stigma. But boys go along with it because it serves a purpose for them.

Dilbert: The system works. About 95% of the boys stay in the group they have chosen. We talk to the boys on an informal basis often. "What do you think of the system?" Most of them are quite happy to stay with the system.

It appears that typing and grouping does a lot of work for boys. Oscar, Olaf, Samuel, or Peter indicate they choose a group based on the philosophies or beliefs or characteristics that permeate that group. Theirs is the action of creating an identity by association, an infinitely safer proposition than being an isolated voice within the culture.

48 This is not necessarily the case all the time. In my experience teaching I have seen cases of boys who wish, for example, to be seen as "cool" ostracized by that group because they are not deemed suitable. However, while at Greene's College, no boys made this observation; to the contrary, the predominant opinion was that that boys were largely successful in aligning themselves to a suitable "group".
Each of the groups do this. “Skids” see themselves as independent thinkers; “We hate conformity” (Peter). “Cools” like to think that they are street smart and savvy consumers of popular culture; “It’s all about showing style. That’s what’s important” (Oscar). The “academics” master the art of marks-grubbing and accept being marginalised. Their superior abilities will eventually give them the rewards even if there is a social cost; “The academics don’t have a life. It’s all study and no fun. They hardly even live in Canada” (Kurt).

Third, it seems reasonable to conclude that boys manipulate the parameters of the group/s to suit their own needs. They rarely stay immobile within the group. The “academics” group spawns sub-cultures such as “nerds” and “parachute kids”, each developing its own culture to suit their particular needs. Within the “skids” there are “skateboarders”, and ‘metal heads’ and others who have their own ideas” (Samuel). Likewise in the “cools” there are competitive sub-cultures that require Olaf to “out back-up” a rival coolness.

An important opinion arising from the interviews is that we can’t assume that the identities created by participating in the groups that combine to form their boy-culture, are accurate to a boy’s “true self”. As with boys’ definitions of masculinity, their visible actions and publicly espoused opinions often run counter to their more intimate beliefs. With few exceptions, each boy I interview eventually professes quite egalitarian gender concepts in spite of any outwardly hegemonic, sexist, chauvinistic façade. What then, is needed to encourage what Oscar calls the “true self” to rise to the surface?

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49 The complexities involved in this use of sub-cultural groups to develop identity is, in reality, another thesis. See Martino (2000).
What are Boys' Needs Regarding Masculinity?

We need opportunities to discuss masculinity! Boys tell me they need chances within the curriculum to express opinions on a wide range of issues. In the interviews I ask many of them; "When do you get to talk about things such as masculinity? Does it happen in groups, or in classes, or with friends?" Ishmael, who has comfortably chatted with me about such issues in many public places like the lunch hall and a classroom, is horrified.

Ishmael: Jeez, I wouldn't think so. We don't have deep conversations in classes in this school. I've had some amazing conversations with guys, but outside school, not in it. I mean, if you are going to talk about masculinity, hell, in a social situation? Jeez, you wouldn't last long!

Apparently it is a matter of self-protection. "Boys don't feel comfortable exposing their emotions to other guys. That's seen as dangerous or prohibitive or whatever" (Peter).

Lachland tells me they rarely discuss masculinity in the school. I am bewildered. "There is absolutely no dialogue? No one plants questions or ideas in your mind?"

Lachland: Well maybe in CAPP a bit, but not really. I guess the fact is there is no opportunity to talk about it... you don't just bring up these subjects. I guess that's because guys think that they need to block off their emotions. To be real men.

Chris agrees, but extends the idea further.

Chris: It's important to not give out information to people that gives them things to harass you about. That's why friends are important. While you might not be willing to express in a large setting you may be willing to express one-on-one.

Surprisingly, Stuart, the tough guy, also supports this idea.
Stuart: The thing is, I know that I can say things to my friends and not feel like I am opening myself up, y'know, even when I am. Because I know they aren’t going to take it the wrong way.

I explore the notion of “opening up”. Under what circumstances, other than with close friends, can this happen with boys? Andre tells me CAPP sessions often work that way.

Andre: CAPP is sometimes good, sometimes it’s not. It’s good when you get to have these discussions. The best parts are the discussions. You find out a lot about the experiences of other people. You usually won’t do that when you talk to your friends.

“So you need the CAPP forum to be able to get into that?”

Andre: Yes. It’s probably because other people are sharing ideas so you won’t be as afraid to express your own ideas. That’s what I think. Because, after all, if everyone else is doing it then you feel that it is OK to express it.

“So CAPP creates a safe environment?” “Yea, it's a safe environment.”

We need a safe place to discuss masculinity! Apparently, opportunities for discussing issues such as masculinity must be contrived; they rarely happen spontaneously. These situations occur in only a few social situations, and in only some subjects; “Boys tell me, ‘In X’s class we never talk about things, we just learn and go’. I teach a lot of electives, and the casual environment of these subjects lends itself to discuss other things” (Louise).

This introduces a second need; if boys wish more opportunities to discuss, they also require a safe environment for those discussions. Fear of ridicule seems to paralyse boys from expressing opinions about personal issues. Overcoming katagelophobia requires a refuge, and aside from intimate social situations these are created within subjects by the actions of supportive teachers.
Andre: We have good discussions in other subjects, like even in English and social studies, and, like, those work sometimes too. But it’s really up to the teacher. It’s the teacher who can make it happen. They have to get the kids to open up.

Other boys mirror Andre’s point. In a long conversation with Chris, a grade ten student, he describes an obligation he feels to live out a stereotyped image of manhood: “Well I’ve been brought up that way and that’s what I’m expected to be and that’s what I’ll have to be”. This is a lack of option that “is bad. I don’t think that people should be constrained by it. But it exists and eventually, a few decades later, it might have loosened up. Maybe even destroyed”. I ask how that can happen?

Chris: If you try to [challenge the stereotypes] you’ll be looked at as being odd. But if I was to change it I think the main thing is to express your feelings. I think that is what is the problem with the stereotypes. The stereotype is that you are not supposed to express your feelings and that is one of the major things. Once that is broken the stereotypes would slowly disappear.

We talk about how that could be done. How can boys be encouraged to express things that impact their close-held beliefs regarding masculinity?

Chris: It’s the teachers. Their role is to help boys overcome their blocks and explore themselves. Blocks like the fact you can’t have emotions or anything. Even in CAPP you have to put up the image that you don’t care about anything. You can’t even put up political opinions or someone will call you a nerd for reading a newspaper.

Many teachers agree their role is critical. “If a child in your classroom is in fear, they obviously aren’t going to take any risks at all. Their fear clouds their brain. I always try to create an environment where they feel safe” (Meg).
If teachers are important in creating a safe environment, the interviews indicate so too is the size of the class. Louise feels that “smaller classes cuts down the amount of negativity. Working in small groups makes that work much more intense”. Peter agrees. He doesn’t need extra direction from a teacher, rather, would appreciate a closer relationship; “Small class sizes allow more of a focus on the student by the teacher”. This focus negates oppression. “If a guy is being ragged, he’s going to be ragged in every class, unless it’s a very small class. There the teacher can control it.” (Ishmael). Big classes kill openness, according to Chris.

Chris: When you ask a kid “What do you think?” he’d say something and the second person would say what the first person said because it’s already been accepted, and no-one is making fun of it so it’s OK. But if you did it on a smaller basis, smaller classes, you can listen and say, “this is what he thought and this is what he thinks”, and your opinion might be different and you’d probably say it.

“Smaller class sizes are safe?”

Chris: Yes, say classes of ten or so. It allows you to express yourself even more. It’s difficult to get up in front of a big group – you could but then you’d just lie to protect yourself.

How these “safety” issues – class size, increased focus, greater “intensity” on work, better teacher/student rapport – lead to increased expression are nicely summarised by Ishmael.

Ishmael: Yes class size does definitely make a difference. If it was a smaller class the kids would be really into what they were doing. There would be a sense of competitiveness and a sense of moderation and respect. The larger the class gets, the
less of that there is, in general. If there were lots of kids in, say, my art history class\textsuperscript{50}, it would be awful because you wouldn’t be able to get the creative thoughts going.

There’d be the continual scoffing every time Mr. X talked of femininity. There’d be guys calling artists “fags” all the time. It wouldn’t work out all that well.

We need some control over where and how we discuss masculinity! A third need arises from the interviews. Boys need flexibility and control in how they explore masculinity. This, according to the boys, is primarily a matter of choice. Arnand, the boy who sees masculinity as being the talents you develop, tells me:

Arnand: I think this school helps people to develop their own masculinity. It gives you the freedom to take what courses you want. You can build on things you feel you are good at and gain confidence.

I ask Kurt what he would do if he were the Headmaster? How would he help boys discuss important issues and explore masculinity?

Kurt: I would give them choices. I think that is a good first step. Giving kids choices is important because that is what enables them to choose how and where to express. It happens when they do what they want to do not what they have to do. The more choices the better. I think that is important.

Some answers concerning boys’ needs regarding masculinity. Contrary to the assumption that all-boy schools automatically produces an environment that lets boys explore, and somehow, mysteriously, come to terms with masculinity, the participants indicate that such engagements are very superficial. Opportunities for greater exploration of masculinity apparently require quite specific curricular conditions. Boys tell me that

\textsuperscript{50} On a previous occasion Ishmael had joyfully described this class as being wonderful because there were about a half-dozen boys enrolled.
such conditions are rare. They can only happen in subjects where expression is mandated. “Academic” subjects do not fulfill this criterion because their binary epistemologies do not allow room for “the self”. They only happen in subjects that are “safe” – defined as those with teachers who allow students to become equally involved in the evolution of knowledge and in classes that are small. Boys also say that meaningful exploration can only occur in classes that allow them a high degree of control – the risks of opening up are too great.

The Interviews: The School

In Boys Doing Art I do not intend to focus at length on single-sex schooling, but it is concerned with how the structure of this school impacts art’s ability to work with boys on issues of masculinity.

Earlier, during the Immersion phase, I found three suggestions of how this might happen. First, I found that the school’s structure, operation, and environment directly controls boys’ movements and experiences, and partly creates the scenarios within which boys negotiate masculinity. I now need to know something about the nature of these influences. I explore such issues during interviews by asking questions around the topic “What are the best and worst things about this school?” With this broad introduction, more specific questions are asked, such as “Does the school limit you, or help you, to explore issues concerning masculinity?”

Second, I found the school has a particular interpretation of knowledge and learning that permeates boys’ experiences in the school. I now need to know how its epistemologies impact boys and the art program in the school. I explore this by asking questions around the topic “What do learning and ‘academics’ mean to you?”
Third, I found the school appears to place strong expectations on boys in terms of living up to an image of the “ideal” graduate. I now need to understand how this version of masculinity, the “Greene’s College Man”, influences the types of masculinities boys build in art and in the wider school. I explore this by asking questions around the topic “Do you think this school is pursuing a ‘Greene’s College’ man?”

What Features of the School Impact Boys’ Views of Masculinity?

To explore more deeply these themes I ask questions such as “What do you like or dislike about this school?” “What are its best and worst features?” “How is this school different to co-educational schools?” “What does this school let you do, and what does it limit?”

The school’s diversity builds a great atmosphere! “What do you like or dislike about this school?” brings mostly favourable responses. A cluster of comments emphasises that the resources and varieties of options offered by the school are a significant benefit. These take many forms. The most obvious is the excellent physical resources that staff and students enjoy. “The facilities are so amazing here,” says Kurt. He and other boys are aware that they are privileged at Greene’s College; “The swimming pool is great, and the fact the new wing is carpeted – that doesn’t happen in public schools” (Peter).

From the staff a very common response is “The best thing? That we get to teach in a place like this. The boys are great, and the fantastic facilities, and we are given almost everything that we want to do our teaching” (Victor). Its physical benefits are, on a superficial level, an important attraction for boys and staff. But most also acknowledge other less obvious yet perhaps more worthy advantages the school has to offer. “The school’s got a positive atmosphere. There are a lot of good facilities. A lot of the things
that you can do here you can’t do anywhere else. A lot of variation of the courses. It makes a good atmosphere” (Brendan).

Another benefit boys cite are the activities that are available to them. “Originally [what attracted me to Greene’s College] was it’s reputation, but now I love the range of activities like the Jazz Group and the sports and after school activities. And the numerous clubs the school offers”. Lance, the Headmaster, reminds me these are no accident – it is an intentional policy; “[Boys benefit from] a rich range of activities, so there are things happening in the mornings and in the lunchtimes and after school. Games, a myriad of clubs, plays, trips, tours.”

Perhaps the variety is too great. Wendy is bewildered by some offerings; “It’s surprising some of the things that are tolerated. Like our WWF\textsuperscript{51} club. The boys watch wrestling in their lunch hour. It’s not even a sport!” And for other teachers it causes problems. When I ask him what are some good or bad features of the school, Chester, frustrated because his morning class had many students absent on an excursion, storms “All the activities are a real problem here. Too many boys are involved in too many things. Boys are always missing from class for all sorts of reasons. Sport, school trips, debating, you name it. It’s impossible”. But the variety of experiences available to boys is something they appreciate. “This school is really diverse, it encourages so many aspects of life. Heaps of activities as well as the academic aspect. It attracts scholars and artists and athletes. The diversity of this school is just incredible” (Bruce).

The appreciated aspects of the school – its facilities, the range of activities, and the diversity of choice – are manifestations of the wealth the school has at its disposal. But

\textsuperscript{51} World Wrestling Federation, a popular television extravaganza with dubious education (or even sporting?) merit.
putting aside issues of privilege, boys are identifying ways the school’s operation allows exploration of “individualities” or masculinities. A range of choices, a diversity of experiences, and facilities to provide these opportunities are important factors to boys.

In this school there’s less masculinity! “How is this school different to co-educational schools?” draws many comments that elaborate how Greene’s College creates an environment that impacts boys’ negotiation of masculinities. One trend in responses is that boys feel their relationships with their peers are different here. Oscar, a new arrival to Greene’s College from a co-educational high school, says this school is easier to adapt to socially. Why is that, I ask?

Oscar: Because there aren’t girls. When there are girls in the school you change the type of person you are to impress them. And because you don’t have to do that here, things are much more casual and relaxed. Fitting in isn’t that much of a problem.

Also, people aren’t as much caught up with ‘coolness’ here as they would be with girls around.

Olaf tells me that in the single-sex school boys “treat each other nicer. They have no-one to impress, no one to compete with”. I ask him if he is suggesting that having girls in the school make boys prone to putting each other down? “Definitely. All we can compete about here is academics and sport. There’s no competition when trying to date someone or be cool. You still try to be cool, but not as much.” Chris agrees; “Here, there are no distractions. You don’t have to impress girls all the time. There is no one to impress but yourself. You don’t have to worry about what you are doing or how you look”.

This point is presented consistently during the interviews. “Here, there’s less pressure to impress girls. In a way it takes away from the ‘play fighting’. At [my previous school] you are always trying to act macho because there are girls and you want to impress them”
Boys Doing Art

(Chris). Brendan, also new to the school, says “Here boys don’t show off that much. In co-ed schools guys like to show off for the girls to get their attention. Here you don’t see all that much showing off. Guys just do what they want to do.”

According to many participants the single-sex environment decreases the need for boys to act out stereotyped masculine behaviours. I ask Oscar why he thinks this is the case?

Oscar: I think masculinity is less apparent in this school than it was in my other school or other co-ed schools. Because in a co-ed school the masculinity has to be well defined because you have to be able to complement girls. You have to be able to show off your masculinity. As opposed to here, because it’s all boys, what happens is that masculinity is diluted. There is masculinity and femininity within any group, within any environment. So people are much less masculine here.

There’s less distractions here. You can get on with your work! Another benefit of the single-sex environment is that it supposedly provides a positive, settled and focused environment. This impacts boys’ academic work. Randall says, “Boys do better academically here. They don’t have so many distractions, like having in the back of their heads ‘If I do this well I’ll look like a nerd in front of these girls’. And they will have more time to do their schoolwork.” Andre echoes his comment; “There are less distractions here. Without girls, I mean. There is more stuff going on in co-ed schools. More talking and socialising, compared to this school. There is more work here, staying on task. So there is more order.”

The “order” he speaks of is noted by the teachers; “The classrooms are very settled in this environment. There isn’t as much of a need for boys to have an audience in the classroom, and also in the social dynamic of the school” (Roscoe). Louise agrees, noting
that “The boys are so much more aware of where ‘the line’ is here. What they can and cannot cross. Whereas in the co-educational school the line is so much blurrier.” Oscar gives a student’s perspective on this point.

Oscar: The school is more positive than in the co-ed school I went to before. You need to do sports, and work on your art after school and do the extra curricular activities; this is doing stuff as opposed to being negative and pessimistic and saying ‘extra-curricular activities aren’t for me’, and ‘I don’t like study’. The positive atmosphere of the school helps people to not be negative and therefore lets them feel they don’t have to be so superior.

This school “levels the playing field”! Oscar also mentions other benefits of the single-sex environment. This structure apparently has an equalising effect on its population. “The fact that it’s all-boys helps to put everyone on the same level, the same playing field”. Laurie, the Director of Studies, explains this “level playing field” concept in more detail. A curricular implication of the all-boy school is the freedom it gives males to participate in many activities that might otherwise be deemed un-macho.

Laurie: Art and music are cool in this place. So is athletics. You can be active and skilful in both and not be seen as a freak. And the uniform makes everyone equally “geeky”. So there is less self-definition into cliques than I see in other schools.

This has an effect on gender stereotyping;

Chris: Well guys have to avoid art. Y’know, it’s sort of a feminine area. Meg says it deals with your feminine side, so a lot of boys are scared of that. In a co-ed school boys would get ridiculed because they have to act macho in front of the women. Here we don’t have to worry about that.

A teacher agrees.
Wendy: I think there might be less peer pressure here. In my CAPP classes lots of issues come up where boys say things that I don’t think they would say if girls were there. I think they would have felt restrained, or I think the girls would have jumped on them for certain comments. They are less inhibited. Definitely.

**Boys here are more “together”!** What is regularly mentioned is that tolerance improves as boys mature. “[This school’s environment] becomes safer, I guess, in the later years. Because after you’ve been with a group of guys for so long the sense of brotherhood is very strong” (Peter). For Andre, a grade ten student, the school structure has a lot to do with this. “Boys here are more together. They become more like friends than they would in co-ed schools. Probably because you are around them all day. Like, they share thoughts and will say things, and be more like, friends with each other.” The participants have raised an interesting point; often, in the literature, the “brotherhood” of all-boy schools is contemptuously dismissed as one facet of chauvinism; the “boys’ club” that helps perpetuates male hegemony (see, for example, Addelston, 1996). But here it is being presented as a mark of an advanced stage of maturity; “brotherhood” can represent boys’ acceptance of other’s ideas, and an embracing of diversity amongst their peers.

Some answers to the influence the structure of the school has on boys’ negotiation of masculinities. Participants say boys are under less pressure to act out stereotypical “macho” masculinities. They are more focused on their work because of less distractions and a school culture that emphasises academic achievement. They consistently quote a “positive atmosphere” that is created by wide range of choices available to them and an ethos of participation and involvement in the school. They feel less inhibited when choosing subjects and are more likely to do activities they want to do, rather than being limited by gender stereotypes. They feel free to be “themselves”, even if it is labelled
being immature. They enjoy teachers who focus teaching strategies on boys’ needs. They develop a “brotherhood” which admires individuality and difference and isn’t necessarily some exclusionary male-only cult.

On the negative side the vibrant “boy-culture” that exists in the school can be intimidatory and restrictive in many ways. The expectations placed on the boys creates a stress that in some situations appears debilitating. The demarcation of “academic” and “non-academic” subjects limits boys’ participation in, and enjoyment of, subjects that mandate expression and communication.

**Does the School’s Interpretation of Knowledge and Learning Impact Boys’ Negotiation of Masculinities?**

From the Immersion data I gained the impression that the school sponsors quite definite concepts of knowledge and learning. I now need to understand from the participants how these concepts impact boys’ opportunities to negotiate masculinities, both inside art and in the wider context of the school. To address this issue I ask questions such as “This place has an ‘academic’ reputation. Can you tell me what that means?”, “Can you define an academic subject for me?”, and “How do they (academic and non-academic subjects) differ in terms of what you do, what you learn and what is important to you?”

**Being “academic” is more than regurgitating knowledge!** What is clear from talking to the administration is that the leadership of the school passionately endorses a wide and inclusive definition of learning and knowledge. The Headmaster describes his concepts of learning from a personal perspective.

Lance: I have never stopped being impressed and being kept alive by the thirst for more knowledge. I love reading history and studying politics. I love exploring art, I
have a great thirst for it. So I think that anything that thirsts for knowledge is academic in nature. Anything that causes you to try and think and relate one concept or idea to another is intellectual stimulation.

The Headmaster develops this idea further when describing the school’s philosophy with boys;

Lance: We are trying to instil in them that they will never exhaust their thirst for knowledge. They need to spread and absorb [all that they can], and not narrow themselves to just one narrow field of inquiry and knowledge. We are trying to say to them “Young men, you have to be very guarded about becoming just a scientist or a mathematician because that is not going to sustain you. Don’t discard education for education’s sake”.

These beliefs are reflected in the administration’s aims for the boys.

Millington: We want them to be independent thinkers. We are trying to get away from the simple regurgitation of knowledge. In the final analysis I guess knowledge is a process of making connections, and those connections expand as the mind and the horizons are extended.

The leaders of the school create an impression that learning in Greene’s College is, at least at the philosophical level, driven by a need for a broad base of learning, of developing divergent as well as convergent skills, of exploring knowledge in all its permutations across the broad panoply of subjects in its curriculum.

Being “academic” is more than just grades! These worthy goals lead me to question how well they reflect the reality of what happens in the school. I mention during the interviews that I suspect boys have a rather limited idea of “learning”. The administrators reluctantly agree (“Yes, I bet they do”, says Lance). The administrators are realistic; they
accept that a more limited interpretation of knowledge and learning than what they 
idealistically describe, operates at the classroom level. One clear indication of this, they 
tell me, is that at Greene’s College, the boys are obsessed with grades. 

Millington: Yes, you are quite right. I am still extremely uncomfortable with the 
North American obsession with marks rather than the notion of knowledge. I mean, I 
am someone who has a passion for knowledge and understanding. I read all the time; 
I’m interested in many things. And I really have no time for people whose obsession 
is with testing kids, marking kids, who use marks as a kind of blunt instrument to 
bludgeon kids into submission. My approach is that we excite boys into the fact that 
learning is fun. Education, in the widest and deepest sense of the word has little to do 
with marks.

This, coming from the teacher who during my Immersion phase admonished the grade 
eleven’s after one assembly for poor grades (“This is a university entrance school. We 
expect you to be serious about that aim, it’s what we are here for. So get your act into 
gear, sort it out”) does not suggest hypocrisy on his or the administration’s part. Rather, 
it reflects that on this issue there exists a profound dilemma in the school between 
idealistic ambitions and practical reality.

We have to provide our clients with academic success! While the school, through its 
administration, holds admirable perceptions of what is meant by “learning” and 
“knowledge”, the responsibility of their positions of leadership force them to come face-
to-face with the challenge of ensuring the institution’s economic success. The Director of 
Studies sheds some light on this problem.

52 What, during my “First Access” and Immersion phases, boys and staff have termed as “marks grubbing”.
53 See The School Assembly, Chapter 6.
Laurie: The bottom line is that we have to demonstrate to the real world, to parents and the community, in order to survive as an independent school, that our product is measurably better than other schools.

As the Headmaster points out, this is an unavoidable reality of the modern independent school operating in a very competitive market: "We see ourselves as being a top academic school. We are very mindful of how the public perceive us. We want to continue to attract top kids because that's what stokes the great machine along". Some argue this "school-as-a-business" rationale has become a fundamental part of the very essence of the school.

James: That's the reality of this place, [we are a College school]. It exists to the point where students become aware of that and they start saying "Is this for marks?" That is a big thing. It is sort of drilled into them basically. I guess because we are a business, and we are good at delivering that product.

Many staff are not comfortable with this situation. Victor worries that "the boys are driven to succeed and that's unhealthy". "It's the worst aspect of the school", says Roscoe. "The fact that the kids are so goal driven, so mark obsessed to get into the right university, to perform pre-determined tasks." Roscoe stresses that the staff share the administration's discomfort that learning has taken on such a narrow definition in the school. "In the staff room I hear the staff say 'The students should be encouraged for the love of learning itself'. The trouble is, that's not the mandate of the school. We are a business". Whether this is actually the case or not, it certainly is what the boys hear.

Peter: Academically the school is extremely competitive. It's what's been indoctrinated into the students. Here you are told from the very beginning, well not told, it is 'suggested', but anyway it's bred into you that the grades are the most
important thing. It isn’t necessarily the content. It’s getting the little numbers at the end of the year that’s important. I find it can be destructive.

Lance laments this dilemma; “The curriculum is driven by forces you don’t always control, such as ‘pass these exams’. But we don’t expend enough reflective time in class, and staff, despite their training, aren’t always comfortable with that approach.” Meg agrees, “I don’t know how we ended up teaching so many subjects the way we teach the academics”. Janet would answer that teaching boys didactically is a practical necessity.

Janet: When they [the boys] exhibit the characteristics we are trying to help them develop, they can be quite difficult to manage. The same characteristics we are trying to foster; independent thinking, teaching them how to use power, gain power, share power, recognise power, it all makes it difficult to run a class.

Whatever the reason, an “academics” culture permeates the school. A direct result is a particular conceptualisation of learning and knowledge that has evolved because it serves the agenda of the school’s clients. What is this notion of “academics”, and what does it mean for boys’ negotiation of masculinity?

“Academics” are certain subjects! The boys I interview are quite clear about “what is academic”. First, they use subjects to define the concept. “Academics are the subjects you absolutely have to have” (Stuart). “Science and math. They are the academics” (Chris). “The easiest definition is that academics are the core subjects like English, math, science and socials” (Samuel). I ask Samuel if they are academic because they are core subjects, or if they are core subjects because they are academics? The latter. “They are academic because it’s all memorisation. They are classes where you don’t have the opportunity to give an opinion on something or try to work things out.”
"Academic" subjects are all about impersonal memorisation! This comment highlights a second trend in responses; if "academics" are specific subjects, then those subjects also have particular characteristics. "An academic subject requires a lot of studying and a lot of tests. It's something that you have to build on. It's all memory" (Arnand). "Academic is when you have to study hard, you have to work for it" (Randall). "Academics is where you have to study a lot from books. You have to learn a lot of things" (Simon).

If "academics" are only some subjects and they have certain characteristics, a third descriptor highlighted in interviews is that they also have a common interpretation of knowledge. What you learn is impersonal and removed from "you". Typical of many responses is Chris' comment; "Academics are subjects where you are not allowed or expected to express your ideas. Like in math; that's an academic subject. It's pretty much clear cut what math is." Samuel explains this belief very well.

Samuel: It's just pure memorisation. I guess that is what makes it academic. There isn't really a personal factor in it. It's just information being given to you.

Sometimes the school does a pretty good job of making it more personal, like we did in English with Kosovo and stuff like that. During the last term we didn't follow the regular curriculum. We talked about what people think and stuff like that. So even though they are academic there are times when they become less academic and opinions are sought. They make it more personal to you. (My emphasis.)

I must admit I am surprised at how often members of the staff echo these very limiting definitions. One of many similar comments from staff was Wendy's response to the question "What is academics?"
Wendy: An academic subject is one that is thought to be rigid, one that takes a lot of time to read. It has a lot of highly structured lessons where the boys need to be taught. It’s heavily into science and math. And English too; it takes a lot of time and repetitive instruction to go from level to level, that way it becomes very academic. An academic subject is one that you need to be able to graduate.

Discussions with the participants show that they believe the school’s primary function is to support the academics. Only some subjects fall into this category. By definition they are subjects that lead to specific (high status) careers, they focus on rote learning, they only deal with examinable material, and they must exclude meaningful interaction with participant’s own beliefs and attitudes because they can only deal with material that is either right or wrong. While simplistic to the point of inaccuracy (particularly when considering the breadth of definition of this term given by the school leadership) this is how the majority of boys who were interviewed conceptualise “academic” learning. This is a worrying portrait of an aspect of this school that carries such importance.

The “non-academics” are about exploration and they engage the personal! With such clear-cut images of “academics” I ask one boy what characteristics “non-academic” subjects have? “With the academics, if the answer is right, it is right. With other subjects there is so much grey area, you can argue your thesis is right and you could be” (Chris). I am entering the domain of subjects like art. I ask Samuel what are the alternatives to the academic subjects?

Samuel: They are the electives. You get to choose them. When you choose a subject that’s non-academic you’re electing it, you are putting yourself into it. Because you have elected it, that’s what your opinion is. (My emphasis.)
Elective subjects engage the personal, and as such they act to define the individual. By choosing a subject, you are giving others a message about how you see yourself. Art is one of these subjects.

The electives also encourage exploration. "In art you have to learn from the experience of doing it, or take other people's word for it if they have the experience" (Kevin). "Art feels like a free block. Even music is stricter. In art we get a task and it's sometimes quite hard. We can solve it ourselves, or we can walk around and see what others are doing with their project" (Kurt). The boys see it as a release from the rigid parameters of other subjects. "It's totally different to the academics where all you do is regurgitate facts back" says Chris. "That's not problem solving. You don't have to think like you do in art. Here you have to conjugate. You are trying to express something original and new." And from Samuel;

Samuel: Victor gives us our project, and he lets us work on it on our own and build something that we feel satisfied with. It's something we want it to be. It's great, because you have been able to put your personal opinion into it. Your feelings and opinions are in there. It isn't like the academics where it's all "This is what you have to learn, now learn it".

It seems that art's benefits are important to boys who do it. "Art is different [to the academics] because you are exploring your own self, your artistic side, your talent. You are developing what you are good at" (Chris). "For me it's like sport, a release. It's so different. Art is working, but it's creative. You branch off into stuff you want to do" (Ben). "In academic subjects you learn a concept, but here in art you take the concept further. You create your own" (Andre).
Some answers to boys’ perceptions of learning and knowledge in the school.

During the interviews I was attempting to explore how the types of knowledge sponsored by the school impacts boys’ opportunities to negotiate masculinities, both inside art and in the wider context of the school. Participants’ comments indicates that the institution has noble and worthwhile concepts it wishes to pursue with boys. But the reality is that the school also has many needs, and these needs actually drive what happens in the classroom.

It is apparent that the school must, as a matter of pragmatism, recognise that its business is producing success and this means high grades in certain subjects by its clients. Boys interpret this to mean that “real” learning is measured by grades, and that only some types of knowledge are acknowledged by the school and society as worthwhile. In this environment it remains a critical task of marginalised subjects, those excluded from the comfort zone of perceived “academic” subjects, to literally fight for recognition and acceptance with students and the school community.

Within this school that many say rewards non-involved and repetitive learning, boys often say that art offers an alternative educational environment where expression, where communication, where the developing of personal ideas and ideals, and where the opportunity to accomplish practical results, are possible.

Electives, boys tell me, act as “self-definers”, and as such they carry more importance to boys in terms of exploring “the self” than most academic subjects. While as an educator I am tempted to argue (like the Headmaster on pages 244-245) that all subjects can and should be taught in a manner that achieves these goals, the fact is that the boys are making these outcomes the clear and distinct definition between “electives” and “academics” in this school.
What Type of Boy is the School Producing?

He’s a molded man, an all-rounder! From the interviews there is no doubt the image of a “Greene’s College Man” exists. I’ll call him the “ideal”. Does the staff feel the administration sponsors such an ideal? “Oh yes! The administration will talk about what is the “acceptable range” of the Greene’s College boy” (Janet). “I don’t know about the school, but I think the Headmaster has a certain boy he wants. He has a vision!” (James.) “Yes, he exists as a stereotype,” says Louise. “He’s Caucasian (I don’t want to be racist, though). Tall, blonde, well built, and an athlete. Strong academically, a gentleman.” Dilbert echoes similar beliefs. “They [the administration] have got a great model of who they want to produce, someone who is academically very sound, but also experienced in the athletic world.” He goes on to add music and art to these accomplishments. “I think the school’s ideal student is someone who can excel in all those areas.”

The Headmaster doesn’t back away from admitting he holds a clear ideal for “his” boys. I ask him if he can realistically pursue this goal? Can he really influence how a boy will turn out? “Yes. At my old school sometimes boys come back and give me their reflections that help me believe I make a difference. I know if I stand by my convictions it will change boys.” I ask him what are these ideals?

Lance: My product is the boy that has the confidence to be able to accept mistakes, to be honest and take his punishment. He has what I like to call a “quiet confidence”. He feels good about where he’s come from, he feels good about where he’s going, and he feels good about what he has to offer. But he isn’t so naïve or arrogant that he goes into the world thinking he’s got all the answers.
These goals are certainly worthy. Does the message reach the boys? What is of interest is to hear boys' interpretations of the ideals they feel the school holds as valuable. For some it is a very literal message they receive; "He's six foot two inches, one hundred and ninety pounds, extremely good at rugby and basketball. He gets honours with distinction, and he's a spectacular artist. But he isn't rebellious or disruptive. And he's rich!" (Bruce.) For others the message is more subtle. "They [the administration] kind of give you the feeling that they want to create something out of you, mould you into, I suppose, an all-rounded man" (Lachland). "I'm sure they have a role model they want us to follow," says Chris. "But for obvious reasons they are not going to name any names and say this is who we want you to be. You can't find him, because everyone has their strong and weak points."

Many boys can put specific characteristics on this "ideal". "Yes there is a Greene's College man. He's a gentleman. That's what they are trying to do with us. We are going to be respectful and successful. An all-round type of person, y'know, do sports and stuff" (Andre). Chris agrees, "The man they are trying to turn out is well-rounded. He's an academic and an artist. He's creative and well mannered. A gentleman!" For some, this "ideal" carries significant overtones of power;

Randall: He's bigger and stronger and faster and more important than others. They [the administration] want someone who is going into society as a high earner, someone who is high up on the social scale and is able to say "I went to Greene's College ". He's someone who is going to promote the school for them when he leaves.

For others it is an ideal that stresses traditional stereotypes of masculinity. This happens through the things that are emphasised ("[A Greene's College man] is a sportsman. You
can see that by the awards they give out. Art isn’t stressed, but other things are, especially sports. Sports are masculine. They are very proud of their sports teams” [Olaf]). This is also emphasised by the things that are downplayed (“Oh, he’s the all-rounder. You’ve heard of him, good at sport and fairly smart and does all his studies. He has a hint of the arts to him, but only a bit, to make him fully-rounded!” [Ishmael]). There is no doubt the image of the ideal man exists in the school, and he takes on various forms, according to who interprets him. As participants begin to explain how they see that ideal reified, many see it as a positive concept.

James: It lets kids do different things without being seen to be geeky or gay or whatever. When I was in school things like the band were off limits to me, they were geeky. And art. Its usually seen as feminine. Here its part of the ideal.

He’s fabricated, not genuine! While the goal of setting standards of masculinity to which boys should aspire is noble, some concerns are aired as well. One issue is that this “ideal” boy Greene’s College wants to turn out is perceived by some as having inherent faults. For example, he is fabricated, not genuine. “There is an ideal here. They are creating an ideal. When I first arrived I thought ‘Oh my God they are manufacturing successful people’! I spoke to a teacher and he disagreed. Seriously though, they are manufacturing people!” (Ishmael.) Ishmael’s greatest complaint is that by conforming to the ideal boys do not meet their potential.

Ishmael: I only know one of these all-rounders. He’s the ideal Greene’s College boy. He does art, but it is “socially acceptable” art. It’s mostly pencil sketches (because that shows off the skills everyone admires) and his work is mostly about sport and cars. This kid is an all-rounder, a guy’s guy. He’s only doing enough art to become an all-rounder. That’s what they [the administration] are trying to do to us.
Another boy sees the image of the Greene's College man deeply rooted in traditional stereotypes of masculine behaviour.

Randall: A lot of it comes from the white male perspective. A lot of it is to do with being bigger and stronger than the next guy and having a job that has more money and a bigger car and a better-looking girlfriend. It's all so material.

He's a conformist! Another fault some teachers identify is that the ideal operates simply to get boys to conform. "The ideal is a boy who is very competitive, hardworking, very conformist and un-opinionated. 'Just do what you're told.' That way he'll be fine. He won't be a creative thinker or an individual, but he'll get by in society" (James).

He's impossible to achieve! If a negative effect of the ideal is that it is seen to manufacture boys and seek conformity, another criticism from participants is that it is a concept or ideal that is unsustainable, it creates pressure, and can harm boys. "The kids who aren't in the 'path' [fulfilling the ideal of the Greene's College man] become more rebellious and more negative and end up not supporting the school" (James). One boy is clearly frustrated with trying to meet the ideal. When I ask him if there is an "ideal Greene's College man", he answers,

Armand: Yes there is and it's too much though. They are trying to develop a kid who's really competitive. That's unhealthy. I can't take it, it's ridiculous. There's a lot of cheating going on, and a lot of stupid acts going on. I've decided to not go along with it. At the end of the day I'll probably be the better man for it. That's why I like art. It's not competing with other people.

The sad fact is that many boys see that this important icon is in all reality, an impossibility. "I haven't found anybody like that. I don't think it's possible" (Chris).

"The ideal kid has a big brain and big muscles and is active in all sports and academics.
That’s impossible. You can’t focus or balance them. Some try, but then there is a lot of stress and pressure and problems” (Arnand). “Of course it’s impossible. No one can live up to that sort of image. Some try, but its too much” (Kurt).

A number of teachers agree with the impossibility of attaining these noble goals. “No, I suppose when you think about it, they simply can’t [meet these goals]” (Russell). “There are many outright failures” (Victor). Even the Headmaster agrees. I say to him that many boys won’t meet the ideal. He answers “Of course they won’t”.

One teacher, Louise, comments further about the ramifications of this situation. “Very few boys live up to the expectation [of the ideal Greene’s College boy].” She goes on to trace the boys’ progress from grade eight (“where they don’t really have much awareness of the reality of what’s expected of them”), into grades nine and ten (“they have such optimism”) to the sad awakening in grades eleven and twelve where they “become more cynical”. “I don’t know what anyone else thinks, but I feel discouraged with the grade twelve’s. I think there is something that happens in this school by then. They become apathetic, disenchanted.” For both the boys and staff it is a sad acknowledgement; the ideals of this perfect man are beyond the boys’ capabilities.

Some answers to the existence of a school-sponsored “ideal” man. What is clear is that this ideal is recognised by the boys as being a standard of masculinity set by the school. It involves certain aspects of “character” to which any successful Greene’s College boy must aspire. In the culture of this school where competition and success are highly prized, this ideal becomes a model of masculinity that carries significant power over the boys.

Thus the characteristics that make up this ideal are critical when considering the freedom boys may have as they pursue their own versions of masculinity. Participation in
art is encouraged in that artistic accomplishment is stressed as being part of being the ideal “all-rounder”. However, it is also discouraged by tagging art as a “non-academic” subject that does not, ultimately, contribute to “what you are really here for”. Such is the diachotomy boys face. On philosophical grounds learning “who you are” is a prized outcome of the school, but in reality the school appears to frown on such exploration because to do so is to elevate the individual above the team, and possibly into the realms of non-conformity.

Ishmael: Ideally that means he plays an instrument, because it’s culture but it’s not actually you making the noise, it’s not profoundly you. Also, acting is OK for the hint of culture, because they can choose which author, whose words, you are going to speak. Art is not on. Oh no! Art is totally him, the individual, and that freedom scares them.

A consequence is that this practice by the school can nullify the mandate on boys that they explore personal values and beliefs that constitute their own masculinity. While it appears that philosophically the school supports the types of experiences boys gain through art (exploration of “the self”, developing individual interpretations of reality, negotiating values and beliefs with others through open-ended and inconclusive projects), the reality is that boys perceive the school’s aims as quite different. In this environment, and contrary to the philosophical beliefs of the administration and many staff, boys believe they are being trained to obey, and they are being encouraged to adopt a pragmatic approach to knowledge, to learning, and to life.

Reflections on My “Emerging Themes”

This chapter has explored issues brought to light during the Immersion phase of the study, done through interviews using questions evolved from that data. While I
interview, I also continue to transcribe and code on a nightly basis. As the information grows, I read and re-read the data and, using the merging functions of ATLAS, I conflate many codes into "family codes". This helps me identify trends that exist across responses. I explore these trends, or "emerging themes", further using the memo function of ATLAS.

Summary of Themes Identified During the Interviews Concerning Art

Art is an enjoyable subject that acts as a release for boys within the mundane school curriculum. However, a further five characteristics were emphasised.

Art has personal significance for boys. The art curriculum holds relevance for many boys because (a) it allows them to work in a way that suits them individually, whether they be a skills-based or a "high-art" type of student, or whether they enjoy a conceptual or a technical approach to the subject; (b) the art curriculum allows boys to engage in projects according to their own interpretations of what is required.

Art mandates exploration of "the self". This occurs because (a) art curriculum is "non-academic", and as such it allows personal interpretation of facts. In addition, the very act of selecting art acts as a public declaration of some personal values and beliefs; (b) art is a practically-based subject that requires boys to "do it" rather than be passive receptors of information; (c) art curriculum expects personal opinion to be the main focus of all work produced; (d) in art, teachers take on the role of facilitators of exploration, not that of didactic instructors.

Art provides boys with a venue for communication with others. This occurs because (a) the art curriculum creates, according to boys' definitions, a "safe" environment; (b) art curriculum helps negate kategelophobia by mandating and providing curricular opportunities for expression; (c) art curriculum provides a forum for discussion on "equal grounds", (d) by its very nature art is a subject that fosters relating to others.
Boys Doing Art

(“once others relate to your work, they are relating to you” [Peter]); (e) art curriculum helps boys challenge hegemony by not owning any “right” and “wrong”.

The art curriculum provides boys with freedom. This occurs in three ways; (a) curricular freedom allows boys room to determine their own methods and means of addressing set criteria; (b) intellectual freedom allows boys room to interpret and engage material according to individual epistemologies, (c) physical freedom provides boys room to move between classes and groups within classes, to discuss ideas and to find a suitable environment to engage in their work.

The art curriculum provides boys a “level playing field”. This occurs because (a) boys of all “types” have room within its curriculum to engage the material according to individual needs, (b) art fosters tolerance between boys through the expectation of a fair and equal exchange of ideas, beliefs and opinions.

Summary of Themes Identified During the Interviews Concerning Masculinity

Restrictive definitions of masculinity. Boys are handed a clear but limited definition of masculinity by society, by their school, and by their own culture. There is, for boys, (a) a clearly perceived danger in differing from these definitions; (b) and in reality are rarely challenged in this environment to do so.

Stereotypes of masculinity can lack relevance. In virtually every case interviewed, the stereotypes of masculinity rife in their culture and the school bear little resemblance to the reality of boys’ actual beliefs regarding personal masculinities.

Boys are typed. The school, and boy-cultures within which boys operate, acts to “type” boys. This (a) effectively legitimises some limited masculinities; (b) to some degree dictates behaviour; (c) deflects attention from the challenge to articulate personal masculinities.
Boys manipulate their own culture. Boys do not accept the superficiality of this typing as a fair description of who they are. They act within their culture to refine or even re-define these masculinities (a) by extending these “types” into “groups”; (b) by negotiating an “identity” within the limited mores of these groups; (c) by identifying with a group that is most in sympathy with their personal beliefs; (d) by acknowledging these “identities” are not a true reflection of personal values and beliefs.

Boys seek opportunities to communicate and express. Boys are pro-active in negotiating these masculinities (a) because they have a desire to express and communicate individual beliefs; (b) because groups have associated characteristics to which boys are (to some degree) in agreement; (c) because they are able to manipulate the parameters of these group to achieve “identities” that reflect something of their individualities.

Boy-culture doesn’t meet boys’ needs. Having said this, typing and grouping within the boy-culture does not adequately meet the needs of many boys to properly express the values and beliefs that constitute their personal masculinities. Many wish to describe to others a more individual interpretation of themselves. To do this, they; (a) require support from outside their culture. This support includes; (b) being given opportunities to express themselves (usually associated with small groups); (c) a safe environment, created in the curriculum by; (d) the nature of the subject (discussion/interchange style as compared to academic/instruction style); (e) teachers capable of facilitating discussion; (f) small class sizes; and (g) an established mandate that gives boys permission to show emotions, caring, and knowledge.

Summary of Themes Identified During the Interviews Concerning the School.

The school (unintentionally) creates a very limited definition of knowledge. Described as “academic” knowledge to the boys this approach values above all else
learning that is rote and knowledge that is binary. Marks-grubbing is symptomatic of this school culture that emphasises high-stress, that encourages non-participatory activities (within its formalised curriculum), and breeds a competitive and stressful environment based on clear definitions of success and failure. Academics by definition exclude the personal, while non-academics are seen as encouraging creativity, self-expression, and are a secure environment for discussing personal issues.

All participants clearly identify an “ideal” male towards which the school directs its boys. The ideal, while encompassing worthy values, is represented in the boy-culture as another stereotype, with inherent faults and limitations, one of which is that it is seen by some as being fabricated and manufactured. The ideal seeks to have boys conform, and represents an unsustainable goal; an image of masculinity that is out of reach of most boys and that cannot be achieved. The ideal for most boys, therefore, has an element of in-built failure.

A Preliminary Model of the Phenomenon of Boys Exploring Masculinity Through Art Education

From this ongoing analysis, I find I have been sketching the broad outlines of the phenomenon of how boys’ perceive masculinity, and how they use the art curriculum to negotiate these masculinities. Boys experience a number of barriers to exploring masculinity. In spite of this, they can be seen to actively work through a process of gradual engagement of masculinity. Art education provides boys with a number of benefits when engaged in this process.

The Six Barriers to Exploring Masculinity

1. Stereotypes provide a too-easy escape. Stereotypes act as an easy alternative to engaging masculinity in any meaningful way. In their day-to day lives boys are rarely
asked to engage issues regarding masculinity. When they are, stereotypes provide a superficial, safe and socially acceptable path to negotiate those tricky situations when the peer group requires “manly” responses.

2. Stereotypes lack personal relevance. The values inherent in stereotypes are too often significantly removed from most boys’ individual beliefs. This disparity means boys often disassociate the concept of “masculinity” from their inner-most values and beliefs – values and beliefs that more honestly define them.

3. Stereotypes have no scope for exploration. The structure of these stereotypes is so limited that no room exists within them to allow boys to extrapolate the concept of masculinity any further. If boys wish to do this they enter unknown waters, where knowledge of masculinity fostered by the stereotypes provides little support, direction, or guidance.

4. Masculinity is a “vacuum” for boys. Boys lack knowledge of its construct and the variety of ways it is represented in society, and in their own culture. They rarely show ownership of any conceptual frameworks necessary to explore masculinity in meaningful ways beyond the stereotypical.

5. There exists no satisfactory masculinity “vocabulary”. Boys have few verbal tools to articulate individual masculinities beyond the stereotypical. Even if they live worthy masculinities, and even if they wish to explore them further with others, boys have difficulty articulating what they are thinking. Whereas feminism has supplied girls with
many such tools, boys have few linguistic concepts to draw on, causing them to revert to stereotyped definitions that they acknowledge are trite and lack personal relevance.

6. The unsatisfactory climate for exploring masculinity. There is evidence of a lack of institutionalised and cultural empathy for the existence of a myriad of masculinities. Various important agents in boys' lives unintentionally act to limit opportunities to extend their concepts of masculinity. The environment within which they are schooled, the institution itself, the curriculum, and the staff, act to legitimise a select interpretation of being a man, and while occasionally recognising individuality it does little to foster or encourage its development.

**Boys actively work through a process of engaging masculinity**

In spite of these barriers, boys actively explore masculinity through a process of defining themselves to their peers.

**Boys' "layering" of masculinity.** Boys engage masculinity through at least four layers. Initially they rely on stereotypes of masculinity, which come with pre-determined "types" and associated behavioural characteristics.

The next layer of engagement is through "groupings". This is the fundamental way boys organise their own culture. Here they advertise their association with a subculture. Some are keen to be seen as being a "jock", some an "academic", some a "bohemian", some a "skid".

Third is the pursuit of "identity", during which boys engage in complex negotiations within the rules of their groups. This appears to be done in an effort to be different, but not too different. Here boys seek a "character" or an "identity" that may not

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54 By this I am referring to the wealth of knowledge girls now own about how they are marginalized by sexism, how social structures can be used to oppress their values, beliefs and opportunities. Many girls know -- and use -- terms such as chauvinism, equal opportunity, women's ways of knowing, etc.
necessarily reflect their own values or beliefs. In spite of its importance, it is acknowledged to be an “act”. Boys attempt to be “cool”, or they want to show others they can be “alternative”. Either way, it is an attempt to confront and extend the rules that govern their peer group, without totally removing themselves from that culture.

The fourth layer is “individuality”, where boys explore ideas and actions that may be removed from the conventions of the peer group, but hold significance for themselves. At this layer, boys are acknowledging that the “identity” they have created within their peer group is not necessarily accurate to their personal views of the world, or reflective of their “true self”. Characteristic of this layer are comments by boys that contradict their culture, and actions that are interpreted as putting themselves “out there”, meaning beyond the safety of normal boy-culture behaviours. This layer is the most dangerous. To seek individuality often means intentionally leaving the protection of the boy-culture.

Boys’ core need to communicate and express. At this fourth level, this innermost and most intimate layer of boys’ engagement of their masculinity, boys confront the values they hold most dear. They question their own beliefs and determine “who I am”, and determine which of these core qualities they wish to articulate to others in a way convincing enough to be accepted by their peer group. To do this, boys operating at this level seek opportunity to “communicate” and “express”, they engage in a “passion” for something personally important. This is the act of negotiating their individual masculinity with others.

In the schooling situation, this fourth layer is facilitated in intimate social groups, and through curriculum with classes that are small, flexible in approaches to learning, run by passionate teachers, and characteristically use discussion as a pedagogy tool. By the boys’ own definition, these curricular characteristics are most often those of the non-
academic subjects, where definitions of knowledge are more liberal, and expression and communication is mandated.

The eight attractions of art education for boys. As one of these subjects, boys describe art as holding a number of advantages. Firstly, it is non-academic. This means art curriculum does not pursue any "right or wrong", allowing boys room to consider, interpret, create and present, and then justify individual interpretations of concepts. Secondly, art recognises multiple ways of working and multiple solutions to problems. Thirdly, art is taught in a "free" atmosphere that releases boys from the limitations of the traditional classroom. Fourthly, art allows many "types" of boys to participate equally, levelling the playing field between boys, and allowing significant interchanges to occur. Fifth, art by its very nature, and supported by how it is taught in this school, is a safe forum for expression and the exchange of ideas. Because of this art allows boys to challenge hegemony. Sixth, art is relevant to "real-life" and suits the ways boys like to learn, because it is problem-based and allows boys to "do it". Seventh, art is non-competitive, something that makes it a refuge in this academic environment. Eighth, because of its flexible curriculum art allows teachers to focus on "the personal" with boys.

The influence of the school on boys exploration of masculinities. The school provides admirable resources for boys, including significant support for the art program. This variety of options for study allows boys a degree of autonomy. The school provides a settled and focused environment, which helps boys to acquire knowledge and to engage in worthwhile interactions with peers relatively free of harassment. Also, it appears that the school has an "equalising" effect on the boys, created by its strong academic focus, its use of the uniform and procedural demands to homogenise the school population, and its expectation of participation in a variety of activities. The single-sex structure breaks some
gender stereotypes, and gives boys the freedom to act “more naturally”. These factors create an empathic environment for boys to address issues of social justice.

The interviews suggest that some practices of the school conflict with the art curriculum regarding its perceived benefits for boys. What I understand from boys’ comments, is that while art curriculum fosters divergent processes of learning, the school holds as “important” those subjects that favour convergent approaches. While art curriculum encourages expression of the self, the school endorses knowledge that is binary, and is removed from boys’ “real life”. While art curriculum encourages boys to create personal meaning, the school (through its focus on academic grades) gives the impression to boys that the opposite is “what they are really here for”. To achieve the grades required of them, they must be passive receptors of didactic instruction.

This model, analysed from data systematically acquired through informal and broadly based observations and conversations (“Conceptualising the Boundaries” phase), through more focused observations and discussions (Immersion phase), and through detailed and in-depth interviews (“Emerging Themes” phase) provides a clear image, a model of the phenomenon, of boys, masculinity and art education. What must now follow is a period of “fleshing out” this sketch, where the model is used to make sense of my original research queries.

**Conclusion**

It is, again, a lovely spring day. I sit in Newton Hall during the last staff meeting as the Headmaster sums up the year, as various fun awards are given out, and as some

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55 Clearly, this is not always the case. During the interviews, boys mentioned that in some subjects they are encouraged to discuss issues. However, when Samuel and others made these comments, they were stating them to be the exception, rather than the rule, and more the result of progressive teaching than traits inherent to these subjects. In comparison, boys were consistently stating that such attributes are inherent to art’s epistemology.
final housekeeping items are discussed. There is an air of relaxation about the meeting. Everyone wears casual clothes, they laugh and make quips to each other while motivational and (justifiable) self-congratulatory speeches are made. My seat is at the rear of the room. I sit and watch quietly, very much the observer again. These are not my celebrations. For the staff the work is done, and a long summer waits outside the doors.

For me, I have a long way still to go. I suppose I can share in the release of tension for staff, that unique feeling that teachers have as they say goodbye to a full and rewarding year, because in some respects, my study is complete. I have the feeling that the themes that have emerged from this phase, and the model of the phenomenon that has been created, now allows readers of this study to draw conclusions about how boys perceive masculinity, how they explore and negotiate these masculinities, and the importance of art in this process (in this school). My feeling is that the inwardly spiralling, inwardly focusing nature of Boys Doing Art has reached a point where it can converge no more.

I have often considered that what I am doing is like progressing down a funnel. At the top it is wide, with huge amounts of data scattered in its vast volume. Slowly, over time and through much effort, I progress down the funnel by analysing and re-focusing the data into ever more specific inquiry. I am slowly being lead by participants’ comments towards clearer and clearer understanding. The walls close in, the data becomes more condensed, and meanings become more apparent. Eventually I will be squeezed out the neck of the funnel. When I reach this stage there will be a conclusion, a finish. Sitting here, watching the release of tension amongst these extraordinary teachers, realising I now have a model of the phenomenon I am investigating, I wonder if this is as far as I will travel.
As tempting as the thought is, I realise this is not the end for me. The sheer mass of data collected and analysed during this phase is daunting. Months of interviews and observations have been transcribed and coded. They have been read a number of times to explore the meanings that participants are placing on the phenomenon I am investigating. The “model” of the phenomenon, summarised into the previous half-dozen pages, is enlightening but still not complete. I need to make further sense of what the participants have told me, to see how they have helped me understand better those questions first raised many years ago by Malcolm and others like him, and to apply that information to what the literature tells me we know about boys’ exploration of masculinity. I now need to immerse myself back into the data, to do what Ely et al (1991) describe as an unavoidable phase of ethnography, the quiet and secluded consideration of what participants have told me.

As the staff leave the hall for the beaches and their holiday cabins in the mountains of this gloriously beautiful country, I realise they are taking away something I have come to depend on; the companionship of professionals engaged in the rewarding occupation of educating young men well. This coming task will be, I think, a lonely phase.
Chapter 8: The Fourth Phase, "Making Sense"

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter, structured into three sections, is my attempt to make sense of what I have seen, of framing a discussion of the results of the ethnography. I realise from reading what I have written to date that the time is right to come face-to-face with the core issues that have been driving Boys Doing Art for over a year. It is a period during which I must triangulate the data by comparing the responses of the three groups of participants (the administrators, the boys, and the teachers), as well as comparing the responses within each of these groups, to see where opinions on the themes identified in the previous chapter converge, diverge, or have commonality. It is also a stage where I begin to voice more of my own insights based on participant observations and my analysis of that data. While attempting to stay within the parameters of the information I have received, I begin to make comment on the key focus of this thesis – the art curriculum and its role in boys' development of concepts of gender.

What Range of Masculinities Exists in the School?

I have never doubted that I will find a "range" of masculinities at Greene's College. For a start, it is clear from my writing in Chapter 2 that I disbelieve the assumptions rife in the literature, that assumes masculinity is some singular entity that is common to all boys. From my own experience I know that boys vary widely in their masculinities. While the scope and nature of this eludes me, I begin the project confident that I will hear many versions of manhood being articulated. I fully expect that from material gained during Boys Doing Art, I will hear participants categorise a number of masculinities using familiar labels, such as nerd or jock. I realistically expect to have participants expand this list, to add some extra "types" to this list that are new to me. On reflection, I think I was
anticipating that I would have identified for me some “inter-differences” of masculinity, a mass of categorisations of masculinity that differentiates some boys from most others.

The First Range of Masculinities: Types

This expectation is fulfilled; a commonality is that all participants recognise these inter-differences as existing. This is what is happening when boys are “typed”. Types of masculinity are applied to boys from without (society and the school), as well as from within their own boy-culture. This is done to boys, and they also do it to themselves and to each other. They will describe themselves as a “jock” or an “academic”, or they may be more discriminating and say they are a “thinking kind of man”, or someone who is “physical and active”. These are descriptions of themselves founded on other people’s interpretations of “manliness”, and are also a method of categorisation that is based on certain inherent traits that seem unchangeable; after all, “You are what you are” (Samuel).

The school validates typing by being an active participant. The institution is considered by many to advocate a specific type of masculinity. Types of boys are dictated from very early in their association with the institution. The boys know that a gatekeeper has decided through interview who “is right” for the institution. They then see typing happen as they enter the school when they are streamed into homogeneous home-groups based on physical prowess. There is even evidence of teachers typing boys as a pedagogical tool; a way of predicting reactions to curriculum, or to help teachers plan an approach that will be most effective for a particular project.

30 By denoting “types” as the first layer of masculinity, I am not suggesting a similar structure doesn’t occur within femininity. Girls can also be “cool”, “nerds”, etc. However, I have no data to show how girls use typing when exploring femininity, or if it is the same as boys in this school suggest they use it when exploring masculinity.
Typing by the school continues throughout the boys’ high school lives with the spectre of the “ideal” graduate looming over their heads. This ideal is a concept widely acknowledged within the school culture by both boys and many staff. He is an all-rounder, a sportsman, a poet, a musician, and an artist. He is an academic, he is a courageous being, and he is a gentleman. The all-rounder comes to the fore in all circumstances – in the classroom and on the mountain. The boys describe him as the pinnacle of success in terms of meeting the school’s expectation of the perfect graduate, the ideal man.

![Diagram of masculinity layers](image)

**Figure 8.** Boys’ layering of masculinity.

Typing may have its uses, but it also has shortcomings, in that it creates a simplistic view of masculinity that restricts any further exploration of it as a concept.
Boys acknowledge that their immediate responses to “What is masculinity?” are dictated by the qualities of manliness pushed by their culture, their school and their society. Boys feel pressure to conform to these “types”, these stereotypes (see for instance Brannon, 1976), and are rewarded because they provide safety: to challenge its boundaries brings the risk of ostracism.

It is on this point that some divergence of opinion occurs. While many staff and administrators say they want to produce men who are individuals, who are creative and are questioners of authority, they admit this is unlikely in a school that both subliminally and at times quite overtly promotes conformist, competitive men in the mould of this ideal. Students view the ideal in a different light; the ideal represents a perfection of masculinity that boys’ view as impossible to achieve. Thus this supposedly motivational ideal becomes, in itself, a stereotype and an unreachable gender expectation. “Typing”, as shown in Figure 8, represents the most superficial range of masculinities evident in the school.

The Second Range of Masculinities: Groups

To me, it is not surprising to find that participants instinctively organise masculinity by types. “Jocks” and “nerds” are terms commonly known and used, and in some ways they are common sense. After all, we all own inbuilt characteristics that can be used to categorise us, and boys are no different. However, using these as categories to define something as personal as a boy’s masculinity seems a limiting interpretation of the concept. Therefore, I also expect to hear participants articulating the existence of a range of more descriptive masculinities in operation beneath these superficial types, or stereotypes. At the beginning of the study, I expect this to be where Boys Doing Art will extend our knowledge of boys’ perception of masculinity.
I find these more intimate versions of masculinity evident when boys describe how they “group” themselves, a phenomenon that surprises me with its complexity. Not only do these groups harbour a more sophisticated range of masculinities, they also constitute a central component or structural element of their boy-culture.

The sorts of groups I encounter often have strange names. “Jocks” again appear, but with it comes “cools”, “parachute kids”, “skids”, “bohemians”, “metal heads”, “populars”, “grunges”, “skateys” and so on. Staff and administrators admit they know little of this manifestation of the boys’ culture. I occasionally hear grouping being dismissed as an “immaturity thing”, something that meets a temporary social or developmental need, but will disappear soon. Judging from my discussions with the boys, such opinions tend to underestimate the importance of this phenomenon. During Chapter 6 and Chapter 7, boys give details about a selection of these groups, and others are only briefly mentioned. I never find myself in a position to explore them in any depth, because while I find them interesting, it is not their composition that is significant. Rather, it is the way they operate. The groups are a symptom of the society boys have created for themselves, and are one of this culture’s most visible features. Through them that I am introduced into the complexity of a “boy-culture” that dominates much of boys’ negotiation of masculinities.

Within these groups lie the second range of masculinities that I encounter. The groups are characterised by boys creating associations with other boys according to attitudes rather than physical dispositions, as happens with typing. These attitudes include tastes in music, dress, activities, and other likes and dislikes. They occasionally

57 Read Kurt’s description of some of these groups on page 253.
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encompass attitudes concerning moral or ethical issues, but are predominately concerned with organising their social structure according to commonalities that exist between boys.

These groups are not static but are in a continual state of change. Boys continually manipulate the parameters under which they operate. They call this “going with the flow”, making changes according to what is perceived to be “in” at the time. The groups can be polarized, with a range of often quite emotional opinions separating them, but they do allow boys a degree of freedom to gravitate towards cliques with which they share some affinity through shared tastes.

Boys appear as united in their descriptions of the phenomenon of groups, as staff and administrators appear uninformed of their purpose and importance. This is a critical gap in communication. By understanding something of the characteristics of the groups, we can begin to see how boys perceive themselves as different to others; skids are non-conformists, “cools” are in tune with popular culture and “have a life”, etc. While typing is immediate, imposed from without, and seemingly genetic (or at least, virtually unchallengeable), the action of associating with a group is to express something of how a boy perceives himself. This is done by making alliances with “like-minded” boys, and by rejecting associations with others. What is important is that they choose their own group, an action that is boys’ first meaningful exploration, within their society, of what makes them different. These are their early attempts to “self-define”, and in the process, because they wish to refine their own wishes to be in tune with those of the group, they are developing the important cultural skill of being able to negotiate the acceptance of their own individuality.

While this process continues (and becomes more complex and dangerous) as boys explore their masculinity further, it is important to note that the groups we as adults often
treat with humour are in fact boys’ first real acts of self-definition. While boys’ types are characteristics they are supposedly born with, a boy’s association with a group represents a significant attempt to practice autonomous choice. “Groups”, as shown in Figure 8, represent the second range of masculinities evident in the school, the layer where boys begin to define themselves to others according to personal tastes.

The Third Range of Masculinities: Identities

I encounter the third range of masculinities when boys describe to me their attempts to create “identity”. These masculinities are characterised by a need to be unique, while conforming to rules that govern the specific group to which a boy belongs.

What constitutes “identity” cannot be easily defined. Boys readily acknowledge that getting identity, or “style”, or “character” cannot be scripted. The cultural rules that govern this process fluctuate as boys continually refine what is “in”. Thus, for boys, the move from the comfort of a group into the development of an identity within that group is not an easy transition, and is made difficult by the illogicality of wanting to create an image, a personalised “character”, while at the same time making sure they are not being seen as being too different from others.

This is illustrated to me by the phenomenon of “being cool”. A common aim of many boys, being seen as cool is a status symbol within the peer group, if it can be attained successfully. However, it is a non-static concept with no clear rules. Being cool is to walk a tightrope between the desire for uniqueness and the need to subscribe to the mores of the group. The codes of conduct of “coolness” are so ill defined, that to be able to engage them is an act of “coolness” in itself. The boys who can successfully redefine the code, who can push its parameters to its limits (but not beyond) are in fact the coolest!
I do come across other methods that boys use to negotiate a position with their peers, other than to pursue "coolness". One is the manipulation of the dress code, another is the choice of the music to which they listen. While these are acts of self-definition, and they do begin the task of creating an "identity" within their group, all the choices I encounter are similar, in that they have limited options, they are sanitised, they pre-exist. The range of music groups, and the styles of dress that boys choose, the ways of being "cool", all come within the acceptable parameters of the culture (although this can accommodate some quite polarised tastes), meaning that boys rarely take risks and adopt "attitudes" that they have actually constructed themselves.

While it represents boys' continued desire to define themselves, to negotiate an "acceptable" position within their culture, these "characters" or "styles" have little substance. They are acknowledged as being transitory, important as a developmental stepping stone, but not a reflection of the "true-self". An important purpose of this activity is its role in furthering the skills of safe negotiation with their peers, the "cultural currency" I noted in Chapter 7. The skill of exploring individual beliefs with others began with boys choosing and being accepted by a group (and a sub-group within these groups) with which to be associated. With boys' pursuit of an "identity", this skill is refined and extended further, and as a result more and more of "the true self" becomes visible. However, in order to remain within the security of the culture, it is a characteristic of these identities that they often lack meaningful significance to boys' true values and beliefs (as described by Oscar, page 260).

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* See Chapter 7, page 255.
"Identities", as shown in Figure 8, represents the third range of masculinities evident in the school, one where boys practice how to negotiate a position that defines them as unique in some way, but that remains within the parameters of their culture.

The Fourth Range of Masculinities: Individualities

If staff and administrators appear uniformed about the importance of groups and of building an identity to the boys' culture in this school, all three categories of participants are united in their opinions concerning the fourth layer, "individualities". This, the fourth range of masculinities that I encounter, is constructed when boys attempt to explore what makes them an individual, and it is a phenomenon that is commented upon regularly by senior boys, staff and administrators alike.

The nature of the boy-culture I encounter discourages true individualism. To be different is admired, but to be too different is a threat to the status quo. Pressure (through "mocking" and "stirring") is exerted to keep boys from displaying too much individuality. For this reason, "individualities" comes as a stage beyond whole-hearted participation in the boy-culture. Only a courageous boy will abandon the security of the culture, to "go out on a limb" and expound individual opinions. However, this action is also admired by boys (and staff), because of the bravery it displays, and also because the opinions and actions that make this boy so different and individual are often rooted in the strongly personal, and speak to issues of social justice.

There is some divergence of opinion on this topic. Some participants, primarily from the boys and staff categories, state that the school discourages individualism, although (through the comments of its administrators) it claims to do the opposite. There appears to me some justification for these opinions. On a philosophical level the school can be seen to encourage individualism by promoting a broad definition of knowledge and
learning (that accommodates individual beliefs – see the comments on page 276), and on a practical level it provides a wide range of activities that cater to quite divergent interests. However, according to boys, the reality is that the school frowns on the development of individuality in its students. Individuality is not team-oriented\(^59\), it works against the unstated aim of the school to “get results”\(^60\), and it challenges the homogeneous atmosphere of the school\(^61\). As a result, some boys and staff often comment (either rightly or wrongly) that the school turns out non-individualistic, non-creative men who conform to a norm. This may not be the case, but it is a consistent comment – one that is perhaps as one teacher speculates, more a protest over the perceived limits that the school imposes on the boys, rather than any accurate assessment of the wide range of “men” that the school produces.

In spite of experiencing what they say is pressure to negate “individualism”, boys have a strong affinity for the term. They recognise it in themselves and others. During interviews they use it as a term to encapsulate those versions of masculinity they hold that run counter to the stereotypical. However, individuality is also a carefully guarded concept; such opinions are voiced within the security and the confidentiality of a long one-on-one interview, but they are rarely voiced “in public”. Boys who do strongly express their own ideas of what is right and wrong are often called, in the boys’ language, “individuals”.

\(^{59}\) Individuality is not team-oriented; therefore it doesn’t fit the sports mentality rife in the school where, if required, all must be sacrificed for the good of the team.

\(^{60}\) Individuality means stating opinions that may vary from the norm; therefore it makes achieving the successful “product” a difficult task. The main purpose of the school – gaining impressive grades – is achieved through the “academic” subjects and in these, students’ individual input and expression is not encouraged. In academic subjects, they tell me, it is not possible to move away from a “right” answer and into individual interpretations.

\(^{61}\) Those who are too different, who won’t benefit the school, or be benefited by the school, are either shipped to another institution or are dismissed as eccentric and a novelty.
The state of being an “individual” has many characteristics. Of the boys I hear described in this way they are often (but certainly not always) older boys. They have been associated with a particular group in the past, but have grown beyond its politics. They are in some respects aloof and disdainful of their peers’ behaviours. However, they hold the cautious respect of their peers, although they are also ostracized in subtle ways. They nearly always have “a passion” – something that they do very well and use to communicate and express their values and beliefs.

During interviews I often hear comments that emerge from this layer, and I come to realise they express the types of gender attitudes that contemporary masculinity research identifies as the act of recognising “multiple masculinities”\(^\text{62}\). “You have to realise that your own actions impact on others”; “As you get older you see that other opinions, while different to your own, are equally valid” (Neil); “I enjoy watching others work in art – their art challenges my perceptions and makes me see things in a different way” (Oscar); “I get along with X much better now. We have agreed to be different and now learn a lot from each other” (Peter); “I am sick of homophobia. X is called gay and he isn’t, and these guys can’t see that it just doesn’t matter” (Simon). What characterises the Individualities layer is that boys operating at this level of exploration not only recognise these valuable qualities in masculinity, they are also active in working out how they can be accommodated in their own lives.

It seems that seeking “individuality” means stating opinions on issues of social justice, it means you have liberal interpretations on what is knowledge, and it means you actively seek meaningful relationships in order to understand how others think and feel. These are, in essence, what Connell (1996), Mac an Ghaill (1996), and others feel

\(^{62}\) As explained in Chapter 2.
constitutes masculinities that are non-hegemonic. This is not a state that comes easily or without cost, and it is the culmination of the acquisition of skills developed during the “groups” and “identities” layers. “Individualities”, as shown in Figure 8, represents the fourth range of masculinities evident in the school, a stage that meets the common admiration of all three categories of participants. It is the stage where boys actively negotiate with their peers their most closely held values and beliefs, and attempt to come to terms with the values and beliefs of others.

Boys Use of These Layers to Negotiate Masculinity

This model (Figure 8) recognises that a range of masculinities exists. This discovery answers to a substantial degree my first research query. Such masculinities cannot be given convenient labels (apart from the superficial “typing” layer) because they are specific to each boy and they become increasingly so as boys develop their ideas about being male and negotiate these ideas with their peers. This has significant educational ramifications because knowledge of these layers and how boys use them gives educators opportunities to design and implement curricular strategies that can, to use Meg’s words, channel boys towards acceptance of a multiplicity of masculinities.

If I was expecting to identify “inter-differences” in masculinity, qualities that make one type of masculinity different to another, I certainly find a significant range represented in these four layers. What I do not expect to have described to me is a range of “intra-differences” in masculinity – the phenomenon where the individual boy’s own masculinity changes as he is mobile between these layers.

The concept of “intra-masculinity mobility”. This is a critical concept for Boys Doing Art. From Scott and Olaf’s descriptions on pages 200 and 201 respectively, when boys feel challenged they often revert to a superficial layer of engagement of masculinity
where the rules and behaviours are not in dispute. For example, in Stuart's interview he
described how one day in class he had a situation where he used his size to intimidate a
female teacher. Even though he acknowledged he was at fault (“I know I was in the
wrong”), even months later he was still angry at being suspended because “it was only
because of her reaction, because she started crying”, and also that he was denied an
opportunity to “defend myself”. Stuart’s misplaced decision to assert dominance, to “act
the man” and walk out of the class, while winning him some credibility for bravado, and
displaying all the characteristics of the stereotyped male, was as he later acknowledged a
mistake. He should have resolved the issue through discussion.

When boys feel the need to assert independence and autonomy, they revert to a
mid-level engagement of masculinity where their culture allows a degree of
experimentation, and the freedom to stretch the ill-defined rules of their culture.
Examples of this type of behaviour are common throughout the text, particularly those
places where boys describe the machinations surrounding “grouping”. For example,
Samuel’s description of the tensions that exist between “skids” and “cools” (page 259) is
exactly this – boys “pushing the envelope”, but using the mores of their particular group to
provide them protection, provided they don’t go too far.

When boys are driven to question themselves, their beliefs and values, and the
beliefs and values of those around them, they are engaging their masculinity at its deepest
level. In short, the ways these layers operate is intrinsically aligned to the varying degrees
that boys wish to express and communicate personal opinions, values, and beliefs that
constitute their own masculinity. There is evidence that boys genuinely want to engage
this fourth level (“I have a need to express”), but are restricted for a variety of reasons,
which will be listed shortly.
It seems reasonable to consider that what I have been observing in this school over the past year is boys reacting to social, academic, and peer pressures by continually weaving from one layer of masculinity to another. Under some circumstances, the factors are right for boys to engage their deepest “individuality” layer of masculinity – at other times they feel they should, supposedly for self-protection, act according to stereotyped behaviours from more superficial layers of masculinity, even though they may not necessarily support those values and beliefs.

The notion that boys are actively engaging in such “intra-masculinity mobility” makes some sense of what teachers like Victor (“They can be all over the palace – one minute quite immature, the next minute they surprise you with insightful and sensitive behaviours!”) and fellow students like Neil (“There are times I have to get away from them. Depending who they get together with, they can be quite different people”) find so frustrating. Some boys’ “maturity” levels fluctuate, something that is perhaps more accurately them accessing the level of masculinity they feel they should inhabit in order to engage with their peers under certain circumstances. If this is so, it is a notable concept, because it demonstrates that boys have some control over when and how they explore their masculinity – they are not the “passive receptors” of masculinity that large parts of the literature assumes (see Chapter 2).

The observations and discussions with participants in Boys Doing Art have been leading to this point. Opinions from all three categories of participants indicate that boys can be influenced in making the decision to access a deeper layer of engagement with their masculinity, and schools and subjects within schools can play a part in this process. Our aim as educators should be to facilitate, at boys’ discretion, their journey through this process, and their access to this fourth layer of their engagement with their masculinities.
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We must design curriculum that allows boys free passage towards creating "individualities".

Before dealing with this issue in terms of specific curriculum qualities that boys say helps them access the "individualities" layer, it is important to acknowledge something of the particular schooling environment within which this curriculum operates. The previous chapter reported themes that are evident in participants’ responses to my questions asking them how Greene’s College impacted their exploration of masculinity. While administrators feel the school encourages boys to acquire a "thirst for knowledge" (page 245), some staff and boys speak about the restrictive definitions of knowledge that exist in this place, which results in the institutionalisation of an unofficial "hierarchy of subjects". Boys say they feel the school does not prize knowledge that addresses personal meaning or explores "the self" (pages 227 and 228). Some speak about how the knowledge they pursue does not seem relevant to their "actual lives" (page 228). While administrators and some staff talk about encouraging "excellence" (pages 236), many boys and some staff speak about the destructive pressure to succeed (page 266), which results in the unhealthy phenomenon of "marks grubbing" (page 267) and a school culture that appears to elevate academic success over all else (for example, see page 178 and page 266). While administrators and some staff talk about setting positive role models for boys to aspire to, many boys and some staff are sceptical about the value of the "ideal man" they feel they are being asked to emulate.

Clearly, this school environment does not present a unified image to all its inhabitants. What to some appear to be benefits, others see as disadvantages. What to some is seen as a core educational goal, is seen by others as an irrelevance, or more worryingly, as contrary to what they wish to achieve. However, not everything in this
school is a contradiction. Participants also agree on many positive attributes of the school. The resources that are provided give students and staff opportunities they might not otherwise have (page 269). Boys are encouraged to try a wealth of activities (page 269 and 270), they are provided a supportive environment for studying (page 272), they are presented with an environment that “levels the playing field” between the different types of boys (page 273), and they are provided an environment that helps them undertake activities that stretches their skills. Boys often praise the school’s “settled environment” that is relatively free of harassment, of violence (page 271), an environment that prizes the acquisition of knowledge and excellence in all things. The single-sex school lets them be more “natural”, it frees them from having to act macho, and allows them to participate in activities that are otherwise off-limits due to their “feminine” stigma (page 225).

It is within the context of these tensions, contradictions, and alliances between the school and the reality of the programs that are taught to the boys that the following section must be situated. There are times where the school and the art program act with concert to encourage boys to explore egalitarian masculinities. What this study has been searching for, is some insight into the qualities of curriculum that allow this to happen. The following discussion deals with this issue. It begins with a repeat of the “barriers to exploring masculinity” that boys identified earlier, and continues with an analysis towards which Boys Doing Art has been travelling since my earliest days in this school; what specific qualities of the art curriculum in this school helps boys to explore masculinity?

**Overcoming the Six Barriers to Boys’ Access of the “Individualities” Layer**

In Chapter 7 my analysis of the data suggests there are at least six barriers to this goal. To reiterate; (1) Dominant stereotypes act as a convenient escape for boys from engaging any personal masculinities. (2) The term “masculinity” has been hijacked by
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dominant stereotypes. Its definition is so far removed from boys’ ideas about being a “good person” that boys can’t see that their intimate values and beliefs are also their masculinity. (3) Stereotypes are so rigid and empty they discourage any personal exploration of masculinity. (4) Boys are provided with few concepts concerning masculinity. They are bereft of mechanisms to use to explore its structure. (5) Boys have a limited (and ineffective) vocabulary to use when discussing masculinity. (6) Boys have few sympathetic educational climates for exploring masculinity.

What does Boys Doing Art tell us about the qualities of curriculum that helps them overcome these barriers? The evidence exists within this analysis, because the data indicate that many boys do manage to transit to the “individualities” layer, and they gain some support to do so from particular subject curricula. What are these key qualities?

Qualities of curriculum that assist boys to negotiate masculinities: A safe venue. Boys prefer a safe venue to explore masculinity at the “individualities” layer. While it is true that boys are developing their concepts of gender in even the most hostile environments, the intimidation they say they experience in these places often restricts them to inhabiting some very unfulfilling stereotypes of masculinity. Boys have expressed to me dismay that they are often driven to reflect on masculinity in isolation because few secure environments exist in the school where they can express ideas and feelings (see pages 263 to 268). This contributes to many of the barriers described above – it facilitates perpetuation of ignorance about the construct of masculinity; it restricts any development of a “masculinity vocabulary”; it allows boys to conveniently escape confronting masculinity issues by hiding within limiting stereotypes. Boys say that subject curriculum can address these barriers through providing a safe venue.
Safety is provided by the curriculum when it encourages expression. Curriculum must give boys opportunity to express by unequivocally stating that such openness is a key element in the subject’s epistemology and pedagogy.

Safety is provided by the curriculum when it supports risk-taking. While sounding illogical (after all, risk-taking is hardly a safe occupation), through training and experience in risk-taking boys acquire the skill and confidence to move beyond the status quo and into exploration of individuality.

Safety is provided by the curriculum when it allows boys to develop a recognisable skill. Boys are rarely harassed for being talented at football, music or art. The peer group recognises the acquisition of such skills as the individual’s investment in defining a part of his character. The development of a skill requires continual extension of oneself, and this is done in the safety of curriculum when it provides boys a “blueprint”, or positive experience, for overcoming fear of the unknown.

Safety is provided by the curriculum when it provides opportunity for boys to engage a “passion”. Recognition that some particular activity or issue or belief is important to an individual, and allowing room within the curriculum to let the individual explore that passion, helps boys’ negotiation of masculinities in four ways. The first is that it validates the importance of individuality over set curriculum. The second is that it provides a sanctioned space within the school for the boy to explore aspects of his personality. The third is that it allows the boy a venue to engage others in conversation.

The one exception is academic skill. Boys say “I am only ashamed if I win an academic prize. I love going onto stage for a drama or art or sport award. But not for study.” (Peter.) This exception has complex reasons that are somehow tied into the boy culture belief that to do well in the academics means a great deal of rote learning. To do this you must be a nerd and study excessively, sacrificing any social life: “They have no life!”.
about a deeply held belief. The fourth is that it recognises that addressing the “emotional” through curriculum is equally as important as facts based learning.

The qualities of curriculum that assist boys to negotiate masculinities: Facilitating communication. To engage issues about masculinity with their peers, boys need be able to express and communicate willingly and freely. Generally, expression in this school is suppressed by the peer group through katagelophobia, it is suppressed by the school through its limiting definitions of knowledge that elevate “non-involved” subjects above those that require boys’ personal opinions, and it is suppressed by the lack of suitable venues where expression is expected and rewarded as a valid skill, and not simply as a novel diversion. These qualities contribute significantly to the barriers boys experience in accessing the “individualities” layer of masculinity.

Communication is mandated through curriculum when it provides tools to express. Boys need skills development in communication, and they need a range of approaches to meeting subject criteria to allow individual ways of communicating to be validated.

Communication is mandated through curriculum when it provides a venue to express. These venues exist for stating or displaying opinions, they have an atmosphere of accepting opinions for contemplation and comment, and own a convention of freely engaging other ideas to guide their own development.

Communication is mandated through curriculum when it provides a structure for expression. Such curriculum should have three characteristics. (1) It should provide a structure where boys can use methods and topics relevant to their own culture to address

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64 “Non-involved”, as described by many boys. It is certainly not the case that such simplistic distinctions exist between subjects. On a few occasions, boys have lauded subjects like English as “involved” because of a requirement to justify opinions, etc. However, the predominant view during interviews was that most subjects were unlike art, in that they seemed pre-occupied with covering set curriculum at the expense of personal involvement and expression – something often supported by some staff (see Meg, Lance, Louise and Janet’s comments in Chapter 7)
subject criteria. (2) It should provide a structure where reason and justifiable critical insights are taught as specific subject skills. (3) It should provide a structure where divergent methods of expression are permitted, that suit individual boys’ skills and interests.

Communication is mandated through curriculum when it provides avenues for peer-response to boys’ expression. This occurs when the curriculum (1) provides opportunity for boys to use criticism skills to examine other’s opinions; (2) where the subject has established a tradition of interaction – both during the process of construction of ideas, as well as during critique at the completion of tasks; and (3) where the curriculum allows a range of possible outcomes to set tasks, rather than one single result that disallows a free exchange of ideas as students explore a topic.

Communication is mandated through curriculum when it endorses a broad interpretation of knowledge. Students are relegated to receive and regurgitate information when curriculum presents knowledge as “factual” and “complete”. Boys need curriculum that allows them to practice the skill of negotiating beliefs.

Qualities of curriculum that assist boys to negotiate masculinities: Freedom. Boys feel restricted by the school; its uniform, its discipline, its tight and busy schedule. Boys feel restricted by the subjects that they are told are most important; their rigid interpretations of knowledge, their limited approaches to learning and instruction, their refusal to allow individual responses. Boys feel restricted by the expectations placed on them; the pressure to fulfil “the ideal”, to achieve success, to participate fully and effectively. These restrictions may not be fair on the school, considering its liberal philosophies and many of its practices. However, they are none-the-less genuinely felt,
and as such they contribute to many of the six barriers to exploring masculinity described previously. The data do present us with a list of solutions to this problem.

Freedom is provided by the curriculum when it creates a non-pressured environment where boys are allowed to pursue ideas freely. To some extent, this is already in evidence in this school; participants very much see the single-sex structure as being "liberating", allowing boys to be more open than they would in the co-educational environment. However, this does not always translate to the classroom situation, where the pressure to perform in the academic subjects often limits them to a didactic existence.

Freedom is provided by the curriculum when it allows boys physical movement within the classroom setting. While it is consistently noted that boys need physical activity to keep them focused, it is also true that boys appreciate the opportunity to move amongst their peers, exchanging ideas.

Freedom is provided by the curriculum when it allows multiple approaches to learning. This happens at both the epistemological level when divergent approaches to developing knowledge are accommodated, and at the pedagogical level when flexible, hands-on, project-oriented activities are offered to fulfil subject criteria.

Freedom is provided by the curriculum when it allows boys multiple styles of learning. The focus on "academics" by the school leads in many cases to a lack of intellectual freedom in the school, with many students viewing good scholarship being the reporting of facts and figures, rather than any individualised interpretation of information.

Qualities of curriculum that assist boys to negotiate masculinities: Accommodating boys' particular ways of learning. The way instruction happens in the classroom impacts

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65 For example, the Social Studies class where the "interactive" quiz game replaced the "normal" lesson halfway through (see Chapter 6)
how boys interact. The results of the study show that boys acknowledge that “poor instruction” robs subjects of those qualities that they utilise to explore masculinity, and contributes to many of the barriers to accessing the “individualities” layer described previously. Teachers and boys often comment that they have particular ways of working and learning. Whether these are unique to boys is not the issue; the data suggests at least six qualities of instruction help boys use the curriculum to negotiate masculinities.

Many boys at Greene’s College comment that their particular ways of learning are met by subject curriculum when it provides them opportunity to produce a tangible product. They tell me they like “hands on” experiences and they often claim that they learn best in these scenarios. They like to “take something away from it”. These comments are, perhaps rather value laden. Clearly, at Greene’s College, the high academic standards that are the norm indicate that the boys learn very well, regardless of the style of curriculum being studied. My understanding from boys’ recognition of “hands on” experiences being of particular value to them, is that they are saying this is a more enjoyable and relevant style of learning.

Many boys at Greene’s College comment that their particular ways of learning are met by subject curriculum when it allows them to “get on with it”, and learn through experience, rather than through theoretical discussions or seemingly meaningless exercises. Many boys at Greene’s College comment that their particular ways of learning are met by subject curriculum when it provides relevancy to their situations. By “relevance”, they need to see the purpose of what they are being asked to do, and it should have some bearing on their own culture. Curricular tasks must have some link to them either on a very personal level, or to the goals and ambitions they have. With this, they
will usually participate with enthusiasm. Without it, negativity is the often hallmark of their actions.

Many boys at Greene's College comment that their particular ways of learning are met by subject curriculum when it provides a working environment that is disciplined but not authoritarian. Boys comment that they appreciate good teachers who can control a class, and use this control to supervise freedom. These teachers allow them freedom to discuss openly and to interact with different "types" of boys. It is interesting to note that while half the art teachers (and approximately 20% of the whole school staff) are women, boys have not mentioned the gender of the teacher being a factor that dictates their participation, enjoyment or achievement in a subject. Good teachers, either male or female, provide the boys freedom to explore the parameters of the subject without it disintegrating into abstraction or laissez-faire pedagogy. Such freedoms let boys exchange ideas while protecting them from kategelophobia.

Many boys at Greene's College comment that their particular ways of learning are met by subject curriculum when it accommodates their impetuousness. Consistently I hear from staff, and see modelled in the classroom, that many boys want a minimum of instruction. They appear to prefer launching into a project and learning as they go along, a characteristic, as Victor states (pages 176 and 177), which builds excellent problem solving and lateral thinking skills. However, this tendency makes flexibility and patience vital pedagogy tools of the teacher.

Many boys at Greene's College comment that their particular ways of learning are met by subject curriculum when it is delivered using quality teaching methods. Stated by many boys in interviews, and supported by many observations, is that boys' interactions within the curriculum are maximised when staff "get to know" the students well, when
they create an environment where boys feel safe to “open up”, when the curriculum is addressed using issues that are relevant to boys, and when teachers have pedagogy styles that facilitate discussions and exchange of ideas. Boys say they respect “good teaching”, which they characterise as creativeness, knowledge of, and a passion for their subject area, lateral thinking, tolerance, flexibility, and allowing boys freedom. Boys tell me they appreciate “character” in a teacher, and the ability to recognise “the other” in the classroom. These qualities, they tell me, lead to classes that help build relationships between boys by holding their interests, by challenging them to explore new ideas, by getting get them to listen to other’s beliefs, and by role modelling positive concepts of learning and knowledge.

Qualities of curriculum that assist boys to negotiate masculinities: Opportunity to develop relationships. As previously discussed, many boys and staff perceive that the school’s main focus is on “the academics”, something that has (fairly or not) been defined as a curriculum style that involves little or no personal input (see Chapter 7). They feel that personal interactions have little place when acquiring knowledge. A common criticism by boys of some subject curricula is that they do not provide opportunities for them to “get into” the material being studied. In the previous chapter, Samuel and Brendan describe how this process constitutes the important relationship skill of negotiation – hearing and considering other opinions.

Many boys at Greene’s College comment that in terms of helping them develop relationships, curriculum should provide classrooms free of stress, where boys feel safe to “open up”. This requires curriculum to provide activities that can be accomplished in smaller groups. This requires curriculum that encourages an interchange of ideas between
boys when exploring solutions to set tasks. This requires curriculum that presents its material as open-ended, not binary and devoid of alternative “truths”.

Many boys at Greene’s College comment that in terms of helping them develop relationships, curriculum should provide intimate settings, such as small class sizes. As Wendy describes (page 274), boys often revert to safe but meaningless stereotypical responses when put on the spot in large groups. Discussion in small groups, focusing on issues relevant to boys, allows them access to other beliefs. Many boys at Greene’s College comment that in terms of helping them develop relationships, curriculum should foster “brotherhood”. Brotherhood, in the context presented by participants, is the recognition of a commonality between boys that still acknowledges and prizes individualities. Curriculum helps this to happen when it provides opportunities for boys to build understanding of their culture and also to share opinions on that understanding.

What Role Does Art Play in Boys’ Negotiation of Masculinities?

This list of curriculum factors that help boys to negotiate masculinities constitutes a model of “boy-friendly curriculum” (Figure 9). The essence of this research query is to ask to what extent does art curriculum match this profile? A comparison between the qualities of art curriculum enacted at Greene’s College (analysed from the data in Chapter 7) and the curriculum factors that facilitate negotiation of masculinities (listed above) indicates that a strong correlation exists. The nature of this similarity is now reasonably obvious, but requires stating.
Figure 9. The qualities of curriculum that boys identify as helping them to negotiate a range of masculinities: A model of “boy-friendly curriculum”.

The Correlation Between Greene’s College Art Curriculum and the Qualities of Curriculum That Boys Need to Negotiate Masculinities

Art curriculum at Greene’s College can meet many boys’ “safety” needs. Art is a subject that provides, for many boys in this school, a safe venue to express. At Greene’s College this is clearly illustrated. First, expression is accepted as being part of art’s epistemology (“to do art is to express”, [Ben]). Teachers articulate clearly and unambiguously that “this is what you are here for” – this is a central tenet of “doing art” (see Appendix B and C). Some resist (Randall wants only to make art – drawing is a surreptitious attempt to get him to read more into his pots other than it being a simple object that he enjoys making), but most boys appear liberated by this sanctioned
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opportunity to express. Second, expression is supported by the four components of art’s curriculum. “Studio” treats learning as creating visual images to express an idea. “Aesthetics” treats learning as manipulating the visual qualities of those images to express an effect. “Criticism” treats learning as engaging in reasoned dialogue with others about what is being expressed in the images people make. “History” views attempts to express as ongoing social development – the art works made constitute part of a historical and cultural tradition.

Art is a subject that can, for many boys in this school, facilitate risk-taking. While not all activities in this subject stress risk-taking, my observations and talks with participants indicate that a conscious aim of the program at Greene’s College is to pursue this as an epistemological goal. I have certainly witnessed this occurring at a pedagogy level. To overcome boys’ fear of expression (“We have to make it safe for them”) the teachers encourage boys to “go out on a limb”, by challenging them to try new materials, they encourage them to attempt a bold approach to a project, they nurture an independent point of view that might run contrary to opinions dominant in their culture. While these approaches are not unique to art in the school, they certainly have a profound affect on boys doing art at Greene’s College. Interestingly, the only characteristic that Meg can identify that is common amongst the “really wide range of boys who do art” is that they tend to be risk-takers. As Victor points out on page 236, this results in boys acquiring the skill and confidence to move beyond the status quo and into exploration of individuality.

Art is a subject that for many boys in this school, provides them safety by helping them develop a skill with which to express. The opportunities that paintings, drawings, sculptures or photographs provide to say, “this is what I believe” are considerable (see Ishmael and Victor’s statements in Chapter 7), and their message is amplified as their
talent increases. Through continuous development of studio skills boys become more expressive; they move from common class projects (such as the woodblock prints I watched in the grade tens class) to some highly sophisticated and individualised works in the later years (Peter’s conceptual art works). Added to this is the element of “removed expression” that boys often describe – the opportunity to safely express quite deep thoughts, and place them in the public domain while retaining the right to distance oneself for protection.

Art is a subject that provides, for many boys in this school, opportunity to engage a “passion”. To declare a passion is a dangerous thing – it makes the boy unique and exposes them to ridicule. Yet at the same time a boy’s passion is (arguably) his most defining quality, the thing that stands him alone from others and expresses most accurately his more intimate values. Art celebrates the “passionate” in an individual at both an epistemological level by requiring students to make personal responses to the curriculum (Figure 4), and at a pedagogy level (such as is consistently highlighted in the Greene’s College curriculum documents, Appendix B and C). For example, the art teachers at Greene’s College consistently seek out such individuality by asking students to explore personally relevant images through sketchbook development, through negotiating an individual approach to a class assignment, and by training in the student the studio skills that will best present his ideas to the public.

Art curriculum at Greene’s College meets many boys’ communication needs. As is consistently stressed in Greene’s College curriculum documents (see Appendix B and C), art in this school is a subject that can provide boys with significant tools with which to communicate. The studio component of its curriculum that I witness in operation, focuses on skills development. The ability to translate an idea into a visual form requires training,
and the effectiveness of an artwork's message often increases with the quality of the image. At Greene's College I witness a consistent, sequential education in studio skills. In the early years boys undertake exercises in manipulating the principles and element to gain an "effect" (such as witnessed in my observation of the art foundations class, see pages 169 to 171). This process goes on to more refined manipulation of skills during the middle years to express a "message" (such as the ceramic sculptures in Victor's class, see pages 169 and 170). At its most advanced level in the later years, boys use studio skills to describe sophisticated "concepts" that are often windows to more intimate beliefs (for example, Ishmael's sketchbook, or Peter's "found" artworks). If the "studio" component of the art curriculum provides powerful tools to communicate, so too does its "aesthetics" component. Boys receive through education in aesthetics a comprehensive vocabulary specialised for the visual — the "principles and elements of art". This gives boys a common language with which to discuss their art works, and as such helps "level the playing field" between the many types of boys doing the subject.

However, "aesthetics" is more than knowing art's vocabulary — it is actually using this language to communicate with others about what we visually perceive (Broudy, 1987). At Greene's College the art teachers continuously engage boys in aesthetics. In the early years, the task is to learn its terms, and to associate these terms to the visual (for example, as is done in the lesson described on page 169). In later years as skills develop, boys are able to utilise this language to discuss the qualities of the works they make (for example, the grade ten boys making their prints, page 177). Meg does it continuously — "John, what do you think of Brad's sky — is it too heavy?" At its most skilled level, boys use the aesthetic component of art's curriculum to engage in significant conversations about messages and meanings inherent in art works. Indeed, through developing studio
skills with which to create complex visual messages for others, and through developing visual literacy skills (aesthetics) with which to discuss and debate those images, the art curriculum provides significant tools for boys to communicate with others.

Art curriculum at Greene’s College can provide boys a venue within which to communicate. Greene’s College places emphasis on displaying work in both informal and formal scenarios – “getting it out there for others to see, to respond to”. Informal venues for communication occur through “arts criticism” activities in classroom; the prints Meg spreads across the table for me to see; the continual use of actual lessons to showcase work (“Hey boys, come and see what Jake has done”); the pin board displays done during and at the end of each project, these all elicit responses from students and constitute valuable opportunities for communication. Non-art boys “drop in to see what’s going on”, a fresh display from another class prompts informal conversations between boys. Formal displays occur on a grand scale during Arts Week, and more modestly on a continual basis in the halls, in the staff room “the whole school is an art gallery”. This creates a culture of communication through the sharing of ideas, and in the process it institutes an important convention in the school; boys should freely engage with other’s ideas.

Art curriculum at Greene’s College can provide a structure for communication. The “history” component of its curriculum stresses that art does not exist in a vacuum – the things that boys want to say most often have an historical precedent that adds credibility to their message, and their imagery is also often rooted in the context of their culture, which adds relevance to their message. At Greene’s College, I consistently hear the art teachers stress that boys are “building on what has come before”. They readily use exemplars from the past (“we call it ‘appropriation’”), or philosophies of noteworthy artists to help extend discussion and exploration of their students’ art.
Boys’ culture contributes to the structure that art provides for communication. The casual atmosphere of the art classroom lets boys link their culture to their work (the rap music that is tolerated by Meg, the boys’ conversations during Victor’s class that only they understand). Boys draw on their culture to make artworks that hold significance and meaning for each other (Nick’s Dante-style pictures of hell). Art blends, in a special manner, both academic knowledge of the past and cultural knowledge of the present, into imagery and issues that have relevance to boys culture.

Art curriculum at Greene’s College can provide avenues for peer-responses to boys’ attempts at communication. Firstly, through “arts criticism” it provides robust models for criticising art – for making reasoned responses to other’s work. These models are taught in early years, and I see them reinforced continually in class through informal conversations and (very occasionally) through formal critique sessions. This creates a culture with boys that it is reasonable to offer opinions on other boys’ artwork, and that there is an acceptable and useful structure for doing this. In addition, it reinforces with boys the understanding that there are ways of solving problems that differ from their own, and that hold equal validity.

Secondly, and common to art curricula that follows a discipline-oriented format, the Greene’s College program stresses that making art is only one part of effective participation in “the creative process”. Of equal importance is “responding” to art. Boys are required to display their work in order to engage others in discussions. This expectation of boys, that they are required to open up their works for critique because it is a natural part of “doing art”, helps to negate katagelophobia and provide opportunities for rich communication between boys, because “everyone does it so it must be OK”. Thirdly, the art curriculum allows quite divergent responses to common set tasks. There is no set
or prescriptive methods to “doing art”, so boys are free to engage curriculum according to personal interests and strengths. This diversity of interpretations creates multiple opportunities for communication between boys. There is no singular answer to an assignment, rather panoply of responses is the norm, and they often foster quite intense interchanges between boys, both during project and at its closure.

Art curriculum at Greene’s College can foster communication through its *liberal interpretation of knowledge*. The tools, the venues, and the structures that art curriculum provides boys to communicate would mean little if its epistemology embraced knowledge as being “factual” and “complete”. A feature of art curriculum is its celebration of multiple viewpoints, and its curricular components – criticism, art history, aesthetics, studio – act to support this. When boys make their art, they are presenting quite diverse and original opinions, and arts criticism and discussion of aesthetics challenge boys to digest other opinions, to consider the strengths and weaknesses of other’s points of view, and to modify their own opinion in light of what others say. In this way, art curriculum makes the clear statement that the various types of knowledge that boys use, have equal validity. The negotiation that happens during this process constitutes a significant level of communication between boys.

Art curriculum meets boys’ “freedom” needs. At Greene’s College, the art classes provide many boys with a *low stress environment*. This is because art is not competitive (“there is no right or wrong in art, so we are free to express and be creative”), therefore boys don’t feel the need to “marks grub”. A consequence of this is that in this school, art rates lowly on the hierarchy of subjects, but it has the advantage that boys see art as a “refuge” in this high-stress environment. This is reflected in art’s casual working environment, and it means that the teachers adopt an informal pedagogy where classes
simply “begin”, and teachers engage boys individually as needed (Meg’s repeated “Is everyone OK?” is often her most intrusive act of instruction).

Art curriculum at Greene’s College provides many boys' with physical freedom. During my observations I notice that a characteristic of art classes is boys’ mobility during lessons (“it’s a natural part of the subject – boys have to ‘check out’ what’s happening”). This freedom of mobility has beneficial consequences for boys’ negotiation of masculinities. Firstly, it means that boys engage a range of peers. As discussed previously, these boys come from the wide variety of “types” of boys, who under “normal” circumstances have little to do with each other, and such engagements use the common vocabulary provided by art curriculum’s “aesthetics” component. This is an example of what boys tell me is good about art, how it “levels the playing field”.

Secondly, I witness boys using this freedom to gain a variety of opinions on their work that would not occur in “traditional” classes where boys are restricted to their seats. The constant “ebb and flow” of boys between groups in the class, between classes, and even from outside of the art classes, creates a culture of healthy interchange of opinions.

Thirdly, I witness boys using this freedom to remove themselves from antagonistic or distracting situations (Neil, moving upstairs – see page 200), or to join another individual or group with a “likeminded” approach on a particular project. Such physical freedom creates an atmosphere of controlled independence and autonomy, rare in subject curriculum.

Art curriculum at Greene’s College provides many boys with curricular freedom. I quickly identify the phenomenon of “multiple curricula” in action at Greene’s College. Even within the reasonably structured program at this school, it is possible for art to offer boys a diversity of options in meeting curricular objectives (Appendix B). This is due to
three aspects of art curriculum. First, teachers can implement the art program in quite
different ways, according to strengths and interests of teachers (for example, Victor
focuses on 3D, Meg on painting and drawing, Miles on IT). This gives boys a degree of
freedom about which class to join (from my diary, the students really move around a lot).
Effectively, boys are aligning personal interests with styles of instruction. A second
aspect to art’s “multiple curricula” is that boys are encouraged to make their own
interpretation of how to meet subject criteria, and can choose which art method to use to
accomplish the task. At Greene’s College, this process happens using sketchbooks and
individualised discussions with teachers over a period of time. A third aspect of the
“multiple art curricula” at Greene’s College is that boys are free to choose which art
medium to use according to their own skills and interests, and according to which studio
technique best suits the “ideas I want to get across”.

Such freedoms are due to the particular and special characteristics of art
curriculum. “Studio” owns an almost infinite range of media that can be used by boys.
“Aesthetics” allow boys to manipulate principles and elements of art and to come up with
a huge variety of visual responses to set criteria – each being equally valid. “Criticism”
provides boys the possibility of multiple explanations of work – they are empowered to
justify the approach they use through the act of arts criticism. Finally, “history” provides
boys a convention in art of divergent problem-solving approaches to visual problems, and
it allows them the use of a rich and diverse catalogue of exemplars to justify any freedoms
they have taken.

Art curriculum at Greene’s College provides many boys intellectual freedom.
Some boys do art in a convergent manner (the “potters” and other “technical workers”)
and are rightly or wrongly seen as lacking the desire to push intellectual boundaries.
However the majority see art as being quite free, because of its mandate to “find our own answers”. “Problem solving”, and “risk taking” are commonly used descriptions of “doing art” and characterise this divergent methodology of intellectual experimentation. I watch boys use studio, aesthetics, criticism, and history components of the art curriculum to pursue independent interpretations, and justify them to their peers and the art staff (for instance, Ishmael’s pursuit of photography, and Peter’s conceptual artworks).

Art curriculum at Greene’s College accommodates boys’ particular ways of learning. Art’s curriculum provides many boys at Greene’s College hands on activities, where they learn by “doing it”. Its “studio” component is practically based, where boys get to “do it” and end up with a tangible product. The quality of the program at Greene’s College ensures that while boys are making, the other three components of art curriculum (which are not necessarily product-oriented; aesthetics, history, criticism), are incorporated into this physical activity. While not often offering formalised sessions in these components the teachers stress that “the process is as important as product” by incorporating aesthetics, history, and criticism consistently within the daily running of lessons. During conversations with boys about projects, and occasionally with small groups (for example, the time I walked in on Meg with a few boys gathered around a desk, looking at images in a book and discussing their relevance to the project at hand), I watch the teachers engage boys in these activities in a relevant and absorbing way. I also witness the use of sketchbooks as a method of researching relevant artists (“history”), and developing ideas through images (“aesthetics”). Greene’s College has developed a program that allows boys to “do it” while managing to engage the four strands of the curriculum fully – boys learn through experience, rather than through isolated theoretical discussions or seemingly meaningless exercises.
The art curriculum at Greene’s College has relevance to many boys’ interests and beliefs. Mostly, the boys at Greene’s College see the activities they are asked to do as purposeful and as making sense (“we can move from Victor’s instructions into our own stuff”). As a result of this control that boys have over the direction of their projects, their work becomes relevant to their culture. The evil skulls, the pool tables, the paintings incorporating popular music band logos (“it’s all so typically youthful”) all reflect how boys can manipulate set criteria into culturally relevant imagery. Such pre-occupation with popular culture is no worry to staff, because subject matter can vary infinitely yet still fulfill curriculum requirements (“You get used to the blood, the nihilism, because it’s them making sense of the project”). This means boys participate with enthusiasm, it means their work communicates more widely with their peers than it might otherwise, and it means the work “makes sense” to others. This meaningful interaction between set curriculum and the boys’ own culture is the envy of a number of other staff (“I wish we could do those things with boys in our subject”).

Art curriculum in this school can foster a disciplined working environment. At Greene’s College I consistently watch the art teachers exert control over the boys by teaching established art conventions, then use this control to supervise curricular freedom by challenging boys to “push these limits further”. Meg, and Victor allow boys freedom to discuss openly and to interact with different “types” of boys, they allow boys considerable freedom to explore the parameters of the subject yet manage to keep this exploration relevant to the criteria they set for the project. This is more a characteristic of individual pedagogy than of curriculum – a pedagogy that lets boys exchange ideas freely, while protecting them from kategelophobia. However such strategies can only happen when it is sanctioned and supported by the curriculum. The “hands on” nature of art
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The curriculum's "studio" component means that boys frequently enter a class, get their projects from the shelves, and begin working with little interference from staff ("OK, get on with your prints...Who needs help?"). "Aesthetics" and "criticism" activities are then used to focus students' efforts as teachers move around the room working with individuals. Other teachers tell me they are jealous of art, of the atmosphere created in the classes and the opportunities to interact with boys that is not available in "the academics".

The art curriculum at Greene's College can accommodate many boys' impetuousness. The "studio" component owns no "established operating pattern" which means boys are free to analyse the criteria of a project, then proceed as they wish. Boys often "launch themselves into it", then teachers use art curriculum's "aesthetics" and "history" components to engage students in reflecting on the direction their work is taking, and use art criticism to reflect on the success of that direction. I witness Victor and Meg continually engaging boys in this process ("What have you done, young man – show me"). The often ill-considered beginnings to projects that result from boys' impetuousness, is countered by art curriculum's ability to continually refine ideas as works progress, a feature that permits its teachers to show "flexibility and patience".

The art curriculum at Greene's College allows many boys opportunity to develop relationships. The art curriculum in this school provides many boys with an environment that facilitates development of relationships. Firstly, it meets some of the basic needs they say are necessary to develop relationships. The physical freedom of art classes that allows boys to move from group to group creates in a de facto way, the small class sizes that they desire. In this "safe" atmosphere boys feel they are more prone to "open up", to express thoughts, and to engage others in meaningful ways. Secondly, art requires boys to express, to communicate. Thirdly, the art curriculum allows teachers to adopt a pedagogy
that relies on dialogue, on communication, and on forming a "working partnership" with others. While this is role-modelled by the teachers, I watch boys at Greene's College use similar skills in developing relationships with peers. Fourthly, the curriculum components contribute to an environment of developing relationships. Studio fosters mutual respect for skills and talents. The images boys produce provide stimuli for initiating exchanges, and material for ongoing dialogue. The aesthetics and criticism components create a culture in the class of looking at other's works, and of offering opinions on those works. This develops relationships based on hearing other opinions, and on acknowledging the validity of these opinions.

The art curriculum at Greene's College fosters brotherhood between many boys. This happens in three ways. Firstly, art attracts different types of boys into the subject and fosters communication between these types based on the curriculum requirement to express and communicate. The subject then provides the tools to help boys build relationships – studio and aesthetics lets diverse interests and skills be accommodated; history and criticism provides skilled and sophisticated common language that fosters increased understanding of other's opinions. Secondly, art helps boys recognise commonalities. Studio and criticism allows them to see and hear other's beliefs ("When you see what someone else is saying, you know more about them"). Thirdly, art helps boys develop respect for individualities. The subject allows boys to realise that while a bond of commonalities may be there, this doesn't preclude (in fact it complements) individualities existing ("We like each other but have quite different beliefs"). Brotherhood in this context is recognising the link of commonality, while accepting that difference exists; the ability to see "the other". Fourthly, art provides boys a common legacy. Through engaging in art history, boys realise that art owns a centuries-old
heritage. Boys realise that this history is rich in aims and ambitions that are common to their own — they see themselves as part of an ongoing tradition. This translates to the curriculum, where through the history component, boys are expected to relate to the past (through connections with artists and exemplars) and translate this link to here-and-now. This practice has the flow-on effect of seeing each other as partners in this tradition — a common link between them.

Art's Negotiating Tools: Its Four Strands of Curriculum

The correlation between the positive attributes of art curriculum, and the curriculum factors that boys require to negotiate masculinities, are considerable. I have difficulty finding negative attributes of art curriculum in this regard. This is because participants regularly indicate that the intrinsic nature of art education closely parallels the activities in which boys engage as they explore their individualities. Discipline-oriented art curriculum, such as the example operating at Greene’s College (see Appendix B), is at most times a conscious attempt to elevate the interpretive over the didactic, the reflexive over the contained. This curriculum, as it is represented in the classroom, prizes knowledge that is a product of "the creative process" over knowledge that is limited by a need to be scientific and logical. This curriculum, as it is presented on most occasions by most teachers, seeks interchanges between its participants that values individual beliefs over the unimaginative tribal mentality of "the team". This is a curriculum that appears based on interaction between individuals, that attempts to celebrate and accept difference, that prefers questioning over blind allegiance. This is a curriculum that quite intentionally charges a boy with defining himself through the curriculum (see Appendix B), rather than succumbing to the mediocrity of accepting other’s definitions of knowledge.
These are qualities that many subjects might justifiably claim to have as "guiding principles", but as indicated in the data, lofty ideals may appear quite different when transferred to the classroom. At Greene’s College art manages to transfer these curricular advantages into the reality of the classroom setting – largely due to the quality of its teaching staff, but also because its curriculum owns a structure that allows this to happen.

I am not suggesting that the art teachers have in their minds the many curriculum factors described above, each time they teach. Art does, however, accommodate these factors in a practical sense because the four strands of its curriculum are epistemologically and pedagogically closely aligned with boys’ curriculum requirements. Art history, art criticism, aesthetics, and studio provide boys with a safe venue to express and communicate, it allows them the freedom to engage curriculum on an individual level, it accommodates individual styles of learning and concepts of knowledge, and it facilitates the development of relationships – all the elements of the special environment boys need as they attempt to negotiate masculinities. Art does, indeed, offer boys significant support as they negotiate masculinities.

**Does the School Impact Arts’ Role in Boys’ Negotiation of Masculinity?**

I never intend this study to focus particularly on the school, or for it to be a critique of the single-sex system. However during this text the school has consistently emerged as impacting boys’ participation in art in a significant way, and those points – although well documented by now, bear summarising briefly.

There are many ways in which the school supports the art curriculum in its role of facilitating negotiation of masculinities. Greene’s College provides admirable resources, in terms of facilities, staffing, and access by boys to the curriculum through subject enrolment. The school’s policy of providing a variety of curricular and co-curricular...
options supports art by validating its existence, and by creating an environment where boys feel free to pursue activities of their own interest. The school’s stable, equalising, homogeneous environment provides an atmosphere where boys feel inclined to participate. They do not appear to often engage in what Connell (1995) calls “protest masculinity”, which allows subjects like art to flourish regardless of any perceived “waste of time” connotations. The unique climate of the single-sex school frees boys from the pressure to conform to stereotype expectations, and makes it more likely they will investigate subjects of particular interest to them, removed from “gender images” such subjects may hold (as explained in Chapter 3).

I have only detected three areas of negative influence of the school over the art curriculum in terms of its ability to meet boys’ masculinity needs. However, they are significant.

The limited concept of “knowledge” fostered by the school’s practices has been discussed in length and perhaps is more a characteristic of the “university preparatory” type of school, than the single-sex system. However, it does emphasise the power of the hidden curriculum over any noble philosophies that supposedly “drive” the school. By supporting limiting concepts of “knowledge” and “learning”, some things suffer, and one is the art program. The marks grubbing culture establishes a hierarchy of subjects that has little to do with what subjects benefit boys’ overall development, and permits a culture to develop where study has little to do with “life” and thus robs art of validity because it is a subject that is intrinsically focused on developing awareness of “self”.

The concept of the “Greene’s College man” is another aspect of this school that limits art’s ability to help boys explore masculinity. The “all-rounder” image that boys perceive as the masculinity expectation set by the school robs subjects like art from
opening wider parameters of masculinity to boys. While the qualities of this “ideal” are admirable, the fact that it is a singular model, and that it is an impossible ideal to achieve, discourages boys from exploring individual masculinities.

The “school as a business” rationale, as necessary as it may be, has significant repercussions for boys. This focus is responsible for the selection process that seeks only those boys with similar intellectual and behavioural profiles. This focus creates an economic metaphor for the school that permeates all its levels, from the administration down to the boys, and results in boys experiencing pressure to succeed at a limited range of activities, marks grubbing, and an unofficial hierarchy of subjects. This focus leads to limited perceptions by the boys about “what we are here for”, and devalues many activities that most benefit boys’ explorations of masculinity.

Art in this school occupies a frustratingly contradictory position in the school. Art is a subject that is undoubtedly prized and valued. Sometimes this is because of what Eisner (1988) would call its “ornamental qualities”, but more often it is because of its intrinsic value (see the Headmaster’s statement on page 245), and because of the quality of its curriculum and pedagogy. At the same time, it is a most undervalued subject. As an “elective” it commands little respect in a school that rates the importance of a subject on its potential to place boys in important universities. Art contributes little of substance to the school’s “business”.

Conclusion

These results from Boys Doing Art contribute considerable information for gender enquiry in education, for art education, and for the ongoing debate about single-sex schools. The study extends theory in this field by describing a model of how boys engage masculinity (Figure 8); it demonstrates how art education curriculum owns characteristics
that facilitate the type of masculinity development contemporary discourse in this field is seeking (Figure 10); it indicates that single-sex schools for boys can provide them unique opportunities to negotiate egalitarian masculinities.

Boys have a limited knowledge of masculinity and this forces them to rely on stereotypes when considering it as a concept. These stereotypes hold little relevance to boys' "true beliefs" about themselves as men. Boys intrinsically wish to explore their masculinities but are limited by the lack of opportunity, the lack of a safe venue, the lack of any concepts to guide their thinking, and the lack of a vocabulary to articulate their thoughts. However, in spite of this boys are still very active in negotiating a range of masculinities; unfortunately they (and those studying gender and masculinity issues) are largely unaware of many of the positive actions that are occurring. *Boys Doing Art* provides a small but significant window into this phenomenon.

Boys are negotiating masculinities with each other daily. This occurs predominately within the confines of their own culture and according to its fluid and (at times) incomprehensible rules. However within these limits a boy finds ways of emerging from the shadow of a stereotype; he intentionally aligns himself with a group with like-minded attitudes; he invests considerable energy into developing an identity within that group (the beginning of his negotiation of uniqueness) he begins to explore his individuality, those beliefs and values that constitute the fundamental core of his existence. All of these layers constitute important stepping stones for boys as they work towards the innermost layer.

As I reflect on the results of *Boys Doing Art*, it is apparent to me that art education is, for many boys, a significant site of this negotiation. Art is a refuge for communication and expression. Art provides boys with the tools needed to exchange ideas. It gives them
physical, curricular and intellectual freedoms. Art encompasses the ways of learning that suit boys best.

These are generalized assessments, but they are supported by the particular – by hard data concerning the qualities of art curriculum volunteered by participants. Art has personal significance for many boys because it allows them to undertake work that suits their style of working (for example, a “technical” or a “conceptual” approach), and it lets them interpret for themselves how to undertake a project. Art allows boys exploration of “the self”, by being (according to their definition) non-academic (therefore allowing personal interpretation in a free environment), by being practically-based (allowing boys to “do it”, rather than being passive receptors of information), by mandating expression (therefore, having the expectation that personal opinion is the focus of all work), and by having a curriculum where teachers are often facilitators, not instructors. Art provides many boys opportunities to communicate by creating a “safe” environment (using the curriculum tools of art criticism and discussion of aesthetics), by negating katagelophobia (through the expectation of dialogue between students), and by stressing that the very nature of art is to communicate a message to others. Art provides many boys freedom, in the form of physical freedom (allowing movement between classes, into safe spaces, and into small groups where interchanges occur), in the form of curricular freedom (where students choose a medium, and even a teacher, who suits an individual approach to learning), and in the form of intellectual freedom (where students can choose a way of undertaking a project that suits their individual orientation to learning). Art levels the playing field for many boys, by having a curriculum that is flexible and that allows a variety of “types” to participate equally, by fostering tolerance between boys through the curriculum’s requirement to continuously engage in arts criticism, and by providing a
common vocabulary (the principles and elements of art) whereby boys engage in dialogue on an even footing.
Chapter 9: The Fifth Phase, “Wider Contexts”

An Overview of the Chapter

Boys Doing Art I conclude with a short chapter in which I will discuss the significance of the results of this study to art education and gender discussion. This examination will begin by looking at how the model of boys’ engagement of masculinity, provided in Chapter 8 (Figure 8), provides valuable foci for future gender strategies with boys in schools. Chapter 9 will then discuss implications of the “boy-friendly curriculum” model (Figure 9) for art education, and will end with some suggestions for future research.

The Significance of Boys Doing Art to Masculinity Discussion

Boys Doing Art extends the theory of “multiple masculinities”, it relates that theory to education, it provides direction for realistic strategies when working with boys on gender issues, and it leads an emerging trend in masculinity research.

Boys Doing Art Extends Multiple Masculinity Theory.

Chapter 2 describes three significant shortfalls in gender research that constitute a lack of knowledge about the way boys perceive and engage their gender identities. Firstly, masculinity is consistently treated as “an entity” or a theoretical construct that is adapted to suit the orientation of a particular discourse. Secondly, the literature consistently assumes that masculinity is constructed of a prescribed set of characteristics that remain common to all men and boys. Thirdly, previous research treats masculinity as somehow being removed from boys’ every-day lives and actual actions. In Chapter 2 I go on to describe a discourse that addresses these shortfalls, and that has the potential to unify to a significant extent the many polarised political agendas that are in operation when discussing masculinity. Termed “multiple masculinities”, this concept owns five vital characteristics that provide a realistic platform from which to understand boys’ real-life
enactments of masculinity. However, Chapter 2 also identifies two areas where the concept of multiple masculinities requires immediate attention; it is still quite theoretical, lacking ethnographic data to “flesh out” the concept; and secondly, it does not adequately acknowledge how boys are mobile within this concept.

*Boys Doing Art* supports the concept of “multiple masculinity” by providing ethnographic data to further explain its five characteristics, and also extends the concept of multiple masculinities by addressing the two shortfalls described above.

With the former, *Boys Doing Art* challenges the assumption that masculinity is a singular entity. While this can be the case (particularly during the “typing” layer), this study illustrates that boys are capable of extending their concepts of masculinity to include often quite egalitarian values and beliefs. This in turn demonstrates how masculinity is individual to each boy; it is not one theoretical construct, as described in Chapter 2, but is indeed infinitely variable. Such variability occurs as boys explore their own values and beliefs, and as they negotiate these beliefs with their peers. *Boys Doing Art* supports this description of masculinity as multiple, as being in a constant state of modification, and of being influenced by other masculinities, by providing a list of factors that boys identify as inhibiting such gender exploration (pages 293 to 295), and by providing a model based on

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66 To reiterate, the concept of “multiple masculinities” 1) recognizes that masculinity exists as a multiple entity, not homogeneous or necessarily consistent with a range of simplistic characteristics. 2) It views gender as something constructed by its participants as well as by societal forces. Individuals do not automatically adopt a pre-determined gender role - rather they are continually active in building, negotiating and maintaining perceptions of their gender. 3) It treats gender as a relational construct. Boys/men do not construct their versions of masculinity removed from the influences and effects of femininity or other men; rather, the opposite gender and other men have considerable influence in the framing of individual perceptions of “manliness”. Likewise, family, school and society in general exert considerable forces during this continual process of gender construction. 4) It recognizes that to multiply masculinity is to diversify hegemonic structures of power, rendering them more assessable to rehabilitation. 5) A “multiple masculinities” approach links polarized dialogues with a shared concern for males not adequately addressed in previous discourses, in the process focusing on gendered power imbalances in society.
actual experiences and observations, not theoretical conjecture, of how boys engage within their masculinity on a day-to-day basis (Figure 8).

*Boys Doing Art* also extends the concept of multiple masculinities by identifying how boys’ mobile engagement between these layers constitutes their active negotiation of masculinity (pages 312 to 316, and Figure 8).

*Boys Doing Art* Relates the Concept of “Multiple Masculinities” to Education

Figures 1, 2 and 9 illustrate how *Boys Doing Art* transforms what is largely theoretical conjecture into the reality of what happens to boys in schools. A significant achievement of *Boys Doing Art* is that it “fleshes out” the concept of “multiple masculinities”, illustrated in Figure 3, by using boys’ own observations and beliefs to describe the characteristics of curriculum that enable them to explore a plurality of masculinities. Summarised in Figure 9, these favourable characteristics of curriculum constitute a blueprint for “boy-friendly curriculum” – the important features that enable boys to be mobile within their masculinity, and that helps them to access the critical “individualities” layer.

*Boys Doing Art* Provides Directions for Workable Masculinity Strategies

In Chapter 2, gender strategies are criticised as often being unrealistic because they (a) work from the assumption that there exists a commonality between boys’ masculinities; (b) they imply that boys own a collective guilt which justifies wholesale deconstruction and reconstruction strategies, which ignores individual beliefs and attitudes; and (c) they make the seemingly blind assumption that the type of masculinity determined by theorists as being “right” has some relevance to boys’ personal masculinities.

Given these concerns, it is not surprising that despite its supposed “fragility” masculinity is proving resistant to change (Kenway & Willis, 1997; Segal, 1990). The
point to be learned from *Boys Doing Art*, is that if some programs are indeed failing (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998; Kenway & Willis, 1997) it may well be because they lack relevance to boys’ inner beliefs concerning masculinity (for insights into such programs, read Browne & Fletcher, 1995).

*Boys Doing Art* holds significance for future “boy strategies” by addressing these shortfalls in three important ways. Firstly, it demonstrates the pointlessness of trying to change masculinity from “the outside” (a direction that, during the writing of this thesis, has been problematised – see Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). Being told by others that they are sexist, homophobic, and chauvinistic, and that this requires immediate attention, has little persuasive power with boys. Through this study boys indicate that the most effective change in masculinity comes from within its structure. Boys address issues such as homophobia and sexism as they access the inner layers of their personal masculinities. They have a desire to confront these and many other aspects of their own masculinity, they do not always need to be forced to do so. However, many boys do require assistance in overcoming the many barriers that exist which restrict their access to exploring their individuality (a list of which is provided on pages 293 to 295), and this is the task that strategists should tackle, to design and implement curriculum that facilitates change, not directs it.

Secondly, *Boys Doing Art* indicates that boys must direct the nature of any “change”. Current strategies assume researcher omniscience, implying that a theorist can determine which specific goals for boys are the most appropriate in terms of gender development, and that they can design programs that modify boys’ behaviour towards such ends. *Boys Doing Art* indicates that the impetus for “change” pre-exists. This is part of most boys’

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67 For a brief description of three programs, see Chapter 2.
natural development, occurring as they progress through the layers of masculinity exploration (see figure 8) and without sociologists interference, given favourable circumstances. *Boys Doing Art* stresses that “change” must occur on an individual basis, and on most occasions this will happen if curriculum facilitates boys’ access to the inner level, or range, of masculinities.

Thirdly, *Boys Doing Art* holds significance for future strategies when working with boys because it identifies the factors that inhibit their exploration of masculinity. Described in detail on pages 293 to 298, this list suggests that any perceived poor progress of current programs (see Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998) is not necessarily the result of boys’ intransigence, rather it might also be due to the fact that (1) boys have few opportunities within school curriculum to address deeper layers of masculinity, (2) they have difficulty in realising that their inner values and beliefs are in fact their masculinity, something which results in the appearance that they own a poor repertoire of knowledge concerning masculinity (concepts), and (3) they have limited tools (vocabulary) to use when discussing masculinity. (For some recent thoughts on these problems, see Sommers, 2000, or Thompson & Kindlon, 1999.) Strategies should be aimed at meeting these needs before assuming that some conspiracy of hegemony is in operation, as is argued by Mac an Ghaill (1996).

*Boys Doing Art* Contributes to a Developing Genre of “Boy-friendly” Gender Research

During the writing of this study many new publications have emerged⁶⁸. Three trends are apparent. The first is identified by the aim to deconstruct masculine power

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⁶⁸ Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 discuss at length the literature concerning masculinity, and gender research in art education. This summary constitutes the body of knowledge within which the ethnography was conceived, planned, and conducted. Of course, much writing has been published since that time. This material has not been included in *Boys Doing Art* until this late stage, because it does not contribute to the intellectual
constructs in society by challenging boys to “change” their concepts of gender. Research that argues that there exists an inherent link between masculinity and violence (Kenway and Fitzclarence, 1997; Mills, 2001; Skelton, 1997), that masculinities are essentially a product of the reproductive nature of hegemonic masculinity (Clegg, 2001; Nilan, 2000; Young, 2001a), that negative attributes of masculinity are the product of social forces and they can be modified to better suit feminist ideals (Davies, 1997; James, 1999), are all based on overly-deterministic views of masculinity. They maintain an “us versus them” dialogue, where masculinity is seen as exclusively a feminist issue (Blaxter, Hughes & Preston, 2000), and that to research masculinity from any other perspective constitutes “backlash”.

The second trend is characterised by a focus on sexual identity. Underlying informative research on homophobia in schools (Martino, 1999), and the role of sexuality in boys’ determination of masculinity (Nodelman, 2002), lies an assumption that masculinity is only based on the sexual (Dixon, 1997), that masculinity is essentially misogynistic (Epstein, 1997) and homophobic (Plummer, 2001), that masculinity requires compulsory heterosexuality (Reynold, 2000), and that schools police these attitudes through a hidden “heteronormative” curriculum (Letts, 2001).

Occurring during the passage of time between the design of this study and the present day, this literature adds little to the landscape of masculinity research in schools that was critiqued in Chapters 2 and 3. While owning some useful insights, both these approaches, the feminist and the sexualities orientations, remain highly politicised. They constitute an agenda of masculinity research that utilises essentialist and monolith
definitions of masculinity. While in some contexts, and in some instances, these issues are highly relevant and beneficial, they alienate many boys, and in the process leave little room for exploring the reality of gender exploration by most boys in the classroom.

A third trend in recent literature is noticeable. While covering a broad field of discussion, it has as a central focus the better understanding of boys. This is what I would call “boy-friendly” research in that it rejects the assumption that boys are so similar, they can be generalised as being homophobic and misogynistic agents of a heteronormative order, and that they carry an equal burden of gender-guilt, which can only be assuaged through deconstructive strategies.

In some instances, the “boy-friendly” literature that challenges these assumptions is so sympathetic to boys, it constitutes a one-eyed defence of masculinity (Banks, 2000; Canada, 2000; Gurian, 1998; Newell, 2001). This is a concern because such literature often fails to acknowledge the relational aspect of gender (Connell (1995); that individual masculinities must acknowledge the rights of other masculinities and femininities.

However, the majority of the material from this trend in the recent literature makes genuine efforts to gain a better understanding of boys’ experiences in education without impinging the rights of others. For example, some writing questions how particular subjects might help boys engage masculinity (Hughes, 2001; Newkirk, 2000), and speculates on the impact of the “social” on boys’ masculinity development (Mirny, 2001). While it is reassuring to see this positive trend in attitudes to research on boys, it is noteworthy that amongst this literature, Boys Doing Art remains the only example of significant research that actually investigates these issues.

Other “boy-friendly” attitudes are emerging in the literature. Some authors are discussing how special methodologies might be required to understand boys’ beliefs about
masculinity (Maddern, 2000; Walker, 2000), and the belief that, perhaps, boys get few opportunities to explore masculinity (Brooks, O'Dell & Jones, 2000; Thompson & Kindlon, 1999).

This genre of literature argues that a "rescue" of masculinity is not what is required. Rather, an understanding of, and attention to, boys' unique needs will allow many boys to fully develop the equitable concepts of gender that they hold (Newberger, 1999; Sommers, 2000). This will not happen through many current programs. Gilbert and Gilbert (1998) are carefully critical of the limits of many current boy-strategies that rely on a simplistic agenda of behaviour modification, and they stress that the way forward is a better understanding of the wide range of influences on boys' gender development. This group of writing constitutes a promising body of literature; it broadens the base of current research away from the narrowness of the politicised agendas, towards contextualising boys' gender beliefs within the uniqueness of their individual social and cultural situations.

*Boys Doing Art* contributes significant, practical, detail to this approach. Its identification of factors that restrict boys' exploration of masculinity (pages 293 to 295), its description of what elements of the curriculum boys see as beneficial to their exploration of masculinity (page 326), its discovery of boys' layered engagement of masculinity (Figure 8), all provide an understanding of the processes that they go through when exploring and negotiating their masculinities. *Boys Doing Art* provides some of the first specific information on how boys engage gender issues through curriculum, and it constitutes a platform for developing significant strategies with boys that acknowledge their actions in classrooms as being the act of negotiating masculinities.
Art Education Curriculum and Masculinity

*Boys Doing Art* holds significance for art education a number of reasons. The study provides valuable "grass-roots" support for the direction of its curriculum development, it provides valuable information concerning the benefits of a discipline-oriented curriculum, it supports a widening of the current scope of gender research in art education, and it identifies art education curriculum as an "exemplar" in terms of how it meets the goals of contemporary masculinity research.

*Boys Doing Art* Provides Participant-based Support for the Direction of Its Curriculum Development

In Chapter 3 I describe the long and intensive trend in North American art education towards making art a "discipline of study" (see pages 63 to 72). A force driving the rationale for this agenda has been the understandable assumption that art’s poor status within the unofficial, but very real, hierarchy of school subjects is due to its perceived lack of academic rigour (see, for instance, Eisner, 1988b). This focus has contributed to the development of the enormously valuable discipline-oriented curriculum model that is seen in action at Greene’s College during this study. As teachers engage boys in studio, aesthetics, arts criticism and art history, they are developing a range of creative, intellectual and social skills that benefit boys well beyond the art class.

However, does the focus of this development have the support of the students who study discipline-oriented programs? *Boys Doing Art* provides data that indicates that this is, indeed, the right direction. Art’s “beneficial attributes” (see the list on page 297) is an endorsement of the structure of the program in this school, and, it may be reasonable to assume, of the discipline-oriented approach in general.
Boys Doing Art shows that boys’ need to build skills is met during the early years of what the Greene’s College curriculum calls its “foundation” studies (see the description of the grade eight class – pages 169 to 171 – and also material in Appendix B). The study shows that the program’s concentration on not only studio, but also on arts criticism, art history and a development of aesthetic skills, benefits boys immeasurably (as described in Chapter 8). This range of benefits is unlikely to happen spontaneously in the classroom; to the contrary, boys clearly state that curriculum and teachers must “make this happen” in the school setting by providing a “free but controlled” environment, by mandating expression and communication, and by having teachers who facilitate boys’ positive interactions with the curriculum and each other. Boys Doing Art provides evidence of the positive benefits to boys of a discipline-oriented curriculum, when it is taught well. Making art, challenging boys to be critical, getting them to articulate aesthetic qualities, challenging them to place art within the context of history and culture, all provide special opportunities for boys to explore personal values from a range of perspectives, and to learn to understand other’s opinions and beliefs. The qualities that makes art a “discipline” also offer boys a rare opportunity to access their deeper layers of masculinity.

This result from Boys Doing Art makes a significant contribution towards an informed understanding of the many advantages a discipline-oriented art curriculum holds for its participants.

One point of concern is the chasm between student and administrators’ concepts of “academic”. While those developing art curriculum may hold a noble interpretation of this term (such as, for instance, the excellent definitions given by the Headmaster and the Assistant Headmaster, page 276) it may pay to remain mindful that students’ beliefs may differ considerably (see, for example, the descriptions by Samuel, Armand, and others on
While the students' concepts may be misguided, it is never-the-less a genuinely held belief, and stresses that much of what is valuable in art education is its ability to allow students freedom and flexibility, and the ability to allow them opportunity to express in a way that does not judge their opinions as right or wrong. These attributes, summarized so well by the students, must be protected as art education continues to evolve its disciplined structure.

**Boys Doing Art Widens the Current Scope of Gender Research in Art Education**

*Boys Doing Art* begins the task of addressing art education's previously limited agenda in gender research. Chapter 3 acknowledges a wealth of valuable art education scholarship in this field, but identifies three shortfalls. Firstly, art's gender research has been particular to girls; boys' inadequate profile in the subject, indicated by low participation and poor academic achievement (Imms, 2000a), has received little attention. Secondly, by mimicking a mainstream gender research agenda, art education has endorsed a monolith interpretation of masculinity, and in the process has contributed to the ignorance that exists concerning how boys use curriculum to develop gender concepts. Third, art education has failed to explore how its novel characteristics contribute to boys' development of gender concept in a way that may be quite different to most subjects in the schooling environment.

*Boys Doing Art* addresses these three issues. Firstly, it is particular to boys. The study examines in depth why boys do art (Chapter 7), and what characteristics of the subject benefit them and influence their participation and performance (Chapters 6 and 7). Secondly, *Boys Doing Art* utilises a "middle ground" approach to gender (see Chapter 2, and Figure 2) that is largely removed from the politicised agendas that limit a full understanding of "what is masculinity?" (Messner, 1997). *Boys Doing Art* endorses a
wider interpretation of gender in art education than has been in operation in the past. This
approach has enabled the study to extensively analyse how boys use art to negotiate
multiple masculinities (Chapter 8), and in the process, the study provides a wealth of data
specific to the ways that boys engage the art curriculum. Thirdly, by moving away from
the traditional approaches to examining gender in schools (see Chapter 3), *Boys Doing Art*
has been able to examine from a unique viewpoint the power of a discipline-oriented
curriculum to engage students in building meaningful relationships, to challenge them to
tackle issues of social justice, and to empower them to build not only academic knowledge
but as importantly, to develop knowledge about their own culture.

Researching the ways that this subject can be used to address masculinist
hegemony of knowledge and power in our society should drive some gender strategies in
art education, but not all. Art education can also address these issues in a manner that is
highly relevant to boys, through fostering full participation by males and by using all the
four components of its curriculum to encourage them to explore these issues in relation to
their own personal masculinity.

*Boys Doing Art Promotes Art as an Exemplar of “Boy-friendly” Curriculum*

Chapter 2 isolates some key characteristics of curriculum that foster the development
of egalitarian masculinities (Connell, 1996). Identified as being the three goals of
developing relationships, addressing issues of social justices, and acquiring knowledge
(see pages 57 to 60, and also Figure 3), *Boys Doing Art* illustrates how, in this particular
school, the art curriculum can be seen to meet these aims. As discussed in Chapter 8, this
is partly due to the quality of the resources and teaching at this school, but it is also due to
the wonderful opportunities offered to boys by the four components of a well-taught
discipline-oriented program. In art education there exists some rare qualities that
significantly advantage boys – both in general terms (see, for example the Headmaster’s comments on page 245), and specifically as they attempt to develop equitable concepts of gender. *Boys Doing Art* stresses that art owns a vitally important position in the school, and is a rich source of information for gender research.

The idea that discipline-oriented art can be “boy-friendly” should promote considerable interest in art education circles. The discussion on pages 325 to 342, describe in detail how one program achieves this, and makes it reasonable to assume that, because the Greene’s College program is rooted in a discipline-oriented approach, similar programs are in operation in other schools around the world may hold equally beneficial results for boys. This is a significant achievement. Art programs similar to the Greene’s College model are operational examples of “boy-friendly” curriculum.

It is an achievement that must be recognized. As discussed in Chapter 2 and in the previous section, gender research in this subject has largely ignored the boys, and it has tended to overlook the impact of its special qualities on students – that is, impact outside those areas dictated by mainstream (feminist) research. Through *Boys Doing Art*, art education has been briefly removed from this narrow agenda, and has allowed it to be explored in terms of the way it meets the qualities of “boy-friendly” curriculum that are advocated by contemporary masculinity research. *Boys Doing Art* indicates that this subject is an exemplar of this type of curriculum – an exciting prospect for art education gender research.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

There are many issues that *Boys Doing Art* touches upon, that require further research. These include the potential of single-sex schools for boys’ gender development, the nature of “boy-culture” in school settings of differing socio-economic profiles, how teachers can
help boys develop and practice a "masculinity vocabulary", and how schools can help
boys learn more about the construct and nature of masculinity in their society and culture.

However, two future directions are paramount. Research is required that focuses
specifically on art education's pedagogy – on the specific interaction between teachers of
this type of art curriculum, and boys in the classroom. Every day at Greene's College I
witnessed the power of individual teachers to either inspire, or dissuade, boys from
learning and from exploring gender issues within the classroom. They reinforced in me
the belief that even the best crafted "boy-friendly" curricular is impotent unless
implemented well. Detailed investigation that attempts to identify and clarify these
qualities was beyond the scope of this study. However, the platform provided by Boys
Doing Art makes this valuable research possible.

Secondly, research is required that examines in depth the many "marginalised" school
subjects that exist in the school. I would classify these as the subjects that appear removed
from the "core academics" and are often treated as ornamental or on the fringe. Boys
Doing Art suggests that these subjects potentially hold significant advantages for students
well beyond what the economic-rationalist debate has apportioned them. Such
investigation should examine how to counter the phenomenon of "hierarchies" of subjects
in schools. An unofficial subject hierarchy such as the one encountered in Greene's
College discriminates against subjects that forfeit "academic rigour" in favour of qualities
that are not as examinable, but which provide boys the "negotiating tools" required to
explore personal masculinities. These qualities include encouraging expression and
communication, they include providing students the freedom to explore issues from a
personal basis, and they include instituting a flexible curriculum that can meet boys varied
needs. Clearly there exists a place in schools for such subjects (indeed, Greene's College
Boys Doing Art goes to great lengths to make them available to boys), but schools are themselves victims of a social attitude that currently elevates to the point of exclusion some types of knowledge over others. This lack of balance must be addressed.

Conclusion to Section III, and a Final Observation

Boys Doing Art finds that boys address masculinity within a structured hierarchy. This occurs in four layers, from a superficial "typing" of boys, through the "grouping" of masculinities within their boy-culture, to the pursuit of "identity" within that boy-culture, to a final level of actively negotiating "individualities" (that constitute a plurality of masculinities). The study finds that boys actively engage masculinity using these layers, but it is only under special cultural and curricular circumstances that the most meaningful layer, "individualities", is accessed. The study finds that within this school the art curriculum is a site of this fourth stage. It's discipline-oriented structure offers the intellectual, physical and curricula freedom required for boys to negotiate masculinities, in an environment that is "safe" and legitimises communication and expression.

The study finds that this school’s culture sponsors some limiting concepts of knowledge and learning. Boys Doing Art also finds that this school’s expectations concerning its "ideal graduate" limits exploration of masculinity concepts and the development of a vocabulary about masculinity. However, the study also finds that this single-sex school creates an educational environment that is considered favourable to boys. This occurs through its expectations concerning participation in social and schooling activities, through the quality of its teaching, through its provision of resources, and by being able to take advantage of its single-sex environment, it can encourage boys to take risks, express, and challenge masculine stereotyped behaviours.
In conclusion, it is claimed that the art curriculum in this school addresses directly and effectively the goals advocated by contemporary masculinity research, which are considered necessary for boys, in that it allows boys to develop cultural and academic knowledge, it fosters egalitarian relationships, and it challenges boys to tackle issues of social justice.

A Final Observation

*Boys Doing Art* began during the hectic days of classroom teaching in Australia. There I subconsciously stored away, for future consideration, the many contradictions surrounding boys that I witnessed. The project came to fruition in Canada, through some skilled mentorship by my supervisor, through the challenges placed before me by many talented professors, and through the generosity of one school which held, amongst its staff and administration, a collective and genuine interest in boys' education. The study concludes here, once again in Australia, once again removed from the boys, in an office which has been the place where I have relived over and over again those many days spent in a school on the other side of the world.

The truth is, I feel I have never left Green's College. While boys like Samuel and Ishmael, and teachers like Meg and Victor may have trouble remembering me (it has been three years), I have been with them virtually every day, as I read and re-read my pages of data, and in my memory I revisit the many conversations we have enjoyed. This is, I suppose, the nature of ethnography – even though I am the researcher, I cannot be removed from the data, and the data cannot be removed from me.

In a similar way, I am still that teacher in Australia, trying to understand Malcolm. Throughout this text he has been present, but in truth, he is no more than a metaphor – I cannot hope to understand the real Malcolm, his particular motivations, why he did what
he did – but his character, as reported in *Boys Doing Art*, represents a phenomenon that is well worth understanding.

When I remember Malcolm, I see a boy who was not happy to have others judge him within a stereotype and wanted very much to let others see what made him different and unique. His efforts at creating “identity” within his peer group were a spectacular failure. He turned to the medium of art, and used the intellectual and physical skills it had developed in him, to express opinions on matters of extreme importance to him – the corrupting influence of capitalism, the unacceptable abuse of minorities, the slide of society into anarchy. In the skills that many years of a discipline-oriented art curriculum had provided him, he found a vehicle to explore these issues. He used his studio skills to construct arresting visual images that demanded attention from his peers. He used his comprehension of aesthetics to cunningly manipulate these visual images to the extent that they wove a powerful narrative of social injustice. He used his knowledge of art history to claim his right, on the basis of precedent, to continue with his controversial narrative, and in the process he used exemplars to take his work to levels of complexity and meaning that significantly challenged viewers. He used the skills he had developed through years of practice in art criticism to engage others through his work, in the philosophies that drove his work, and by association, with the deep social beliefs that he held.

Because of these outcomes, there is justifiable reason to celebrate in general terms the advantageous nature of art’s curriculum for boys. For some time Malcolm had held significant beliefs about many issues, and the desire to explore them. The studio, art history, aesthetic, and criticism skills developed by the art curriculum helped develop the ability, and provide the opportunity, for him to engage others with these passionate beliefs. In doing so, Malcolm presented himself as a man with a social conscience, who
was not afraid to express opinions that challenged the status quo. He presented himself as a man with a thirst for knowledge in its various forms – both academic and cultural. He presented himself as a man with the ability to see worth in others’ opinions, and to often have his own opinions validated by his peer group. He presented himself as a man who was accepted and respected for what was most deep within him, not for any superficial qualities and attitudes. He presented himself as a man who was willing to consider what others believed and could adapt his own beliefs when necessary.

Having said this, it is important to temper the enthusiasm of the final results of *Boys Doing Art* with reality. Malcolm was by no means a perfect man. He was argumentative, prone to violence, at times arrogant, and often ungracious. His opinions on various issues were naïve and lacked reason. He carried a grudge easily and with relish, and was too ready to retreat into a shell where few could follow. He was guilty of putting down some who disagreed with him. Likewise, most boys have faults that can easily be diagnosed as “masculinity gone wrong” and “requiring a change” (Segal, 1990).

*Boys Doing Art* suggests that such judgments are often erroneous. They may be true of some boys, but certainly not of the majority. When I compare Malcolm to some of his peers, boys who took easier paths and never challenged, argued or expressed, I can see how he and boys like him own many of the qualities that Connell (1996) and others espouse. However these qualities often need “teasing out” from under the suffocating cloak of inaccurate stereotypes of masculinity. Boys should be made to realise that “being a man” is to develop a wide repertoire of knowledge and use that knowledge well. He should face head-on the many inequities that exist in our society and question their continued existence. He should strive to develop relationships that enable him to engage others with these personal attributes. The difference between Malcolm, with all of his
imperfections, and some of his peers, is that he moved beyond the superficial layers to a meaningful engagement of his masculinity. It takes a strong person, an “individual”, to move from the safety of those stereotypes and negotiate a unique position amongst his peers.

*Boys Doing Art* makes the case that many boys have within them the desire to do this, but they face significant hurdles. They are victims in that they are limited by a wide range of social and cultural pressures from stepping beyond the stereotype. They are also perpetrators of their own demise because they often take the easy way out and continue through what Connell (1995) calls complicit masculinity, to support a superficial concept of masculinity that benefits males over females.

However, what I have seen in *Boys Doing Art* is that virtually all the boys I came to know wished more from their masculinity, and welcomed opportunities to explore these options. While ultimately the responsibility for moving to deeper layers of exploring masculinity must rest on their own shoulders, it is perhaps equally the responsibility of educators to facilitate this as much as possible. This study suggests that, in spite the best of intentions by this school, its students perceive that few such opportunities exist because of a school climate where the “academic” (as defined by boys) is supposedly prized above all else. It is the role of curriculum designers to be cognisant of all the needs that boys have to explore masculinity, and it is the duty of pedagogues to address and nurture those needs.

This study helps to spell out such “boy-friendly curriculum”. The list is tentative due to its infancy. However, the information presented in *Boys Doing Art* - the concept of boys’ layered engagement of masculinity, the barriers to boys’ exploration of
"individualities", the qualities of supportive curriculum, the model of one such curriculum - constitute a platform for significant future development.

This study unapologetically focuses on art education and its benefits to boys because, from the proof of observation and comment, the visual arts – when taught within the discipline-oriented framework – can without doubt be an excellent example of how curriculum can help boys negotiate masculinities within the structure of the school. This is a message that must be heeded by some other subjects who purport to meet the needs of young males, but which contribute little to their acquisition of cultural (as compared to simply academic) knowledge, to their development of relationships, and to their ability to tackle issues of social justice.

There are many boys like Malcolm who, but for serendipity, never receive the support they deserve to adequately negotiate their own masculinity.
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APPENDIX A
Details of Greene's College

Greene's College
Western Canada.


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<th>Details</th>
<th>Junior School (K-7)</th>
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<td>Enrolment</td>
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<td>Major Languages Spoken</td>
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<td>Admissions Officer (male)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religious Affiliation</td>
<td>Non-sectarian</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of teachers</td>
<td>Grades 8-12 62 full, 21 part time</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities (Senior School)</td>
<td>4ha inner suburban property, built in 1985, 36 normal classrooms, specialist computer technology (4), music, art, drama, science, woodwork, gymnasiums (2), aquatic centre, canteen, library, central meeting hall, summer camp, private bus fleet (6), grade 12 common rooms (2), sports fields – rugby (2), soccer (2), tennis (6), boarding house (Grades 5-12, 163 beds).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Served</td>
<td>Open to any fee paying students. Population comprises students from North Western Canada, Pacific Rim.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fees</td>
<td>$10,000 pa (day students), 18,000 per annum boarders.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Destination of Graduates</td>
<td>(1998)93% University. 2% Colleges. 1% employment.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

Extract from Greene’s College Art Curriculum

VISUAL ARTS

The creative act of making art:
- gives form to curiosity.
- enlivens and enriches the human spirit.
- is magic – it is the act of making the invisible, visible.

AIMS OF THE PROGRAM:
1) develop and find expression for individual visions.
2) develop the powers of reflection: to see one’s own work critically and in relation to the history of art and to contemporary practice.
3) supply the means to realise ambitions: studios and tutorial teaching, workshops & technical instruction, teaching & tuition in art history & theoretical studies.
4) develop visual literacy - in the constantly changing world of technology, everyone has a need to become successful, visual problem-solvers.
5) create a dialogue - carry one’s discoveries and experiences into the minds and hearts of others - for the creative process to be complete, communication must occur.

* The single measure that distinguishes outstanding art students is how far they go beyond what has been taught.
* The art room is a creative community, everyone learns from one another.
* All art students are:
  - expected to work with energy and dedication to fulfil the potential of their talents.
  - encouraged to apply the knowledge and concepts gained from the history and theory of art to their own art work.
  - encouraged to develop their own independent studio work and critical ideas.

* Through the study of great works of art, one will begin to see one’s own work in relation to both the art of the past and of the present day.
* Seek to invent original ways of manifesting your ideas,
remembering, the balance between coherence and chaos is kept on a knife edge.

**VISUAL ARTS DEPARTMENT**

Overall Program Goals (for Grades 8 to 12)

- to stimulate and extend students visual curiosity;
- to assist students in developing appreciation for their own artistic endeavours and those of others;
- to develop student's potential to respond critically to visual and aesthetic phenomena;
- to enable students to gain expertise in art processes and skills;
- to foster in students an understanding of the relation between art and history.

**Learning Outcomes**

Students are encouraged to develop their own imagery, while learning about the elements and principles of design, materials and processes and criticism as it is related to visual expression. Throughout the program where necessary, Art Foundations is incorporated for those students who do not have a background in art.

**Evaluation**

Evaluation is ongoing and includes all assignments.

Requirements for evaluation is based on the following criteria:
- understanding of assignments.
- completion of required work.
- presentation of work (numbering, signing, and matting) - constructive use of class time.
- care of materials.
- contributions to class discussions.
- participation in workshops and fieldtrips. Students have access to the art room during their class time, before school, lunchtime, and after school.
A Mark Sheet is used when the assignments are evaluated. This allows the students to see how well they have done in each area; it also avoids confusion as to how a final mark is obtained. There is also space on the mark sheet for individual comments.
APPENDIX C

Extract from Greene’s College Art Syllabus

VISUAL ARTS 11.
Ms Meg, Mr. Victor and Ms. Francis

VISUAL ARTS 12.
Ms Meg, Mr. Victor

For the majority of the term, the students work independently and treat the teacher as the resource person. The main aim of these courses is to produce CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVERS. Students design their own visual problems and they are responsible for finding inventive, original and personal solutions. Process is of great importance and approximately two thirds of the student’s mark is based on his approach, focus and overall interest in the course. The end product is, therefore worth one third of the mark. Evaluation criteria and weighting is provided on the following pages.

To enable the students to learn the skills needed to produce informed and sensitive responses, certain projects or themes are set. The Intended Learning Outcomes are based on the new Fine Arts 11 Curriculum and a copy of these Learning Outcomes is provided. Some projects will focus on technique and others on theme. Form and Content are the main areas considered.

FORM
- HOW THE IMAGE IS CREATED
- VISUAL IMPACT
- ELEMENTS & PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN.

VS. CONTENT
- What the image communicates, (ie., What it is about / What is it saying?)

SKETCHBOOKS

Sketchbooks must be used on a regular basis as a visual record of their experiences and responses. Reflection on and analysis of their drawings are necessary components of creative problem solving and critical thinking.
For ALL MAJOR PROJECTS ideas need to be planned and the following areas should be successfully worked out in the sketchbook BEFORE beginning a project.
- Concept/- Composition/- Development of the full Picture Plane/- Medium/- Scale

The following is an example of a Sketchbook Assignment:

A.) - spend 15 MINS. DRAWING an IMAGE from observation. - a section of your room, house across the street, garden, a figure relaxing, etc.
B.) - select a photograph that you have, tape it into your sketchbook and respond to it.

**SKETCHBOOKS/Criteria FOR EVALUATION**

Students are encouraged to take responsibility for the use of their sketchbooks. Following is the evaluation scale and criteria for both sketchbook assignments and major projects.

5 - the student works independently on imagery that is consistently personal, inventive, and original.
4 - the student works individually and often uses original solutions and ideas.
3 - the student has explored some aspects of personal imagery and has some success in expressing ideas and feelings.
2 - the student can work with some independence and parts of the work show some originality and imagination.
1 - the student needs constant direction and the work is unimaginative, unoriginal, and unstimulating.

**Strategies for Developing an Artistic Image**

Artists strive for images that rise above the ordinary, that are compelling, and that communicate effectively. Image development strategies are methods, techniques, and pictorial devices that artists use to create such images.

1. **What do you want to say?**
- Establish what you want to say/communicate
- Decide on the theme/subject matter/topic.

Sources for image development include:
- working from memory
- working from the imagination or feelings
- direct observation of source material

2. Collect INFORMATION - So you can make a knowledgeable decision in order to determine HOW & WHY?

Once the theme has been decided the student artist should discover how different artists have responded to that theme. Begin by collecting as many different examples on that theme. Aim to become knowledgeable and informed on the varying ways a particular theme may be expressed.

Research how the theme has been expressed by artists in other cultures and throughout history. Make a time line using examples of the theme. WHEN & WHERE?

3. Record responses to the theme. Use a sketchbook. Do sketches and small studies relating to the theme. Include photographs, notes, resources, and so on. Refer to the work of historical or contemporary artists. How is their work original and effective?

4. Create your own response to the theme. Produce a "Major Work". Be aware of how the elements and principles of design have been used to successfully communicate the theme. Use media appropriate to the image.

5. Reflect on the success of the finished work. Consider what makes it successful or unsuccessful. Learn how to critique your work in an informed an objective way.

PERSONAL EVALUATION

1. What was the source of image?
2. What steps were required to communicate your idea?
3. Have you been successful in communicating your intent?
4. Any challenges, weaknesses, frustrations?
5. Visual impact? Eye movement throughout the picture plane?

THE IMPORTANCE OF DRAWING

Drawing is a language without a code - its symbols are personal, but easily communicated. Drawings reveal subtle & complex thoughts with feelings impossible to articulate in words alone. A drawing’s worth is measured not only by its - DEGREE OF NATURALISM but also by:

- the information it contains,
- the feelings it expresses,
- its imaginative use of form and content,
- the seriousness of its theme, and
- the level of aesthetic energy (formal coherency) it generates.

WHEN EXAMINING A DRAWING ASK:
1) What do I see?
2) What do I remember?
3) What do I imagine?
4) What do I know?
5) How does it make me feel?

THE QUALITIES TO STRIVE FOR IN DRAWING

- Empathic
- Smooth
- Firm
- Taut with energy
- Confident
- Always forward moving
- Descriptive
- Detailed?
**APPENDIX D**

Catalogue of Observations and Interviews

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<tr>
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<th>Date</th>
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**Figure D1.** Catalogue of observations and interviews.
APPENDIX E

A Page From the Field Diary

Record of Documents
All documents have a label attached when collected, that stipulate when and where it was collected, if it was a primary or secondary document, and if it was solicited or offered. A similar label is placed in the field diary to mark the time and circumstance of its collection.

Record of photographs
Photographs are double-labeled. As the photo is taken, one label is placed into the field diary to record when/where it was taken, and its context. A copy of this label is placed on the photograph after it has been processed.

Text
All observations, occurrences, thoughts, and plans are written into the field diary. It forms an ongoing record of the procedure of the ethnography.

"Data" label
Each separate "occurrence" is given a "data number", with a label to mark its place in the field diary (and details of the occurrence). A "record of data" is kept separately (see Appendix D), which allows me to keep track of information that is being gathered.

Figure E1. A page from the field diary.
APPENDIX F

Line Plot of Frequencies of Observations and Interviews

Frequencies of Data Collection, by Month

![Line plot of frequencies of observations and interviews.](image)

MONTH

**Figure F1.** Line plot of frequencies of observations and interviews.
APPENDIX G

Consent Letter to Student Participants

24th February 1999.

Informed Consent Form.

Dear

My name is Wes Imms and I am a doctoral student in Curriculum Studies in the Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia. For my thesis leading to a Ph.D. I am conducting a study titled “Art curriculum and the schooling of boys in a secondary single-sex school setting” under the supervision of Dr. Anna Kindler, Associate Professor in the Department of Curriculum Studies, University of British Columbia.

In the past there has been little research conducted on the effects of curriculum on boys' academic and social development. In particular, we know little about how specific curriculum influences the ways in which boys develop their “gender identities”.

This study focuses on questions concerning the art curriculum within the single-sex school. Does art in this setting help boys to develop an increased body of academic and cultural knowledge? Does it help boys develop relationship skills? Does it provide boys with a forum to discuss and practice tolerance of differences between males?

A number of classes and student interactions have already been observed within Greene’s College since this study began in November 1998. The next phase is the collection of data directly from staff, parents and students through interview to gain participants’ view on this topic.

I would like to invite your son to be a part of this project. His input would be valuable because of his experience with the art program at Greene’s College. If elects with your permission to be involved in this study he will be interviewed once, on school premises, at his convenience during the school day.
Informed Consent Form

I the undersigned do/do not (please circle one) give consent for my son to participate in Wes Imms’ study “Art curriculum and the schooling of boys in a secondary single-sex school setting” under the supervision of Dr. Anna Kindler.

I have received a letter explaining the nature of the study and a copy of this consent form.

I understand my son’s participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that he may refuse to participate or may withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

Signature (Student) Date

Signature (Parent or Guardian) Date
## APPENDIX H

### List of Codes

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<th>Art curriculum</th>
<th>The school</th>
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APPENDIX I

Original Interview Questions Resulting from Immersion Data

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<td>What masculinities embrace tolerance, respect, “the other”?</td>
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<td>Does art pedagogy help boys explore masculinity?</td>
<td>What are boys’ needs from the school as they negotiate masculinities?</td>
<td>How “multiple layers” curriculum helps boys?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THE SCHOOL</strong></td>
<td>How does the school impact art’s role in helping boys negotiate masculinities?</td>
<td>How “intrinsic/extrinsic curriculum helps boys?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does the school’s definitions of knowledge and learning effect boys’ negotiation of masculinities through art?</td>
<td>What messages of power does the school present to boys?</td>
<td>Why boys with varied interests do art?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are boys’ needs from the school as they negotiate masculinities?</td>
<td>What effect does the schools’ endorsement of art as non-academic have on boys?</td>
<td>How does art fit into the intellectual and academic environment of the school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does the school determine boys needs?</td>
<td>Definitions of knowledge endorsed by school?</td>
<td>Does the school validate art to the boys?</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Does the school place on boys?</td>
<td>What subject specific expectations does the school place on boys?</td>
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<td>What do teachers adapt teaching to suit particular subjects?</td>
<td>How do the school determine boys needs?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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