CRITICALLY EXAMINING MEN, MASCULINITIES, AND CULTURE: BOYS IN CRISIS AND MALE TEACHERS AS ROLE MODELS

By

BRANDON M. STERNOD

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To the Faculty of Washington State University

The members of the Committee appointed to examine the dissertation of Frandon Michael Sternod find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

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Pamela J. Bettis, Chair

_____
Dawn M. Shinew

_____
Michael T. Hayes

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Abstract

By Brandon M. Sternod
Washington State University
May 2009

Chair: Pamela J. Bettis

This study is a Foucauldian analysis of the discourse of masculinity with a particular focus on education and schooling. Specifically, the author addresses a recent phenomenon in education known as the "boy crisis" and the related call for the recruitment of more male teachers to serve as "role models" for boys and young men. Utilizing Foucauldian archaeological methodologies, the author first critically examines several discursive fields from different historical periods and academic disciplines. In doing so, he reveals numerous historical ruptures and discontinuities and demonstrates how concepts such as masculinity, boyhood, and "male role models" are perpetually constructed and reconstructed to sustain existing power apparatuses. Next, the popular written news media discourse about the "boy crisis" and "male role models" from the United States from 1997 to 2007 is scrutinized utilizing Foucauldian genealogical methodologies. In this examination, the author identifies several dominant themes within the discourse that are highly influenced by and uncritically assume certain "common sense" beliefs about masculinity, boyhood, and male role models. He also locates a number of alternatives discourses that reveal a wider range of possibilities and the means of resistance for male teachers and students alike. Finally, the author concludes by

proposing that educators, regardless of gender, consider adopting a “mythopoetic model of transgression”—a profeminist, socially-just theoretical model based on cross-cultural myths and mythological archetypes.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, my sister and her family, my father-in-law, my partner Latisha, my son Hayden, and to the child we will all be welcoming into the world in just a few short months. Thank you for all of your love, support, and inspiration.

Chapter 1

Introduction

And now my life has changed in oh so many ways,
My independence seems to vanish in the haze.
But every now and then I feel so insecure,
I know that I just need you like I've never done before.

Help me if you can, I'm feeling down
And I do appreciate you being round.
Help me, get my feet back on the ground,
Won't you please, please help me.

—The Beatles, *Help!*

In the past decade, an increased proportion of the popular written news media discourse on education and educational issues has focused on the supposed troubles of boys in schools and the perceived shortage of men in the teaching profession to serve as male role models. This is a distinct change from the popular discourse of the 1990s that framed girls as the ones who were being "shortchanged" in America's schools (AAUW, 1992; Pipher, 1995; Sadker & Sadker, 1994). In this study, I scrutinize this written news media discourse using a Foucauldian framework in an attempt to make sense of this apparent discursive shift. Two recently published books highlight some of the differing perspectives on these topics.

The first book, *The Trouble with Boys: A Surprising Report Card on Our Sons, Their Problems at School, and What Parents and Educators Must Do* (2008), is written by Pulitzer Prize winning journalist and former *Newsweek* columnist Peg Tyre. It is an investigation into the new "gender gap" in America's schools, with newly confident girls on one end of the spectrum and underachieving and apathetic boys on the other. In a seemingly apolitical, evenhanded style, Tyre argues that American boys, regardless of race or socio-economic status, lag behind their female peers in large part because their

needs are not being met by teachers and administrators. She contends that their struggles are also not being recognized by feminist-leaning scholars and researchers who are driven to improve school cultures for young females but who willfully ignore and even discourage the talents and proclivities of young males. In turn, Tyre argues, boys have fallen behind, have not been provided with the much-needed academic assistance, and have been forced to navigate their own paths through school cultures that are no longer "boy friendly."

The second book, *Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men* (2008) by sociologist Michael Kimmel, is also concerned with the chronic underachievement of boys and young men. Kimmel describes how many boys have lost interest in school, engage in risky and ultimately destructive behaviors, and suffer psychologically and emotionally in their attempts to live up to an increasingly ubiquitous "guy code." This "guy code," a more developmentally advanced version of psychologist William Pollack's (1999) "boy code" consists of several tenets of masculinity that guide young men in their journey from adolescence to adulthood. It is pervasive, rigid, and based on power, domination, and humiliation. For Kimmel, it is this code that is in large part responsible for the struggles boys and young men face today and not a discriminatory educational system.

By briefly introducing these two books, I am by no means attempting to set up a dichotomy with one book representing the "dominant" discourse on boys in schools and the other representing its opposite, a more critical perspective. Rather, the comparison is meant to demonstrate how both books characterize the discursive field of the popular written news media itself, full of conflicts and contradictions. For instance, In *The*

Trouble with Boys, Tyre (2008) is equally critical of the brain and hormone based research of best-selling author Michael Gurian and the assumption that male underperformance is linked to the decline of male teachers as she is of feminist leaning scholars who she believes too readily dismiss boys' struggles. While she admits that poor white and minority boys face far more challenges in life compared to upper to middle class white boys, she is also prone to describe boys as a monolithic and generic group with uniform interests and abilities. Kimmel (2008) agrees with Tyre that boys and young men are in fact struggling in school and in life but stops short of claiming that they are the ones now being "shortchanged." He talks about young males as a generalized group as well because they all, to one degree or another, feel pressure to conform to certain norms of masculinity. But he also notes that certain males are privileged over others by virtue of race, class, sexuality, and ability and that males in general are privileged over females. He encourages boys and young men to be resilient in the face of the "guy code" and to disrupt the destructive cultures of male entitlement, silence, and protection but does not specifically spell out what role adult males can play. He merely states that mythopoetic men's movement icon and male initiation proponent Robert Bly (1990) "may have been right" (p. 101).

In making this comparison, I also want to show, despite the conflicts and contradictions found in both books, how one book is, at its core, ideologically more appealing to the dominant culture in America and is more representative of the "gender gap" and "boy crisis" discourse found in the popular written news media. Consider these statistics: Both books were released in August of 2008. According to Amazon (2008a), Tyre's book ranks #905 in current book sales as of the 25th of October. It is the #1 book

under the categories of "education: instructional method" and "educational theory: ed psychology" and the #2 best-selling book under the category "education: theory." On the other hand, Kimmel's book is ranked #10,532 in total book sales (Amazon, 2008b). It is ranked #5 in the category "sociology: men" (below a book by radio host Dr. Laura and just above Bly's *Iron John*, first published in 1990) and #24 under the category "adolescent psychology" (behind Mary Pipher's *Reviving Ophelia* (1995) and Gurian's *The Wonder of Boys* (1997), both originally published over a decade ago.) These sales statistics indicate that many in this country (possibly the majority) are more than willing to accept that boys and young men are endangered by feminist ideals and are equally ready to blame teachers, schools, and scholars, but are less willing and even reluctant to confront dominant beliefs about gender and masculinity. In the research conducted for this study, this pattern also holds true.

The work of Tyre (2008) and Kimmel (2008) are just two of the latest contributions to the discourses of masculinity, boyhood, and male role models—contentious discourses rife with discord, contradictions, and ideological struggles. According to Foucault (1984), "scientific" discourses such as these are not sources of objective, universal truths but rather are produced by unstable human institutions that are themselves "subject to constant economic and political incitement" and "transmitted under the control, dominant if not exclusive, of a few great political and economic apparatuses" (p. 73). These discourses and the apparatuses of power that produce and transmit them are the subject of this study. Before I directly address these discourses and the methodologies I will use to interrogate them, however, let me first provide some

background on how it is that I came to this place and why I took on boys in schools and male teachers as “role models” as the focal points of my scholarship.

Background of the Problem

Prior to my son Hayden’s birth in the spring of 2007, my experiences as a teacher working closely with male students and developing what some might consider mentoring relationships with them led to and shaped my interest in what it means to be a “male role model.” Indeed, the very idea of being a positive “male role model” was one of my main motivations for becoming a teacher. Coming from a primarily white, middle class background, I naively started my career believing that my understanding of “success” in life and what it meant to “be a man” was universal and that my charge, as a teacher, was to provide my students the skills required to meet those goals. In particular, I was interested in working with traditionally underserved populations such as working-class youth and students of color because I felt that they simply lacked the opportunity that I had and if they were given the skills, they could be just as successful. I also knew that many of those underserved students also often lacked a male in the home and that school was often the only place they would interact with a positive “male role model” on a regular basis. I envisioned myself fulfilling both of those obligations.

However, as I gained more experience, I soon realized that many of my students did not necessarily agree with my “model” of success or masculinity, especially many of the male students. I was able to develop and maintain a positive relationship with these students for the most part, especially when I was willing to talk about sports, movies, music, and automobiles. But the cordiality of our interactions did not necessarily translate

to academic performance. While few were outright resistant, most were apathetic about the "lessons" that I had to teach them and resisted simply by not participating. In fact, in my last semester, roughly half of the boys in my five English classes either received Fs or Ds.

In *Learning to Labor*, Willis (1977) describes the social and cultural world of white, working class British schoolboys known as the "Lads." Like my primarily Black and Hispanic students, the "Lads" were also resistant to middle class norms of success and masculinity. They rejected school culture due to their partial "penetration" or understanding of a social structure that disadvantaged them as a group. Perceiving that they lacked the cultural capital or "knowledge and skill in the symbolic manipulation of language and figures" (p. 128) possessed by the dominant class in society and required of those who wish to move out of their current social class, the "Lads" were resigned to instead prepare themselves for a life of labor on the workshop floor and, as a consequence, to help reproduce the social status quo. They performed poorly in school, participated and incited physical fights, ridiculed other males who they believed were overly obedient, and adopted racist and misogynistic attitudes that supported their ideals about what "real" manhood was all about.

Willis' Marxist analysis of culture and social structure resonated strongly with me and my experiences with my male students and was the first step towards my theoretical understanding of how power operates in society. But for all of its strengths and insights into the minds of boys and young men and their struggles to maintain their delicate masculine identities, its analysis is primarily a critique of social hierarchies based on class rather than gender. Connell (1995, 2000, 2002) addresses such gender hierarchies

with a specific focus on boys, men, and masculinity. Connell argues that although there are many discourses, or ways of talking about, understanding, and enacting masculinities, there is typically a dominant version that is privileged above all others in a given society. This is the version she calls *hegemonic masculinity*. Although it is often assumed that the hegemonic definition is the most common form of masculinity (and thus the most "natural" or "normal"), Connell contends that this is not the case. Factors such as race, class, culture, religion, sexual orientation, and ability often operate in social institutions such as public schools to exclude a great number of men and boys and to benefit those few who meet the hegemonic mold—typically white, middle to upper class, Christian, heterosexual, able-bodied or athletic males in western societies. Like Willis' "Lads" (1977), those who do not meet these standards generally still internalize and value them (i.e. working class white males harboring feelings of superiority over women and minorities). Others may struggle against or resist the standards (for examples, my students' rejection of the middle class norms of masculinity that I embodied) but are nonetheless defined by or in relationship to them.

As a child, I most certainly embraced the hegemonic discourse of masculinity despite the fact that I, more often than not, failed to measure up to them. I idolized strong, hyper-"masculine" characters such as Popeye, the Incredible Hulk, Rocky Balboa, and Hulk Hogan and felt embarrassed when I acted in any way considered to be non-masculine by others. As an adolescent, I looked to professional athletes as my role models and felt the need to prove my own masculinity by besting other boys on the playing field. And as a young adult, my friends and I would regularly berate each other using homophobic terms such as "homo" or "gay," to regulate each others' masculinity.

When I became a teacher, I similarly made the effort to appear even more masculine to gain the respect of my students. In my role as a teacher, I became an overly masculine version of myself. The traits and mannerisms that I possessed that made me appear strong, such as a stoic and aloof attitude, a deep, commanding voice, and an athletic appearance, were placed in the foreground and those characteristics which I felt might make me appear weak were placed in the background. Consequently, I found that some of my male students gravitated to me (even those who rejected my white, middle class beliefs about academic success) and treated me as a "role model" while many of my female students seemed to keep a respectful distance. My most vocal students tended to be male and my most docile students tended to be female. It seemed that my emphasis on hegemonic masculinity had an effect (in many ways negative) on the way my students behaved, and in very gendered ways. After leaving the ranks of high school teachers, I began to question how my own behaviors were shaped and how they have operated to shape the behaviors of others (most notably the students in my classrooms.) I also wondered what role masculinity plays in the lives of other men and boys, particularly male teachers and their students.

The "Boy Crisis"

According to popular authors Christina Hoff Sommers (2000) and Michael Gurian (1997, 2001, 2003), there is a "crisis" among boys and men in schools today, but it has nothing to do with hegemonic norms of masculinity. They argue that American schools, in response to feminist research and in an effort to give girls their voice, have become distinctly "anti-boy." As a result, boys (as a group seemingly void of race, class, sexual

orientation, and ability) now struggle in schools both academically and socially. Both authors refer to statistics that show that boys are being surpassed by girls on standardized tests and rates of college admission as well as studies that confirm a higher percentage of boys than girls are identified as special needs and/or with behavioral problems. What they propose as one solution to this "crisis" is that boys need more traditionally "masculine" male teachers—who somehow "get" their male students better than female teachers—to serve as "role model" in order to save them from feminist faculty, schools, and curricula.

Gurian (1997, 2001, 2003) and Sommers (2000) are not alone in their concerns about boys in school; best selling books such as *Real Boys* (Pollack, 1998) and *Raising Cain* (Kindlon & Thompson, 2000) also frame boys as troubled individuals. While neither book blames feminism as Gurian and Sommers do, both argue that boys are struggling in school and in life and are need of attention. Pollack (1998) argues that boys are struggling to meet outmoded definitions of masculinity that force them to succumb to a rigid "boy code," or unbending and intolerant standards of masculine behavior. This leads many to put on a "mask of masculinity." In other words, they put on a public, masculine face in order to hide their true selves. Kindlon and Thompson (2000) also believe that boys are struggling to meet unreasonable social norms but agree with Gurian (1997, 2001, 2003) and Sommers (2000) that schools are also failing to recognize those innate qualities that supposedly make boys act "like boys" such as an abundance of kinesthetic energy, low impulse control, and slower developing verbal skills.

Another notable vocal proponent of the "boy crisis" is former First Lady Laura Bush. In the winter of 2005 the Bush administration launched an ambitious project called Helping America's Youth Initiative, spearheaded by the Ms. Bush (a former school

teacher and librarian.) While the initiative itself is not necessarily remarkable (it seeks to address teen violence and raise test scores), the focal point of the initiative certainly caught the attention of educators and scholars alike. In speeches and television appearances across the nation, the former First Lady (White House, n.d.) proclaimed that boys were in trouble and quickly falling behind the girls in almost every academic arena. She repeatedly mentions, echoing the works of both Gurian (1997, 2001, 2003) and Sommers (2000), that boys make up the majority of students in remedial reading and special education classes and that fewer and fewer young men are attending college.

As I alluded to previously, I experienced firsthand the academic failures of numerous boys and have had several discussions with colleagues about how and why female students tended to be more "successful." I have had male students drop out of school, get suspended or expelled, and pulled out of my classroom for possession of drugs. I have had a few that were active gang members, others who had been victims of gang violence, and one that was stabbed and left to die by a former childhood friend who belonged to a rival group. Was there something about these students, some innate or "hard-wired" masculine characteristics, which led them to do poorly in school or to engage in violent and/or criminal behaviors? Were there things that I did (or did not do) as a teacher that led to such male failure and misbehavior? Are boys as a group being systematically discriminated against as a group by a school system that favors feminine aptitudes and characteristics?

"Male Role Models"

Although authors, educational researchers, and political figures like Gurian (1997, 2001, 2003), Sommers (2000), Pollack (1998), Kindlon and Thompson (2000), and Bush (White House, n.d.) propose numerous ways to alleviate boys' supposed troubles, one suggestion that connects all of their work is that adult males are needed to serve as "role models' for boys and young men, both in and out of school. For instance, Sommers (2000) provides an example of a "successful" school for boys in Great Britain that provided students with a young and athletic male teacher who taught to the boys' supposedly gender specific interests and provided the firm discipline that the boys needed and desired. Gurian (2001) discusses a "male nurturing system" that men naturally provide for boys and young men that he claims women have a difficult time replicating. Pollack (1999) claims that boys need adult "male role models" in their lives who "exude masculinity in a genuine and expansive way" in order to show them that there are multiple ways to be "a man." Kindlon and Thompson (2000) argue that male teachers have a "calming effect" on boys and provide a more "boy-friendly" learning environment. And, in her numerous speeches supporting the Helping America" Youth campaign, Laura Bush (White House, n.d.) repeatedly cites several successful models where male teachers had positive impacts on the lives of their male students.

Given my previously-stated desire as a beginning teacher to be a "role model" for my male students, my emerging awareness of the development of my own gendered identity, and now my position as a father to an infant son, I continue to be drawn to the subject of boys, their schooling, and the part male teachers have to play. I find the discussion simultaneously fascinating and disturbing because it both mirrors my own

experiences and naïve assumptions about what it means to be "a man" and because the "masculinity" or masculine characteristics of these proposed male "role models" are so often taken-for-granted and unquestioned. With the exception of Pollack (1998), none of the authors cited above discuss male teachers and/or male role models as individuals who demonstrate multiple forms of masculinity. Most propose very stereotypical ways of modeling how to be a male in this society and suggest the existence of an essential, universal form of masculinity that all boys will "naturally" respond to. Like my earlier vision of being a "male role model" for underrepresented populations, these individuals ignore the ways factors such as race and class (not to mention ethnicity, sexuality, and ability) can complicate definitions and understandings of "masculinity" and assume the presence of a male teacher alone is enough to remedy the diverse array of problems that male (and female) students face today.

Problem Statement and Research Questions

As I have shown, beliefs about masculinity, boyhood, and male role models that can be viewed in many ways as stereotypical are all too often framed in the popular written news media discourse as "common sense" and are rarely subject to scrutiny. Complicating issues related to power, hegemonic masculinity, and the diversity of male experiences are frequently ignored and/or silenced. The apparent backlash against feminism (Faludi, 1991) found in much of the popular literature is also a cause for concern. Martino (2008) explains that "current calls for more male teachers as role models need to be understood as part of a broader cultural project of re-masculinization," (p. 190)—a project that reads recent gains made by girls and women as a threat against

the social supremacy of boys and men. Uncritical reading of such popular literature could quite possibly perpetuate dangerous stereotypes about who men and boys are (or should be) and ignores the numerous problems of hegemonic masculinity and patriarchal power. Finally, the recruitment of males to the teaching profession is commonly conducted under the assumption that a male teacher's presence alone will solve boys' academic woes. But this desire for more male teachers assumes a universal masculinity and ignores that there are multiple forms of masculinities. As Martino and Kehler (2006) argue, "consideration of the kinds of masculinity to be promoted in schools is needed, including the ways in which this process might lead to better educational and social outcomes for both boys and girls" (p. 126-127).

With these problems in mind, the research questions that drive this study are as follows:

- What are the common sense discourses about masculinity, boyhood, and "male role models" found in popular news media discussions of the "boy crisis?"
- How has knowledge about masculinity, boyhood, and "male role models" been discursively produced in the past century by way of the media, mythology, and academic disciplines (namely, psychology and sociology) and how does that knowledge production contribute to popular beliefs about who boys and men are and who they should be?
- How are power, identity, race, Socio-economic status (SES), sexuality, and ability addressed in popular media discussions of the "boy crisis?"
- What is the relationship between the common sense discourse on male role models and patriarchal power?

- If more men do become teachers, as the popular discourse often calls for, which masculinities should they model if they model at all?

Study Design and Significance

The intent of this study (and of my scholarship in general), echoing Foucualt (1996), is to analyze popular discourse in order to stimulate a reconsideration of masculinity, boyhood, and teachers as "male role models." As Foucault writes,

> The work of an intellectual is not to mould the political will of others; it is, through the analyses that he does in his own field, to re-examine evidence and assumptions, to shake up habitual ways of working and thinking, to dissipate conventional familiarities, to re-evaluate rules and institutions and ... to participate in the formation of a political will (where he has his role as citizen to play.) (p. 462-463)

In the chapters that follow, I survey historical and scientific discourse as well as popular written news media discourse from all regions of the United States in order to determine the underlying assumptions, meanings, and motivations that support taken-for-granted beliefs about these interrelated issues. Through my analysis, I seek to "shake up" habits of mind and body and to problematize "common sense" ideologies. I also suggest an alternative, more fluid way male teachers can think about and enact masculinities.

For this study, I have utilized critical discourse analysis methodologies and a theoretical framework inspired by the collective works of Foucault (1967, 1972, 1984, 1990, 1994, 1995, 2006). In my examination of historical and scientific discursive fields concerning masculinity, boyhood, and male role models (chapter 3), I employ

Foucauldian archaeological methods (1967, 1972, 1994) as I attempt to make sense of the broader, social and cultural influences on the production of discourse (*savoir*) as well as the formal statements of certain disciplines (*connaissance*). In this analysis, I also remain cognizant of Foucault's critique of the assumed rationality and continuity of modernity and of man's subjectivity (Scheurich & McKenzie, 2005). In my examination of the data collected from the popular written news media discourse (chapter 4), I put several Foucauldian genealogical concepts (1984, 1990, 1995) to work as I scrutinize the production of "truth" and its connection to apparatuses of political and economic power. I observe how certain "truths" about masculinity, boyhood, and "male role models" are produced discursively, the technologies of power that create and recreate existing power relations, as well as how unjust social relationships can be resisted in and through discourse. A more explicit discussion of critical discourse analysis, Foucault's archaeological and genealogical methods, and the influence of his theoretical work on this study can be found in the subsequent chapter (chapter 2).

While this study parallels several contemporary works of scholarship in education (Carrington, Francis, Mutchings, Skelton, Read, & Hall, 2007; Dreissen, 2007; Johnson, 2008; Marsh, Martin, & Cheng, 2008; Martino, 2008; Martino & Kehler, 2006, 2007; Rouston & Mills, 2000; Skelton, 2002; Sokal & Katz, 2008; Titus, 2004), it is significant for a number of reasons. The above articles all critique binary definitions of "masculinity" and "femininity" and assumptions regarding the homogeneity of males and females. They question the recent popular demands for more male teachers, the suggestion that recruiting male teachers will "solve" boys' supposed social and academic difficulties, and the "common sense" assumptions about male teachers as "role models"

that are at the heart of much of the popular discourse. However, I believe that the scholarly literature is limited in that 1) the majority of the studies were conducted utilizing data from either Great Britain or Australia, 2) there is little to no focus on the popular discourse and the role of the media in perpetuating and re-constructing the "common sense" assumptions of male teacher recruitment efforts, and 3) there are few if any suggestions for how educators and teacher educators can practically make sense of and address these issues.

With this study, I have attempted to address these limitations. First of all, all of the data for chapter 4 were collected exclusively from sources within the United States—some from regional sources (newspapers such as the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, the *Chicago Sun-Times*, the *Seattle Times/Post-Intelligencer*) and some from national sources (newspapers and magazines such as the *USA Today, Newsweek, Time, U.S. News and World Report*, and *The New Yorker*.) While Great Britain and Australia are very similar to the United States in that they are primarily white, patriarchal, capitalist western societies, the political and social contexts are not always the same. In fact, granted the amount of scholarship already produced from those countries, it is evident that they have been dealing with fears of a "boy crisis" and lack of "male role models" in schools for decades whereas this issue has only recently re-emerged in the United States.

Secondly, a majority of the scholarly literature practically overlooks the popular media discourse on boys' troubles in schools and the call for more "male role models" in schools in favor of qualitative research in schools and analyses of other scholarly works. While some touch on what is being said in the media (Bricheno & Thornton, 2007; Dreissen, 2007; Marsh, Martin, & Cheng, 2008; Roulston & Mills, 2000) and a few

others systematically analyze the dominant discourse (Martino, 2008; Martino & Kehler, 2006; Titus, 2004), the great majority of educational research articles on the topic fail to address how it is being discussed in the media and how that discussion impacts policy and practice. Granted, the critical work that is being done in the schools and in the academic arena is invaluable and often-times inspiring but, as I have argued, the dominant discourse simply cannot be ignored.

Finally, as is the case with a great deal of critical works in education, the studies cited here have a great deal to say about what is wrong with contemporary educational policies and practices but very little to offer to educators, teacher educators, and educational researchers who seek practical solutions to the problems they face. While I agree with the assessment that we must remain mindful of "common sense" assumptions and "truth claims" made within the media concerning boys in schools, their male teachers, and how they effect schooling (Martino, 2008; Martino & Kehler, 2006), I also believe that we scholars need to provide those in the field who seek to disrupt dominant discursive practices with the tools that will allow them to do so. This is why I argue, if more males do indeed "answer the call" and enter the teaching profession, that they strongly consider adopting a "mythopoetic model of transgression"—a profeminist, socially-just theoretical model based on cross-cultural myths and mythological archetypes—as the basis for their pedagogical approach (chapter 5).

Chapter 2

Methodology/Theoretical Framework

You say you'll change the constitution
Well, you know
We all want to change your head
You tell me it's the institution
Well, you know
You better free your mind instead

—The Beatles, *Revolution*

At the heart of this inquiry are the dominant discourses of masculinity, boyhood, and male role models and how they are talked about, understood, enacted, and reproduced through popular written media to the point that they become taken-for-granted or understood as "common sense." Indeed, I argue that the work of "boy crisis" authors and journalists have met with receptive audiences primarily because they both reiterate and reconstruct familiar and comfortable understandings of what it means to be (and become) a man. For this study then, I use a Foucauldian style of critical discourse analysis as my method of research. Critical discourse analysis also serves as a vital element of my theoretical framework because, as Rebecca Rogers (2004) explains, critical discourse analysis is both a theory and a method. In this sense, critical discourse analysis is similar to another widely known methodology, critical ethnography (Anderson, 1989; Lather, 1986), in that they both use a particular methodological approach to uncover unjust structures of power.

Previous studies in education utilizing critical discourse analysis include anthologies such as Popkewitz and Brennan's *Foucault's Challenge: Discourse, Knowledge, and Power* (1998) and Rogers' *An Introduction to Critical Discourse Analysis in Education* (2004) as well as Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) and Cazden's (2001) work on classroom talk, Lewis and Ketter's (2004) examination of learning as

social interaction, Woodside-Jiron's (2004) study of public policy, and Kainz and Aikens (2007) work on home/school relations. A recent edition of the journal *Educational Studies* (2008, v. 44, n. 1) deals exclusively with the use of Foucualdian methodologies of discourse analysis in education with articles focused on the early childhood classroom (Cohen, 2008), the education of school counselors (Shenker, 2008), school architecture (Piro, 2008), educational reform (Levitt, 2008), and academic anxiety (Levine, 2008).

More closely related to this study, Josephine Payton Young's "Cultural Models and Discourses of Masculinity: Being a Boy in a Literacy Classroom" (2004) examines the language used by boys in a particular educational setting and Jordan J. Titus' "Boy Trouble: Rhetorical Framing of Boys' Underachievement" (2004) explores how the popular "boy crisis" discourse is utilized in support of conservative political agendas. While Young describes and uncovers particular details of the "boy crisis" in regards to literacy and Titus does the same in the realm of popular discourse, politics and educational policy, their analyses do not address the common sense notion of male teachers serving as role models for male students. Martino and Kehler (2006) do analyze discourse regarding the notion of male teachers as role models in light of the recent "boy crisis" but are far more focused on scholarly works than popular written media accounts. They also derive a majority of their data from sources in Australia and Canada, with little interrogation of sources from the United States. The purpose of this study is to address these voids in critical discourse analysis literature in educational research and to implicate future directions for policy and practice in teacher education.

According to Rogers (2004), the critical discourse analyst explores power relations and reveals inequities in the social structure; studies the correlation between

form and function in language and clarifies how some language practices are privileged over others; uncovers social problems related to inequity; and analyzes "how discourse operates to construct and is historically constructed by such issues" (p. 4). Because social theory is so deeply embedded within critical discourse analysis, I would be remiss if I treated the two as if they were somehow unrelated. Therefore, in this chapter I discuss both my method and my theoretical framework and further explicate their interconnectedness. In the first section of this chapter, I broadly summarize critical discourse analysis, most notably the works of Fairclough (1992, 2004) and Gee (1996, 2004) before articulating the specific method of analysis that I use in this study, that of Foucault (1967, 1972, 1984, 1990, 1994, 1995, 1996). In the second section, I discuss the importance of Foucault's methodologies in terms of both his theoretical influence on critical gender scholarship in general and on this inquiry in particular.

An Overview of Contemporary Understandings of Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis, in one way or another, systematically analyzes language, or discourse, in order to gain understanding into the above "critical" issues. More specifically, discourse (the object of this form of analysis) can be defined as "groups of signs," a group of "verbal performances," "acts of formulations" such as a series of sentences or propositions, and/or as a "group of sequences of signs, in so far as they are statements, that is, in so far as they can be assigned particular modalities of existence" (Foucault, 1972). A majority of contemporary studies in educational research using critical discourse analysis can be separated into three similar yet separate styles of analysis, typified by the work of Fairclough (1992, 1995), Gee (1996, 2004), and

Foucault (1967, 1972, 1984, 1990, 1994, 1995, 1996). Critical Discourse Analysis (uppercase; often referred to as CDA) is a highly-specific, textually-oriented "brand" of critical discourse analysis championed by Fairclough and influenced by the linguistic model of grammatical and textual analysis method of Halliday (1978, 1994) known as systematic functional linguisitics or SFL (Rogers, 2004; Gee, 2004). Gee's style of critical discourse analysis (lower case) is linguistically influenced but also draws from socioliguistics as well as literary criticism (Gee, p. 20). Foucualdian discourse analysis is much more abstract and conceptual than Fairclough and Gee and less linguistically-oriented. His work in discourse analysis is typically divided into his archaeological period (1967, 1972, 1994) and his genealogical period (1990, 1995).

CDA: Fairclough

The stated goal of Fairclough's CDA is to "bring social theory and discourse analysis together to describe, interpret, and explain the ways in which discourse constructs, becomes constructed by, represents, and becomes represented by the social world" (Rogers, et al., 2005, p. 366). Rather than viewing discourse as strictly constitutive, Fairclough's perspective is that the language people use both shapes and is shaped by social forces. The discourse analysis Fairclough employs is made up of equal parts linguistic and social analysis. As mentioned previously, Fairclough's linguistic analysis is heavily influenced by systematic functional linguistics (SFL), especially the work of Halliday (1978; 1994). SFL's primary focus is on language and its utility, i.e. its form and function. However, SFL does not examine language as if it exists in a vacuum, void of context. Instead, SFL is rooted in the social context in which language is used and

"looks at how language both acts on and is constrained by this social context" (Rogers, 2004, p. 8). SFL also stresses the examination of whole texts versus decontextualized utterances and the language options (or systems) available to users and what the language consciously or unconsciously chosen (or not chosen) signifies.

Fairclough joins this linguistic analytical approach with a brand of social analysis influenced by post-structuralist scholarship of Foucault, Bordieu, and Bakhtin (Gee, 2004; Fairclough, 1992). In his methodology, Fairclough examines discursive relationships and social practices in three distinct domains: local (particular texts such as a newspaper), institutional (for instance, the political affiliation of the corporation that owns said newspaper), and societal (or, the over-arching discourses that constitute and are constituted by the local and institutional domains). Fairclough stresses that these domain do not exist separately or independently. He argues that each domain is in constant dialogue with the others (Rogers, 2004; Woodside-Jiron, 2004).

Also in a dialectical relationship, according to Fairclough, are the social elements that make up social practices. These elements include semiotic (or language-based) components and non-semiotic components (social relationships, individual beliefs, attitudes, and history, and the existing material world) (1992, p. 60; 2004, p. 230). Fairclough argues that if one is to affect change in a given society, both semiotic and non-semiotic elements must be addressed. Texts, or "semiotic elements of social events, be they written, spoken, or [a combination of] different semiotic modes" such as television programs (2004, p. 226), and non-semiotic social elements interact during social practices such as schooling to help people make meaning of their world. If

"semiotic emergence" or the making of new meanings is to occur, both texts and non-semiotic social elements need reconfiguration.

Gee and critical discourse analysis

Contrary to Fairclough, Gee contends that critical discourse analysis does not need to be linguistically-oriented and is made up of "a wider array of approaches" including but not limited to his own. He believes that researchers who "combine aspects of sociopolitical and critical theory with rather general (usually thematic) analyses of language not rooted in any particular linguistical theory or background" are still doing the work of critical discourse analysis (2004). For instance, Foucault's archeological (1967, 1972, 1994) and genealogical (1990, 1995) works are, by Gee's definition, critical discourse analysis. Other works, with particular focus on education that are not based on linguistic theories and use differing methodologies but by Gee's definition would be considered examples of critical discourse analysis, include Lesko's *Act Your Age! A Cultural Construction of Adolescence* (2001), Willinsky's *Learning to Divide the World: Education at Empire's End* (1998), and Willis's *Learning to Labor* (1977). Based on this proposition, I believe that Gee's understanding of critical discourse analysis has greater utility for this study compared to Fairclough in that it allows for a broader, less technically-rigid approach to the analysis of language. It permits one to focus more closely on issues of power (the "critical" part of critical discourse analysis) within a more generalized study of discourse.

According to Gee (2004) any type of discourse analysis, whether critical or not, can take on either one or both of two distinct "tasks" in regards to the discourse that is to

be studied. These tasks are utterance-type meaning tasks and utterance-token meaning tasks (also defined as situated meaning tasks). Utterance-type meaning tasks involve "the study of correlations between form and function in language at the level of utterance-type meanings" (p. 25). In this instance, "form" refers to words, phrases, and other "syntactic structures." Function refers to the meaning or purpose a form enacts. Utterance-type meanings are more general meanings and are not situation- specific. In any given language, words such as "men" or "boys" have certain "meaning potentials" or "general expectations" which define their range of possible meanings as they are used in different contexts. So when the words "men" or "boys" are used, it is broadly understood that it is human males that are the topic of discussion.

Utterance-token or situated meaning tasks also study the relationship between form and function in language but focus more closely on how certain words or phrases take on specific or situated meanings in specific contexts. For instance, when a national news outlet such as *Newsweek* proclaims that "boys" are at risk of academic failure and features surly yet well-kept, white adolescent males on its cover, it can be assumed that it is white, middle class, school-age boys from the United States that are being discussed rather than all young males in general. But when an openly gay man wears a shirt at an anti-abortion rally that proclaims "I Love Pro-Choice Boys," the meaning of the word changes completely. In this case, it can be assumed that the "boys" in question are young adult men that politically support a woman's right to choose rather than adolescent or pre-adolescent males. Another example of this is when an author invokes the word "feminist" or "feminism." In an academic context, "feminist" is typically understood as a critical theory that problematizes existing power relations based on gender. However, in

the context of contemporary popular culture, “feminism” is often times associated with “man-hating,” often time lesbian radicals who seek to disrupt “natural” gender roles.

For Gee (2004), a discourse analysis is considered “critical” only when a third task is undertaken. Whether one focuses on the correlation between form and function in language at the utterance-type level or the utterance-task level (or both), a critical discourse analysis will also examine how those correlations are associated with social practices:

> Non-critical approaches tend to treat social practices solely in terms of patterns of social interaction (e.g., how people use language to *pull off* a job interview)… Critical approaches, however, go further and treat social practices in terms of their implications for things like status, solidarity, distribution of social goods, and power (e.g., how language in a job interview functions as a gate-keeping device allowing some sorts of people access and denying it to others). In fact, critical discourse analysis argues that language in use is always part and parcel of, and partially constitutive of, specific social practices, and that social practices always have implications for inherently political things like status, solidarity, distribution of social goods, and power. (Gee, 2004, p. 32-33)

In terms of the study of men and masculinity, a non-critical approach might look at contemporary beer commercials revolving around the fictitious establishment of “man laws” as simply a pattern of interaction either between men or between business and consumer. A critical approach would attempt to understand how such commercials symbolically position some activities or individuals as “masculine” and exclude others as non-masculine within a patriarchal social structure.

Foucauldian Critical Discourse Analysis

For the purpose of this study, I put Foucault's (1967, 1972, 1984, 1990, 1994, 1995, 2006) archeological and genealogical methodologies (discussed in greater detail below) to work as I focus on situated meanings or utterance-token tasks in my discourse analysis as well as the third task described by Gee, that of examining how language interacts with social practices, as I draw a connection between the language used in the popular discussions of boys, men, and male role models in schools and the social practices and power relations that simultaneously construct and are constructed by them. The methodologies and concepts of Foucault fit within Gee's more flexible definition of critical discourse analysis and allow for the increased focus on power and its relationship with discourse. In the chapters that follow, I focus on utterance-token tasks rather than utterance type tasks because I seek to go beyond the general understanding and use of terms like "men," "boys," and "male role models" as being simply the males of our species to more specific, contextually-based understandings and uses of the terms. What do they mean in this place and at this time? How are those meaning affected by the dominant culture? By race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability? And how do these meanings shape (and become shaped by) social practices? For this analysis, the specific context on which I focus will be contemporary written popular texts that discuss the "boy crisis," particularly those that advocate for increasing the number of male teachers in schools in order to provide good "male role models" for male students.

Archaeology

While not as linguistically oriented as the critical discourse analysis of Fairclough (1992, 2004) or even Gee (1996, 2004), Foucault's methods of discourse analysis are systematic nonetheless, despite criticism that says otherwise (Fairclough, 1992; Rogers, 2004), especially in his earlier archaeological works. In *Madness and Civilization* (1967), *The Order of Things* (1994) and *Archeology of Knowledge* (1972), Foucault details a method to study language that is far more linguistically-oriented than his later genealogical projects (1990, 1995). As Foucault (1972) states, his use of the term archaeology "does not imply the search for a beginning; it does not relate analysis to geological excavation" (p. 131). Rather, archaeological analysis involves the uncovering of the *archive*, i.e. the law and/or system that governs what can be said, when and where it can be said, and how such statements shift and change from one historical period to the next.

In his archaeological studies (1967, 1972, 1994), Foucault emphasizes the study of rules that govern the discourse of "a middle domain between everyday nondiscursive practices and formalized disciplines such as mathematics and some of the natural sciences" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 58), that is, the "sciences of man" like medicine or psychiatry. As Scheurich and McKenzie (2005) explain, archaeology focuses on both *connaissance*, or formal knowledge such as scientific theories and statements made within an academic discipline, and *savior*, the broad discursive conditions from which the *connaissance* emerges including but not limited to philosophy, commercial and social practices, and institutions. Foucault (1967, 1972, 1994) chooses to focus on these sciences and their "conditions of possibility" in particular in order to disrupt assumptions

about the origin, continuity, and progression of thought in regards to mankind, to de-center man (in the broadest sense possible) as the subject, and to reveal historical rules of discourse that govern the emergence of certain objects of knowledge. In other words, archaeology allows one to "write a history of discursive objects" in a manner that "does not plunge them into the common depth of primal soil, but deploys the nexus of regularities that govern their dispersion" (Foucault, 1972, p. 48).

In order to systematically analyze these rules or discursive formations, Foucault uses the following four descriptive categories: objects, subjects, concepts, and strategies. Foucault first begins by grouping together formal speech acts within a field that refer to a common object—be it madness, medicine, or the "human sciences." He argues that these common objects are discursively produced and do not pre-exist in and of themselves. They exist "under the positive conditions of a complex group of relations"—relations that do not define an object's "internal constitution" but rather define and delimit that which enables the objects to appear (i.e. places said objects in a "field of exteriority") (1972, p. 45). The discursive formations are governed by rules that operate autonomously outside of human consciousness, define what is possible and what is not, create the space for objects to emerge, and affect and are affected by other discursive practices. For example, objects of knowledge such as "boys" and "girls" do not simply exist outside of discourse. Instead, they are defined and limits are placed upon them by different yet related discourses. Anatomical differences between the two groups certainly are a physical reality, but what appears in terms of how "boyhood" or "girlhood" are understood, talked about, or enacted depends on what discursive practice allows.

Foucault continues by examining "enunciative modalities" or types of statements or discursive activities such as "describing, forming hypotheses, formulating regulations, teaching… each of which has its own associated subject positions" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 43). Using this concept, Foucault questions what links statements made within a certain discourse together, why those statements are allowed but not others, and what are the laws that operate behinds these statements. In order to locate such enunciative modalities, one must determine who is speaking (i.e. who is allowed to use such language and why), what are the institutional sites from which the discourse derives, and what is the position of the speaking subject as defined by the situation in which he finds himself that allows him to see, describe, observe, and question in the first place (Foucault, 1972). Teachers, for instance, are constituted through enunciative modalities and subject positions held in place by the current rules of educational discourse. As authority figures and the facilitators of learning in the classroom, teachers have the ability to assess and influence students' speech, writing, and behavior. But as state-accredited employees, they are themselves subject to and constrained by the discourse of their district, community, state, and federal governing bodies. Subject positions such as these do not exist outside and independently of discourse but are instead a function of the "enunciative modality" itself. It is also important to note that enunciative modalities do not merely regulate the subject positions they constitute; they serve to define those who they are addressed to (i.e. the students) as well.

The next descriptive category in Foucauldian archeology is that of concepts. Foucault points out that the concepts that make up particular discursive formations are never fixed or stable but instead are in a constant state of flux. As Dreyfus and Rabinow

(1982) explain, “Concepts shift, incompatible concepts overlap, and all are subject to conceptual revolution” (p. 69). Foucault (1972) stresses that changes in such concepts are not evolutionary or teleological. Put another way, there is no essential meaning or rationality behind these shifts or the occasional revolution. They are, however, still subject to the rules of the discursive field in which they are used. In order to find a “system of occurrence” between such concepts in a way that does not fall into the trap of “logical systematicity,” Foucault argues that “one would have to describe the organization of the field of statements where they appeared and circulated” (p. 56) by noting the forms of succession and coexistence between concepts within that field, by locating a “field of memory” (i.e. statements that were once acceptable and considered valid but fell out of favor for whatever reason), and by identifying “procedures of intervention” when concepts are adjusted, refined, and reordered (p. 57-58). The point of focusing on this development of concepts is to demonstrate that, although they vary from one historical period or particular discipline to the next, “the rules of formation operate not only in the mind or consciousness of individuals, but in discourse itself; they operate, therefore, according to a sort of uniform anonymity, on all individuals who undertake to speak in this discursive field” (p. 63). Therefore, the archaeologist must understand that concepts such as masculinity and femininity do not have an essential or teleological foundation or reflect some greater “truth.” She must also be aware that the most she can do is systematically make comparisons concerning the formation of concepts between different fields of discourse (a task I undertake in Chapter 3).

Finally, Foucault discusses the notion of strategies and how they are formed. Strategies in this sense are themes or theories that serve to organize concepts. They are

"not the seeds of discourse", but are instead the "regulated ways (and describable as such) of practising the possibilities of discourse" (1972, p. 70). In his discussion of this last formation, Foucault explains how one theme, such as evolution, can have two different meanings or discourses at two different periods of time within the same "science of man." How can a person make a certain kind of statement in one period and appear to be knowledgeable and another make the same statement in an earlier (or later) period and appear to be a fool? What can explain this sort of discontinuity? Foucault states that there are always choices within a discursive formation that allow for the "reanimation" of existing themes with ever-present, opposing strategies when interests within the same science become "irreconcilable." What this means is that, despite (or more correctly, due to) the rules that govern discursive formations, there will always be space or the possibility for discontinuous change. As Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982) explain, "Foucault holds that this changing space in which certain possibilities for action emerge, are exploited, and then are abandoned, should replace the teleological notions of the development of themes or theories" (p. 72). For the archaeologist, this means that possible points of discursive diffraction, unrealized alternative discourses, and the "function that the discourse under study must carry out in a field of non-discursive practices" (p. 68) should be identified and described (also to be addressed in the subsequent chapter).

Genealogy

The strength of Foucauldian methodology in terms of social analysis is his genealogical works (1990, 1995). With his archaeological methodologies, Foucault

analyzes the general discursive conditions (*saviors*) in order to trace the formation of particular disciplines (*connaissances*). In doing so, he problematizes and critiques the teleological logic of modernity and man's subjectivity. With genealogy, Foucault builds upon these critiques as he scrutinizes relationships of power and their associated technologies as revealed through discourse and discursive practices (Foucault, 1984; Scheurich & McKenzie, 2005). In these later studies, Foucault alters his focus away from the rules that govern discourse to concentrate more explicitly on power as employed in and through discourse, the discursive nature of politics, and the discursive nature of social change. As Fendler (1998) explains, "A typical objective of genealogy is to problematize commonplace assumptions… Foucault's genealogies do not take the subject for granted, but rather analyze the constitution of subjectivity as an effect of power relations" (p. 39).

According to Foucault, genealogy reveals the construction of objects, specifically objects of knowledge such as madness or sexuality, through institutional practices (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982; Fairclough, 1992). Unlike his earlier archaeological works, systems of knowledge and truth are not studied "objectively" or attributed solely to the independent and autonomous rules of discourse. Rather, discourse and discursive practices are viewed as tools in systems of power (Fairclough, p. 50-51.) For Foucault, power is seen as an element in everyday life rather than an outside force. It's a "net of relationships" (Johannesson, 1998, p. 305) rather than a system operated by or benefiting an elite class. The mechanisms of this system of power, such as the production of the "truth" and the technologies that produce and are produced by them (i.e. the "regimes of truth"), are hidden and embedded within discourse. People are incorporated into this net

of relationships via discursive practices. The task of the genealogist, then, is to scrutinize the social field for discursive practices—things that are written, said, and silenced and their material effects—in order to uncover the apparatuses of power. In this process, the genealogist problematizes power structures and their mechanisms, reveals how objects of knowledge are constituted through discourse, pays particular attention to those discursive practices such as dissenting perspectives and local knowledges that are pushed to the margins, and describes the ruptures and breaks in institutional and social practices that are taken-for-granted or considered "common sense" (Johannesson, 1998; Kainz & Aikens, 2007).

For those who wish to disrupt existing power relations, two of the most useful and particularly relevant Foucauldian concepts from the genealogical period are "reverse discourse" and "tactical polyvalence," both of which can be found in Foucault's discussion of homosexuality in *The History of Sexuality, Volume I* (1990). As Foucault details, there was an influx of "scientific" research conducted on the topic of homosexuality in the 19th century as well as an increased amount of legal and literary works pertaining to the same topic. One result of this increase of attention on homosexuality was a "strong advance of social controls into this area of 'perversity'" (p. 101). Another result though was the creation of a "reverse discourse." As Foucault explains, "homosexuality began to speak in its own behalf, to demand that its legitimacy or 'naturality' be acknowledged, often in the same vocabulary, using the same categories by which it was medically disqualified" (p. 101). Although at first glance "reverse discourses" seem to mirror modernist, Cartesian-influenced binary thinking, this is certainly not the case. A "reverse discourse," although constituted by the very same

discourse it seeks to disrupt, is really not the same at all. By speaking for itself, it confounds and disrupts accepted beliefs and expresses its desire to "reverse," overturn, and transform the dominant discourse—all from the inside. "Reverse discourses" are not an end in themselves, but are important initial steps that must be undertaken if systems of power are to be confronted. According to Weedon (1987), "Reverse discourse has important implications for the power of the discourse which it seeks to subvert. As a first stage in challenging meaning and power, it enables the production of new, resistant discourses" (p. 106).

These "new, resistant discourses" play a role in the next important Foucauldian concept regarding political resistance, "tactical polyvalence." When discussing this concept, Foucault (1990) reminds us that, although power and knowledge are intricately connected through discourse, discourse is not a unified entity that merely serves the powerful. He writes:

> We must conceive discourse as a series of discontinuous segments whose tactical function is neither uniform nor stable. To be more precise, we must not imagine a world of discourse divided between accepted discourse and excluded discourse, or between the dominant discourse and the dominated one; but as a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies. (p. 100)

Discourse does convey and constitute power, but it can also serve to challenge and frustrate power as well. As Foucault describes them, discourses are merely "tactical elements" that are at work in a "field of force relations." They can be used to oppress but also to liberate. In fact, discourses serve many functions and can lend themselves to numerous strategies, emancipatory and otherwise. Even Fairclough, who is critical of

Foucault's social analysis, admits that "the notion of the tactical polyvalence of discourses is a valuable insight into processes of ideological struggle as they might be envisaged in a hegemonic model" (1992, p. 60).

Combined, the concepts of "reverse discourse" and "tactical polyvalence' serve as powerful examples of the value in Foucault's social analysis in regards to political resistance and social change through discursive practices and validate his genealogy as a viable methodology for those who seek to uncover, explain, and trouble existing networks of power. As I have shown, Foucault's genealogical methods question the teleological assumptions of modernity and man's subjectivity, provide a highly nuanced understanding of the role of discourse in the production of knowledge, and supply valuable insights into how one might use discourse to resist unjust power relationships. Used in conjunction with his archeological methods in the study of the rules that govern the use of language, I believe a Foucauldian-influenced form of critical discourse analysis is perfectly suited for the study of the dominant discourse regarding boyhood, masculinities, and male role models and for the disruption of the "common sense" ideologies that are embedded within them.

Addressing the Critics of Foucault: The Analysis of Discourse

Although many critical discourse analysis scholars acknowledge Foucault's valuable insights into discourse and its relationship to power, several have been critical of what they perceive to be the insufficient amount of emphasis he places on linguistics and his view of discourse as strictly constitutive (Fairclough, 2002; Rogers, 2004). In terms of linguistics, Rogers notes that "Foucault's work, within the French discourse analytic

tradition, foregrounds power/knowledge relationships, but does not attend closely to the linguistic construction of texts" (p. 252). Fairclough takes this point further when he suggests that Foucault "neglects" textual, discursive, and linguistic analysis (p. 56). Both Rogers and Fairclough favor an approach to critical discourse analysis that includes elements of Halliday's (1978; 1984) systematic functional linguistics (SFL) over Foucault's more "abstract" approach. They argue that a practitioner of CDA must be able to shift between different modes of analysis, linguistic and social, in order to truly be effective and understand the meaning-making process. As Rogers writes, "A critical discourse analyst using this set of procedures will continually move between a micro- and macro-analysis of texts. This recursive movement between linguistic and social analysis is what makes CDA a systematic method, rather than a haphazard analysis of discourse and power" (p. 7).

While Foucault's method of discourse analysis is not as linguistically oriented as Fairclough (1992) and Rogers (2004) correctly point out in that it is not concerned so much with grammatical structures, I believe it to be highly systematic and certainly not "haphazard." Foucault, and those who follow his archeological methodology, clearly focus on particular discursive domains, the "sciences of man," and examine the language possibilities, or acceptable statements, that exist within that domain at any given time. As Foucault clarifies:

> It is a question of what governs statements, and the way in which they govern each other so as to constitute a set of propositions which are scientifically acceptable, and hence capable of being verified or falsified by scientific procedures. In short, there is a problem of the regime, the politics of the scientific

> statement. At this level, it's not so much a matter of knowing what external power imposes itself on science, as of what effects of power circulate among scientific statements, what constitutes, as it were, their internal regime of power, and why, at certain moments that regime undergoes a global modification. (1984, p. 54-55)

In the Foucauldian style of discourse analysis, the language itself, while vital, is secondary in importance to the rules that govern its usage and eventually (in his later genealogical work) to the power/knowledge systems that govern entire societies.

Extending the critique of Foucault's discourse analysis, Dews (1986) and Fairclough (1992) contend that the Foucauldian perspective on discursive practices is flawed because discourse is understood by Foucault to be strictly constitutive. They argue that discourse is only constitutive to a point. Discourse must take place in a material world—a material world made up of pre-constituted objects and social subjects. Discourse, in its interaction with these existing objects and subject, is inevitably altered and/or shaped by them as well. As Fairclough explains, "The constitutive process of discourse ought therefore to be seen in terms of a dialectic, in which the impact of discursive practice depends upon how it interacts with the preconstituted reality" (p. 60). So while Fairclough accepts Foucault's argument that discourse helps to shape objects of knowledge such as "madness," "discipline," and "sexuality" as well as people into social subjects, he believes that Foucault "overstates" discourse's constitutive power.

I reject this criticism as well. For Foucault, it is unquestionable that discourse is in many ways constitutive. As he argues throughout his works, archaeology and genealogy alike, discourse, discursive practices, and the rules that govern them define, delimit, and regulate the way we understand our world, our selves, and others. But that does not make

them inescapable or unchanging. In fact, Foucault (1972) states that the point of his archaeological method is to reveal these rules in order to escape from their grasp:

> These pre-existing forms of continuity, all these syntheses that are accepted without question, must remain in suspense. They must not be rejected definitively of course, but the tranquility with which they are accepted must be disturbed; we must show that they do not come about of themselves, but are always the result of a construction the rule of which must be known, and the justifications of which must be scrutinized….What we must do, in fact, is to tear away from their virtual self-evidence, and to free the problems that they pose. (p. 25-26)

In his discussion of the formation of objects, enunciative modalities, concepts, and strategies, Foucault (1972) continually reminds his readers that while these rules that regulate the practice of discourse do exist, they vary from one discursive field to another and are prone to radical shifts, breaks, and ruptures in ways that defy the logic of continuity or progression. While he does not spell out ways individuals can in fact disrupt these rules until his later, genealogical projects, that is certainly not a reason to reject the insights and benefits of using his archaeological methodologies.

For these two reasons listed above, the de-centering of language structures in favor of the rules that govern them *and* the demystification and disruption of said rules, I believe that the discourse analysis methods of Foucault, archaeology in particular, are ideally suited to address the problems posed in this study. Specifically, I use archaeology as a methodology and theoretical framework in which to analyze several historically-based, cross-disciplinary discursive fields concerning masculinity, boyhood, and male role models in the following chapter (chapter 3).

Addressing the Critics of Foucault: Social Analysis

Fairclough and others are also critical of Foucauldian social analysis, especially in regard to its ability to affect change. According to Sawicki (1994), the two most common critiques of Foucault (or the defects of his work) are: "his rejection of modern foundationalist epistemologies (and their philosophies of the subject) and the related question of the adequacy of his politics of resistance (Who resists power? What is its source? Toward what aim should resistance aim?)" (p. 297). Without a subject position, they argue, the oppressed will have no ground to stand upon and can only feel powerless and ineffective in the face of inescapable systems of power. These concerns "point to the dangers of relativism, pessimism, and nihilism often associated with his work" (p. 297). A third (and related) complaint concerning Foucault's work is his framing of discursive structures of power and the constitutive relationship between those structures and actual discursive practices (Fairclough, 1992; Taylor, 1985).

The first criticism I will address is Foucault's rejection of modernist epistemologies and their associated "standpoints," specifically in regard to critical gender scholarship and the struggle against patriarchal power. As Sawicki (1994) points out, many feminists believe that Foucault's perspective is incompatible with any movement that seeks emancipation for the powerless. For instance, feminist standpoint theorist Nancy Hartsock (1990) argues that, in refusing to envision alternative orders of power and emphasizing resistance and destabilization over transformation, Foucault in effect deprives feminists and feminism of tools that are crucial to their emancipatory goals (p. 168). In a discussion of Hartsock's rejection of Foucault, Sawicki writes, "Ultimately, she

claims that Foucault's analytic of power fails feminism because it is not a theory developed *for* women. It is a theory of a colonizer who rejects and resists the colonizers, but who, because he does not think from the perspective of the colonized, 'fails to provide an epistemology which is usable for the task of revolutionizing, creating, and constructing'" (p. 296-297).

This last comment touches on and leads to the second criticism of Foucault regarding his "politics of resistance" and its perceived inadequacy to affect change. For many, Foucault places too much emphasis on the oppressive power of discursive practices and not enough emphasis on the practices of contestation and human agency (Fairclough, 1992; Lecourt, 1975). As Fairclough (1992) writes, Foucault does not oppose change or ignore its possibilities. He does, however, "exaggerate" the "extent to which the majority of people are manipulated by power" (p. 56). So while Foucault is interesting in disruption and destabilization,

> In the totality of his work and in the major analyses, the dominant impression is one of people being helplessly subjected to immovable systems of power. Foucault certainly insists that power necessarily entails resistance, but he gives the impression that resistance is generally contained by power and poses no threat. (p. 57)

Others believe that the flaw in Foucault's social analysis is based on his confusion of structure and practice (Fairclough, 1992; Taylor, 1985). This is the third common criticism of Foucault. Regarding *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972), Fairclough argues that Foucault reduces "discursive practices" to merely a "system of anonymous, historical rules" and thus turns everyday action and language use, i.e. practice, into its

opposite, a structure (p. 57). By focusing purely on structures and not actual practices, Foucault grants the dominant discourse an undue amount of emphasis and loses sight of the ways people actively resist power. “Too great a focus upon structures is tantamount to taking a one-sided perspective in respect to these struggles – the perspective of the powerful, of those whose problem is preserving social order and sustaining domination,” Fairclough explains (p. 58). He continues by stating that the Gramscian conception of hegemonic power avoids this confusion and therefore offers a more complete understanding of how it operates. For Gramsci (1971), power is by nature unstable in that the elite require the consent of those they dominate in order to stay in power. As such, the instability and struggles of the dominated and the structures that oppress them are both major focal points.

Once again, I feel obligated to argue against these dissenting perspectives. Within the realm of critical discourse analysis, I believe that Foucault’s methods of social analysis are especially relevant, and that the previously discussed criticisms are in fact erroneous. Concerning the first critique, I agree with Butler’s (1990) position that emancipatory politics void of subject positions is not only possible but advantageous. As Butler writes, “Construction is not opposed to agency; it is the necessary scene of agency” (cited in Sawicki, p. 298-299). In regards to the second and third critiques, I believe that Foucault, particularly in his later genealogical works (1978, 1982), has a great deal to offer to those who wish to understand, resist, and disrupt existing power structures. I have found the previously discussed concepts of “reverse discourse” and “tactical polyvalence” to be most useful in combating such complaints.

In any sort of critical gender scholarship, be it feminist or studies such as this one focusing on male gendered identities, there is always the danger of falling into dichotomous ways of thinking about males and females as "subjects." As Sawicki writes,

> Feminists have mistaken social constructionism for determinism because they have been caught in the binary logic of Western thought in which the idea of free will presupposes a form of agency that escapes the world in which it must negotiate its identity—an I that is at most 'embedded' and 'mired' within discourse… but never wholly constituted by it. (p. 299)

By clinging to such subject positions and this notion of free will, gender scholars can only reiterate and reinforce the very same binary line of reasoning about gender that they are struggling to overcome. For Foucault, people do indeed have agency, but only within a discursive context. Gendered identities, like all other subjectivities, are necessarily discursive.

According to Butler (1991), this understanding is beneficial and does not inevitably lead to relativism, pessimism, and nihilism as so many have claimed. Butler, whose own work relies heavily on Foucauldian concepts, argues that instead of gendered identities being something we "are" (i.e. subject positions), they are actually something we "do." Gender is a performance, scripted, directed, and enacted by the dominant discourse. Because these gendered identities are created through discourse, they are by nature unstable and able to be disrupted. Therefore, the contradiction between Foucault and Gramsci that Fairclough (1994) proposes is unimportant if not nonexistent. As Foucault notes, the discontinuous concept of change implies that there are always other choices to be made or strategies to be employed, no matter how much they may

contradict preferred understandings. For Butler then, the task for those of us who wish to resist existing patriarchal power structures is not to reinforce the logic that supports it but to blur existing gender boundaries, disrupt conventional ways of thinking about being male or female, and to create the space for change to occur.

An example of this very idea can be found in Haraway's (1991) "Cyborg Manifesto." In her work, Haraway describes a cyborg as a purposeful political identity made up of the very same dominant discourses concerning gender, post-industrialism, and capitalism that she and her allies seek to contest. "Neither wholly human, machine, or animal, it defies categorization and takes pleasure in the fusion of boundaries (human-animal, human-machine, nature-culture), but also takes responsibility for their construction," Sawicki explains. "It is an identity stripped of innocent origins and yet opposed to domination. Haraway describes its perspective as one of hopeful possibility" (p. 306). Working within the Foucauldian discursive framework, Haraway has found a way to reject hopelessness and nihilism in the face of power and to use discursive practices and subjectivities to disrupt power structures (all without falling into the trap of binary modernist thought.)

I believe that Foucault's rejection of modernist thinking (i.e. the rejection of man as subject) and his beliefs regarding the conditions necessary for social change are among the strongest elements of his *oeuvre* and, as such, demand to be a part of this study. That is why I use Foucauldian genealogical concepts as the framework of my analysis of the popular news media accounts regarding boys in schools, masculinity, and male role models collected (Chapter 4). Combined with his archaeological methods, Foucault's

insights into the critical analysis of discourse have proven to be invaluable assets that easily compensate for any perceived faults that his critics may describe.

Theoretical Framework

As Gee (1996; 2004) has explained, non-critical forms of discourse analysis closely examine the relationship between form and function in language. Critical discourse analysts, on the other hand, scrutinize both language and its relationship to social practices, especially those practices that perpetuate existing power relations. According to Rogers et al. (2005), critical discourse analysis is "an attempt to bring social theory and discourse analysis together to describe, interpret, and explain the ways in which discourse constructs, becomes constructed by, represents, and becomes represented by the social world" (p. 366). I have argued that the Foucauldian methodologies of archeology and genealogy aptly lend themselves to such tasks. But critical discourse analysis is not merely a method; it is also has a strong theoretical component. In this section, I will discuss several of Foucault's key concepts as a theoretical framework, both in critical gender scholarship in general and in this study in particular. These concepts include: the discursive production of "truth," technologies of power (and how they work upon the body), historical discontinuity and the politics of resistance.

The Discursive Production of "Truth"

As Foucault shows us in his archeological works (1967, 1972, 1994), objects of knowledge are constituted through highly-regulated forms of discourse. Because these objects are instrumental in our own self-definition, discourses—and the rules that govern

them—play an active role in the formation of our understanding of reality or what we consider to be the "truth." Therefore, as Foucault explains (1984): "'Truth' is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation, and operation of statements" (p. 74). In his later genealogical studies (1990, 1995) Foucault demonstrates how this production of truth is intricately connected to the networks of power that dominate our society: "'Truth' is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extends it. A 'regime' of truth" (1984, p. 74). Through discursive practices, "truth" is constructed. And because this "truth" is instrumental in the maintenance of existing power relationships, it is perpetually being reproduced and reiterated to the point where it is taken-for-granted, seen as "common sense," or as if it comes from nature. This politicized understanding of the discursive production of truth has been a vital part of critical gender scholarship in recent decades and has a strong influence on this inquiry.

For instance, Connell's (1995, 2000, 2002) notion of hegemonic masculinity is highly reflective of this understanding of the discursive production of "truth." Connell details how, in certain societies, there are preferred versions of masculinity that are considered to be "normal" or "natural." Produced through discourse, defined as an object of knowledge by various "sciences of man," and acted out on the bodies of males, this "hegemonic masculinity" helps to define what "true" masculinity is and what it is not. Thus, as Connell argues, "gender must be understood as a social structure. It is not an expression of biology, nor a fixed dichotomy in human life or character. It is a pattern in our social arrangements, and in the everyday activities or practices which those

arrangement governs (p. 9). In a patriarchal society such as ours, this production of gender has political implications as well.

Men who possess "true" masculine traits have a distinct advantage over those who do not, have an easier time dominating women (and other men as well), and are more likely to reproduce and proliferate this "truth" discursively as it places them in positions of power. But even those men who do not meet hegemonic standards of masculinity benefit from such reproduction:

> Normative definitions of masculinity… face the problem that not many men actually meet the standards. This point applies to hegemonic masculinity. The number of men rigorously practicing the hegemonic pattern in its entirety may be quite small. Yet the majority of men gain from its hegemony, since they benefit from the patriarchal dividend, the advantage men in general gain from the overall subordination of women. (1995, p. 79)

Through discourse, dominant notions of masculinity have been established and have come to be understood as natural despite the fact that most men do not measure up to their standards. But this arrangement, this production of a "true" or "hegemonic" masculinity, helps to sustain the dominance of males over females in society and has therefore become a "regime' of truth.

Butler's (1991) work on gender has also been influenced by Foucault's concept of truth production. In *Gender Trouble*, Butler argues that, as gender became associated with biological sex and thus itself became "natural," so too did the ideal of heterosexuality as the compulsory norm. Normative gender and gendered performances have become so intertwined with sexuality that it has become increasingly difficult to

distinguish one from the other. This is how the "heterosexual matrix" was established. According to Butler, the heterosexual matrix is "that grid of cultural intelligibility through which bodies, genders, and desires are naturalized" (McRobbie, p. 70). And not only naturalized—they are rigidly enforced as well. Recent controversies regarding gay marriage and adoption illustrate this point. If gender and sexuality were as "natural" as many believe them to be, then why do they need to be so strictly enforced and regulated by society? As Butler argues, that is the power of the "matrix" and of other "regimes of truth"—as dominant ideals are constructed and re-constructed as "natural" and "normal" all other ways of being become "unnatural" and thus abhorrent, illicit, and illegitimate.

In this study, I also theoretically and conceptually rely on Foucault's insights on the production of "truth." I argue that beliefs about boyhood, masculinity, and male role models have become so intertwined with systems of power that they have come to be understood as "common sense" and "natural" and that any perceived reversal of existing power structures involving these objects of knowledge is necessarily framed within the dominant discourse as a "crisis." So when reports appear that show that boys in schools are performing at a lower level academically and socially compared to girls as they have recently, it is no surprise that many today are calling for a return to an approach to education that reinforces traditional ideals of manhood and reproduces the binary logic of masculinity/femininity (when, in fact, it could be argued that this is a logic which we never have really left behind).

Technologies of Power (And How They Work Upon the Body)

When the rules that govern discourse are linked with systems of power, "regimes of truth" are born. But these regimes do not just dictate reality within the discursive fields in which they originate. They also have real effects on the bodies of the subjects involved. As Weedon (1997) explains,

> Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the 'nature' of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects which they wish to govern. Neither the body nor the thoughts and feelings have meaning outside of their discursive articulation, but the ways in which discourses constitute the minds and bodies of individuals is always part of a wider network of power relations, often with institutional bases (p. 105).

According to Foucault (1990), bodies are regulated through discourse through specific technologies of power or what he refers to as "bio-power." The major purpose of Foucault's later work was to show how these technologies, technologies such as the examination and confession, work upon bodies, discipline them, and bend them to the will of power.

As Foucault explains in *Discipline and Punish* (1995), his genealogical studies demonstrate that "the body is also directly involved in a political field… Power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs" (p. 25). The point of such technologies is to make bodies both docile and productive tools of the economic system. In this regard, docility and productivity go hand-in-hand. As Foucault argues, bodies are most

productive when they are "caught up in a system of subjection (in which need is also a political instrument meticulously prepared, calculated, and used); the body becomes a useful force only if it is both a productive body and a subjected body" (p. 26).

This understanding of the effects of discursive power upon the body has had a significant effect on critical gender scholarship. By connecting discourse and power to the body, Foucault has "recognized that this potent combination of knowledge and power, localized on the body, is actually a general mechanism of power of the greatest import for Western society" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 113). One key technology of power Foucault describes is "normalizing judgment" (1984, p. 195). Objects of knowledge such as masculinity and femininity define for us what is normal and what is not. Essentially, those who are deemed normal are rewarded, those who are not are punished. Both Connell (1995, 2000, 2002) and Butler (1991) apply this understanding in their works on gender and the patriarchal systems of normalizing judgment. For Connell, hegemonic masculinity defines the ideal male body as fit and athletic but most importantly as productive. The male body is regulated through technologies of power in homes, in schools, and on the playing field. So even though most men fail to meet the hegemonic standard within these arenas, it is sustained within them nonetheless due to the fear of punishment. For Butler, the effects of such mechanisms of power have defined for us which bodies are "masculine" and which ones are "feminine" and have assigned certain physical desires for each. Far from being "natural," these socially constructed and regulated designations compel us to "perform" our gender (and the associated "normal" sexuality) or suffer the consequences.

For this study in particular, technologies of power such as "normalizing judgment" are clearly visible in the popular literature on the "boy crisis" that places a great importance on the physicality of the male body—its "innate" energies and tendency toward rough and tumble play, aggressiveness, and risk-taking. Many authors have utilized the discursive mechanism of power to define (or redefine) the male body and have connected this normalized definition of masculinity to the productiveness and security of our nation. They also encourage parents and teachers to allow boys to be disciplined by this normalizing discursive practice, hence the call for more "boy-friendly" schools. Others have stressed the importance of male role models in schools and are highly specific about the kinds of men many envisioned as such "models." These men are often described as "athletic," "aggressive," or proponents of a stricter form of classroom discipline. The "usefulness" of their bodies as productive male role models, per the dominant discourse, requires their bodies to be subjected, disciplined, and normalized as well.

Historical Discontinuity and the Politics of Resistance

As a critical discourse analysis, one of the primary functions of this study is to uncover and disrupt unjust or imbalanced power networks as they are expressed and reproduced through discursive practices. Therefore, a vital theoretical element of my analysis revolves around the possibilities of change. In his conceptualization of historical discontinuity, Foucault provides the building block for such possibilities.

In his genealogical projects, Foucault (1990, 1995) set out to demonstrate that human history was not a story of essential meanings or perpetual progress as the

dominant discourses of social science would have us believe but rather one of ruptures and breaks. “For the genealogist there are no fixed essences, no underlying laws, no metaphysical finalities. Genealogy seeks out discontinuities where others found continuous development,” Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982) explain. “It finds recurrences and play where others found progress and seriousness. It records the past of mankind to unmask the solemn hymns of progress. Genealogy avoids the search for depth. Instead, it seeks the surfaces of events, small details, minor shifts, and subtle contours” (p. 106).

Contrary to conventional historical narratives, Foucault does not attempt to locate essential truths or to make historical events fit into a teleological or evolutionary framework. This approach, in his estimation, would further validate the taken-for-granted assumption of historical continuity. By examining the surface of things, the genealogist is trying to locate the “micro-physics” of power—that is, the small discursive acts that sustain it. The purpose of this approach to demonstrate that “there is no essence or original unity to be discovered” (Davidson, 1996, p. 224). What has come to be known through history as nature or “common sense” is really a human construction, produced and proliferated through discourse. Examined as such, one sees history not as progressive but as a past rife with contradictions and discontinuities.

The advantage of viewing history as a series of ruptures and breaks is that it better allows for possibilities of change. Traditional methods of historical and social analysis often serve to support existing power structures by demonstrating how those structures have progressed over time to the point they are today or how certain objects of knowledge have retained their essential characteristics. But the genealogical approach leads one to different conclusions: “The more one interprets the more one finds not the

fixed meaning of a text, or of the world, but only other interpretations. These interpretations have been created and imposed by other people, not by the nature of things" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 107). By denaturalizing texts and the world, the genealogist is free to envision a world free of certain power imbalances and social constraints. For if these "interpretations" can be created and imposed by people, they can also dismantled and reconceptualized. As Popkewitz and Brennan (1998) write, "constructing histories about how our subjectivities are formed (making the agendas and categories of the subject problematic) can provide potential space for alternative acts and alternative intentions that are not articulated through the available commonsenses" (p. 25).

Contemporary critical gender scholars like Connell (1995, 1997, 2002) and Sawicki (1994) employ this view of discontinuity and resistance in their understanding of gender and patriarchy as a social construction. For instance, Connell (1995) writes that "if patriarchy is understood as a historical structure, rather than a timeless dichotomy of men abusing women, then it will be ended by a historical process" (p. 238). Vital steps in resisting patriarchy and bringing about change are, she argues, bringing into question hegemonic beliefs about masculinity, "de-gendering" society, and the re-embodiment of men in ways that show society "different ways of using, feeling, and showing male bodies" (p. 233). For Connell, the key to resistance is to "dismantle hegemonic masculinity and construct in its place, not a new hegemony but a de-gendered world" (Howson, 2006, p. 154).

Sawicki (1994) also suggests that dominant beliefs need to be disrupted and that new understandings of self must be envisioned. She makes a direct link to Foucauldian

beliefs about historical discontinuity and the politics of resistance when she discusses the recovery of a long-held feminist practice, that of "consciousness-raising":

> As I have argued elsewhere, a post-structuralist account of subjectivity is compatible with the insights underpinning the feminist practice of consciousness-raising. In some models the aim of consciousness-raising is simply to develop critical consciousness and a recognition of oppression, not to uncover an authentic and shared experience. More often, consciousness-raising leads to the destabilization of one's sense of identity, not to a unified sense of self. Indeed, this notion of consciousness-raising is not unlike Foucault's genealogy. Both are designed to challenge current self-understandings and to create the space for new forms of subjectivity (p. 307).

Through the study of the popular written discourse about boyhood, masculinity, and male role models in schools, I too have set out to create a space where traditional understandings of these objects are recognized as socially constructed, problematized in terms of their relationship to power, and re-envisioned in the hopes of disrupting patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity. Utilizing a Foucauldian-inspired form of critical discourse analysis as both a methodology and a theoretical framework, my intent for this study as a whole is raise the reader's consciousness about the constructedness of masculinity and the roles of men and boys in education, both as students and as teachers.

Chapter 3

Uncovering the Archive: The Discourse of Masculinity, Boyhood, and Male Roles Models

Everywhere people stare
Each and every day
I can see them laugh at me
And I hear them say

Hey you've got to hide your love away
Hey you've got to hide your love away

—The Beatles, *You've Got to Hide Your Love Away*

When I hold you in my arms
(Ooooooooohhh, oh yeah!)
And when I feel my finger on your trigger
I know nobody can do me no harm
Because happiness is a warm gun, momma
(Bang Bang Shoot Shoot)

—The Beatles, *Happiness is a Warm Gun*

Since the early 1900s, much has been written about the historical importance of male mentors (Campbell, 1953, 1972, 1988; Segal, 1994; Bly, 1991), the development and acquisition of "normal" gender identities based on models (Erikson, 1959; Kimmel & Aronson, 2004) and the way children learn how to behave by watching others (Bandura, 1963; Kohlberg, 1966). The expressed desire for an increased number of male teachers to serve as "role models" in America's schools has been evident for over a century (Hansott, 1994; Blount, 2005) and has recently been revived (Gurian, 1997, 1999, 2001; Sommers, 2000). But little critical thought has been given to "common sense" understandings of concepts such boyhood, manhood, and "male role models" that proliferate within the popular discourse and where and how those understandings came to be. For instance, what are the implicit and explicit cultural and/or social norms that shape and are shaped by our understanding of what an ideal "model" should be and what does such a "shaping"

process reveal? If male teachers are to serve as "models" for young men and boys, what kinds of masculinities should they be modeling? Does a mentor necessarily need to be the same sex as his or her student in order to be a good "model?" And finally, is the concept of a "model" appropriate or helpful in the first place, especially when the increasingly diverse student population of American schools (social, cultural, racial, linguistic, etc.) and the continued homogeneity of American teachers (primarily white, monolingual, and middle-class) are considered? (Britzman, 1993; Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, & Curran, 2004).

In this chapter, I use Foucauldian archaeological methods (1967, 1972, 1994) to interrogate several discursive fields related to the topic of men serving as mentors or role models for young men and boys in schools in order to address these questions. In the attempt to uncover the *archive*—a task that is "never completed, never wholly achieved" (Foucault, 1972, p. 131)—I examine statements and the knowledge produced in both formal, academic disciplines (*connaissance*) and the more generalized discursive field from which such formalized knowledge emerges (*savior*). Like Foucault and his works that focus on particular *objects of knowledge* such as madness (1967) and the human sciences (1994), I begin this analysis by identifying one specific object common to each field, in this case masculinity, and how it operates discursively within them. *Enunciative modalities* that work within each field, as they relate to the object, are then examined. In other words, I discuss the "various statuses, the various sites, the various positions" speaking subjects such as scholars and authors can "occupy or be given when making a discourse" (Foucault, 1972, p. 54) regarding masculinity. Next, I analyze how the formation of objects and enunciative modalities effects the development of *concepts* such

as mentor, “role model,” boyhood, and manhood and the continuities and discontinuities that exist between and among each strand of literature. And last, I examine how the discursive formation of objects, enunciative modalities, and concepts come together to form and/or support specific theories, or *strategies*, and how these strategies operate to regulate the possibilities of discursive practice.

I explore a range of discursive fields, specifically psychology and sociology (*connaissance*), and history and mythology (*savior*), not because I seek to unite them or to locate an essential meaning or origin for the concepts they share but because I believe it is important to provide a broad overview of the different yet connected understandings of the “masculine” role model, understandings that span both time and academic discipline. I also believe that taking such an approach is necessary if the “common sense” assumptions about men, boys, and masculinity that undergird all of these scholarly approaches are to be illuminated, problematized, and reconceptualized. Foucault (1972) outlines a similar approach when he writes:

> I shall accept these groupings that history suggests only to subject them at once to interrogation; to break them up and then to see whether they can be legitimately reformed; or whether other groupings should be made; to replace them in a more general space which, while dissipating their apparent familiarity, makes it possible to construct a theory of them. (p. 26)

By identifying the formation of objects, enunciative modalities, concepts, and strategies that take place within these seemingly disparate historical groupings, I am better able to demystify those constructs that divide them and step back to see the greater discursive field anew. And by examining both the knowledge produced by formal disciplines *and*

the discursive conditions that make such formal knowledges possible, I attempt to disrupt the modernist assumption that such formal knowledges develop in a rational and continuous manner and problematize the human subject as "both the doer and the object of the doing, the researcher and the researched" (Scheurich & McKenzie, 2005, p. 848). In doing so, I present a less restricted, more complex understanding of certain centuries old, taken-for-granted assumptions about boys, men, and masculinity—one that lays the foundation for a historically based, culturally-aware, multi-faceted analysis of contemporary attitudes concerning the role of male teachers in our schools as expressed through popular news media discourse (found in chapter 4).

Four Discursive Fields

The first discursive field I will examine involves the academic disciplines of psychology and sociology. In my analysis, I describe a number of seminal works pertaining to masculinity, the developmental differences between males and females, the significance of "sex roles," and the importance of "modeling" said roles. As Foucault (1967, 1972, 1994) has demonstrated, cultural assumptions are often constructed, confirmed, and validated by such social sciences. The examination of this field serves to expose this connection between popular beliefs about the sexes and the production of "scientific" knowledge. The second discursive field that I examine is the early history of "boy crises" in Western cultures since turn of the 20th century. This is an important step because it shows that concerns about boys and men in schools are not just a recent phenomenon but instead are a resurrection and reconstruction of decades-old fears and anxieties.

The third discursive field I analyze is mythology. According to notable mythology proponents Carl Jung and Joseph Campbell, myths are universal and, through archetypal figures such as the hero, the warrior, and the wise old man, provide us with vital insights into humanity's "collective unconscious." In recent years, several mythology scholars, most notably Robert Bly (1990), Robert Moore (1990), Sam Keen (1991), and Shepherd Bliss (1995), have drawn upon the insights of Jung and Campbell and have suggested that the problem with men and boys in Western cultures today is that they have lost their connection to archetypal-based truths about essential or "deep" masculinity and mythology-based rites of passage. In this third step, I closely scrutinize this mythological strand in order to determine whether masculine archetypes support dominant notions of masculinity, help us to transcend them, and the possibilities that they offer.

Finally, I conclude this analysis by examining the more recent history of boys in schools and the increasingly urgent calls for more male teachers to serve as role models. In this fourth and final discursive field, I will look at multiple perspectives on the current "boy crisis," including those who contend that boys are being neglected in our society and are psychologically in pain (Pollack, 1999; Kindlon & Thompson, 2000), those who argue that boys are "innately" different that girls, are treated like second-class citizens in female dominated schools, and need to be taught in gender-specific ways (Gurian, 1997, 1999, 2000; Sommers, 2000), and those who take a more critical approach to the issue and believe that the "boy crisis," as it is popularly defined, does not actually exist (Francis, 2006; Kimmel, 2004; Martino & Kehler, 2006). The real problem, they claim, resides in dominant definitions of masculinity that stifle and constrain the behaviors and

interests of boys and men and lead them to act in stereotypically "masculine" ways, often times violently and/or in an emotionally detached manner.

Socio-Psychological Perspectives

Popular cultural and dominant social forces (*saviors*) can play a major role in shaping what we think of ourselves and others. But disciplines such as sociology and psychology also play a large role in the shaping of public opinion. In fact, "sciences of man" (*des connaissances*) such as these have played a major role in the construction and maintenance of beliefs that serve to perpetuate unjust social structures since the European colonization of the Americas, Africa, and Asia to today (Foucault, 1972, 1990, 1995; Said, 1979). The influence of academic and/or scientific discourses on dominant social perceptions of gender is certainly no exception. In what follows, I chronologically detail the work of several prominent psychologists and sociologists whose theories have played a role in shaping popular beliefs about boys, masculinity, male role models and schooling from the turn of the 20th century until today. I do so not to imply a certain evolution of thought concerning masculinity, boyhood, and "male role models" but because I believe it helps to illustrate how historical discourse is discontinuous, marked by several ruptures and breaks, and very often contradictory.

I first discuss two key figures of the early 20th century, American Psychological Association (APA) founder and original president G. Stanley Hall and psychoanalysis pioneer Sigmund Freud. I then examine the work of three notable figures of the mid-20th century, Former Harvard professor and president of the American Sociological Association (ASA), Talcott Parsons, internationally recognized American sociologist

Robert K. Merton, and psychoanalysis innovator and figurehead Erik Erikson. And finally, I will present the ideas of scholars from the latter half of the past century, moral development expert and former Harvard professor Lawrence Kohlberg, award winning psychologist and Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) creator Sandra Bem, and highly influential social cognitive theory originator and Stanford professor, Albert Bandura. These individuals and their bodies of work were chosen not only because of their accomplishments and innovations in their respective fields, but also because of their frequent inclusion in widely used textbooks, handbooks, and encyclopedias (Kimmel & Aronson, 2004; Lerner, 1976; Lerner & Steinberg, 2004; Ritzer, 2003; Shaffer & Kipp, 2006) which serves as an indicator of their lasting influence on psychological and sociological discourse. It is also important to note that, in terms of enunciative modalities and the privileges of their respective social positions, all of the above scholars are white, educated, and upper- to middle-class and each of them, with the exception of Sandra Bem (and Bandura's co-author Kay Bussey), are male.

Again, the object of knowledge at the center of this discussion, masculinity, unites these historically separate bodies of work. Also uniting the speaking subject in these fields, however, are their enunciative modalities—as prominent academics, scientists, and scholars, the individuals discussed here are similarly situated in their ability to influence and create discourse. Therefore, the main focus in this section will be on how each scholar responds to, breaks from, or reiterates the dominant discourse of masculinity through the formation of academic concepts and theories and what those concepts and theories have to tell us about boyhood and male role models.

The early 20th century: Gender as a product of biology. G. Stanley Hall was a prominent member of the American psychological community in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and was a principle figure in the development of research and theories about human mental functions and adaptive processes, known as functionalist psychology (Diehl, 1986). However, he is best known for his evolution-inspired (and widely-criticized) recapitulation theory (Diehl, p. 868; Kimmel & Aronson, p. 368). According to Hall (1904, 1923), individual human development occurs in a parallel fashion to what was then understood as the evolutionary development of the human race. As Hall writes, "every child, from the moment of conception to maturity, recapitulates, very rapidly at first, and then more slowly, every stage of development through which the human race from its lowest animal beginnings has passed" (1923, p.380). In general, Hall argues that when a child is first conceived, he or she evolves from a single cell organism to a mammal. Once born, the individual goes through a stage of savagery, cruelty, and immorality mirroring the behavior of earlier, less civilized humans and of contemporary human cultures deemed to be still "primitive." Achieving adulthood, then, meant the child has fully developed in a manner that matches fully evolved, "civilized" societies.

While this theory applied to all people, sex-specific physical changes that occur during puberty (as a child transitions from the savagery stage to adulthood) led Hall to argue that boys and girls needed to be educated separately to meet their separate biological and psychological needs. For girls, this meant that, during adolescence, they needed to be separated from boys in order to avoid "reproductive organ damage" and to be better prepared for their future role as mothers (1904, p. 562). For boys, Hall contends, it is also imperative that they be educated separate from girls and women. As Kimmel

and Aronson (2004) explain, Hall believed that "the presence of girls in the classroom could have a 'feminizing' effect on them and female teachers were thought to produce wildness in boys by not allowing free enough expression of their savage impulses" (p. 367). Worse yet, coeducation was deemed to be detrimental for both sexes (and for society in general) because it led to "overexposure." Hall concluded that, if educated together, the close contact would cause boys and girls to lose sexual attraction for one another as adults (Kimmel & Aronson, p. 368).

Although his works on recapitulation and sex differences were widely criticized in the psychological community at the time, Hall's theories found a receptive audience among many educators and parents (Diehl, 1986, Kimmel & Aronson, 2004). Coeducation would continue to be the dominant mode of schooling, but Hall's concepts and theories regarding the difference between males and females were widely read and embraced by a sympathetic and like-minded public and served to discursively reproduce dominant social and religious beliefs concerning masculinity.

Following the work of Hall was another prominent theory of human development, that of Psychoanalysis. Initially developed by Sigmund Freud (1938, 1962, 1969, 1975), Psychoanalytic Theory also offered distinct views on perceived essential, developmental differences between the sexes. The basis for Freudian Psychoanalysis is that the human mind is made up of the id (representing base biological urges) the superego (representing the social demands and cultural norms of the parents, particularly the father), and the ego (representing a mediating force that stands between the id and the superego.) Freud argued that early in life, "normal" males and females learn to see themselves as boys and girls by identifying with their gender-appropriate parents. In his theory of psychosexual

development or infantile sexuality, Freud outlines universal stages of human development based on various sites of "pleasure:" The oral stage (childhood pleasure derived from suckling), the anal stage (pleasure from the control of bowel movements), and the phallic stage (pleasure from the sexual organs). It is in this last stage, Freud postulates, that children develop a sexual attraction for their opposite-sex parent and hatred for the parent of the same sex, otherwise known as the Oedipus Complex for boys and the Elektra Complex for girls. Because of these feelings, boys in particular develop "castration anxiety" or the fear that if they continue their sexual attraction to their mothers, their fathers will harm or even castrate them. Because of this anxiety, boys must learn to dis-identify with their mothers by desiring women (as symbolic versions of their mothers) sexually and identifying with their fathers (as men.) In doing so, "normal" boys "achieve gender identity and sexual orientation at the same moment in time." (Kimmel, 2004, p. 74). According to Freud (1975), if a father figure is distant physically or emotionally or overly punitive, then the boy is at risk for poor superego development and will not effectively internalize the father's principles and characteristics.

Many of Freud's concepts and theories have been dismissed and discredited by contemporary psychology researchers and practitioners as either non-scientific, sexist, and/or culturally biased (Kimmel & Aronson, 2004), but his influence on popular and scholarly thinking about gender differences cannot be underestimated. His terminology has become part of Western culture (for example, "Penis envy" and "Oedipus complex" have both been adopted into the popular lexicon) and his work has been the foundation for a number of prominent psychologists of the 20th century, most notably Carl Jung, Freud's daughter Anna Freud, Erik Erikson, and Nancy Chodorow.

The work of Freud represents a discursive rupture or break from Hall's brand of functionalism in that the emphasis is turned away from the function of the mind to the internal factors that drive individuals to commit certain actions. But by suggesting that boys need to be separated from their mothers (and hence femininity) and learn to identify with their fathers (masculinity) if they are to develop "normally," Freud (1938, 1962, 1969, 1975) perpetuated the discourse that boys and girls are innately different psychologically and need to be treated as such. Although not as direct about the need for male teachers for boys as Hall, Freud's concepts and theories suggest that at some point, boys need to be increasingly in the presence of men who will help them develop strong, masculine superegos. Taken together, the works of Hall and Freud frame the development of gender as a "natural" biological and psychological event (one that can be disturbed by improper social influences) and discursively draw the distinction between "normal" masculinity and femininity and those masculinities and femininities deemed to be "deviant" or "abnormal." In effect, their discursive contributions serve to naturalize, reinforce, and perpetuate social distinctions and practices based on gender.

Mid-20th century: Gender as a social role. According to dominant, early discourse in psychology represented by Hall and Freud, gender (and hence masculinity) is an all-encompassing, biologically-based reality and can be understood in terms of stages of development. Although the development of males and females is believed to be universal, socialization is still important in that "normal" maturation can be thwarted if proper precautions are not taken. But what exactly is "normal" gendered behavior and what function does it serve for society in general? In 1956, sociologist Talcott Parson

attempted to answer these questions in *Family, Socialization, and Interaction Process* and solidified widespread interest in what would become popularly known as "sex role theory."

According to Parson's structural functionalist sociological perspective, social systems such as those found in Western cultures such as ours are made up of structural units such as specific social roles and institutions. These structural units are relatively static but, due to the necessary interaction with one another and with the external environment, must retain certain dynamic elements if they are to properly function (i.e. satisfy the needs of the social system in general) (Trevino, 2001). Therefore, Parson's work on the structure and interactions of the nuclear family framed "sex roles" as social and cultural manifestations of biological sex that served particular functions to meet the needs of society. Parsons developed a dualistic model of sex roles that on one hand charted the rigid and unbending separation of gender roles in relation to education, profession, household tasks, decision making, and child care and on the other hand the total breakdown or blurring of said roles. This model was not designed to serve as a polarity between "normal" and abnormal" gender roles but rather to demonstrate the range of positions in gender roles in families (positions that most families navigate in between).

Parsons' sociological discourse breaks from both Hall and Freud's psychological discourse in that it argues that sex roles are social constructs that developed not out of biological or psychological imperatives but out of social needs. These constructs, he believed, were static for the most part but had the potential to change if necessary. As a functionalist, Parsons was mainly interested in how gender roles operated and was not

concerned with issues of power, equity, or identity conflict. His work and other early studies on "sex role theory" viewed gender differences and "roles" as merely instruments and/or functional developments that served a positive purpose for society and not as a system of oppression per se. "The first generation of sex role theorists assumed that roles were well defined, that socialization went ahead harmoniously, and that sex role learning was a thoroughly good thing," Connell (1995) explains. "To put it formally, functionalist theory assumed a concordance among social institutions, sex role norms, and actual personalities" (p. 23). The main influence of Parsons' concepts and theories on both sociological and popular understandings of gender was the validation of existing power structures and the existence of sexually differentiated roles by suggesting that such structures and roles were in accord with the needs of society. As such, Parsons, like Hall, normalized objects of knowledge like gender, femininity, and masculinity and reinforced dominant social practices through discourse.

Following and building upon the discourse of Parsons was the work of fellow sociologist Robert K. Merton (1956, 1968, 1973, 1976). Merton was also grounded in structural functionalist sociology but developed an understanding of sociological concepts and theories that was far more multifaceted and cognizant of power relations compared to Parsons. What set Merton's sociological perspective apart is 1) the complex and multidimensional nature of social structures and 2) the prominence of asymmetrical relationships (Sztompka, 2003). For Merton, societies are made up of complex, interconnected networks that are themselves made up of statuses, roles, norms, values, and institutions (just to name a few). But these networks are not (and should not be)

without conflict. The relationships that exist within these networks are rife with disagreements, tensions, abnormalities, and ambivalence. As Merton (1976) writes:

> It is fundamental, not incidental to the paradigm of structural analysis that social structures generate social conflict by differentiating in historically differing extent and kind, into interlocking arrays of social statuses, strata, organizations, and communities that have their own and therefore potentially conflicting as well as common interests and values (pp. 124-125).

For Merton, societies are far more dynamic and far less static than Parsons acknowledges. Achieving balance (and hence "normality") within the social structure is not taken for granted or assumed. Instead, reaching a state of social equilibrium is always problematic and contingent (Sztompka, p. 24). In other words, for a society to be successful over the long term, it must be readily able to adapt. This represents a major rupture in the dominant discourse as represented by Hall, Freud, and Parsons. In those previous scholars' work, objects of knowledge such as masculinity were either biological or psychological derived and unchangeable or static sociological roles that served society. According to Merton, such objects can and necessarily do change to meet social needs.

One of Merton's greatest accomplishments in regards to his influence upon popular thinking was his ability to turn a phrase. Commonly used expressions or concepts such as "unanticipated consequences" and "self-fulfilling prophesy" were both developed by Merton. Another phrase Merton coined is especially pertinent to this study: "role model." First used in a study on the socialization of medical school students, the expression rapidly caught on (Holton, 2003) and its usage (as this study shows) is now commonplace. Within a given society, Merton contends, there are certain "reference

groups" that individuals compare themselves to, even if they do not necessarily belong. Members of these reference groups thus serve as "role models" for those that aspire to be a part of said group as well. But learning how to fulfill a certain role within a society, in this case how to be a "man" or how to be "masculine" is not a simple matter. "Merton emphasized that, rather than assuming one status and one role, a person has a status set in the social structure to which is attached a whole role-set of expected behavior—and that, with those sets, ambiguities, incompatibilities, and conflicts almost inevitably lurk." (Holton, 2003, p. 514).

Cumulatively, Merton's work was far more nuanced than previous sociological schools of thought. Considering his acknowledgement of the complexities, uncertainties, and power imbalances of social structures in general and social roles (such as sex-roles) in particular, his discursive contributions were distinct and quite prophetic considering the social tensions and changes that were to occur in the 1960s and 70s. However, like Parsons and other structural functionalists of that time, he still viewed roles as serving a positive function in society; hence, the contemporary, taken-for-granted understanding of "role model" as a positive example or someone to look up to rather than a mode of political or religious indoctrination.

Psychologist Erik Erikson (1950, 1959, 1963) was a prominent figure at this time as well. Following the psychoanalytic insights of Freud, Erikson also believed that there are universal elements of the human mind (id, ego, and superego) and of human development. However, Erikson differed from Freud by placing less emphasis on the id (innate, primary functions such as the libido) and more emphasis on the ego (the part of the mind that cognitively balances base urges with social norms and expectation). By

making this shift, Erikson acknowledges that humans are not just physical or psychological beings but social beings as well (Lerner, 1976). To reflect this difference, Erikson adapted Freud's original stages of psychosexual development (oral, anal, phallic, latency, and genital) to include more individual work on one's own identity apart from pure sexual function. For the purposes of this study, three of Erikson's concepts have particular relevance—the notions of the identity crisis, role confusion/identity diffusion, and a sense of generativity in adulthood.

According to Erikson, when an adolescent reaches puberty, he invariably has an "identity crisis" where the question "who am I?" must be answered. He must work to achieve an identity rather than simply have one come naturally or be assigned one by society. It is a cognitive process where the individual must figure out who he is, what he will do, and what role he will play in society. If a child is unable to resolve this "identity crisis" and achieve an identity (i.e. find a role that fits), then he will experience either role confusion (uncertainty about what role one should play) or identity diffusion (the inability to settle into an identity even into adulthood). Once in adulthood, the individual's sense of identity is still critical. "Generativity" concerns the psychic need to pass on what one has learned to their own children. As Erikson (1959) explains, "Generativity is primarily the interest in establishing and guiding the next generation although there are people who, from misfortune or because of special and genuine gifts in other directions, do not apply this drive to offspring but to other forms of altruistic concern and of creativity." (p. 103). If a person feels as if he if successfully meeting society's expectations in regards to his chosen role, he will more than likely have this

sense of generativity. However, if one feels like he has failed at meeting social expectations, a sense of "stagnation" will be likely to occur.

Erikson's work has a clear discursive connection to the topics already discussed in this study, both psychological and sociological. Like the works of Hall and Freud, Erikson's concepts and theories center on stages of development and continue the ideal of universal, innate elements of the human psyche. However, like Parsons and Merton's work, Erikson's ideas place an increased amount of emphasis on social forces and the importance of roles. Erikson's ideas are unique though and represent a rupture in the discourse of masculinity and gender in that they suggest that individuals have the opportunity to try on different identities and roles in adolescence in order to determine for themselves what suites them best. Boys are not destined to follow their fathers' masculine model (or risk becoming a deviant) as Freud suggests and girls are not restricted to simply being mothers and wives (Lerner, p. 208) in order to best serve the social structure as Parsons might argue. But, like Merton and his notion of "role model," Erikson suggests that only those individuals who successfully meet the societal expectations of a given role (i.e. the "positive" role model) will be in a position to pass their knowledge along to the next generation. Thus, existing relations of power and dominant beliefs about gender are not questioned or disrupted too much according to this model. If anything, they are normalized and reproduced.

The latter half of the 20th century: Gender as a cognitive process. In the first half of the last century, psychoanalysis was the dominant academic discourse regarding human development. It shaped the way people understood the human psyche and

differences between the sexes by way of the formation of objects like masculinity and the formation of concepts and theories such as the Oedipus complex, identity crisis, and generativity. As the century progressed, an increasing degree of importance was placed on factors of socialization and the social roles males and females were expected to enact. During the latter half of the century, this emphasis on socialization would grow stronger and would eventually be coupled with theories about cognition, or the individual's ability to both learn from and interact with her environment (Galambos, 2004). This development represents yet another discursive break, somewhat more radical than the minor ruptures of the past, and points to a more adaptable, and less essentialized understanding of masculinity. Three examples of this phenomenon are the works of Lawrence Kohlberg (1966), Sandra Bem (1975, 1981), and Alfred Bandura (1963, 1986; Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

In his work on the cognitive development of gender identities, Kohlberg (1966) disagrees with Freud's view that children's attitudes towards their own sex (and socially expected sex-role) are directly connected to the maturation of their bodies and/or their sexual urges. Instead, he contends that their attitudes change in accordance with the development of certain modes of cognition. (1966, p. 83). By the time a child is two to three years of age, Kohlberg believes that she realizes that there are two types of people in the world and that she belongs to one of them. For these younger children, gender is still a fairly vague and meaningless concept and is typically associated with clothing and hairstyles and later genitalia. Between ages three and six, "normal" children may experiment with gender as they come to grips with its meaning. It is the years between four and six, Kohlberg argues, that children begin to realize that changing one's clothes

or hair does not change one's gender—they come to the understanding that they will be the same gender for the rest of their lives and begin to see themselves more completely in a gender-specific way. This phenomenon is known as "gender constancy" (Kohlberg, 1966).

But this understanding of one's gender is not just a matter of simple socialization. It is instead a cognitive act, one that is dynamic and heavily influenced by physical development and social experiences:

> The child's sex-role concepts are the result of the child's active structuring of his own experience; they are not passive products of social training… At any given point, the child uses his experiences of his body and his social environment to form basic sex-role concepts and values, but at any given point environmental experiences also stimulate restructuring of those concepts and values. (Kohlberg, 1966, p. 85)

Once a child figures out which gender group she belongs to, she actively looks for information regarding that gender and the behaviors expected of her. She will, more than likely, begin to behave in such a manner in order to achieve a sense of consistency between herself and her environment (Galambos, 2004). Once this consistency is established, Kohlberg (1966) argues that it is "relatively irreversible" (p. 88).

Another important contrast between Kohlberg and Freud is the motivation to adhere to certain sex-typed behavior. For Freud, boys learn to identify with their fathers, i.e. adopt a masculine gendered identity, out of the fear of punishment (castration.) For Kohlberg, boys learn to "be boys" through both the cognitive understanding of themselves as belonging to the group known as "boys" and through differential

reinforcement. As Kohlberg explains in this syllogism, “I am a boy, therefore I want to do boy things, therefore the opportunity to do boy things (and to gain approval for doing them) is rewarding.” (p. 89). In other words, boys act like “boys” because they learned to self-identify themselves as such. And when they act in socially-accepted, “masculine” ways they are rewarded, which serves to reinforce and reproduce that behavior.

According to Bem (1975, 1981; Galambos, p. 238), children do not just learn that there are two genders, determine which one they belong to, and start acting accordingly as Kohlberg suggests. They also begin to develop naïve theories or schemas about gender through which they view they view themselves and their environment. According to this gender schema theory, children learn content-specific information about gender such as anatomical differences, divisions of labor, and characteristics of personality. They also learn to actively make sense of their world in a dualistic sort of way, as Bem (1981) elucidates:

> In addition to learning such content-specific information, the child is also learning to invoke this heterogeneous network of sex-related associations in order to evaluate and assimilate new information. The child, in short, learns to process information in terms of an evolving gender *schema*, and it is this gender-based schematic processing that constitutes the heart of the present account of sex typing. (p. 354-355)

For individuals deemed to be “schematic,” Bem argues that they learn to see themselves, others, and the world around them in terms of gender stereotypes (i.e. what is stereotypically masculine and what is stereotypically feminine) and begin to evaluate their own adequacy based on these stereotypes. The gender schema thus becomes a

"prescriptive standard or guide," a force in self-regulation, and a "self-fulfilling prophesy" all in one (p. 355-356). Although not as widely recognized as her fellow psychologists (perhaps due to her subject position as a female), Bem's insights into gender schemas are highly illustrative of the power that discursive objects such as masculinity can play in the lives of individuals. These objects are not merely descriptive; they are also constitutive and operate as a lens though which one sees the world.

Breaking even further away from the dominant discourse, Bem (1975) proposes that this sort of "sex-typing" or sex-role differentiation is outdated and is no longer an effective method of understanding ourselves as individuals. Instead of helping us to achieve a sense of wholeness, concepts like "masculinity" and "femininity" are too restrictive and prevent us from becoming fuller, more complete human beings. The answer, she feels, is a particular form of androgyny:

> Because his or her self-definition excludes neither masculinity nor femininity, the androgynous individual should be able to remain sensitive to the changing constraints of the situation and engage in whatever behavior seems most effective at the moment, regardless of its stereotype as appropriate for one sex or the other. (p. 634-635)

Bem concludes that an "either-or" attitude towards gender and "sex-roles" only limits an individual's ability to adapt to multiple situations and contexts and that a healthy individual should be able to enact both "masculine" and "feminine" behaviors whenever needed. She suggests that androgyny may "come to define a new and more human standard of psychological health" (p. 643). While this point of view contradicts the work of past scholars in regards to what it says about masculinity and gender and has the

potential to effect major social change, it still operates within the language of "mental health" and "normalcy." It may push or expand the limits of discursive practice, but is in itself limited by accepted psychological discourse. For, according to Foucault (1972), discourses and objects of knowledge are not generated spontaneously or independent but in relation to systems of institutions, behavioral norms, and social and economic processes: "which means that one cannot speak of anything at anytime; it is not enough to say something new; it is not enough for us to open our eyes, to pay attention, or to be aware, for new objects suddenly to light up and emerge out of the ground" (p. 45). In other words, while Bem's work serves as a radical departure from the works of Hall, Freud, and Erikson, it nonetheless derives from and exists in relation to established psychological discourse and maintains and reproduces key discursive vestiges.

Related to the cognitive development models of Kohlberg and Bem is Bandura's (1963; 1986) work in social cognitive theory and his later collaboration with colleague Kay Bussey on social cognitive theory and gender development and differentiation (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). In his earlier work, Bandura (1986) postulates that "behavior, cognitive and other personal factors, and environmental influences all actively operate interactively as determinants of each other" (p. 23). Put another way, behavior patterns (such as gender-linked activities) shape and are shaped by personal factors (levels of cognition, personal motivation, self-regulatory abilities) which themselves shape and are shaped by environmental factors (such as common social influences). This is what he refers to as "triadic reciprocal determinism." This interplay between behavior, cognition, and environment would eventually lead to his later and more famous theory on observational learning or modeling, formally known as social learning theory or social

cognitive theory. According to this theory, people are not dominated and constituted by inner physical and/or psychological forces (as Freud argues) nor are they somewhat helpless actors playing roles defined by their society or as determined by external forces (as Parsons argues). Human action is instead an interaction between the triadic factors as described above.

In support of this theory of human behavior, Bandura conducted numerous studies to determine how cognition and environment effect and are effected by human action, including his famous Bobo Doll study (1963) where children of both sexes watched a tape of an adult physically attacking a toy clown in a highly specific way and then overwhelmingly replicated that behavior without prompting. Bandura (1986) concludes that a great deal of human learning occurred not through biological or sociological pressures but by way of observation:

> Observers can acquire cognitive skills and new patterns of behavior by observing the performance of others. The learning may take varied forms, including new behavior patterns, judgmental standards, cognitive competencies, and generative rules for creating behavior. Observational learning is shown most clearly when models exhibit novel patterns of thought and behavior which observers did not already possess but which, following observation, can produce in similar form. (p. 49)

Specifically related to gender and masculinity, Bussey and Bandura (1999) argue that biological determinism is overly simplistic and ignores key social and cognitive factors in the lives of males and females. Using the triadic model discussed above as a foundation, they insist that biology plays only a minor role in the development of one's own gendered

identity and that most gender differences are cultural in nature. As Galambos (2004) explains, "emphasized in this model is the self as agent. The individual is seen as an active processor and interpreter of gender-related information, which feeds into decisions on how to conduct oneself." (p. 238). In further contrast to Freud, Erikson, and Kohlberg, Bandura and Bussey also contend that this process of triadic reciprocal determinism regarding the learning of gendered behaviors is not limited to early childhood or adolescence. Instead, they argue that it can continue to develop throughout one's life.

The work of these later scholars represents a major discursive rupture in psychological and sociological thought compared to the scholars of the early and mid-20th century. By suggesting that gender and the adoption (or rejection) of traditional sex-roles is a cognitive process rather than a biological function or a process of socialization, Kohlberg, Bem, and Bandura (to differing degrees) grant individuals much more agency in their own personal development than previous scholars. Yes, children can (and usually do) choose to act in socially-approved, gender-specific ways. As Kohlberg suggests, doing so is a far more rewarding and secure process than defying gender expectations. But breaking free of such stereotypical behavioral patterns (i.e. socially accepted "sex-roles") is possible and, as Bem argues, allows for greater individual development and potentially greater psychological health. And, according to Bandura's notion of "triadic reciprocal determinism," this process is not only preferable but is indeed highly possible. Bandura has concluded that individuals are cognitively capable of reshaping their gender, their gendered behaviors, and their environment from early childhood on through adulthood.

This dramatic theoretical change in thinking within the social sciences is reflective of concurrent changes in popular culture in the United States from the 1960s until today. With the rise of the civil rights and women's liberation movements, changes in the home and in the workplace, and the increased presence of the media (and thus greater exposure to different ways of being male and female) in our day-to-day lives, essentialist thinking about issues of identity such as "sex-roles" has waned somewhat (Faludi, 1991, 1999). But, as Foucault (1967, 1972, 1994) might point out, this change in the discursive formation of strategies (i.e. ways of organizing and making concepts) does not necessarily represent an "evolution" of thought or serve as a symbol of progress, however. Instead, it is indicative of the contradictory forces that always exist within a discursive field and the space allowed by the rules that govern discourse (the *archive*) for alternative ways of thinking to present themselves when needed (i.e. to fill in unexplained gaps and to perpetuate the "myth" of historical continuity).

Such discursive shifts are also not without consequence and do not occur unopposed. For instance, due to the gains made by women during the civil rights era (i.e. Title IX) and their increased presence in the academic world, the workplace, politics, and at the head of the household, a "backlash" against cultural change, feminism, and feminist thinking became popularized among mostly middle-class white men in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Falludi, 1991). Men's groups such as the "Promise Keepers" formed around the country, argued for "men's rights," and called for men to return to their rightful place as patriarchal leader of the family (Messner, 1997). In many ways, this "backlash" continues today in popular literature about the supposed "feminization" of schooling and the need for more male teachers to serve as "role models" for boys and

young men (Martino & Kehler, 2007), reminiscent of fears about the danger female teachers presented to their males students in the early 20th century (as detailed in the next discursive field). As I demonstrate in the last two discursive fields, this era has also seen calls for a return to an essential ideal of masculinity based on mythology and mythological archetypes and increased amount of research and popular literature on supposed innate or "hard-wired" differences between males and females.

The "Woman Peril": Boys and Schooling in the Early 20th Century

The academic work of Hall (1904, 1923), Freud (1938, 1962, 1969, 1975), Parsons (1956) and others regarding the normal development of gendered identities and the adoption of sex roles did not occur void of a social context. As with all *les connaissances*, or formal statements of a discipline, their collective works were grounded in a *savior*. In other words, their conclusions influenced and were influenced by the social world in which they lived. For this discursive field, I examine the historical period of the early 20th century in the United States with particular focus on the discourse of boys and the perceived danger presented by a lack of adult males in the schools.

In *Fit to Teach: Same-sex Desire, Gender, and School Work in the Twentieth Century*, Jackie M. Blount (2005) details the historical regulation and enforcement of gender and sexual norms in the United States with particular focus on the field of education. On the topic of masculinity, Blount notes an article from a 1911 edition of the *New York Times* that seems to echo some of the major concerns of today regarding the supposed need for more male teachers in schools, titled "Appeal for Male Teachers—Boys too Effeminate, Say Principals, When They Haven't Male Instructors." The article

explains how many boys complete their schooling without having one male teacher, which, according to the author, puts them at a severe disadvantage: "This… is a distinct discrimination against boys at an age when they most need instruction by men" (as cited in Blount, p. 12). The answer, according to the article, was to increase the pay of teachers to attract more men, but the underlying message about what boys "need" in their education resonates more because it was unquestioned and taken-for-granted. As several other scholars point out (e.g., Barnett and Rivers, 2006; Hansot, 1993; Smith and Vaughn, 2000), the fear of female teachers "feminizing" boys in America's schools was not confined to the New York area, and it certainly was not merely a passing concern. Throughout the United States, similar concerns were widely expressed by political and business leaders prior to both World Wars. Then labeled "the woman peril," many were fearful at this time that the dominance of female teachers in schools would produce effeminate (and possibly homosexual) boys and eventually weaken the nation. As we will see, dominant discursive practices regarding masculinity would respond to this demographic shift and the related fears concerning new generations of "effeminate" males by narrowly defining what makes one "masculine" (i.e. competitiveness, athleticism, heterosexual virility) and excluding those things that do not (i.e. being "weak" and "soft.")

Female educators teaching both sexes in the United States was not necessarily a new phenomenon at the turn of the 20th century, however. Since the advent of the Common school Movement in the mid-19th century, women have made up a significant portion of the teaching demographic. One reason for this was the commonly held assumption of the time that women were naturally better models of morality than men

and were ideally suited to rear and guide the development of the youth, especially young boys and girls (Smith & Vaughn, 2000). Becoming teachers was seen as an extension of women's roles as mothers: "Mothers were expected to socialize their children in the family, teachers their pupils in the school" (Hansot & Tyack, 1988). Another reason for the predominance of women in the classroom was the rise of industrialization. Men at that time had progressively more employment options; they could choose to teach and possibly rise up the ranks to become school administrators or they could participate in industry-related occupations for significantly higher pay.

> As teaching became more and more feminized, industrialization changed the nature of work for men increasing their opportunities in both manual labor and the profession. The percentages of male teachers to the total diminished throughout the century. By 1880 only 32.2 percent of the nation's educators were men. Forty years later that figure had decreased to 15.5 percent, the lowest ever recorded in the history of teaching. (Smith & Vaughn, 2000, p. 7)

Even though the actual number of male teachers rose by 63% from 1880 to 1920, it was the overall percentage of males in the teaching profession that grabbed headlines and became a major cause for concern for many Americans.

The industrial revolution was also an impetus for concerns about the shifting state of gender roles in society. In Great Britain and the United States, the changing nature of work caused many to worry that men and boys were becoming increasingly effeminate. As Beynon (2002) explains, "In pre-industrial times physical strength and material rewards were closely linked. The effects of the industrial revolution diminished the importance of physical strength… and this no doubt contributed to the idea that men were

getting soft and weak." (p. 43). Coinciding with this perceived "decay' of the male body was the decay in male spirituality. As Putney (2001) notes, male participation in Christian churches had also been steadily on the decline at this time. Several prominent figures, including the aforementioned G. Stanley Hall, felt that the Christian church was in "peril" and becoming feminized due to the high number of women in positions of leadership.

As a result of both the perceived degeneration of the male body and spirit, the concept "Muscular Christianity" took hold in the latter half of the 19th century in both the United States and the United Kingdom and continued on unto the 20th century. Champions of "Muscular Christianity" included Hall (social scientist and scholar) and Dwight L. Moody (religious leader) in the United States (Putney, 2001, p. 2, 3) and Thomas Arnold (schoolmaster) and Boy's Scouts founder Robert Baden-Powell (military leader) in Great Britain (Beynon, 2002, p. 41). The emphasis of "Muscular Christianity" was to involve men and boys in sports and activities that reinforced so-called Christian values such as teamwork, adhering to rules, and fair play. The intent of such activities was to reaffirm male supremacy and to bolster the connection between manhood, Christianity, and national security. As Beynon explains, "Young men's engagement in healthy, sporting activities at all levels of society was held to be necessary for the perpetuation and well-being of the Empire… It became a marker of the health of the nation and of masculinity" (p. 42).

Not coincidentally, there was also an increase in activism for women's rights during this period of time. In the public sphere, a place once reserved exclusively for men, women were becoming increasingly prominent. Women were not just assuming

positions of leadership in religious organizations as G. Stanley Hall so feared. Many were transitioning from being teachers to leaders of the educational institutions themselves. For instance, in the state of California, several women held county superintendant positions (Weiler, 1994). In Texas, Annie Webb Blanton was elected as state superintendant of schools in 1919 (Smith & Vaughn, 2000). On the national stage, Ella Flagg Young was elected president of the National Education Association in 1910 (Smith & Vaughn, 2000; Weiler, 1994). And the American School Peace League (ASPL), founded by former teacher Fannie Fern Andrews in 1908 and made up primarily of female teachers, served as a vocal opponent of militarism in schools nationwide (Zeiger, 2003). When these social and professional advances are combined with the increased presence of women in universities at this time and the vocal (and eventually successful) women's suffrage movement, it becomes clear that the call for more male teachers was not due merely to concerns over the "softening" of the American male and the associated fears about national security—it can also be read as a strategic backlash against female empowerment (Hansott & Tyack, 1988; Lesko, 2001; Smith & Vaughn, 2000).

To combat the advancement of women in schools and society, political, business, and military leaders from across the country actively sought what they believed to be truly "masculine" men who were willing to enter the classroom or to take up leadership positions within schools. In California, Governor George Pardee spoke to the state legislature in 1905 about the need to increase teacher pay in order to attract more men and rid the system of women whom he believed viewed teaching not as a profession but as an "expedient" occupation to have until something better came along, like marriage (Weiler, 1994, p. 28). State Superintendant Edward Hyatt added to these concerns in

1910 when he commented that, not only did schools need more male teachers, they needed specific types of men—ones who were both "virile" and "red-blooded" (Weiler, p. 28). In the early years of World War I (prior to American involvement) a national campaign for preparedness was launched and it too connected gender and boys in schools to national security. National leaders such as Oregon Senator George Chamberlain, physician Hugh H. Young from John Hopkins University, and Admiral F.E. Chadwick from the U.S. Naval Academy, called for increased military training and physical education for boys in schools (Zeiger, 2003,157-159). Like the proponents of "Muscular Christianity," these men and many others felt that the presence of women in positions of authority over boys and young men had made them "soft" and "effeminate." As Admiral Chadwick explains, placing young boys and men under the guidance of female teachers "is to do damage to that most precious possession, his masculine nature…he will never recover. He goes through life a maimed man" (as cited in Zeiger, p. 159).

As a consequence of such influential figures and the popularity of their views, the early decades of the 20th century saw a marked increase of military and physical training in schools (leading to the advent of the junior Reserve Officers Training Corps [ROTC] in 1916), the emphasis on competitive school sport for boys, and the dominance of men as school administrators. On this latter topic, Smith and Vaughn (2000) note that, due to these concerns about women leadership positions in schools, the number of female administrators in both elementary and secondary schools dropped rapidly from 1905 to 1920 and continued to decline throughout the 20th century: "In 1905 women comprised 61.7 percent of elementary administrators and 5.7 percent of the secondary administrators. By 1985 they would be at 16.6 percent and 3.9 percent respectively" (p.

8). By 1999, the percentage of female administrators did increase to 38 percent at the elementary level and 15 percent at the secondary level. However, it typically takes women longer (in terms of service as a teacher and/or administrator) to achieve the position of principal compared to men. Female administrators are also paid less than their male counterparts (Zheng & Carpenter-Hubin, 1999). What these statistics indicate is that, despite the continued predominance of female teachers in the classroom, the early 20th century movement to "re-masculinize" schools has had lasting effects as male administrators still far outweigh females and continue to be entrusted to lead and to shape educational policy and practice.

From these examples, it appears that certain enunciative modalities (i.e. male scholars, religious leaders, politicians, military officers, physicians, and school administrators) have been privileged to speak authoritatively about masculinity while others (female teachers, homosexual and/or "effeminate" men and boys) have been discredited, refuted, and/or silenced altogether. Speaking from these privileged enunciative modalities, these men are allowed, through discursive practice and because of their affiliation with certain institutions, to develop influential concepts and theories to shape public policies. Meanwhile, non-masculine modalities and their discourses are demonized and framed as threats to the developmental well-being of boys and, subsequently, to the security of the nation.

In terms of the formation of strategies concerning masculinity that occurred as a result of these discursive practices, Blount (2005) and Lesko (2001) explain that, in the early half of the 20th century and beyond, American schools became one of the most important vehicles for creating and regulating what was deemed to be normal and

appropriate gendered behaviors. Home economic programs were developed to train girls for their expected roles as mothers, wives, and homemakers. Boys, on the other hand, were prepared through physical education, sports, and various leadership programs to assume their positions as the heads of their respective households, boardrooms, and battlefields. But this gender regulation was not just reserved for students:

> An important means that schools employed to influence students' gender was through the selection of school workers who might provide gender-appropriate modeling. School districts hired women teachers thought to be chaste and pure guardians of virtue… Conversely, schools preferred hiring married men—who headed traditional, heterosexual households. (p. 15)

These school workers (i.e. teachers and administrators) were selectively hired to be gender-appropriate models for their male and female students to follow. For male educators in particular, the expectations of those like State Superintendant Hyatt (male teachers must be "virile" and "red-blooded") seemed to hold sway. Not only did men have to be vigorous, forceful, and active models of masculinity and leadership, they also had to adhere to other dominant norms of masculinity including compulsory heterosexuality.

Mythological Perspectives

In his bestselling book *Iron John* (1990), Robert Bly meditates on what he perceives to be the declining status of men and masculinity in contemporary western society. He describes a world rife with distant fathers, "soft" men who put the needs of women ahead of their own, and a general sense of confusion about what "being a man" is

all about. The cure for these social maladies, he claims, is to reintroduce rites of passage from boyhood to manhood into our cultural and social practices. Bly writes,

> The ancient societies believed that a boy becomes a man only through ritual and effort—only through the "active intervention of the older men." It's becoming clear to us that manhood doesn't happen by itself; it doesn't happen just because we eat Wheaties. The active intervention of older men means that older men welcome the younger men into the ancient, mythologized, instinctive male world (p. 15).

Heavily influenced by the work of psychoanalysis pioneer Carl Jung (1968, 1998) and mythology scholar Joseph Campbell (1954, 1972, 1988), Bly and fellow "mythopoetic" figures such Robert Moore (1990), Sam Keen (1991), and Shepherd Bliss (1995) argue that if we are to resolve the "problems" that western males face today, we must return to the wisdom of the ancients and get in touch with the "instinctive," and "deep" masculinity detailed in myth and expressed through mythological archetypes. They claim that, once in touch with this essential form of masculinity, men will be more at peace with themselves, be better partners, friends, and fathers, and be better prepared to pass this wisdom on to (i.e. intervene, shape, mould) the next generation.

For this third discursive field, I discuss the discourse of "mythopoetic" men's movement and its mythological foundations. I first examine the foundational work of both Carl Jung and Joseph Campbell and their understandings of the importance of myth on the human psyche and on human cultures in general. I then discuss in greater detail Bly's *Iron John* and what it tells us about mythology and contemporary gender ideals and practices. I then examine other mythopoetic writers and what they have to say about

myth, masculinity, and what it means to "model" manhood. As with the discursive field involving the academic disciplines of psychology and sociology, the object of knowledge and the enunciative modalities are shared among the speaking subjects cited here. All speak to some degree about masculinity and how it is discursively defined through myth. They are all, with the exception of Benjamin (1995), an African American activist, white male academics and authors speaking from privileged social positions and from privileged social institutions. The main emphasis for this discursive field will be the concepts and strategies these individuals suggest as they relate to masculinity, boyhood, manhood, and "male role models."

Jung and Campbell. Coming from a psychoanalytic background, Carl Jung (1968, 1983, 1998) was well versed in early 20th century psychological discourse and accepted many of the Freudian concepts discussed earlier such as the id, ego, and superego, and the Oedipus complex. He also shared with Freud the beliefs that the dreams of individuals were important in revealing the inner workings of one's unconscious mind. However, Jung differed from Freud's interpretations of dreams being (for the most part) manifestations of repressed sexual urges. Jung believed that dreams could also serve as expressions of the collective unconscious, or, a reservoir of the collective experiences of the human species present in each individual. And, if the collective unconscious is shared among all people, so too must be the mythological archetypes in which they are expressed: "myths and symbols, which can arise autochthonously in every corner of the earth and yet are identical, because they are fashioned out of the same worldwide human

unconscious, whose contents are infinitely less variable than are races and individuals" (1998, p. 62).

For Jung, myths are important portals into the collective human subconscious and are notable for their archetypes, or universal models of significant types of people such as the hero, the mother, and the wise old man (otherwise known as the *senex or mana-personality*). According to Segal (1990), myths serve three functions in Jung's view. The first, as Jung writes:

> Myths are original revelations of the preconscious [i.e. collective] psyche, involuntary statements about unconscious psychic happenings… Modern psychology treats the products of unconscious fantasy-activity as self-portraits of what is going on in the unconscious, or as statements of the unconscious about itself. (as cited in Segal, p. 255)

Second, myths serve to guide individuals to understand the unconscious. In this sense, "the lives of the characters described in myth become models to emulate" (Segal, 1990, p. 256). And the third function of myth according to Jung is that they serve as conduits to the unconscious itself. Myths help one understand previous experiences already embedded in the unconscious while serving as subconscious experiences unto themselves.

Jung's interpretation of one archetype, the wise old man, has particular relevance in terms of this study. Jung (1983) describes the wise old man as a figure that "appears in dreams in the guise of a magician, doctor, priest, teacher, professor, grandfather, or any other person possessing authority" and serves to compensate for the "spiritual deficiencies" of the dreamer by providing wisdom or "filling the gaps." (p. 126). As an

example of this archetype, Jung (1968, 1983) describes the dream of a young (presumably male) theology student. In this dream, the student was in the presence of what he called the "white magician," a handsome older man dressed all in black. After addressing the young man, the "white magician" calls upon the "black magician," another older man exactly like the first except dressed entirely in white. In the story, these dual "magicians" work separately yet in conjunction to solve the mysteries of life. But what the student does not realize is that these two old men are really half-evil/half good, half masculine/half feminine parts of a whole: "The two magicians are, indeed, two aspects of the wise old man, the superior master and teacher, the archetype of spirit, who symbolizes the pre-existing meaning hidden in the chaos of life," Jung (1968) explains. "He is the father of the soul, and yet the soul, in some miraculous manner, is also the virgin mother." (p. 35).

What is the meaning of this particular "wise old man" in relation to the three functions of mythology stated above? First, according to Jung, archetypes such as the "wise old man" are important, universal symbols embedded in the collective unconscious. Through myths and dreams, the "wise old man" serves as an expression of the human psyche about itself. In this case, the dichotomously separate yet strangely and inextricably unified "magicians" speak to the supposedly dualistic/holistic nature of the human mind. Second, the characters in myths serve as models to follow and help us understand the unconscious. The dual-natured magician tells us that we too are also dual-natured, but also tells us that these "natures" are complementary halves of a greater whole. If we are to emulate this model, Jung might suggest that we follow the magician's lead and embrace all aspects of our being (our persona and our anima/animus), not just

those that make us appear “masculine” or “feminine.” And third, myths and their archetypes serve both as windows into the inner workings of the human psyche and as genuine experiences of the individual mind. In the case of the theology student, his dream not only reflects and reiterates a major theme of the collective unconscious but also acts as an experience that he can learn from. For the rest of us, Jung argues that myths lend us insight into the preconscious mind and act as experiences that we can use to personally understand ourselves.

For mythologist Joseph Campbell (1954; 1972; 1988; Segal, 1990), myths take on greater importance. Unlike Jung, Campbell views myth as not only meaningful in a psychological sense but completely vital, necessary, and practical in everyday life. Mythology “teaches you what’s behind literature and the arts, it teaches you about your own life. It’s a great, exciting, life-nourishing subject.” (1988, p. 11). Through myths, all people can learn about how to move from childhood to adulthood, what it means to enter into a marriage, and how to make the transition from one role to the next. As Segal (1990) further explains:

> Myth for Campbell contains all the wisdom humans need. They only need learn to interpret it. They need never venture beyond it. Moreover, myth is easy to interpret. It has a single meaning, even if “sages” are required to decipher that meaning. (p. 260)

Campbell argues that we live in a demythologized world today where young people are starving for this ancient wisdom (1988, p. 9). He contends that societies such as ours that lack myths also lack meaningful rituals such as rites of passage or initiations for our youth and that boys and girls are forced to make up their own myths in order to make

sense of their world. This often results in “destructive and violent acts by young people who don’t know how to behave in a civilized society.” (p. 8).

Aside from their psychological and practical functions, myths and mythological archetypes also have metaphysical importance. In *Myths to Live By* (1972), Campbell discusses this metaphysical or transcendent function of myths. He explains that from the earliest histories of humanity, mythology has been needed by people to help organize their lives—a need equal to the need for food and shelter and greater than the demands of economy and law. By virtue of consciousness, humans have become aware that they are alive but also must find a way to come to terms with their inevitable death. As Campbell explains,

> This recognition of mortality and the requirement to transcend it is the first great impulse to mythology. And along with this runs another realization; namely, that the social group into which the individual has been born, which nourishes him and protects him and which, for the greater part of his life, he must himself help to nourish and protect, was flourishing long before his own birth and will remain when he is gone (p. 22).

Mythology then is especially important to humanity as well as to the individual because it reminds him of his mortality while at the same time encouraging him to reciprocate the gifts he has been given by his social group by providing them for subsequent generations. In this sense, myths show individuals how to transcend death through the “nourishment” and “protection” of others.

For the purposes of this study, the views of both Jung and Campbell exemplify the psychic, historic, and discursive importance of mentorship or “role models” as

embedded in myth. The archetype of the "wise old man" or "senex" who guides the hero through his or her journey has, for these scholars, profound psychological and metaphysical meanings—meanings that are to be emulated by others. From this perspective, it would seem that "teacher as role model" is completely appropriate. And Campbell goes further when he suggests that "sages" are needed to help others understand myths. Not only are "wise old men" important in a mythological sense, they are practically important as well. The question, then, that begs to be asked is do these "sages" or "wise old men" have to be *men* at all?

In literature, classical and popular alike, examples of this archetype are prevalent. In Greek mythology, there is the aptly named Mentor, who looked after Odysseus's son, Telemachus, when his father went away to fight in the Trojan War. In the stories of King Arthur, Merlin fills this role. In Chinese folklore, there are the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove. In Tolkien's *Lords of the Rings* trilogy, it is the character Gandolf. In the world of science fiction, Morpheus fulfils this role for Neo in *The Matrix* trilogy. And in perhaps the most famous modern mythology, *Star Wars*, the "wise old man" can be found in both Obi-Wan Kenobi and Yoda. In classic Greek literature, Socrates in Plato's *Dialogues* is prototypical. In these stories, Socrates is a wise yet forgetful old man who engages in philosophical discussions with younger men. Using what it is now referred to the "Socratic Method" (one still practiced by teachers today), Socrates asks his "students" a series of questions in order to expose errors in their logic and beliefs. According to Socrates, knowledge is already contained in the mind of the student—it is the job of the teacher to guide the student toward it by modeling the "correct" line of reasoning. For male teachers attempting to be "role models" for boys and young men, this model poses

an interesting challenge. If one task as a teacher is to "model" a correct way of thinking, whose version of "correctness" should one follow?

In terms of discourse, the work of Jung and Campbell demonstrates that dominant concepts and theories of masculinity, whether supported through the social sciences or through popular written media, are not necessarily reflective of some essential or teleological truth about men. In fact, the strict gender binaries found in the previous two discursive fields—while dominant in their own time—appear to be historical discursive ruptures in the light of this mythological perspective. While the archetype of the "wise old man" may be an authority figure and warrior, he is also a nurturer and a trickster. While there are traits that are considered "masculine" or "feminine" within this discursive field, they are not exclusive to just men or just women. Instead, they represent complimentary halves of a greater whole, embodied in these cases by male mentors. This particular way of discussing masculinity as an object of knowledge, while prone to essentializing and susceptible to discursive influences, limits, and constraints, disrupts stages of development deemed to be "normal" based on gender, the idea of "sex roles," and "gender constancy" nonetheless and once again suggests the prevalence of historical discontinuity.

Contemporary mythological understandings: Robert Bly. Jung and Campbell both argue that myths are not mere relics of the past or simply familiar literary templates that have no meaning. Myths like the "wise old man" are strongly reflective of the modern human psyche (especially the collective unconscious) and can serve as useful guides in the understanding of the lives we lead today. Contemporary mythologist Robert Bly

agrees with this assessment but also maintains certain essentialist notions of gender found in the socio-psychological section of this chapter as he specifically applies myth to masculinity in his best-selling book *Iron John* (1991). According to Bly, we need to look no further than mythology itself to find "correct" models or ways of being male. In a more modern application of the mythological importance of mentorship, especially male mentorship, Bly contends that American men and boys have lost their connection to mythological models of masculinity and have become desperate to once again see the "wild man," a more earthy, untamed variation of the wise old man described by Jung and Campbell. Bly notes that in the mid-20th century, a model of manhood characterized by hard work, discipline, insensitivity, and competitiveness became the normative standard for all men. He calls this model the "Fifties Man." However, in the 1960s another model appeared that served as a response the "Fifties Man", a softer model of manhood to counteract and break away from the hardness of the dominant model. This "soft male" as Bly labels him, opposes violent and senseless conflicts like the Vietnam War, is sensitive to the needs of women, and is in touch with his own "feminine" side. In Bly's view, "The male in the past twenty years has become more thoughtful, more gentle. But by this process, he has not become more free. He's a nice boy who pleases not only his mother but also the young woman he is living with." (p. 2). As a result, men such as these are pleasant individuals but are lacking a certain life energy found in their strong women. Bly believes that the "Fifties man", in his rejection of all things feminine, served as an incomplete model of manhood that was rejected by his more aware son. But, in rejecting manhood, the son grew to become "soft" man, out of touch with his inner (or "deep") masculinity and who helplessly defers to his more balanced and powerful female partner.

Using the western mythological tale of Iron John as a template, Bly (1991) echoes Campbell when he argues that men and boys of today are in need of male initiation where older males train younger males on how to, essentially, be "men." In this story, a young boy frees a "wild man" known as Iron John from a steel cage and leaves his parents by riding off into the woods on Iron John's hairy shoulders. Once in the woods, the boy learns about his own "psychic twin" or the being who has retained the spiritual knowledge given to one at birth, and finally sees the intelligence embedded in nature. "The Wild Man's job is to teach the young man how abundant, various, and many sided his manhood is. The boy's body inherits physical abilities developed by long-dead ancestors, and his mind inherits spiritual and soul powers developed centuries ago." (p. 55). Like the white and black magicians discussed by Jung, the boy and his psychic twin are separate yet one in the same. The boy embodies "masculinity" and the twin, through its connection to nature, represents "femininity" yet both are halves of a greater whole. Thus, the wild man, otherwise known as a male mother, is responsible for showing the boy all aspects of his male identity.

After the boy goes off with the wild man and meets his psychic twin, his hair turns gold (symbolic of his new found knowledge) and he must then venture out into the world to experience grief, meet the King (a symbol of the father) and the God-woman (a symbol of femininity), become a warrior, develop a male womb or second heart that symbolizes compassion, and finally connect fully with the feminine. For Bly, the details above serve as symbolic elements of the male initiation he believes modern American culture is lacking. In a sense, the "Fifties Man" may have become a warrior but never met his psychic twin, developed a compassionate heart, or connected with the feminine. But

the “soft male,” while connected to the feminine and having experienced grief, never met the King or became the warrior.

Bly believes that male mentors need to follow the lead of Iron John and become “Wild Men” themselves. As a symbol of wilderness itself, the “Wild Man” shows others how to trust in “our genitals, our legs and ankles, our inadequacies, the ‘soles’ of our feet, the animal ancestors, the earth itself, the treasures in the earth, the dead long buried there, the stubborn richness to which we descend.” (p. 224). For educators in particular, the failure to develop this “wild” side may have dire consequences:

> (I)f a teacher has not developed the Wild Man or Wild Woman, that person will become the strange being we call an ‘academic,’ whose love of standards is admirable in every way, but who somehow filters out the wildness out of Thoreau or Emily Dickinson or D.H. Lawrence even as he or she teaches them. (p. 230)

If male teachers are to be “role models” for young men, Bly argues that, like the Wild Man, they must be comfortable with the “masculine” aspects of their male identities as well as those aspects often labeled as “feminine.” They also must retain their “wildness” or their connection with nature, the earth, and the transcendent wisdom of the ages.

Building upon the work of both Jung (1968, 1983, 1998) and Campbell (1954; 1972; 1988), the discourse that Bly (1991) has played a part in creating shares many traits with its predecessors yet differs in several notable ways. By breaking from the dominant discourse of masculinity and femininity as polar opposites and instead envisioning them as qualities that both males and females possess, Bly partially aligns himself with this alternative mythological discursive strategy. But, by generalizing the experiences of all males and ignoring the role of culture, race, class, and sexuality in shaping the lives of

men and boys, by claiming the existence of an essential form of masculinity, and by suggesting a singular solution to men's problems (male initiation), Bly also parallels the historical discursive field (where it is suggested that female teachers put young males at a disadvantage) and with the socio-psychological discursive field (which is heavily focused on "normal" stages of development and the stable formation of gendered identities). Bly's work also represents, in some sense, a discursive backlash to the social and theoretical changes that occurred in the 1960s and 70s. While he is complimentary of the advances women experienced as a result of the feminist movement, he laments that the same movement, in conjunction with the existence of the "Fifties Man," created soft men who are in touch with their "feminine" feelings but out of touch with that which makes them essentially male.

Contemporary mythological understandings: The mythopoetic men's movement. Robert Bly may have been to most prominent member of the "mythopoetic" men's movement of the late 1980s and early 1990s, but he was not the only notable figure. Taking up the cause beside him were fellow authors and activists Robert Moore (1990), Sam Keen (1991), and Shepherd Bliss (1995). It was Bliss, in fact, and not Bly who actually coined the phrase "mythopoetic." Bliss writes,

> Rather than employing rational, analytical or political thinking, the mythopoetic approach to men uses symbols, metaphor, and archetypal images.' The mythopoetic approach is change and future oriented, rather than conservative and past oriented. A mythopoetic approach to men seeks to transform men, masculinities, and manhood. (p. 300)

Although most mythopoetic authors call for the separation from women and male-only initiations in order to enable the search for one's own "deep" masculinity (i.e. the form of masculinity that resides deep inside each man via the collective unconscious), they also claim that their intention is not to rekindle the past in order to help "oppressed" men to reclaim their rightful, dominant position in society. Instead, they insist, as Bliss does here, that they utilize myths of the past to help envision better, more complete ways of being male for the future.

In short, the mythopoetic men's movement authors (similar to Jung, Campbell, and Bly) emphasize three main points: First , males need to be separated from their mothers and/or the world of women. Second, males need to be initiated into the world of men. And third, as newly born men, males must reincorporate themselves and become productive, positive forces in society, eventually passing on what they have learned to future generations of men.

In *Fire in the Belly* (1991), Keen details a mythopoetic recipe for being (and becoming) a man. As he writes, "To become a man, a son must first become a prodigal, leave home, and travel solo into a far country. Alien nation before reconciliation. There can be no homecoming without leave-taking. To love a woman we must first leave WOMAN behind." (p. 23). For boys, this means they must leave or be taken from their mothers at a time coinciding with puberty and be "thrust into the virile society of men." (p. 29). He describes the practices of several cultures where this separation was marked by some act of violence or mutilation enacted on the boy by older men, acts that were intended to leave a physical or emotional scar that would become emblematic of the journey from boyhood to manhood. As Moore (1990) explains, the psychological roots of

this step stem from Freud's Oedipus complex. Without separation from the mother and the experience of nurturing from the "mature masculine," a boy will only be capable of expressing "immature masculine energies," be prone to quarrelling, be overly passive or weak, lack creativity, have an inflated ideal of one's self, and will never truly become a "man."

Once separated from the mother, the boy must be initiated into the world of men. The examples of violence and mutilation that Keen provides are vivid, but are not literally necessary. The act of initiation is mostly a symbolic one, meant to signify the "death" of the boy and the "birth" of the man to a male "womb" or, as Moore describes, "the attempt to move from a lower form of experience and consciousness to a higher (and deeper) level of consciousness, from a diffuse identity to a more consolidated and structured identity." (p. 5). This process could take several days, months, or even years but in one way or another involves the apprenticeship of a boy under the tutelage of a man or group of men.

The man could be the boy's biological father, but that is not necessary. The "father" or "patris" in the initiation is also symbolic. He represents male authority "whether he wears the hat of the teacher, doctor, or man of commerce" (Vogt, 1991, p. 18). For mythopoetic authors, the key here is that this "wise old man" is a more complete, more mature model of masculinity compared to the more violent, emotionally closed-off dominant stereotype of western manhood (similar to the "Fifities Man" concept that Bly suggests). As Bliss (1995) describes, such men need to be representatives of "healthy" masculinity, one that mirrors the "deep masculine"—caring, nurturing, creative, playful,

heroic, and responsible—rather than "toxic masculinity"—violent, intolerant, abusing, and neglectful.

The third and final step in the journey from boyhood to manhood, according to these mythopoetic authors, is the reincorporation of the man into society. In many cultures, this would entail some sort of physical insignia of the journey (a scar, a sword, a shield), the right to have sex or marry, or the adoption of a new name (Keen, 1991, p. 31). According to Moore (1990), achieving this third step means that a child has made the transition from "boy psychology" to "man psychology." In other words, he has graduated from a childish and infantile identity (symbolized by archetypes such as the divine child, the precocious child, and the oedipal child) to a more mature identity (symbolized by the king, warrior, magician, and lover archetypes). All the mature archetypes overlap into one another and represent different yet connected positive human characteristics. The king is authoritative but also thoughtful, generative, nurturing, and just. The warrior is aggressive (when the situation calls for it), focused, aware of his limitations, flexible, and disciplined. The magician is wise, knowledgeable, observant, and reflective. And the lover, perhaps the most neglected archetype in terms of modern masculinity, is sensual, sensitive, empathetic, and affectionate. While each of these "mature" archetypes represents positive qualities a man should have, Moore (1990) reminds us that within these archetypes resides a danger. Each archetype also contains an opposite (or shadow) that serves as a warning for what can happen when one becomes too enamored with one's own power or loses sight of the other aspects of a fuller and richer humanity.

This mythological discourse on masculinity and male role models, some argue, is far more powerful and deeply rooted in society's consciousness than social sciences like psychology and sociology and has a far greater impact on people's day-to-day behaviors and discursive practices (Campbell, 1954, 1972, 1988; Segal, 1990). But the assertions made by the more contemporary mythopoetic authors have come under a great deal of scrutiny as well. Similar to Bly (1991), these writers tend to argue for an essential and monolithic male identity, do not allow for the plurality of male experiences, fail to include men of different races and sexualities, and (intentionally or unintentionally) support a rising tide of men who want to blame women (especially feminists) for society's ills (Messner, 1997). As a consequence of the male-only structure, the overwhelmingly white and middle class demographic of participants, and appropriated Native American rituals that defined the early mythopoetic function, the movement has been widely criticized in academia and repeatedly mocked in popular culture (Kimmel, 1995; Kimmel & Aronson, 2004).

For many, the movement was just a bunch of white men running away from a world they felt was against them but that they, as a group, still dominated:

> Relatively privileged men may be attracted to the mythopoetic men's movement because, on the one hand, it acknowledges and validates their painful 'wounds.' On the other hand, and unlike feminism, it does not confront men with the reality of how their own privileges are based on the continued subordination of women and other men (Messner, 1997, p. 23).

In recent years, many in the mythopoetic movement have readily acknowledged these critiques and have moved to correct these oversights and have made attempts to

acknowledge differences in the lives of men and boys and the privileges that men in general have on the basis of gender (Benjamin, 1995; Bliss, 1995; Kimmel & Aronson, 2004). Although interest in the movement waned at the turn of the 21st century, the basic discursive strategy of bettering men by way of mythology still flourishes in the guise of the ManKind project (Kimmel & Aronson, 2004), an international organization that, while maintaining the mythopoetic mission of helping men to develop themselves more fully through ritual and rites of passage, strives to be inclusive of people from all cultural, racial, and socio-economic backgrounds and to not exclude anyone on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, ability, or religious preference.

According to the mythopoetic leaders, the point of their movement was and is to ground men in an ancient, more fully human ideal of masculinity and not to sustain or reconstruct patriarchal power structures as many feminist and profeminist critics fear. As Bly (1995) explains, "None of us wants to reestablish patriarchy. The destructive essence of patriarchy… moves to kill the young masculine as soon as it appears anywhere within range." (p. 272). While these authors and activists insist that modern men and masculinity are damaged and in need of repair, they insist that their aims are not contradictory to the aims of feminism or gender equality in general. In fact, they too want to question and disrupt patriarchy: "In our view, patriarchy is not the expression of deep and rooted masculinity, for truly deep and rooted masculinity is not abusive. Patriarchy is the expression of the immature masculine. It is the expression of boy psychology, and in part, the shadow—or crazy—side of masculinity," Moore (1990) writes. "Patriarchy, in our view, is an attack on masculinity in its fullness as well as femininity in its fullness. Those caught up in the structures and dynamics of patriarchy seek to dominate not only women

but men as well." (p. xvii). By returning to ancient, mythology-based rites of passage and initiation, the mythopoetic leaders insist that we as a society can begin to steer males of all ages in a more positive direction, one based on human characteristics such as love, compassion, and stewardship rather than characteristics typically connected to patriarchy such as violence, greed, and dominance.

The Contemporary Debate

For this last discursive field, I turn my attention to more recent discourse regarding masculinity and the related concepts of boyhood, manhood, and "male role models." More specifically, I focus on popular psychology and "self-help" books such as *The Wonder of Boys* (Gurian, 1997), *Real Boys* (Pollack, 1999), *Raising Cain* (Kindlon & Thompson, 1999), and *The War Against Boys* (Sommers, 2000), a small sample of popular written news media from around the United States, and the reaction of critical gender scholars to this popular discourse.

Following the mythopoetic movement and other men's movements of the 1990s was another movement that similarly argues through discourse that males in Western societies such as the United States are in trouble and are in need of attention. In this case, however, the males in question are boys. Often labeled the "boy crisis," the proponents of this position claim that boys in our society are falling behind girls, both in school and in life. For example, psychologists William Pollack (1998) and Dan Kindlon and Michael Thompson (1999) argue that the emotional needs of boys are not being met in home or in schools. They contend that boys are under pressure to meet cultural codes of masculinity that cause them a great deal of psychological strain and lead them to act violently. They

are also more prone than girls to fail in school, be diagnosed with serious psychological or behavioral disorders, suffer from depression, and attempt or commit suicide. For Michael Gurian (1997, 2001, 2003) and Christina Hoff Sommers (2000), there is nothing inherently wrong with the average boy and that any claim that there is actually serves to "pathologize" them. For these writers, the problem is the American school. Boys are innately different than girls, they claim, but these differences are not being acknowledged by parents or teachers. Boys are held to "feminine" behavior standards in schools and their academic strengths and interests are not being accounted for by feminist teachers and liberal-biased educational researchers.

But there are a number of individuals who are suspicious of these claims and feel that they are merely a repeat of unfounded complaints made in decades past, as detailed in the first historical section of this chapter. For critical gender scholars Michael Kimmel (2004), R.W. Connell (1995, 1997), and Wayne Martino (2006), the problems that boys face in school stem not from feminists or "feminine" schools but from hegemonic norms of masculinity that encourage boys to reject schooling and act violently in order to "prove" their manhood. Claims about "innate" differences between males and females are unfounded, they say, and fail to acknowledge the diversity among both boys and girls as groups. If these issues are to be resolved, parents and teachers must reject hegemonic masculinity and let boys know that there are multiple, equally valid form of masculinities available to them.

In what follows, I will detail this contemporary debate with particular focus on what these (and other) authors have to say about masculinity. I will also focus more closely on the enunciative modalities from which the discourses derive as they are not as

uniform as the socio-psychological or mythological fields. Finally, I will also closely describe the formations of concepts and strategies within this discourse as they differ and contradict each other quite often and compete with one another for social acceptance. In the first section, I will discuss the psychologically-based perspectives of Pollack (1998) and Kindlon and Thompson (1999). In the second section, I will discuss the view that boys and girls have innate or "hardwired" differences that effect how they should be taught as exemplified by Gurian (1997, 2001, 2003) and Sommers (2000). Finally, I will examine the more critical perspective of Kimmel (2004), Connell (1995, 2000, 2002), and Martino (2006).

Contemporary psychological perspectives. According to Pollack (1998), a Harvard professor and psychologist, boys in this country are faced with a constrictive social definition of boyhood that is enforced within our homes and schools on a daily basis known as the 'Boy Code." Boys are told to be strong, stoic, independent, and unemotional or else risk being socially rejected. "Even when boys appear to be sad or afraid, our culture lets them know in no uncertain terms that they had better toughen up and "tough it out" by themselves." (p. 25). Unfortunately though, as Pollack contends, this process of "toughening up" our boys and showing them how to bury their feelings can have serious effects on their development into young men. They may become depressed, show symptoms of serious learning and behavioral disorders, and may even turn to violence.

Fellow psychologists Kindlon and Thompson (1999) agree with this assessment. They add that, in addition to demonstrating that they are "real boys" by meeting the

mandates of such "boy codes," young males must also demonstrate that they are nothing like girls: "Boys not only feel the pressure to appear masculine, but they feel that in doing so, they must be clearly not feminine—perhaps even antifeminine, and so they consciously and deliberately attack in others and in themselves traits that might possible be defined as feminine." (p. 79). This antifeminine posturing, coupled with rampant homophobia (i.e. the association of sexuality with gender and the use of derogatory slurs such as "gay," or "fag" to question another's masculinity), can lead to violent and aggressive behavior, the degradation of others who do not "measure up," and, as Pollack argues, possible mental health problems--all in the attempt to "prove" one's masculinity.

Another related dilemma for boys in our society according to Pollack (1998) is premature separation from their mothers. Fearful that boys will not become "tough" or be able to live up to the Boy Code if they are allowed to remain with their supposedly more nurturing and emotional mothers, Pollack argues that we push them out into the world before they are ready. This leads to a sense of disconnection from the home as well as a longing for it. Boys learn to feel ashamed of this longing and their other more "feminine" emotions and develop a "mask of masculinity" to hide their true selves from the world. But, as Pollack argues, this action has its consequences:

> When boys feel disconnected and afraid of being shamed, when they harden themselves and put on the macho mask, the one emotion they feel it's acceptable to show, and thus the only emotion they will show, is anger. That anger can come out as risk-taking behavior or, as I sometimes call it, "death-oriented bravado." The boy has such a phobia of showing his shame that he counteracts it or

> overcompensates for it, by showing the opposite—recklessness and risk-taking and even violence against himself. (p. 347)

All too often, parents and educators believe that this "mask of masculinity" is an accurate representation of who boys really are and feel as if they must cater to narrow, traditionally masculine interests in order to engage boys in learning. According to Kindlon and Thompson (1999), this would be a mistake: "Many people think that the only way to hold the interest of boys is to offer them stereotypical 'boy' entertainment and role models: tough-guy movie stars and 'iron-man' athletes… To assume that is to trivialize and underestimate the spiritual and intellectual interests of boys." (p. 243-244). In other words, if we are help boys to open up emotionally, break free from destructive behavior patterns, and shed their "mask of masculinity" we need to encourage them to express themselves through a wide range of interests.

So what kinds of strategies should we employ, as parents and educators, if we are to help boys to lead more psychologically healthy lives? How can we help boys feel connected, alleviate this sense of shame, and put an end to their destructive behaviors? Pollack offers several suggestions. In *Real Boys* (1998), he gives a "primer for parents" that includes tips such as making sure to give boys undivided attention at least once a day, encouraging them to express a broader range of emotions, seeing past their expressions of anger and aggression, avoiding the use of "shaming language" and other forms of teasing and taunting, expressing love and empathy for them openly and often, and creating a more inclusive model of masculinity.

In a more recent article, Pollack (2006) proposes a similar strategy for therapists. He argues that boys must be encouraged to become increasingly empathetic. Therapists

must model such empathy by demonstrating that they understand that boys are afraid to reveal vulnerabilities and will shy away from help if feel they are being judged or criticized. Shame is once again a vital element in this process. According to Pollack, therapists need to be aware of the amount of shame boys and young men experience in regards to their inner feelings and grant them the space to express themselves without feeling that particular emotion any further.

The next step in the process for therapists is to help boys and young men develop into more complete human beings. Pollack argues, "While maintaining appropriate boundaries, clinicians must reach out to the young men and boys under their care and, without making them admit their frailties, lend support, creating a broader sense of what it means to be a man or, for that matter, a person." (p. 194). Given the similarities between his primer for parents and his suggestions for therapists, one can assume that Pollack believes these strategies would work for professional educators as well.

While Pollack (2006) stills believes that boys are "troubled" and falling behind due to the rigidity of the "Boy Code," he also gives reasons to remain hopeful that boys can (and actually want to) change. In his research, he has found that boys are beginning to openly reject traditional models of masculinity and express their desires to remain emotionally connected with loved ones, maintain healthy relationships with family and friends, and to even have non-sexual relationships with female peers. He contends that American society is at the threshold of a "second gender revolution," one in which boys and men will join girls and women in the rejection of traditional gender roles and embrace all of their feelings and desires, not just those considered to be "masculine" (2006, p. 194-195). What Pollack is suggesting, in a sense, is a discursive revolution

where we reform existing objects of knowledge such as masculinity, redefine the concepts that help boys to understand their world, and to reorganize our theories regarding masculinity in order to reject negative forms of being male and to accept more positive, alternative masculine behaviors. In many ways, Pollack echoes the discursive contributions of Bem (1975), Jung (1968, 1983, 1988), and Bliss (1995) by arguing for a transformative form of being male that combines "masculine" and "feminine" traits and characteristics to form a more complete whole.

Kindlon and Thompson (1999) also offer a similar set of strategies that they claim will allow adults, parents and teachers alike, to assist boys emotionally. However, their list differs from Pollack in that they argue that, similar to Gurian and Sommers, many of stereotypical boy behaviors are biologically based and must be respected as such. So in addition to encouraging boys to express a full range of motions, to be empathetic, and to solve problems in non-violent ways, we must also "recognize and accept the high activity level of boys and give them safe boy places to express it" and "talk to boys in their language—in a way that honors their pride and their masculinity." (p. 241). Ways to accomplish both of these tasks, they claim, include teaching boys that there are multiple ways of being a man and by modeling "a manhood of emotional attachment." Male role models can play a large part in this process:

> Boys benefit from the presence of male teachers and authority figures as role models of academic scholarship, professional commitment, moral as well as athletic leadership, and emotional literacy. The presence of men can have a tremendously calming effect on boys. When boys feel full acceptance—when they feel that their normal developmental skills and behavior *are* normal and that

> others perceive them that way—they engage more meaningfully in the learning experience. (p. 48)

Contrary to Pollack, Kindlon and Thompson do not suggest that we revolutionize gender either socially or discursively. While they are not necessarily opposed to a reconsideration of masculinity or to the implementation of alternative concepts and strategies regarding boyhood and "male role models," they are also not ready to abandon dominant ideals concerning masculinity either.

"Hard-wired" differences. Sommers (2000) and Gurian (1997, 2001, 2003) take a different discursive approach compared to Pollack, Kindlon, and Thompson in that they are not trained as psychologists or therapists. They also apply a different set of concepts and strategies to what they perceive to be a "crisis" of masculinity, as influenced by their subject positions as "common sense" oriented, conservative educational critics. They claim that there is nothing wrong with masculinity—instead, parents and educators have been misled by feminist scholars and even psychologists like Pollack and have forgotten the value in traditional understandings of boyhood and masculinity. Typically, those who support this perspective agree on three major themes: girls of today are succeeding at the expense of the boys, biological differences dictate the behaviors of males and females, and that recuperative strategies are needed in order to recover what has been lost.

Referencing a 1998 study by the U.S. Department of Education, Sommers (2000) points out that in the twelve year period between 1984 and 1996, the number of girls who took the high school Advanced Placement (AP) test rose at a faster rate than that of boys. In 1984, the numbers between the sexes were virtually even. But in 1996, 144 12th grade girls per 1000 took the test compared to 117 per 1000 boys. "Girls read more books. They

outperform males on tests of artistic and musical ability" Sommers explains. "Conversely, more boys than girls are suspended from school. More are held back and more drop out. Boys are three times as likely as girls to be enrolled in special education programs and four times as likely to be diagnosed with attention deficit/ hyperactive disorder (ADHD)" (p. 25, 26). While the causes of such trends remain unclear to many, Sommers, Gurian, and others tend to agree that we need to look no further than feminist inspired teachers and policy makers who teach in ways that favor girls' styles of learning and fund programs for the betterment of girls while neglecting the gender-specific needs of boys.

Sommers (2000) and Gurian (1997, 1999, 2001) contend that biological differences dictate the behaviors of children and that boys and girls necessarily need to be treated differently in response. The authors agree that feminism, in its attempt to level the playing field for girls, actually created a school culture that was distinctly anti-boy. They argue that boys are discouraged and punished for just "being boys" while the "natural" attributes of girls are artificially elevated and made to be the standard by which all were to judged. In the process, the academic achievements of boys have dwindled and their rate of deviant (and often times violent) behaviors has increased.

The solution to this problem, they argue, is to create schools that meet boys' distinct needs and help them in recouping their own "innate" masculinity. In *The War Against Boys*, Sommers (2000) dedicates a chapter to describing boys' schools in Great Britain that acknowledge the "natural" tendencies of boys and educate them in a very gender-specific manner. She explains that boys need strict discipline, competition, and outlets for their hormonally charged desire for physical play. She argues that the gender-

segregated schools in question excel at providing for the needs of boys and young men while the great majority of schools in the U.S. do not. Based on his review of research on the differences between the male and female brain, Gurian makes a similar argument. As the title of his 2001 book makes abundantly clear, Gurian also believes that *Boys and Girls Learn Differently!* While he doesn't specifically call for gender-segregated schooling as Sommers does, he does insist that educators must be aware of the "hard-wired" differences in the brain of boys and girls and teach to them in ways that meet their particular needs. A major part of this solution is the recruitment of more male teachers who, by virtue of their sex, have a "natural" connection to and understanding of boys and young men. Citing one British school in particular as an exemplar, Sommers (2000) writes:

> In 1996, Ray Bradbury, the head teacher of King's School in Wincester, was alarmed by the high failure rate of his male students… Bradbury identified thirty or so boys he thought to be at risk for failure and placed them together in a class. He chose an athletic young male teacher he thought the boys would find easy to like. The class was not "child-centered." The pedagogy was strict and old fashioned. (p. 162)

From the perspective of Sommers and Gurian, such teaching styles are more appropriate and more effective for boys and, for Sommers especially, having male teachers leading the classroom is a key element.

Critical masculinities. Opposing the previous position on boys, masculinity, and male role models are critical gender scholars, such as R.W. Connell (1995, 2000, 2002)

Michael Kimmel (2004; Kimmel & Mahler, 2003), who insist that there is nothing innate or hardwired about this thing we call masculinity. Also speaking from privileged subject positions (at the time these works were published, both authors were white male academics), both authors contend that masculinity is a hegemonic social construction, one that establishes a specific set of attributes as the norm or standard by which all in that particular culture are judged. Contrary to the work of Gurian (1997, 2001, 2003), Sommers (2000), and (at times) Pollack (1998) and Kindlon and Thompson (1999), the discursive concepts and strategies Connell and Kimmel employ and/or engage in are non-essentailist and, for the most part, in line with the Foucualdian understanding of the production of knowledge and power through discourse (1984, 1990, 1995). In general, these scholars tend to agree on four major points: biological determinism is false, boys and men do suffer yet are not oppressed as a result of normative definitions of masculinity, boys and men are complicit in the hegemony in that they gain from the patriarchal dividend, and that issues of power in regards to race, class, and sexual identity must always be addressed (Connell, 1995, 2000, 2002; Kimmel, 2004; Kimmel and Mahler, 2003).

From this perspective, biological differences between males and females do not determine differences in behaviors or aptitudes. Both Connell and Kimmel make cases against biological determinism by demonstrating that there are more genetic and biological differences among men and women then there is between men and women. As Kimmel (2004)argues,

> (T)here is little evidence that boys' aggression is biologically based. Rather, we understand that the negative consequences of boys' aggression are largely the

> social byproduct of exaggerating otherwise healthy and pleasurable boisterous and rambunctious play. And it is exaggerated by boys so that they may better fit in with other boys; they over conform to the expectations of their peers. Instead of uncritically celebrating "boy culture," we might inquire instead into the experience when boys cease being boys themselves, and begin to posture and parade their masculinity before the evaluating eyes of other boys. (p. 169)

What may have begun as "healthy" and "boisterous" play, according to Kimmel, has been altered by the process of socialization into a performance of masculinity. As Butler (1991) would stress, being a boy or a girl is something young males and females "do" rather than something that they "naturally" are; those things that are considered "natural" or "normal" within the discourse of "common sense" are nothing more than social performances of gendered identities. It is imperative then to understand the social process and to make it visible. Taking male behaviors for granted or simply passing them off as natural denies the impact of the social world and the structures of power based on male privilege.

This leads to the second point—many men and boys do suffer as a result of hegemonic masculinity yet are not oppressed because of it. Hegemonic masculinity is achieved when one form of masculinity is valued over all others and becomes the ideal, the standard, by which all other ways of being male are judged. According to Foucault (1984), normative standards such as hegemonic masculinity serve the power structure not because the great majority of men conform to the standard, but precisely because most do not:

> The whole infinite domain of nonconforming is punishable: the soldier commits

> an "offense" whenever he does not reach the level required; a pupil's "offense" is not only a minor infraction, but also an inability to carry out his tasks... The perpetual penalty that traverses all points and supervises every instant in the disciplinary institutions compares, differentiates heirarchizes, homogenizes, excludes. In short, it *normalizes.* (p. 194-5)

By not conforming to the standards of "natural" masculinity (i.e. a boy who doesn't meet the "boys will be boys" norm of aggressive, rough and tumble play or a man who prefers to be intimate with members of his own sex rather than members of the opposite sex), boys and men are consequently punished, ranked, and placed appropriately on a hierarchical scale. The visibility of what constitutes nonconforming (unnatural acts, habits, mannerisms) and the invisibility of the standard itself ("natural" and "hardwired", unquestioned, taken for granted) serve to normalize hegemonic masculinity despite the fact that most males can never actually live up to it.

This process causes a great deal of suffering among boys and men, both physically and emotionally, as they attempt to attain the unattainable. Whether its the adolescent “proving” himself by participating in high risk behaviors, the teenager taking drugs, engaging in promiscuous sex, and driving recklessly to show his peers that he's "a man", or the middle aged man ceaselessly dwelling on his athletic or financial failures, men are certainly punished (and punish themselves) in this country for not conforming to the norm. Yet, as Chris McLean argues:

> (I)t is meaningless to argue that men are oppressed on the grounds of gender... it is perfectly legitimate to argue that men *suffer* as a result of conforming to gender stereotypes, as long as it is also recognized that this suffering contributes to the

> maintenance of systems that actually oppress others. (McLean as cited in Mills,2001, p. 58)

Men cannot be oppressed on the basis of gender in a patriarchal society such as ours simply because they benefit in some way or another from the oppression of others, namely women. This is the third major point of the "masculinities" perspective. While men and boys may suffer because of the hegemony, they are complicit in it as well because they are by definition placed above all women by virtue of their reproductive anatomy.

And the fourth major argument made by these scholars is that that issues of power in regards to race, class, and sexual identity must always be addressed. Generalizing statements such as "all boys do this" or "all boys feel this" help to establish normalizing standards by which boys in general are then judged. All too often, such standards have racialized, class-based, heterosexist assumptions and have served to not only exclude a wide range of individuals but also to remind them of their "natural" status as "less than" while reaffirming the “superior” position of white, middle-class heterosexual men. Pollack (1999), Kindlon and Thompson (1999), Sommers (2000), and Gurian (1997, 1999, 2001) have all been critiqued in recent gender scholarship for their scant mention of these highly charged identities as well as their related insinuations that their conclusions apply to all men and boys, not just some men and boys. By using the term masculinities instead of masculinity, Connell, Kimmel, and others discursively reject any singular version of what it means to be a man and seek to acknowledge the plurality of male identities.

Concerning the notion of male teachers serving as role models, several recent critical studies have been conducted regarding this popular belief and assess the necessity of same-sex teachers for boys. Ashley (2003) questions the notion that schools have become "feminized" and questions the effectiveness of bringing in more male teachers in order to change the behavior of boys. He first notes that, if too many female teachers and too few male teachers is the problem, then why is this "boy crisis" such a recent phenomenon considering the fact that females have overwhelmingly been the teachers of both sexes for over a century. He then questions the emphasis placed on adults serving as role models when his research has found that it is not even the most critical influence in shaping boys' perspectives or behaviors: "If there are problem with boys' gender identity, or boys' attitudes towards women and gay men, the first area that needs to be tackled is not teacher recruitment, but the lack of appreciation of how important the boys' peer group is from the earliest years of primary school upward." (p. 267). If hegemonic masculinity is to be disrupted, male teachers who are committed to gender equality are helpful, but not as helpful as addressing the primary source of much of boys' thoughts about gender.

Skelton (2002) also questions the notion that schools have been feminized and the demand for more male teachers at the primary level. Her first criticism is that many of those who call for such a move base their conclusions on the outdated concept of "sex-roles." She argues that claims made by "boy crisis" authors concerning schools that are predominantly staffed by female teachers being "feminized" and the related implication that females can only act in stereotypically "feminine" ways and that men can only act in stereotypically "masculine" ways reveal underlying (and erroneous) assumptions about

the sexes and their capability (or lack thereof) to transcend sex-specific roles. She also stresses that such simplistic thinking actually distracts people from realizing that schools have actually remained structurally "masculine"—increasingly hierarchical management structures, an emphasis on testing and assessment—in spite of the sex of the teaching staff (p. 92).

Martino and Kehler (2006) take the critique a step further when they question the political motivation of this revised focus of the supposed feminization of schools and the insistence on more male teachers. They claim that this renewed focus on boys in schools is merely a backlash against feminism fueled by the "New Right." Recent social changes, including the advancement of women and the acceptance of male subjectivities, threaten the conservative worldview and have inspired the "commitment to the remasculization of schooling and the re-traditionalizing of hegemonic masculinities." (p. 123). They also argue that the proliferation of media reports on this topic highlight the societal need to address complex subjects such as gender, sexuality, and schooling in non-simplistic ways as well as the media's role in disseminating certain sorts of discourses (and thus validating particular "truth claims") over all others. What they suggest as a possible solution is the development of a structure "built around interrogating gender regimes in students' and teachers' lives" (p. 124), where simplistic stereotypes are avoided, hegemonic masculinity (and associated attitudes concerning race, class, and sexuality) and the positioning of "men as victims" are disrupted, and essentialist ideals about masculinity and femininity are exposed. They do not dispute the belief that the recruitment of more male teachers would benefit the lives of students, but they strongly disagree it is the answer to the problems that plague schools today. A better

solution, they claim, is to follow hooks' (1994) vision of the classroom as a "locations of possibility" where students and teachers alike can learn to "move beyond boundaries, to transgress." (p. 124)

Conclusion

At the beginning of this chapter, I asked several questions regarding masculinity and the related notion of the male role model. Through an archaeological examination of four discursive fields related to these topics including sociology and psychology (*savior*) as well as history, mythology, and more contemporary discourse (*connaissance*), I attempted to shed light on these questions by analyzing the discursive formation of objects, enunciative modalities, concepts, and strategies (Foucault, 1972). As I conclude this chapter, I now return to these questions and clarify the implications for this study that have arisen as a result.

The first question I asked concerning masculinity, as an object of knowledge, and "male role models," as a supporting concept, was *what are the implicit and explicit cultural and/or social norms that shape and are shaped by our understanding of what an ideal "model" should be and what does such a "shaping" process reveal?* It has become clear, as evidenced by statements made in the early historical discursive field (Barnett & Rivers, 2006; Benyon, 2002; Blount, 2005; Lesko, 2001; Smith & Vaughn, 2000) the sociological/psychological field (Bandura, 1963, 1986; Bandura & Bussey, 1999; Bem, 1975, 1981; Erikson, 1950, 1959, 1963; Freud, 1938, 1962, 1969, 1975; Hall, 1904, 1923; Kohlberg, 1966; Merton, 1956, 1968, 1973, 1976; Parsons, 1956), the mythological field (Bly, 1990; Bliss, 1995; Campbell, 1954, 1972, 1988; Jung, 1968, 1998; Keen,

1991; Moore, 1990) and by the popular psychology contributions (Gurian, 1997, 2001, 2003; Kindlon & Thompson, 1999; Pollack, 1998; Sommers, 2000) to the contemporary discourse that the dominant implicit and explicit normative understandings and expectations of a "proper" male role model include stereotypical "masculine" traits and "sex-role" appropriate behaviors such as athleticism, physicality, emotional control, and a clear separation from those things deemed to be "feminine." It is also clear that, from the primarily white, middle-to upper-class, heterosexual male positions of the various authors and speaking subjects and the insistence that these "models" are universal, that the dominant understanding of such "male role models" are highly reflective of white, middle-to upper-class, heterosexist, male supremacist values and beliefs despite the fact that they are strategically framed as "normal" or "natural." What this reveals is the interplay between formal knowledge (*les connaissances*) and the more generalized, popular discourses (*savior*). Using the discipline of psychiatry as an example, Foucault (1972) explains such an interplay:

> What made it [psychiatry] possible at the time it appeared, what brought about this great change in the economy of concepts, analyses, and demonstrations, was a whole set of relations between hospitalization, internment, the conditions and procedures of social exclusion, the rule of jurisprudence, the norms of industrial labour and bourgeois morality, in short a whole group of relations that characterized for this discursive practice the formation of its statements. (p. 179)

From Foucault's example as well as the discursive fields described in this chapter, it is evident that scientific statements do not arise objectively nor continuously from disciplines based purely on reason and rationality. Social conditions and beliefs—which

are themselves irrational, marked by discursive ruptures, and at times contradictory—influence and are influenced by the statements that are made in such disciplines. For instance, in the first half of the 20th century, innate psychological differences between males and females were assumed in both the historical literature (Barnett & Rivers, 2006; Benyon, 2002; Blount, 2005; Lesko, 2001; Smith & Vaughn, 2000) and from the formal disciplines (Freud, 1938, 1962, 1969, 1975; Hall, 1904, 1923). By the 1960s and 1970s, the socially constructed nature of masculinity and femininity were beginning to be revealed and more widely accepted (Bandura, 1963, 1986; Bem, 1975, 1981; Kohlberg, 1966). However, by the 1990s to the present day, a popular backlash against feminist thought has grown and has worked its way into psychological discourse (Gurian, 1997, 2001, 2003; Kindlon & Thompson, 1999) and now uneasily coexists with other, contradictory discourses within the discipline (Bandura & Bussey, 1999; Pollack, 1998).

The second question I asked is *does a mentor necessarily need to be the same sex as his or her student in order to be a good "model?"* The answer, according to the dominant discourse in all discursive fields, is an overwhelming yes. From the early fears of the "woman peril" (Smith & Vaughn, 2000) to the "boy crisis" (Gurian, 1997, 2001, 2003; Sommers, 2000), the belief that female teachers have a negative, "effeminizing" effect on their male students has been very explicit. Psychologists such as Hall (1904, 1923) and Freud (1938, 1962, 1969, 1975) also expressed beliefs that the presence of women (and the absence of men) in the lives of boys and young men could disrupt their "normal" development and possibly lead to homosexuality. Parsons (1956) touted the positive functions and static nature of existing sex roles for society and Merton (1956,

1968, 1973, 1976) and Erikson (1950, 1959, 1963) argued that individuals who successfully meet such roles serve as "models" for other to emulate.

Although a number of more contemporary scholars dispute these arguments and dismiss them as either overly simplistic (Bandura, 1963, 1986; Bandura & Bussey, 1999; Bem, 1975, 1981; Kohlberg, 1966) or as indicative of the patriarchal and hegemonically masculine structure of western societies (Connell, 1995, 2000, 2002; Kimmel, 2004), the fact that such perspectives continue to reach (and appeal to) popular audiences by way of best-selling books (Gurian, 1997, 2001, 2003; Kindlon & Thompson, 1999; Pollack, 1998; Sommers, 2000) speaks volumes about the perceived necessity for adult males to serve as "role models" for boys and young men and the effectiveness of concepts and strategies that serve to make dominant ideals and practices appear to be "common sense." Again, what this question and its answer reveal is interplay between *connaissance* and *savior*, formal and more popular knowledges. In other words, the connection between ideology and science. If masculinity is as "innate" and "hardwired" as some claim, then why would a same-sex mentor be so necessary? How is it that formalized statements regarding the universal nature of masculinity and boyhood exist alongside other formalized statements (sometimes by the same author) that claim that such "innate" masculine characteristics can be thwarted by the undue influence of women? As Foucault (1972) might argue, a society such as ours is made by and for those who dominate it and "bears the mark of its origins even in its concepts and logical architecture" (p. 185). What this means is that it serves the interests of those in power, i.e. white, middle-to-upper class, heterosexual men, that their beliefs and values are disseminated to younger generations by way of male mentors or role models. What it also

means is that such a social process must necessarily be made invisible by pronouncing masculinity to be biologically based and therefore "normal" and "natural."

And finally, I asked *is the concept of a "model" appropriate or helpful in the first place, especially when the increasingly diverse student population of American schools (social, cultural, racial, linguistic, etc.) and the continued homogeneity of American teachers (primarily white, monolingual, and middle-class) are considered?* This question is the most difficult to answer given the dominant, universalizing statements made in each literary strand. By not mentioning or acknowledging differences that exist among men and boys (or by portraying those who are different as deviant or abnormal), issues of race, class, culture, and sexuality are marginalized and silenced. When masculinity, as an object of knowledge, is defined by individuals from particular, privileged enunciative modalities (white, middle-to-upper class, male academics more often than not) as monolithic or universal, all other discourses about masculinity become suspect. The concepts and strategies that in actuality apply to very few are used to define all (Connell, 1995, 1997, 2001). But by excluding the diverse array of masculinities that exist, the dominant discourse says as much about those discourses that are silenced as it does about those who are in power. As Foucault (1972) explains, "the manifest discourse, therefore, is really no more than the repressive presence of what it does not say; and this 'not-said' is a hollow that undermines from within all that is said" (p. 25).

From a more critical perspective, the "model" of masculinity described in the dominant discourse is not appropriate nor helpful precisely because it does not acknowledge the social differences that exist between males and females. The dominant "model" is also faulty because it fails to recognize the differences that exist among men

and boys (Kimmel, 2004). If one is to "model" masculinity for male students, a more appropriate approach, some argue, would include a recognition of the privileges that men enjoy in our patriarchal society (Bliss, 1995; Bly, 1995; Connell, 1995, 2000, 2002; Kimmel, 2004; Moore, 1990), an acknowledgement of and an inclusive approach to the differences among males, a willingness to demonstrate that there are a number of positive ways to be and become a man (Pollack, 1998), and the utilization of alternative discourses that allow for the disruption of the masculine/feminine dichotomy and that provides students the tools to transgress gender boundaries (Martino & Kehler, 2006).

In the next chapter, I remain mindful of these conclusions as I apply several of Foucault's genealogical concepts (1984, 1990, 1995) to popular written news media on masculinity, the "boy crisis" in the United States, and notion of male teachers serving as "role models" for boys and young men. In my examination of the data, I am cognizant of the historical, sociological/psychological, mythological, and contemporary dominant discourse that constitute (and are constituted by) the discourses under scrutiny. I also broaden my analysis by elucidating how such discourses utilize knowledge to construct, reconstruct, and support existing systems of power (i.e."regimes of truth") and how students and teachers alike can use discourse to problematize and resist power structures.

Chapter 4

Politics of Truth: Scrutinizing Popular Written News Media Discourse Concerning the “Boy Crisis” and Male Teachers as Role Models

I used to get mad at my school
The teachers who taught me weren't cool
You're holding me down, turning me round
Filling me up with your rules
Me used to be a angry young man
Me hiding me head in the sand
You gave me the word, I finally heard
I'm doing the best that I can

—The Beatles, *Getting Better*

From the brief analysis of historical, sociological, psychological, and mythological discursive fields regarding the formation of masculinity provided in the previous chapter, it is evident that dominant notions of boyhood, manhood, and "male role models" have shifted and changed non-teleologically over the past century. It is also clear that these dominant beliefs constitute and are constituted by several overlapping and interrelated discursive fields but are consistently contested by alternative discourses nonetheless. Yet, despite this discontinuity and the presence of alternative perspectives, there somehow remains a sense of unity or unquestioned "truth" within the discourse itself. Regardless of the multitude of discursive fields, the differing historical periods, and the range of academic disciplines described, the assumed and/or taken-for-granted connection between the male of the human species and "masculinity" as an object of knowledge remains constant. How is this possible? Foucault (1972) explains: "if there really is a unity, it does not lie in the visible, horizontal coherence of the elements formed; it resides, well anterior to their formation, in the system that makes possible and governs that formation." (p. 72). In other words, discursive formations are governed, produced, and distributed systematically by certain rules of discourse or "truth

production" that operate outside of human consciousness. While alternative discourses or "truths" certainly exist outside of the dominant or accepted discourse, they too are constrained by said rules and are thus limited in what they can say and how they say it.

When this system of discourse connects to, produces, and supports apparatuses of power, we have what Foucault refers to as "regimes of truth." To understand this process more clearly, I now turn to Foucault's genealogical methodologies (1984, 1990, 1995) as I apply this understanding about the discourse of masculinity and its related concepts and theories to the popular contemporary discussion on boys, schools, and male teachers as role models. In this chapter, I examine data collected from leading popular written news media sources published over the last ten years in order to reveal the construction of masculinity through institutional practices and to demystify how discourse is utilized as a tool to maintain and regulate existing power relations. I also analyze how unjust systems of power can be discursively resisted as I put Foucault's concepts of "reverse discourse" and "tactical polyvalence" to work.

For this particular facet of the study, data were collected from several best-selling popular newspapers and magazines from all regions of the United States from 1997 to 2007. These sources were selected on the basis of their positions in the top twenty-five newspapers and magazines in the United States based on total circulation (Audit Bureau of Circulation, 2004, 2005) as well as their geographical locations. They include newspapers such as *The New York Times* (representing the Northeast), *The Washington Post* (the Southeast), *The Chicago-Sun Times* (the Midwest), *The Seattle Times*/*Post-Intelligencer* (the West), and the *USA Today* (national) as well as leading national news magazines, *Time, Newsweek, US News and World report*, and the *New Yorker*. The

sources were located and explored via Lexis Nexis using “boy crisis” and “male role model” as key search terms or phrases. From the initial search, 77 articles were deemed to be relevant to this study. After each article was read, an additional “snowball sampling” search resulted in 41 additional articles based on individuals frequently referenced in the first set of data. New search headings included oft-cited authors and journalists David Brooks, William Raspberry, Christina Hoff Sommers, Michael Gurian, William Pollack, and Judith Kleinfeld.

Based on data from all combined sources, several prominent themes were identified centering on the topics of the “boy crisis” in American schools, the popular beliefs concerning male teachers as role models for boys and young men, and the ongoing formation and reformation of masculinity through discourse. In what follows, I examine each theme in detail through a Foucauldian genealogical lens (i.e. focusing on the role knowledge production plays in the maintenance and/or reconstruction of existing power relations), providing samples of actual discourse whenever appropriate. Towards the end of the chapter, I shift my emphasis from the description and analysis of the specific data to a broader and more holistic discursive interrogation of “truth” production as I directly apply concepts derived from Foucauldian genealogy to the intertwined discourses of masculinity, schools, and “male role models” as reflected in the data. The intent of this shift is to not only unveil larger “regimes of truth” that operate within (and outside of) the discursive field of popular written news media but also to reveal the ways in which patriarchal power relations and hegemonic masculinity can be problematized and disrupted.

The first theme of this initial analysis addresses the so-called "gender gap" in America's schools, namely the widely reported phenomenon of boys falling behind girls both academically and socially in all levels of education, and the "science" of measurement that support such claims. Numerous statistics, tests, and other forms of educational and psychological measurement are alluded to in the literature and serve as "evidence" that boys, as a collective group, are in trouble. It is argued by many that boys, regardless of race or class, are struggling to keep up with girls both in school and in life and that something needs to be done for them.

The second and largest theme centers on the Foucauldian technology of power known as "normalizing judgment" (1984) in relation to the dominant popular discourse concerning the perceived causes and suggested solutions to this "gender gap." The majority of the articles collected for this study propose that schools are failing boys because they are "girl-friendly" and fail to recognize innate differences between boys and girls-- differences many authors say have direct impacts on boys' academic interests, behaviors, and performances. It is also argued that schools need to become more "boy-friendly" and adapt to boys' gender-specific needs, interests and abilities. For some, this means a return to single-sex education. For others, this means more male teachers in schools to serve as role models. Those who share this perspective share normalized assumptions about what masculinity is and is not. Many cite the lack of male teachers in schools and claim there is a correlation between this statistical fact and the struggles of male students. Some argue that male teachers "naturally" understand male learning styles and serve as better mentors for boys and young men. Others point out that the lack of male role models leads to male academic failure and violence.

The third theme also focuses on normalizing judgment but this time in relation to the role of race and class in the discourse of the "boy crisis" and/or "gender gap." While many claim that all boys are struggling, others argue that middle-to-upper class white boys are actually making positive academic progress compared to their lower SES and minority counterparts. Despite the fact that white, middle class boys seem to receive most of the headlines and grace the covers of numerous books and magazines, these individuals contend that it is poor white and minority students who are really in crisis.

The final (and least publicized) discursive theme found in the popular written media echoes critical gender scholarship and is referred to as "marginalized discourses." In the handful of articles collected for this study that argue for this perspective, studies that "prove" innate differences between the sexes are questioned, effective pedagogical methods are framed as gender-neutral, and hegemonic masculinity is positioned as the real "crisis."

The Gender Gap: The Technologies of Measurement and Differentiation

Over the last ten years, journalists, pundits, educators, and parents from around the country have expressed their concern over recent studies that show that males, as a collective group, are now performing more poorly than females in school, from elementary school to high school, and on through college. Many note that boys' scores on reading test have declined and that reading and writing are now perceived by boys to be "feminine" activities. Others point out that male participation in Advanced Placement (AP) classes have spiraled downward as have their grades compared to girls. And several have commented that these academic failures have led to other problems such as

disciplinary issues in school and confidence and success outside of the classroom. The disparities between the sexes have become so pronounced that the idea that schools and colleges weigh their enrollment to favor boys has been suggested on a number of occasions. Others have commented, contrary to earlier studies that show that girls are being "shortchanged" academically (AAUW, 1995; Sadker and Sadker, 1994), that it is now boys who are oppressed in schools. As *US News and World Report* columnist John Leo (1999) explains, "The truth is that our schools have many flaws, but the oppression of females isn't one of them. The educational status of boys, not girls, is the real problem."

As discussed in the previous chapter, according to Foucault (1984) there exist certain rules of discourse that determine which types of discourse are acceptable at any given point in time and deemed to be "scientific" and which discourses are pushed to the margins. As he explains,

> It is a question of what *governs* statements, and the way in which they *govern* each other so as to constitute a set of propositions which are scientifically acceptable, and hence capable of being verified or falsified by scientific procedures. In short, there is a problem of the regime, the politics of the scientific statement. (p. 54)

In this case, the science in question is that of educational and psychological measurement, otherwise known as psychometrics. As the supposed bearers of the "objective" truth, scientists and researchers utilize certain technologies of measurement and differentiation (i.e. the examination) to provide evidence that support claims that boys are falling behind girls in school. But as Foucault suggests, we must look deeper

into such evidence to discover the politics and power that are behind such scientific statements.

For example, it has been widely reported that the academic grades of boys in all areas of the United States have declined as have their performance of standardized tests. A recent article in the *USA Today* ("Pay closer attention: boys are struggling academically," 2004), a study by the U.S. Department of Education shows that girls tend to be more successful in high school and are more likely to attend college regardless of societal factors, both in this country and abroad. This conclusion is supported by the work of researcher Thomas Mortensen, whose oft-cited study on gender and college enrollment yielded similar results (Argetsinger 1999; Brooks, 2005; Fonda 2000; Vihn 2002; Marklein 2005; Easton 2007) and a more recent study by the National Endowment for the Arts that shows that the gender gap in reading has widened (Bauerlein & Stotsky 2007). Recent reports in the *Chicago Sun-Times* (Leving & Sacks 2006; Rossi 2006) detail a Chicago Board of Education study that shows that girls are being accepted into select college prep high schools at a 63/37 rate over boys. An earlier, independent study by the same newspaper revealed similar results on the academic performance of boys compared to girls across the state ("Boys, not girls, on the worse end of the education gap," 2003). In this study, the *Chicago Sun-Times* analyzed Illinois school test scores and found that boys are lagging behind girls, especially in reading and writing. The gender gap at that time still favored males in math and science, but according to the paper, several experts agree that that gap is rapidly closing. *Chicago Sun-Times* writer Rick Telander (2006) laments these recent developments and connects these school failures to failures in life for males. He argues that boys are failing and being failed inside and outside of school.

They have lower test scores and higher rates of incarceration. Once dominant in school and in society, boys and men have been surpassed: "Women, once oppressed by societal rules, have flown to the top of the heap in a mere generation."

What these articles demonstrate is that superior performance on such academic measures is equated with social and economic power, domains once reserved almost exclusively for men. In the studies cited are to be believed, females—commonly understood as the "weaker sex"—are now performing better than males on such measures and confound dominant notions of male superiority. This challenge to popular belief is viewed by many to be a "crisis" and steps are being taken to provide males with equal opportunities such as gender-weighting admission to prestigious preparatory schools to favor boys (Rossi, 2006) and institutionally-mandated "boy training" for teachers ("Girls get extra school help while boys get Ritalin," 2003). These anxieties about boys' reported academic position behind girls and the apparent push to return them back to the top of the school hierarchy are revealing in that they show both the "truths" produced by such tests (and the excessive merit such "truths" receive) and the underlying assumption that boys *should* be doing better than girls.

As indicated, K-12 schools are not the only places where females supposedly have a statistical advantage over males, though. Several of the newspaper and magazine articles collected for this study posit that males have also fallen behind females in their rates of college enrollment. The work of policy analyst Thomas Mortensen is especially relevant in this regard. Mortensen has found that the percentage of males on college campuses around the world have dropped, regardless of race or income level (Argetsinger 1999; Brooks, 2005; Fonda 2000; Vihn 2002; Marklein 2005; Easton 2007). Mortensen

notes that this change in the gender balance at the university level can have dire consequences on society. As Argetsinger (1999) reports, "He indicated that the declining presence of men on increasingly female-dominated campuses may indicate greater changes, from the loss of male role models for boys to worldwide changes in the marketplace."

Clearly, Mortensen's concerns are shared by others. In an article by *New York Times* columnist Judith Warner (2006), the author cites an American Council on Education report that claims that the gender gap on American college campuses is widening. In a *Washington Post* article, writer Judy Jolley Mohraz (2000) notes that a study done by the U.S. Department of Education found that the proportion of bachelor's degrees awarded to men has dropped from 51% in 1980 to 44.9% in 1996. This decline, the writer claims, applies to men of every race. And a recent *New York Times* article (Lewin, 2006) reports that, according to a number of different studies, men socialize more and study less in college, get lower grades, and are less likely to earn a bachelor's degree. Women, on the other hand, earn the majority of honor's degrees. According to this author, men make up only 42 percent of college students. Based on this data, the author alleges that sex discrimination is fading and job opportunities for women are increasing.

Spurred on by such "gender gap" studies and commentaries, many colleges and universities, mainly private schools, are beginning to take action in order to balance their gender demographics. According to Lewin (2006), Pennsylvania's Dickinson College is actively trying to recruit more male students. In Washington state, several local colleges are trying to recruit more men, some by emphasizing traditionally male dominated fields

such as engineering and athletics in their marketing (Vihn, 2002). As Vihn reports, the student body at Seattle Pacific University is two-thirds female. Private schools such as Gonzaga and Whitman have similar imbalances and are now trying to accept more men in the name of "equity." Fellow private schools Whitworth and Seattle University have made the recruitment of men a priority. The issue has become so noteworthy that the University of Washington president mentioned the gender gap in a recent commencement speech. However, as Vihn notes, recruiting that favors men is problematic for a public university such as the University of Washington due to federal Title IX provisions. This has led at least one author, Christina Hoff Sommers (2006), to refer to title IX as an "academic weapon" that, instead of providing for true gender equality in American universities, is now biased against college-age males.

Building off of and elaborating upon the psychometric evidence that shows that boys are falling behind girls in terms of academic grades and standardized tests, the above reports attempt to show how such measures "prove" that males do not have equal opportunities in America's public schools and that this unfairly advantages females. They also point out that, because of lower rates of college attendance for males, sexism no longer exists (Lewin, 2006), the "male identity" is at risk (Gurian, 2005), as is the global marketplace (Argetsinger, 1999). In addition, federal law such as Title IX prohibits publicly funded universities from "correcting" such problems which lead some to conclude that the dominant culture now discriminates against males (Sommers, 2006). If these articles are any indication, it is clear that many feel that the "truth" of male superiority is under attack and must be defended and, if necessary, re-created. Ironically, it is one of the technologies of power—the examination—that demonstrates that males

have fallen behind and has directly led to their "inferior" academic standing. However, instead of questioning the technology, those cited in the above examples question the examiners, i.e. teachers, administrators, and policy makers.

In an effort to uncover the objective "truth" about males and females in America's schools, researchers, columnists, and educators alike turn to the "science" of educational and psychological measurement. It is this "science" that has led them to conclude that not only are girls succeeding, they are doing so at the expense of boys. But this perspective fails to take power into account and how existing power apparatuses influence and/or color our assumptions about who boys and girls are and what they should (and should not) be able to accomplish and how scientific discourses operate in support of these assumptions. As Foucault (1984) argues, "Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned" (p. 73). Utilizing scientific and statistical discourse to validate their positions, the individuals who argue that there is indeed a "gender gap" are making unequivocal "truth" claims about the diminishing status of males in schools and the subsequent ascendancy of females. What they fail to acknowledge are their own assumptions about gender (i.e. boys should be performing academically better than girls, men belong at the top of the social and economic hierarchy), how those assumptions influence how the scientific discourse is conducted, understood, and prioritized, and how both the assumptions and scientific discourse serve to construct and reconstruct existing patriarchal power relations.

Normalizing Judgment: Gendered Expectations and Solutions

For Foucault (1984), the examination is just one of many technologies of power that operate to create and recreate unjust social practices and to regulate bodies through discourse. Another form of this kind of "bio-power" is normalizing judgment. Through various "scientific" examinations, people are scrutinized, measured, and differentiated thus allowing certain states of normality and abnormality to be determined (states that usually reflect the beliefs and values of those in power.) I argue that it is this process of normalization and the popular judgments and assumptions based on these norms that underpin the dominant discourse of the "boy crisis." In this section, I specifically address the gender norms revealed in the popular written news media discourse. In the subsequent section, I similarly discuss norms based on race and class.

If boys are indeed doing poorly in all levels of schooling compared to girls and are attending college at a much lower rate as the above articles indicate, what exactly is the cause? According to the bulk of the data examined, which I will refer to as the dominant popular discourse, the answer is threefold. First of all, from this perspective, the current educational system in our country is, as Michael Gurian describes, "girl-friendly." That is, the primarily female teaching force caters to the needs, talents, learning style, and behavior patterns of female students while ignoring and sometimes punishing the needs, talents, learning style, and behavior patterns of males. For the most part, schools and their teachers fail to understand the innate differences between males and females and subsequently treat boys as if they were "defective girls" (Tyre, 2006).

Second, schools need to not only come to understand the "hard-wired" differences between males and females but must learn to teach in a ways that are considered "boy-

friendly." According to this view, boys need the freedom to "be boys" and should not be held to feminine standards of behavior. They also need firm discipline that civilizes them instead of feminizing them (Hart, 2000). Boys need teachers who know to use materials that match their interests such as war poetry and novels written from the male perspective and who understand how to teach to the "male style" of learning (Thompson, 2007). For a number of individuals, this strongly suggests that boys need to be placed in single-sex schools ideally led by male teachers (Tyre, 2005).

The third cause of this supposed "gender gap," (and most salient for the purposes of this study) is the lack of male role models in the lives of boys and young men, namely role models in the guise of male teachers. Clearly, the call for more male teachers and mentors for boys and young men is closely related to the first two causes. It is often argued that because most teachers, especially in the primary grades, are female, school culture has become distinctly "girl-friendly" and very "anti-male." Women do not have the innate understanding of who boys are and therefore cannot quite understand why boys do what they do and how they learn. Male teachers, on the other hand, supposedly "get" their male students and "know" what they need.(Leving & Sacks, 2006; Marklein, "2005). They are often perceived to be more stern disciplinarians (Helderman, 2002) but can also serve as models for a more civilized, gentlemanly style of masculinity that loves to read and learn (Sscieszka, 2002) and knows how to productively "channel male energy" (Peterson, 1998). As many of the selected articles contend, the lack of male role models in the lives of boys and young men equates to a strong possibility of male failure, both in school and in life (Raspberry, 2005).

"Girl-Friendly" Schools: Normalized Femininity

According to the dominant discourse, boys are not doing well in school because of the increasingly "feminine" traits associated with academic success. In some cases, male failure occurs because their gender-specific aptitudes and abilities are not being met. With the prominent placement of such an argument within the written news media discourse, dominant beliefs about females and femininity are continually normalized and juxtaposed against "natural" masculinity. For instance, as researcher Judith Kleinfeld argues in a recent *Chicago Sun-Times* article (Rossi, 2006), today's classrooms, mostly headed by women, play to girls' strengths in reading and writing whereas boys' strengths, "innovative, out-of-the-box thinking where you don't follow the rules" are ignored. Schools are often described as being hostile climates for boys (Koerner, 1999) where, according to Sommers, boys are looked down upon simply for being male (Fonda, 2000; Vihn, "2002). To make matters worse, it is not just schools that fail to value the inherent strengths of males. According to *New York Times* columnist David Brooks (2005), women have the advantage in this new "information age" because their innate abilities in reading and writing insure that they are better students. He argues that "once upon a time it was a man's world" but in 30 years, the idea of an oppressive patriarchy will be a "quaint anachronism." What these articles imply is that gender is not a social construct but a biological reality. Biology, in turn, is destiny—one's biological sex "naturally" determines his or her academic strengths and weasknesses.

In other cases, it is similarly argued that biological sex also determines one's interests. On the topic of the decline in reading scores among males, many posit that schools no longer provide literature that interests the typical boy. As Bauerlein and

Stotsky (2007) contend in a recent *Washington Post* article, K-12 curricula fail to meet boys' interest and provide few male literary role models as protagonists. They write that the books found in classrooms today deal with contemporary issues, relationships, or are "culturally based" and therefore do not appeal to most boys. In a letter to the editor of the *New York Times* (Horseman, 2006), a male literature teacher from Maine laments that *To Kill a Mockingbird* (a novel with a female protagonist and written by a woman) is read far more often than *The Catcher in the Rye* (a novel written by a man with a male protagonist.). And, in another *New York Times* column by David Brooks (2006), the writer argues that teaching boys and girls the same way using the same texts is a mistake. According to Brooks, boys need books written by men like Hemmingway, Tolstoy, and Twain. As he continues, doing otherwise for the sake of gender equality will only turn boys away from school:

> During the 1970s, it was believed that gender is a social construct and that gender differences could be eliminated via consciousness-raising. But it turns out gender is not a social construct. Consciousness-raising doesn't turn boys into sensitively poetic pacifists. It just turns many of them into high school and college drop outs who hate to read.

This notion that biology is destiny and the related assumption that boys and girls must be educated differently is quite common within the discursive field in question. For example, nationally syndicated columnist Rich Lowry (2006) addresses "girl-friendly" classrooms and connects their supposed ascension with feminism. Lowry portrays feminists as politically motivated individuals who favor girls over boys and misguidedly try to change boys' biology. The underlying assumption here is that "science" itself is

apolitical and a reliable indicator of the "truth." And the "truth" for this author is that males and females are, by nature, polar opposites, gendered identities are continuous and unchanging, and that hierarchies based on male supremacy are just. As Lowry explains, boys need patriarchy and "lots of it." The "boy crisis" or "gender gap" according to this author is, in a sense, biology's revenge.

Another example of the biological differences between males and females and what they mean for the classroom in includes a pair of articles written by Peg Tyre (2005, 2006) in *Newsweek*. In "Boy brains, girl brains" (2005), Tyre reports on supposed differences in the brains of girls and boys and what can be done to effectively address them in schools. The author begins the article with a story of a principal who adjusted his school's curriculum based on gender difference. Boys and girls were separated and decisions about how to teach to them were based on brain chemistry. The changes were apparently successful because the students' test scores went up. Gurian is quoted by Tyre, as he states that boys are struggling nationwide because schools are "girl-friendly," most teachers are women, and they teach in the way that they themselves learn best.

In a larger follow-up article, "The trouble with boys," Tyre (2006) expands on this idea. She cites researcher Bruce Perry who believes that testing has narrowly defined academic success, standards which don't fit boys' biology or psychology. She also quotes Sommers, as she discusses the ill effects of feminism on schools. Tyre agrees with Sommers and similarly discusses the fallacy of feminist notions of socialization and points out differences in brain chemistry. She notes that the male brain "is bathed in testosterone" which wires the male brain differently. She also argues that, because of these brain differences, boys do not read as well as girls, are reluctant to ask for help, are

less mature, and do not use their minds as efficiently. According to Tyre, "Boys have always been boys, but the expectation for how they're supposed to act and learn in school have changed." She reports that these differences are finally being noticed by educators and mentions that even the Gates Foundation is recognizing that it is a problem in our schools. As one representative from that organization states, "helping underperforming boys has become part of our core mission."

Articles such as these again illustrate the dominant belief in the innate differences between males and females and what those beliefs imply. Tyre (2005, 2006) echoes many others as she disputes gender as a social construct and frames it instead as an inescapable reality. She uses research on the brain to "prove" once more that boys and girls have gender-specific needs in the classroom and to argue again feminist ideals of gender equity. Like Lowry, she argues that masculinity and boyhood are unchanging. But she also uses scientific discourse to demonstrate that when "brain chemistry" is accounted for, boys' performance on educational and psychological measures improve which indicates a successful return to normalcy. In doing so, Tyre uses both the biological science and psychometrics to explicitly affirm the "truth" about gender binaries (in effect, normalizing them) and to implicitly reaffirm relations of power based on male supremacy.

Schools Need to Become More "Boy-Friendly"

If schools are "girl-friendly" and "anti-male," as the dominant popular discourse claims, what can be done to remedy these inequities? Many who share this perspective argue that schools need to become more "boy-friendly." Some have even gone as far as

to suggest separating boys and girls in schools as a way to maximize boys' potential for success, implying that femininity threatens to pervert masculinity. But what is exactly meant by "boy-friendly?" According to Leving and Sacks (2006), schools don't meet boys' needs, and worse yet, boys are too often punished because of their own natural energies. Lack of male teachers is a problem: "boys need strong, charismatic teachers who mix firm discipline with an understanding and good natured acceptance of boyish energy." In a *Newsweek* letter to the editor (Duringer, 2006), one male teacher writes "the behavioral norm in schools is feminine. When the biologically natural aggression of males is focused into competitive performance, males thrive." Aside from the masculine stereotypes of strength and sternness, what this indicates is that men "naturally" understand how boys should be judged. It also implies that men should play a large part in the socialization of boys, despite previous arguments that masculinity was universal and unchanging.

Christina Hoff Sommers agrees with this assessment (Marklein, 2000). Sommers blame feminists for the problems boys face in school today and calls for a return to the more effective ways of the past: "We're going to have to make our schools boy-friendly, and that may mean bringing back old-fashioned classroom techniques that a lot of boys like, (such as) competition and adventure stories with male heroes." What these authors demonstrate are the popular fears concerning the threat to patriarchal power as manifested in schools and a belief in a romanticized past. They argue that feminist ideals, i.e. the belief in gender equity, contradict the interests of males. They also explicitly refer to an idealized "old-fashioned" curriculum where boys were only exposed to materials written by males, for males, and about males.

Clearly, this notion of a "boy-friendly" environment involves the acceptance of natural "boyish" energies, not holding males to a female standard of behavior, the harnessing of said energy into productive competition, the modeling of an appropriate style of masculinity, and the utilization of materials that meet boys' interests such as those written by male authors involving exciting adventure and male protagonists. But where might one find such an environment if the bulk of our schools are as "girl-friendly" as so many have claimed? For some experts, the solution is a return to single-sex schooling. What this indicates is the belief that masculinity and femininity are inherently separate and that physical spaces such as schools should mirror such a division of discursive spaces. According to Rivers and Barnett (2006) those who advocate male-only classrooms include researcher Bruce Perry, who claims that co-ed classes are a "biologically disrespectful model of education," Richard Whitmore, who complains that today's curriculum is "verbally drenched" and plays to the strengths of girls and not boys, and the aforementioned David Brooks. In "Call a truce in the boy-girl wars," Erbe (2006) positions herself in the middle of the "gender gap" debate, but endorses the position of researcher Leonard Sax who supports the idea that boys and girls are "wired" differently and need single sex schools (only if parents choose it though).

Tyre (2005) also suggests single-sex schooling as a possible answer to boys' troubles. She details an experiment with single-sex classrooms and describes it as a successful model to possibly follow. She also notes that experts such as Michael Gurian are supportive of such initiatives. And in "Designed to teach girls, our schools promote failure for boys," conservative activist Michelle Easton (2007) points to gender gap in literacy and claims the solution is to create school environments that are "boy-friendly,"

especially single sex schools. She notes that the National Organization of Women (NOW) is critical of single sex education, but claims that special interest groups such as NOW need to put kids ahead of their own political agendas and come to the realization that single-sex schools are what's best for boys.

Again we see in these articles the attempt to separate "scientific" discourse from issues of power, privilege, and politics. By calling for a return to gender segregation in schools to "save" boys from their "feminist" teachers, these authors are attempting to turn back the clock on gender equity and the return boys to their rightful place at the top of the social hierarchy. However, such motives are rarely spelled out explicitly. Using the formalized discourse of "science," they argue that any pedagogical approach that does not mirror the one they call for is "disrespectful" and suspect. They hide behind a veil of objectivity while calling feminists' subjectivity into question.

Male Teachers as "Role Models" for Boys and Young Men

The third cause of the "gender gap," according to the dominant discourse, is the lack of male role models in the lives of boys and young men—more specifically, the lack of male teachers in our schools. It has been reasoned that most schools are "girl-friendly" precisely because most teachers are female. It is also been argued that teachers need to make their classrooms more "boy-friendly" by recognizing and harnessing boys' natural "energies" and interests. Building on those two claims is this idea that more male teachers will stem the gender gap in schools because they, by virtue of their sex, understand the needs of male students and can serve as proper models for boys to

emulate. What this reveals is that women are seen as a threat to the developing masculinity of boys and the related belief that men are the ideal normalizing agents.

For example, In a recent *Newsweek* article, "Come back, Mr. Chips," Julie Scelfo (2007) discusses the low number of male teachers in schools. The author notes the number of male teachers is at a 40 year low: Men make up 25% of all teachers, and represent only 9% of all teachers in elementary school (down from 18% in 1981.) She describes this trend as a "feminization of the teacher profession" and links it to boys' comparatively poor performance in schools. One male elementary teacher, the only one in his school, is troubled by this situation and complains that "some of these kids don't have any men in their lives, and they really need a male role model." Scelfo reports that universities such as Indiana and Clemson are currently making efforts to attract more men to teaching and that the state of Pennsylvania is committing a million dollars to the cause. What this article demonstrates is the belief that the lack of proper normalizing agents (i.e. same-sex teachers) has had a negative effect on the "natural" gender order in schools and could possible effect existing power relations. As a result, the "common sense" understanding of males and females as innately different supports very real changes in both policy and practice.

Undoubtedly, there is a gender imbalance in the teaching ranks. But why exactly is this statistic perceived by many to be a problem and why do boys and young men need male teachers to serve as role models is masculinity and boyhood are "natural?" Not surprisingly, the majority of the articles collected for this study that discussed the need for male role models in and out of schools failed to make the reasons for such a need explicit or clear. In many cases, it was stated as a matter-of-fact as if no further

explanation was needed. This clearly illustrates the regime of truth (Foucault, 1984), or the connection between knowledge production and apparatuses of power, at work. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the notion of male mentorship spans across historical periods and academic disciplines—so much so that most authors who discussed male role models treated the idea as if it were an unquestioned, timeless truth.

However, a few articles do indicate somewhat why male role models are deemed to be necessary. For Leving and Sacks (2006) boys need male teachers because they "provide firm discipline" but also have an understanding and "a good natured acceptance of boyish energy." This opinion is shared by parents interviewed by Helderman (2002). One parent states that, "I think the male teachers are a little more aggressive, and they just connect with the boys. They're probably louder and more stern." Another says, "I think this is an appropriate thing, and I think it sends the right message. That message is that the more upright, serious, respectable men who are doing good things that are children our exposed to, the better off our children will be."

Michael Gurian (Hein, 1998; Peterson, 1998) agrees with this assessment. He claims that boys are hardwired to "be boys" and to need male guidance: "by age 10 or so, boy raising should largely be a man's game, where values such as honor, compassion, integrity, and respect for women are handed down with discipline and understanding" (implying that only men can transmit these values.) He goes on to claim that there is a "masculine nurturing system" that men alone understand. For males, it all revolves around respect. If a boy acts in an inappropriate manner, the man in his life will withhold respect and it is up to the boy to then earn it back. Gurian claims that women, due to their more "natural" tendencies to care for and nurture children, have a difficult time

replicating this. What this suggests is that nurturing, as it is commonly defined, cannot be "masculine" unless it involves domination and subjugation.

The most common reason for boys needing male role models in schools, as cited in the articles collected for this study, is the lack of male role models in their lives outside of school and the effect this has on their proclivity to commit acts of violence and other crimes. Again, the lack of "proper" socializing agents is key—without them, "natural" masculinity is allowed to run wild. Men, it is assumed, inherently "know" how to judge and police the behavior of boys and are the appropriate guardians of their developing sense of masculinity. A couple of articles on schools shootings are especially notable. In "The boys behind the ambush," Gegax, Adler, and Peterson (1998) comment on the shooting in Jonesboro, Arkansas committed by two boys, one 11 the other 13 years of age. As they write, "so much innocence, so much evil, bound up together in what is already one of nature's greatest enigmas, the adolescent boy." For many, lack of male role models was seen as a cause. In "Raising sons in the age of Columbine," Peterson (1999) discusses male character and morality in light of tragic school shooting in Columbine, CO. She quotes Gurian who claims that males are "morally fragile" and have "naturally less impulse control" compared to girls. He claims that it is older males who must step in, serve as role models, and "shape boys into moral, compassionate men."

According to the dominant discourse, the lack of male role models in the lives of boys and young men is not limited to extreme, highly publicized cases such as Jonesboro and Columbine. The lack of male role models is framed as a rampant problem that affects the lives of people everywhere. In one *Washington Post* article, Weichselbaum (2003) profiles a former police officer who takes time out of his life to serve as a mentor and

male role model for two teenage males. The writer discusses the former officer's plan to recruit 100 black men to mentor black boys because most crimes are committed by males. Weichselbaum notes that many local households don't have father figures and cites a study by Jean Grossman that claims kids with mentors were less likely to fight, use drugs, or lie to their parents. In another *Washington Post* article, Fletcher (1999) notes the need for male role models, especially black male role models. He reports that black males are more likely than whites to go to jail, be murdered, suffer serious illness, fail at school, and to be unemployed. Mendieta (1999) makes a similar statement in an article in the *Chicago Sun-Times*. She notes that nearly half of the children in the U.S. who grow up in fatherless homes are black and describes the situation as an epidemic (implying the greater threat that uncontrolled *black* masculinity supposedly represents.) For this author, the lack of male role model is also equated with violence. By most accounts, the "breakdown of the family" is to blame for this dearth of male role models and the subsequent rise of male violence, but the lack of male role models in school certainly does not help matters.

Perhaps the strongest statement on the lack of male role models and its effects on the lives of boys and young men can be found in a pair of article written by *Washington Post* columnist William Raspberry. In "A better cure than abortion," Raspberry (2005a) responds to former U.S. Secretary of Education and national "Drug Czar" William Bennett's comment that if we want to eliminate crime in the U.S., we just have to abort black babies. As a rebuttal to this suggestion that one's race makes it more likely that one will commit a crime, Raspberry tells a story about adolescent male elephants in the wild that had no adult males to guide their behavior. He explains that as they grew, they began

acting violently for no reason. The solution was to bring in adult males to re-establish a "natural hierarchy." From that point on, the problems with the young males ceased due to the presence of the adult males. In the follow-up article, "The price of low expectation" Raspberry (2005b) then clarifies his position from the previous piece. He cites Todd Clear, a professor of criminal justice at New York's City University when he writes, "High levels of incarceration concentrated in impoverished communities have a destabilizing effect on community life, so that the most basic underpinnings of informal social control are damaged. This, in turn, reproduces the very dynamics that sustain crime." The main thrust of Raspberry's argument is that male role models are necessary in the lives of boys because they provide strength, stability, and a model for appropriate behavior. He contends, contrary to Bennett's assumption that crime is a product of race, that a fatherless home is far better predictor of criminal behavior than income, education, or ethnic background.

While Raspberry's attempt to demonstrate that the proclivity to commit acts of violence is not attributable to ones' race is appreciated in that it disrupts dominant racialized assumptions, it must be noted that his statements reveal certain normalizing judgments concerning masculinity. By comparing the behaviors of young men to the destructive behaviors elephants, he implies that "natural" and unharnessed masculinity is violent, uncaring, dangerous, and even savage. His proposed solution to this problem is even more disturbing and echoes the dominant discourse regarding the "truth" about males, females, and power. According to Raspberry, adult males are not only the normalizing agents for younger men; they also are instrumental to the establishment of a social hierarchy (one presumably centered on male power.)

In the previous section on the "gender gap" and the technologies of measurement and differentiation, I argue that existing social relationships based on patriarchal power play a major role in shaping popular assumptions about gender and the academic performances of males and females. I also note how discourses of "science" are used to validate such assumptions as "truth" and, in turn, reconstruct the very power apparatuses from which they originate. In this section on the dominant discourse concerning this supposed "gender gap," the operation of a circular, self-sustaining "regime of truth" is also quite evident. Studies on "brain differences" between male and female student are repeatedly referenced, as are other "hard-wired" dissimilarities including (but not limited to) to hormone levels, aptitudes, and dispositions. But "natural" differences between males and females are not just limited to students—male and female teachers also operate differently on the basis of their biological sex (i.e. men are more stern and intuitively understand the needs of male students, women teach in ways that better suit female students). In other words, biology is destiny for all involved.

Arguments such as the ones found in this section concerning "natural" and/or "normal" male and female attributes (and the "scientific" measurement of those attributes) illustrate the aforementioned concept of "normalizing judgment." As Foucault (1984, 1994) writes, one of the most effective technologies of power that has arisen with modernity is the establishment of norms and standards, supported by "science" and enforced by institutions such as hospitals and schools, that all are to be measured and judged by. He explains,

> (M)arks that once indicated status, privilege, and affiliation were increasingly replaced—or at least supplemented—by a whole range of degrees of normality

> indicating membership of a homogeneous social body, but also playing a part in classification, hierarchization, and the distribution of rank. In a sense, the power of normalization imposes homogeneity. (1984, p. 196)

This process of normalization as a means to classify, rank, and punish individuals certainly applies to the definition and enforcement of gender. Take, for example, the very notions of "girl-friendly" and "boy-friendly" schools and the related suggestion that boys "naturally" need male teachers as "role models." The implication of these binary definitions of both males and females implies that there is a "normal" way of being female and a "normal" way of being male, as dictated by biology. According to this logic, males and females belong to mutually exclusive, uniform, and homogenously "masculine" and "feminine" groups. As such, classrooms run by female teachers must naturally caters to the needs and proclivities of female students whereas the classroom operated by male teachers specifically suits male students. What this perspective fails to account for (or, more appropriately, what this perspective fails to tolerate) is the numerous differences that exist *among* males and females—differences that far outweigh the dissimilarities *between* males and females (Kimmel, 2004).

Normalizing Judgment: Racial and Socio-Economic Expectations

Two such overlooked differences among males and females are that of race and class. While not as common as articles that refer to boy- or girl-friendly classrooms or those that discuss male role models, a number of articles found within the popular written new media discourse did in fact address race and class as important factors in better understanding the "boy crisis" and "gender gap." The major points made in these articles are twofold: First, middle and upper class white boys, who seem to receive the bulk of the

media attention, are not in fact in crisis. And second, poor white and minority boys, for the most part, are. What the various authors cited below reveal in making these points is the power and invisibility of social class and whiteness. In other words, when poor white and minority boys struggle in school, it is not deemed to be a "crisis." This implies that these boys, having little power, do not matter. But when the supremacy of middle-to-upper class males is endangered, not only does it get labeled as a "crisis," it is now applied to all boys and young men.

A major stimulus to this discussion is the work of Jaqueline E. King. In the literature collected for this chapter, her research conducted for the American Council on Education is cited on numerous occasions (Fonda, 2000; Marklein, 2000; Warner, 2006). King agrees with the assessment that there is a gender gap on American college campuses and that it is indeed widening. But she also notes that it is primarily a problem for African-American, Hispanic, and poor white men. She has concluded that the gap disappears the higher the position on the "income ladder" (Warner, 2006). King writes that there is "little evidence that white, middle-class males are falling behind." She disagrees with the more widely publicized studies on the gender gap like that of Thomas Mortensen and says trends have been misinterpreted not only by race (where the biggest gaps are still between minorities and whites), but also by age (among students 24 and younger, the gap between males and females is a slight 51% to 49%), and advanced degrees (women earn more master's degrees, but men still dominate doctoral and professional programs) (Marklein, 2000).

Other studies and articles also debunk the "boy crisis" and "gender gap" and note that academic disparities are class and race-based, not gender-based. A recent study by

Sara Mead for Education Sector (Warner, 2006; Young, 2006; Von Drehle, 2007) similarly disputes the idea that all boys are struggling. Like King, Mead found that it is low income boys that are struggling, especially black and Hispanic boys. She notes that, actually, both boys and girls, in general, have experienced improvements in test scores over the last thirty years. It is girls, however, that have improved at a higher rate, implying that gender equality is a viewed popularly as threat to existing power relation, while female superiority is a full-blown crisis. Reporting on the Mead study, Rivers and Barnett (2006) argue that the "boy crisis" is a manufactured one. They believe it is merely a backlash against feminism and a product of media sensationalism. Rivers and Barnett point out that statistics used to "prove" the crisis' existence are rarely broken down by race or class. They believe that the portrait of "typical" boy in the dominant discourse is inaccurate; boys, as a group, are far too diverse to generalize. Marcia Greenberger (2006) claims, like Rivers and Barnett, that reports of a "boy crisis" are overly simplistic and divisive. Both boys and girls have successes and difficulties. She notes that, contrary to reports that say males are underperforming in all academic areas, boys are in fact still scoring higher on AP tests (which of course affirms existing power relations and is thus not worthy of scrutiny). She also notes that once out of high school, girls still dominate low wage career training programs like cosmetology while boys dominate higher wage career training programs like carpentry. And, like the studies mentioned above, she also believes that race and socioeconomic factors need to be included in any analysis.

The fact that African American, Hispanic, and poor white males are struggling in schools is disputed by no one. Yet despite numerous calls to action over the past few

decades, little has been done about it; this reveals the "regime of truth" at work. These groups collectively have little power and thus have little input into the production of "truth." Therefore when they fail academically and socially, it serves merely to affirm the superiority of white, middle-to-upper class males. In the articles that actually do deal with the lower academic performance of poor and/or minority males, the scarcity of men in the lives of black males in particular is a common theme (Weichselbaum, 2003; Wiseman, 2003; Fletcher, 1999; Raspberry, 2005a, 2005b). In "To close gaps, schools focus on black boys," Hu (2007) reports that in one regional study, black girls were doing well in school but black boys were doing poorly, both academically and socially. She notes that many African American scholars believe that achievement-gap programs must meet specific needs of black boys, who have few black male role models. According to Weichselbaum (2003), Harvard professor Ronald Ferguson agrees with this view and feels that finding black role models for these young men is the key. But one must ask, are the calls for more black male role models done so for the sake of the boys, or to prevent crime and other violent behaviors that these males are so "naturally" prone to commit?

Another factor influencing African American boys to struggle in school while white, middle-to-upper class boys succeed is cultural norms among the black community and especially among black male youths. Fletcher (1999) writes that for some black males, doing well in school is perceived to be a betrayal of one's race. Educational researcher Judith Kleinfeld agrees ("Boys, not girls, on the worse end of the education gap," 2003; "Schools' gender-gap concern now is boys," 2002). Even though Kleinfeld is a prominent proponent of the dominant discourse about the "boy crisis," she concedes that the supposed gender gap is far less dramatic than the gap between the races. Like

Fletcher, she claims that the problem is a cultural one because among black males, school is seen as "white" and "sissy." This implies that, like claims about naturalized masculinity (that under examination does not appear to be natural at all), that blackness is also high regulated and normalized.

The points made in this thematic section, in many respects, can be viewed as an alternative or "reverse" discourse in respect to the dominant discourses of the "gender gap" and "boy crisis." By highlighting racial and socio-economic factors that affect the lives of boys, researchers and writers who argue for this perspective disrupt the gendered homogeneity imposed by the dominant discourse and expose the coercive and misleading use of "science" to perpetuate social norms and existing power relations. They also help to clarify who really is in "crisis" by separating the struggles of poor white, Black, and Latinos males from the more "successful" (and certainly more privileged) upper-to-middle class white males. Looked at in another way, however, a case can be made that the arguments put forth in this section fall into the same discursive traps.

For instance, the writers who contributed to this section also rely on "scientific" and statistical discourses to validate their positions. Like those who argue that there is, in fact, a "gender gap" in America's schools and those who contend that schools are not "boy-friendly," researchers such as King (Fonda, 2000; Marklein, 2000; Warner, 2006) and Mead (Warner, 2006; Young, 2006; Von Drehle, 2007) base their conclusions on test scores and rates of college attendance. By acquiescing to such technologies of "normalizing judgment" instead of scrutinizing them, they are allowing the measurement, differentiation, ranking, and punishment of those same poor white, black, and Latino boys they attempt to speak for to continue unabated. It can also be argued that the calls

for more *black* male role models in particular reinforce the illusions of normality and homogeneity as well. Similar to the more common call for more male teachers to serve as role models in general, the logic of this argument presupposes a singular black male experience and an "intuitive" understanding of black boys and young men on the part of older black males while also assuming the dangers of unchecked black masculinity. Simplistic solutions such as this are dangerous not only because they strengthen racial and gender stereotypes but also because they obfuscate and render invisible the differences that exist between people of any social category, be it race, class, or gender.

Marginalized Discourses

As with any other discursive field, there is in this study a collection of discourses that do not fit neatly within the dominant discourse and have been silenced and/or pushed to the margins. But, as Foucault (1990) warns, "we must not imagine a world of discourse divided between accepted discourse and excluded discourse, or between the dominant discourse and the dominated one; but a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies" (p. 100). While these discourses in question are not necessarily dominated (and are in fact dominant themselves depending on the context), within this study of the popular written news media, they have been marginalized nonetheless. For instance, there are those who dispute the dominant discourse of the "boy crisis" or "gender gap" on the basis of race and class. There are also those who dispute the dominant discourse about the trouble with boys in schools on the basis of gender and gendered norms. More in line with the thinking of critical gender scholarship, the authors of these articles question the supposed innate differences between boys and girls in

schools, point out that effective pedagogical methods are gender-neutral, and frame hegemonic masculinity as the real "boy crisis."

The bulk of the popular literature collected for this study that argues that there are "hard-wired" differences between boys and girls that affect their performances and behaviors in school rely heavily on the work of Michael Gurian. This is a major root of the problem, according to researcher David Sadker. Sadker (Tyre, 2005) describes Gurian's work as a "dangerous pseudoscience" that continues a pattern of "science" justifying social inequities. By making such a statement, Sadker is opposing the "regime of truth" by revealing its constructedness. He concurs that there are non-reproductive, biological differences between boys and girls, but that we do not know what they mean in terms of academic performance and/or social differences. He also stresses that there are more differences among boys and girls than there are between them, so postulating that there is a singular "boy learning style" and a singular "girl learning style" is erroneous. There are others who share this opinion. Psychologist William Pollack (Peterson, 1999) disputes Gurian's claims and believes he overstates the effects of hormones such as testosterone on the brain and on the behavior of males. As he emphatically states, "Michael has read his science wrong" (a claim that is itself problematic in that it implies that there is a "right" and "wrong" way to interpret science.) Sara Mead's report for Education Sector makes similar conclusions about popular research on gender differences (Mathews 2006; Gandy, 2006). As Mathews reports, the study "concludes that much of the pessimism about young males seems to derive from inadequate research, sloppy analysis, and discomfort with the fact that although the average boy is doing better, the average girl has gotten ahead of him." This statement contradicts the "regime of truth"

concerning gender binaries by calling the "science" that it supports and is supported by into question. It simultaneously contradicts "common sense" beliefs about gender by emphasizing the general discomfort that accompanies even perceived female superiority.

In a *Chicago Sun-Times* article titled "Is feminism unmanning the American boy?," E. Anthony Rotundo (2000) critiques the work of another prominent "boy crisis" advocate, Christina Hoff Sommers. He critiques her work as "pure conservative polemic" and contends that it is misrepresentative, one-sided, hypocritical, and extremely biased (yet unwilling to admit to it). He finds many of her arguments problematic including her position that all males are biologically alike and opposite of girls, her dismissal of cultural influences, and her support of educational techniques for boys that, he claims, are based on her own cultural biases and lack any legitimacy. As he writes, "Her advocacy of directive moral education rests on no hard evidence at all. Apparently, ideological enthusiasm is sufficient reason to suspend critical thinking as long as the ideology is the right one." This strong critique is telling one—not only does it reveal the constructed nature of knowledge, but it also emphasizes the relationship between knowledge and power and how ideologies can dictate which statements can be deemed to be "scientific" and which ones cannot.

Echoing Rotundo's perspective is a number of articles that dispute the legitimacy of the gender-specific pedagogical approaches suggested by Gurian and Sommers. Rivers and Barnett (2006) believe that the approach that yields the best results for most children is a gender-neutral one. They note that Department of Defense schools run for the children of parents serving in the military have no gender or racial gaps. They suggest the approach these schools take as a possible model:

> (T)hese schools have high expectations, a strong academic focus, and hire teachers with years of classroom experience and training (a majority with Master's degrees). Of course, this solution costs money, and has none of the sex appeal of the trendy single-sex-school quick fix.

In an article in *Time* magazine titled "Beyond the gender myths," Margot Hornblower (1998) supports this gender-neutral pedagogical approach. She argues that reports on girls and boys' struggles seem to forget the common humanity they share: "What helps girls is what helps boys: smaller classes, a demanding curriculum, and encouragement regardless of gender." Hornblower quotes researcher Patricia Campbell who says that notions of "opposite" sexes and learning styles are laughable. She argues that teachers who create safe learning environments, use a variety of instructional methodologies, and divide their attention equally between all students regardless of gender or ability were the ones who were the most successful with both boys and girls.

If it has indeed been demonstrated that effective pedagogical practices are gender neutral and that, in many contexts, academic disparities between boys and girls as generalized groups do not exist, then why has such a discourse been pushed to the margins? First of all, because it disrupts the "common sense" beliefs about a "natural" gender binary. And second, because it does not help to explain why boys, who should be doing better than girls in school, are not (or at least not in ways that conform to dominant beliefs.) Instead, it points to a greater problem involving socialized norms of masculinity that most are comfortable with and even dependant upon.

One of the major elements of the dominant discourse is the notion of male teachers being needed in schools to serve as male role models for boys and young men. A

couple of writers dispute this claim as well, saying that the sex of a role model is really unimportant. They argue that females can also serve as positive socializing agents for boys and young men and that masculinity and femininity are actually irrelevant when it comes to mentorship. In "A guiding hand, man's or woman's, can lift you higher" Mary Ellen Slayter (2005) poses the question "does it really matter if your mentor is of the same or opposite sex?" Slayter's article, for the most part, is concerned with women seeking mentors and provides examples of successful male-female mentor relationships. She also discusses Webgrrls International, a support group for women in the technology industry that emphasizes shared values over biology when choosing a mentor. Bronson and Merryman (2006) also question the need for same-sex mentors in their recent piece in *Time* magazine. They are critical of the Hoover Institute report that concluded that boys do better when taught by a man and vice versa, especially in math and science. The authors question the study's 20 year-old data and the fact that this small discrepancy only took place in science classes but not in math. Bronson and Merryman believe that such reports are sensationalistic claims and misrepresent the importance of gender difference. They also argue that the media needs to become more savvy when it comes to reporting on such politicized research:

> We want the media to recognize when it's being fed a carefully timed and calculated diversion. We are easily distracted by gender politics as students are by those fluorescent lights. Schools are opening around the country this week, and people are talking about teacher gender rather than teacher quality.

With this statement, the authors demonstrate that the "truth" about the "boys crisis," the "gender gap" and "male role models" is not neutral, nor is it "common sense." In fact,

truth claims operate as political power plays in the discourse of the popular written news media discourse.

For many of those who share this more critical perspective, the trouble with boys in our schools today is not feminist teachers, "girl-friendly" classrooms, or the lack of male role models. The problem is hegemonic masculinity, or the normalizing ideology about what it means to be (or become) a "real man." Like the cultural norms that effect African American boys that tells them that doing well in school is "sissy," "white" or is somehow a "betrayal" of their race (i.e. naturalized blackness), hegemonic masculinity tells boys from all backgrounds that performing at a high level academically is not a "guy thing." In "The male minority," Fonda (2000) discusses decline in males attending college and explains that the most notable difference between male and female students at all levels of schooling is motivation. Females are more likely to attend classes, complete homework, and study whereas males are more likely to miss classes, procrastinate, and socialize. He notes that there are many high paying jobs for males once they graduate high school, so they do not necessarily feel any urgency to pursue a higher degree. Fonda cites sociologist Michael Kimmel who says the issue with boys in schools is a cultural one—it's a "sissy" thing to go to college and that men can get a job without it. Kimmel also notes that there is a masculine culture of anti-intellectualism that influences boys not to give their full academic effort. This situation is highly reflective of the privilege many males assume for themselves in a patriarchal society, but also begs the question, for *which* males are these high paying jobs waiting for once they graduate high school?

Boys committing acts of violence in schools is also a contentious issue. For many, socialization and dominant notions of masculinity play a role in the non-academic actions of boys as well. Klein (2003) notes that, due to hegemonic norms of masculinity (norms that are highly heterosexist), many teen school shooters were regularly ridiculed for being different and were often accused of being homosexual (one of the ultimate insults to one's masculinity as sexuality and gender are so intertwined). Klein argues that these boys resorted to violence to "prove" their masculinity. She contends that problems such as these can only be prevented when the root of problem is ended—the pressure to conform to an aggressive, violent form of masculinity. In "Raising sons in the age of Columbine" Peterson (1999) also discusses the possible reasons behind male acts of school violence. She first cites Gurian who argues that boys are "morally fragile" and lack impulse control due to their high levels of male hormones. Peterson then quotes a rebuttal by William Pollack who says that: "the best evidence today is that testosterone does not have a direct effect on aggression in humans." Pollack is wary of research that tells us that boys are biologically incapable of being moral; he believes that this type of attitude can become a self-fulfilling prophesy.

The main emphasis of this more critical perspective is that we still live in a patriarchal society that tightly regulates gender and gendered norms of behavior, including masculinity. Men and boys still have advantages in our society, especially if they are white and middle-to-upper class. Sadker (2000) notes how higher grades don't translate to higher test scores on high stakes tests such as pSATs, SATs, ACTs, or GREs. He also notes how girls dominate less prestigious higher education institutions but that men still dominate Ivy League schools and prestigious professions. He goes on to point

out that, although the majority of teachers are women, most principals and superintendents are men. Similarly, Brown (2000), in a criticism of Christina Hoff Sommers' (2000) work, notes that Sommers vociferously calls for equity for boys in schools but fails to address the fact that once they are out of schools, males continue to be paid more. This implies that although middle-to-upper class white male supremacy is deemed to be endangered, the position of these males on the social hierarchy is still relatively safe. "Regimes of truth" operate is ways that ensure such social upheavals do not happen; in other words, middle-to-upper class, heterosexual, able bodied white masculinity is still the standard all are to be judged by and middle-to-upper class, heterosexual, able bodied white males are still the standard-makers.

. But the advantages males on the whole enjoy do not come without a cost. Boys and men, whether financially well-off or not, are held to a more rigid gender norm while girls and women, thanks in large part to the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s have seen the notions of what it means to be feminine greatly expanded (Pollack, 1999; Gilligan, 2006). This expansion of femininity is a positive sign in that it implies a degree of agency within the discursive field. However, hegemonic masculinity may prove to be more difficult to disrupt in that it is so intertwined with apparatuses of power. Pollack (Brady, 2003; Peterson, 1998) argues that breaking free of such restrictive norms is possible, though. He suggests that boys are struggling today not because of feminist classroom but because they feel restricted by these rigid gender norms, which he refers to as the "boy code" and the "gender straightjacket." He proposes that if we loosen these gender norms and show boys that there are multiple ways to be masculine, then many of the problems they face would be alleviated. By stressing alternative discourses of

masculinity, we could begin to encourage the similar degrees of agency among boys and men. Prominent feminist scholar Carol Gilligan agrees (2006). She says that boys need to be encouraged to express their emotions instead of being told to bury them. She points out that the progress girls have made over the last 20 years should be seen as a sign of hope that boys could make the same strides.

This fourth and final discursive theme differs greatly from the previous three. The perspectives put forth are distinct not only due to their marginalization within the popular discourse but also because the individuals cited, for the most part, consciously avoid following the same discursive strategies (that of relying on the "scientific" production of "truth" to support their claims and the utilization of "normalizing judgment"). For example, Sadker (Tyre, 2005) and Pollack (Peterson, 1999) both dispute the "Brain-based" research of Gurian (1997, 1999, 2001) and point out his work, under the guise of "science," exemplifies both the anxieties of a society uncomfortable with females outperforming males and the attempt to rationalize and reinforce existing power structures based on gender. In doing so, they demystify the interplay between the production of knowledge and power. Other examples include those who stress the commonalities between males and females in terms of pedagogical approaches (disrupting the beliefs about "boy-friendly" and "girl-friendly" schooling) and the insights of Pollack, Gilligan (2006), and Kimmel (Fonda, 2000; "remarkable trends," 2005) regarding the impact of hegemonic masculinity on the lives of boys and men and the need to emphasize the existence of multiple, equally valid masculinities. These suggestions imply that the utilization of "reverse discourses" (Foucault, 1990) may be an effective way to interrupt and transgress hegemonic masculine norms.

Disrupting the Regime of Truth

In order to better understand the data collected for this study and the relationship between masculinity, popular news media discourse, and the production and maintenance of power structures, I now turn more specifically to conceptual tools suggested by Foucault in his later genealogical studies (1984, 1990; 1995) to further my analysis. In using Foucauldian methodologies, I seek to reveal how discourse is utilized as a tool to support power apparatuses and create what Foucault describes as "regimes of truth." I also pay close attention to methods of resistance found within the discursive field, defined by Foucault as "reverse discourses" and "tactical polyvalence." To organize and focus this discussion, I return to the research questions outlined in chapter 1 and critical perspectives that formed the theoretical foundations of the inquiry. Again, the research questions that this study seeks to answer are:

- What are the common sense discourses about masculinity, boyhood, and "male role models" found in popular news media discussions of the "boy crisis?"
- How has knowledge about masculinity, boyhood, and "male role models" been discursively produced in the past century by way of the media, mythology, and academic disciplines (namely, psychology and sociology) and how does that knowledge production contribute to popular beliefs about who boys and men are and who they should be?
- How are power, identity, race, Socio-economic status (SES), sexuality, and ability addressed in popular media discussions of the "boy crisis?"

- What is the relationship between the common sense discourse on male role models and patriarchal power?
- If more men do become teachers, as the popular discourse often calls for, which masculinities should they model if they model at all?

Put concisely, "common sense" understandings found within the data collected reveal a distinct connection between the formation of objects such as masculinity and patriarchal systems of power through popular, historic, and academic discourses as well as institutional practices such as schools and the printed news media. As evidenced by the articles cited above, schooling is generally understood as a foundation of social order. Masculinity, as an object of knowledge, helps to determine who has the "qualifications" to rise to the top of the job market and society. And popular beliefs or "common sense" understandings about boyhood, manhood, and male role models work to support and reiterate these institutions and, conversely, to maintain existing power relations.

Just as revealing as these "common sense" understanding are those discourses that are silenced and/or marginalized. Who are the subjects of dominant discourse and why? Who is excluded? From the slight amount of attention granted to issues of race, class, sexuality, ability, and alternative masculinities, it can be deduced that the dominant discourse operates not just to support male supremacy but specifically to support the continued supremacy of middle-to-upper class, heterosexual, able-bodied white males who act in stereotypically "masculine" ways to the exclusion of other, non-hegemonic masculinities. And finally, the popular discourse calls for more male teachers to act as role models in schools, which if allowed to come to fruition, can both work for and against dominant ideals of masculinity and the patriarchal power structure. If done

uncritically, male teachers in the classroom modeling only "traditional" masculinity will work to confirm dominant beliefs and maintain existing power relations. Boys and girls alike will be provided with models of masculinity that are, by popular definition, dispassionate, restrictive, individualistic, and intolerant and their exposure to other discursive possibilities will be limited. However, if students, parents, teachers, and teacher educators have an increased awareness of the discursive formation of masculinity and the connection between "truth" and power, then the capacity for men in schools to enact a range of masculinities and resist existing power apparatuses can be dramatically increased. Both male and female students will benefit from exposure to an adult male who is comfortable disrupting dichotomous ideals concerning logic and emotion, nurturance and discipline, strength and vulnerability, "masculinity" and "femininity." In what follows, I explain these conclusions and further discuss 1) the common sense discourse, power, and the production of knowledge 2) alternative discourses, and 3) the discursive limits of possibility for male teachers as role models.

Common Sense Discourse, Power, and the Production of Knowledge

The majority of the data collected for this study falls in line ideologically, knowingly or not, with what I have labeled the dominant popular discourse and reveal the institutional relationship between the production of "truth" and patriarchal power. Several assumptions about masculinity, gender, power, and the purposes of education are taken-for-granted and framed throughout the discourse of boys in schools and male teachers as role models as "common sense" and operate in a way that discursively disguises or conceals their own construction. These discourses, as *savior*, are also partially

responsible for the formation of formal knowledge (*connaissance*). By hiding the discursive formation of these assumptions, the objects of knowledge that they rest upon appear to be "natural" or "innate" and far too often remain unquestioned.

For instance, it is assumed throughout the discourse that boys should naturally perform better and be more successful than girls in school. This is evident in the proliferation of articles reporting the so-called "gender gap" in test scores (Bauerlein & Stotsky, 2007; Leo, 1999; Leving & Sacks 2006; Rossi 2006; Schools' gender-gap concern now is boys," 2002; Telander, 2006; Young, 2006) and the disparities in the rates of college enrollment (Argetsinger 1999; Brooks, 2005; Fonda 2000; Vihn 2002; Marklein 2005; Easton 2007). From this perspective, males performing at a lower level academically than females in schools constitutes a "crisis" precisely because the idea of such an occurrence is in direct opposition to what is expected or believed concerning male superiority. As several scholars have indicated (Hansott & Tyack, 1988; Lesko, 2001; Smith & Vaughn, 2000), this was certainly the case in the early decades of the 20th century when women were beginning to establish themselves as religious and educational leaders and faced similar resistance from the military, religious, and academic establishment. Today, a backlash against female empowerment has occurred and the "re-empowerment" of males via educational institutions became a major point of emphasis within the popular discourse. In patriarchal societies such as the United States, men are by definition socially, professionally, politically, and economically dominant and nothing in our history suggests otherwise. For there to be a rupture in that logic, even if it is just a perceived rupture, serves as an indication for many that something is amiss and in need of attention and correction.

Another “common sense” assumption made implicitly and explicitly throughout the dominant discourse is that boys and girls learn in uniformly opposite ways and need classrooms that cater to their gender-specific sensibilities and aptitudes, referred to as “girl-friendly” and “boy-friendly” classrooms and schools (Brooks, 2005, 20006; Koerner, 1999; Leving & Sacks, 2006; Marklein, 2005; Rossi, 2006; Tyre, 2005, 2006). What this assumption reveals is that “masculinity” and “femininity”—those characteristics that supposedly signify one as a boy or a girl or as a man or a woman—are almost uniformly believed to be biological based and unchanging. Despite historical changes that have occurred within the discursive fields of sociology, psychology, and mythology regarding how (and why) one develops a specific gendered identity (Jung, 1968, 1983, 1998; Kimmel & Aronson, 2004; Lerner, 1976; Lerner & Steinberg, 2004; Ritzer, 2003; Shaffer & Kipp, 2007) as well as the increased visibility of trans-gendered, transsexual, and “queer” individuals, the idea that biological sex and social definitions of gender are one in the same is still evident. And while neurological studies that demonstrate measurable cognitive differences between males and females are greatly outnumbered by studies that indicate no difference at all (Kimmel, 2004), the brain-based “research” of Gurian (1997, 1999, 2001) and Sommers (2000) that argue for “hard-wired” masculinity repeatedly are granted an inordinate amount of media attention.

Related to this seemingly impenetrable popular understanding of gender as unchanging and continuous is the assumption, supported ideologically by Freud (1938, 1962, 1969, 1975), Hall (1904, 1923), and several mythopoetic authors (Bly, 1990; Keen, 1991; Moore, 1990), that the increased presence of male teachers in the schools to serve as “role models” for boys and young men will almost instantly create classrooms more

conducive to male success compared to classrooms headed by women (Barovick, 1998; "Girls get extra school help while boys get Ritalin" 2003; Hein, 1998; Kantrowitz & Kalb, 1998; Lowry, 2006; Peterson, 1999; "Pay closer attention: boys are struggling academically" 2004; Thompson, 2007; Tyre, 2006; "What others are saying" 2004). Because femininity is discursively defined against masculinity (and vice versa) in all facets of social life, the notion that male teachers just "get" male students and instinctively understand their "boyish energies" (Leving and Sacks, 2006) while female teachers do not and are prone to punish boys just for "being boys" is very easy for some to accept simply because it reinforces and reiterates commonly held beliefs.

A final "common sense" belief that demonstrates the connection between discourse and patriarchal power are the suggested ramifications of the "boy crisis" on American society as a whole. It is argued that, if left unchecked, consequences of this "crisis" and the lack of "male role models" in schools include but are not limited to rampant violence, a limited marriage pool for women, and nationwide economic peril (Argetsinger, 1999;Gurian, 2005; Peterson, 1999; Raspberry, 2005a, 2005b) . Men and masculinity, it is assumed, are a foundation for our national safety, identity, and long-term well-being. If boys do not have older males in their lives to provide them with "appropriate" models of masculinity, it is commonly understood that they will be more prone to act out violently and become threats to "civil" society. If institutions like schools do not cater to the gender-specific needs and interest of boys, it is assumed that women will surpass men socially in a matter of years and will face a shortage of suitable "masculine" mates to start their families with. And, if boys, especially white, upper-to-middle class boys, are not able to be successful in school and go on to high paying jobs, it

is argued that the American economy will suffer as will our standing in the world. What these fears reveal is the primacy of that particular group and just how intertwined notions of masculinity, heterosexuality, academic success, social order, and economic superiority truly are, both discursively and institutionally. Schooling, it stands to reason, is designed to prepare students for their appropriate roles in the workforce and in society. Boys and young men (most notably heterosexual, white, middle-to-upper class boys and young men) should naturally ascend to the top in school thanks to their supposedly innate masculine characteristics (competitiveness, risk-taking, rationality). With superior individuals leading the way, our national supremacy will "naturally" continue unabated. However, if the foundation or construction of just one aspect or institution is endangered, then they all appear to be threatened. Therefore, institutional actions must be taken—first in the media and subsequently in the schools themselves.

Alternative Discourses

As indicated in this chapter, a small but substantive proportion of the data gathered for this study mention, either as a supplement to the dominant discourse on the "boy crisis" and the need for "male role models" or as a rebuttal, the effects race and class play on boys' academic performance, social behavior, and attitudes towards schooling. This is not unexpected; as Foucault (1990) might argue, the attempt to normalize masculinity through discourse inevitably allows for the formation of such alternative, reverse discourses. This is not to say that there are no disparities within the discourse that need to be addressed; only that there is some indication that the logic of the "boy crisis" as a generalized phenomenon that positions boys as the newly oppressed is

not as impregnable as other concepts that support what hooks (2004) refers to as "white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy."

With that being said, the discourse about the performance gap between white and minority students and poor and middle-to-upper class students has been pushed to the margins nonetheless. Even "boy crisis" champions Sommers (2000a) and Kleinfeld ("Boys, not girls, on the worse end of the education gap," 2003; "Schools' gender-gap concern now is boys," 2002) admit as much, even if they attempt to use the racial disparity as an extreme or "worst case" example what *all* boys are experiencing. When reading such discourse, the question that needs to be asked is if minority and poor white males are (and have been historically) performing so poorly in school and are often acculturated to view being educated as acting "white" or "sissy" rather than an opportunity to improve their lives (Fletcher, 1999), then why isn't this "gap" receiving at least the same amount of attention? The answer again rests in "common sense" beliefs and their connection to systems of power (i.e. how they operate to reiterate the "regimes of truth."). In this instance, poor and minority students are not expected to do well in school or to graduate into social positions of power and authority according to the dominant discourses of both race and class. So when an African American male fails a high-stakes test or a poor white male drops out of school, there is no apparent discursive rupture. It is completely unremarkable. In other words, the race and socio-economic gap in academic performance has, up until now, been easy to ignore because it served to reaffirm "common sense" beliefs about the inferior status of poor and minority students.

One issue concerning minority males, black males in particular, which did receive a fair amount of attention was in regards to the supposed need for more male role models

both in and outside of school (Fletcher, 1999; Gershenson, 1999; Leahy, 2005; Mendieta, 1999; Raspberry, 2005a, 2005b; Weichselbaum, 2003). Seemingly similar to the dominant discourse regarding the increased need for male role models, the articles cited here differ in that that the call for an increased presence of adult males in the lives of these boys and young men is not necessarily out of the desire to promote their academic success but more out of the desire to prevent crime and/or anti-social behaviors. Again, according to certain "regimes of truth" black males are not expected to do well in school and are supposedly prone to violent and criminal behavior. If understood using this lens, it is clear that the intent of these articles is not to empower minority males as the dominant "boy crisis" and gender gap" articles attempt to do for white males. Instead, they serve as examples of an implicit attempt to control the social behavior of young black men through mentorship and schooling. So in a sense, what is being marginalized is the discourse of black empowerment.

The last marginalized discourse I discuss is the critically-based discourse of "masculinities"; in other words, the discussion of alternative ways of being male including but not limited to gay males, boys and men with disabilities, non-Western males, and "effeminate" or non-traditionally "masculine" males. This discourse is so marginalized that it was never actually mentioned directly. A number of articles did mention the pressures placed on boys to act in stereotypically "masculine" ways out of fear of ridicule and other forms of social punishment (Brady, 2003; Fonda, 2000; Gilligan, 2006; Klein, 2003; Peterson, 1998; "remarkable trends," 2005; "What others are saying," 2004) but few examples of alternative ways of enacting masculinity were mentioned (other than enjoying to read, expressing one's emotions, and acting morally.)

This silence is a very telling one. Because they are not named, alternative masculinities (or even the concept of them) have more or less been excluded from dominant discursive practice and treated as if they do not actually exist. It also serves the dual purpose of regulation and normalization: Those individuals who belong to or enact these non-traditional masculinities are implicitly directed to hide that aspect of themselves or suffer the consequences while those supposedly "masculine" traits that are discussed are further solidified as the normative standard all boys and young men must live up (or down) to.

Discursive Limits of Possibility for Male Teachers as "Role Models"

For the male teacher who does not fit neatly into the stereotypically masculine mold, the dominant discourse on masculinity and male role models can serve as a major conceptual roadblock in terms of envisioning different ways to "model" masculinities for his students. The work of many of the authors and journalists cited here have been successful at discursively creating a popular sense of "panic" regarding boys in schools and the teachers they interact with. The dominant discourse is so powerful and seemingly overwhelming because it both reiterates, reconstructs, and naturalizes familiar and comfortable understandings of what it means to be (and become) a man. As Foucault (1984, 1990, 1995) would argue, dominant discursive practices such as those discussed in this study constitute and reconstitute objects of knowledge such as boyhood, masculinity, and male role models in ways that best support existing power structures to the exclusion of those that do not. Beliefs about boyhood, masculinity, and male role models have become so intertwined with systems of power that they have come to be understood as "common sense" and/or "normal" and any perceived reversal of existing power structures

involving these objects of knowledge is seen as a threat, necessarily framed within the dominant discourse as a "crisis," and is immediately attacked, discredited, or worse yet, ignored and/or silenced altogether.

Therefore, if one chooses to utilize a Foucualdian framework with the hopes of disrupting power structures such as patriarchy, the possibility of effecting change can at times seem to be a highly daunting task. Nonetheless, I believe that Foucault's conceptual work can be a very valuable asset in envisioning (and enacting) ways to disrupt and discredit dominant notions of masculinity, boyhood, and male role models and in the attempt to gain clarity about gender and schooling (and the discursive elements that shape our understanding of them). For "discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy" (Foucault, 1990, p. 101). In other words, discourse can and does convey and construct power and power structures but can also operate in a manner that "undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it." (p. 101). This is where the concepts "reverse discourse" and "tactical polyvalence" come into play.

As the first step in discursively confronting patriarchal power and the "common sense" understandings about masculinity, gender, and schooling that undergird them, a reverse "boy crisis" and "male role model" discourse would allow alternative masculinities to "speak in (their) own behalf." In his example of reverse discourse, Foucault (1990) demonstrated that the psychiatric, legal, and literary discourses about homosexuality of the 19th century allowed for the strict policing and social control of sexual behaviors but also provided a platform from which alternative sexualities could

articulate themselves. I argue that the dominant discourse on the "boy crisis" and "male role models" has created the same sort of space for alternative masculinities to emerge. Because the possibility for such a discourse has now been "created," students, parents, teachers, and teacher educators of either sex alike now have the opportunity to dispute dominant claims and demand that the legitimacy of the alternative masculinities that they themselves practice or believe in be discursively recognized.

However, in resisting the dominant discourse of the "boy crisis" and "male role models," it must be understood that discourse does not operate on an "either/or" basis. It is not a polarity between the dominant discourse and its opposite. Instead, discourse is made up of numerous, unstable discontinuous strands that lack cohesive tactical function. Discourses then should be seen as "tactical elements or blocks operating in the field of force relations" (Foucault, 1990) that can be utilized in multiple ways for multiple purposes. This is the concept of tactical polyvalence.

For individuals who seek to disrupt the current, dominant understandings about masculinity, boys, schools, and role models, bringing the notion of tactical polyvalence into the open can have numerous positive possibilities. First, in refusing to comply with binary, modernist thinking, essentialist attitudes regarding natural "masculine" behaviors and traits and their "unnatural" counterparts are disrupted. Second, by openly utilizing a multitude of discourses and discursive practices as strategic or tactical elements in opposition to unjust power relations, one reveals and demonstrates the objects that we come to define ourselves by are constructed and reinforced through institutional practices rather than products of "nature" (i.e. how can hegemonic norms of masculinity be "natural" if they can be contradicted so openly and repeatedly? What enables them to be

defined as such and to what end?) And finally, in putting these tactical forms of discourse to work in the attempt to disrupt patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity (and femininity, for that matter) male and female teachers alike “model” for their students resistant discursive strategies that they themselves can begin to enact.

Chapter 5

Resistant Discourses: Contemporary Critical Scholarship and the Mythopoetic Model of Transgression

Little darling, I feel that ice is slowly melting
Little darling, it seems like years since it's been clear
Here comes the sun, here comes the sun,
And I say it's all right

—The Beatles, *Here Comes the Sun*

As I have demonstrated in previous chapters, the "boy crisis" and the subsequent calls for more male teachers to serve as 'role models" for boys and young men in America's schools are discursive strategies that utilize appeals to "common sense" to normalize gender and gender roles, to reassert hegemonic masculinity, and to support unjust patriarchal power apparatuses. Through a Foucauldian critical discourse analysis of popular written news media of the past ten years, we can see within the dominant discourse the formation of masculinity as an object of knowledge in the way that assumptions about boyhood and manhood are taken for granted and/or unquestioned, in the promotion of male teachers as "role models" for boys and young men as a response to the supposed "feminization" of schooling, in the fact that the differences among males as a group based on race, social class, sexuality, ability, etc. are ignored, and in the way that alternative masculinities remain undiscussed and are rendered invisible. However, we can also see that reverse discourses do indeed exist and how they can be tactically untilized to disrupt "common sense" assumptions and bring attention to the multiple ways of being male.

In this chapter, I discuss this analysis in the context of related contemporary scholarly literature. In the first section titled "critical conversation," I examine what educational scholarship has to say about the idea of single-sex schooling as a solution to the "boy crisis," the recruitment of male teachers in the effort to de-feminize schools, and the notion of male teachers as "role model." I then assess the scholarly literature in light of the findings of this study and suggest ways in which the academic discourse could be enriched and/or expanded. In the second section titled "resisting the hegemonic hold," I outline my concluding thoughts on the matter, explain my belief in a "mythopoetic model of transgression," and clarify my perception of what it all means for educational policy and practice.

Critical Conversation

While the dominant popular discourse on the "boy crisis" and male teachers as "role models" supports and reconstructs hegemonic norms of masculinity, the majority of scholarly educational literature based on those subjects tend to take a much more critical approach. Despite the claims made in the popular media about changing policies and practices within schools and colleges of education based on brain differences between boys and girls, "girl friendly" and "boy friendly" pedagogical approaches, and the supposedly positive effects of male teachers on male students, most of the research done in recent years refute such claims and argue for the development of educational policy and practices based on the evidence provided by scholarship rather than unsubstantiated claims based on appeals to "common sense" and little else. While few of the scholarly articles located for this discussion thoroughly and systematically utilize popular written

news media as a source of data as I do (notable exceptions include Martino and Kehler, 2006; Martino, 2008; Titus, 2004), many draw similar conclusions to the ones one I have made in previous chapters, especially conclusions regarding the division of and assumptions about students on the basis of gender, the recruitment of and assumptions about teachers on the same basis, and taken-for-granted notion of male teachers as "role models."

Single-Sex Schooling

As the dominant news media discourse collected for this study indicates, a number of parents, educators, researchers, and policy makers are believers of the idea that male and female students are innately different and need distinctly different learning environments. Many of these individuals argue that schools today cater specifically to the ways that girls learn best and that boys have fallen behind as a result. As a "solution" to this "problem" some suggest a return to single sex schooling. And, under the current Bush administration, this solution has become increasingly easier to initiate. In 2001, the United States Congress approved the release of funding for single-sex schools deemed to be innovatively addressing the needs of students under the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act (Salomone, 2006). In the Fall of 2006 U.S. Department of Education Secretary Margaret Spelling announced a revision of federal Title IX regulations to allow for separation of the sexes in the classroom. As stated in a U.S. Department of Education (2005) press release, "Recognizing that some students learn better in a single sex class or school, the regulations give educators more flexibility, under Title IX, to offer single-sex classes, extracurricular activities and schools at the elementary and secondary education

levels." Not coincidently, in the previous year the Department of Education released the results of a meta-analytical study about the effectiveness of single-sex schooling when compared to schooling that took place in the more common co-educational setting where it was reported that "most studies reported positive effects for single-sex schools on all-subject achievement tests."

A study such as this one would seem to vindicate the arguments of Gurian (2005; Tyre, 2005; 2006) and Sommers (2000a, 2000b, 2006; Marklein, 2000) concerning the different needs of male and female students, but surprisingly, a shadow of doubt was cast on the need for and success of single-sex schooling by the other conclusions drawn by the research team. While most of the studies they collected did report positive differences in favor of single-sex schooling, an almost equal number showed no differences whatsoever. In addition, there were no long term indicators of success for single sex schools in terms of rates of college attendance and graduation rates. Also, the researchers stated that the assumptions they shared prior to the study concerning how single sex schools positively affected the academic performance of students once in college, improved upon or negated differential treatment by teachers, and addressed the issue of bullying were not substantiated by any of the over 2000 studies collected (U.S. Department of Education, 2005).

In an article concerning the difficulties in conducting research on single-sex schools, Salomone (2006) details the actions by the federal government that allow for an increased number of exclusively male or female schools and celebrates the fact that there will now be more single-sex school sites for researchers to observe and collect data from. Salomone acknowledges that the easing of Title IX restrictions and the increased access

to federal funding under NCLB have made such research increasingly viable. But she also acknowledges a recent Supreme Court ruling which states that the decision to segregate schools on the basis of sex must be "exceedingly persuasive"—a decision she argues creates a "research conundrum." She admits that most studies on single sex schools up to this point have been inconclusive and that if researchers, administrators, and policy makers are to make changes to current policy and practice on the basis of sex, their decisions must be well-supported, thoughtful about race and socioeconomic status, and account for cognitive and social development. To demonstrate how this may be done, Salomone details evidence that she believes support the assumptions about the effectiveness of single-sex schools but admits that more work needs to be done. Although she attempts to appear neutral and open-minded on the matter, her tacit support for single-sex schools and her calls for researchers to "maintain their objectivity" and to eschew politics by remembering that it is "all about children and not ideology" is reminiscent of language used by conservative advocate Michelle Easton in her critique of the National Organization for Women (NOW) cited previously in the previous chapter (Easton, 2007).

Articles concerning single-sex schools that are far more skeptical about their success and the ideological foundations on which they are based include the work of Herr and Arms (2004) and Tsolidis and Dobson (2006). In an article based on what they describe as the largest public experiment with single sex schooling in the United States, Herr and Arms details years of observations conducted at a California middle school dubbed the Single Sex Academy (SSA)—a school made up primarily of low income and minority students. Based on assumptions about what constitutes the best learning

environment for at-risk urban students of color, boys and girls were separated and provided with different curricula and teaching styles. Herr and Arms admit that over a five year period, test scores did in fact increase. But this "success" did not occur without consequence. To improve test performance, curricula were narrowed and reduced, lessons and learning became less meaningful, and teaching became less "authentic" (i.e. resorted to rote learning and repetitive drills). In many cases, the separation of the sexes served as a crude method to control the behavior of minority youths, especially African American males. Overall, Herr and Arms conclude that this single-sex experiment in particular failed to address gender inequities and the structural barriers that maintain them and actually perpetuated gender stereotypes rather than combating them.

Tsolidis and Dobson (2006) base their work on single-sex schooling in Australia but make several pertinent points that apply just as easily to calls for gender-segregated school in here in the U.S. They note that in the 1970s and 1980s, single-sex schools were proposed as solutions to girls' academic struggles and compare the arguments made and actions taken at that time with the current push for single sex schools to meet the supposedly distinct needs of boys. The authors found that single-sex schools for girls established decades earlier failed in large part because they were based on the flawed belief in the homogeneity of "girls" and served only to perpetuate gender norms and stereotypes. They argue that similarly changing educational policy and practices for the sake of boys would also be based on these erroneous beliefs concerning the essential nature of the sexes and would also neglect and ignore the differences that exist among boys. Based on the previous example, they argue that segregation based on gender can

only aid in the continued construction of dominant notions of masculinity and femininity through the institution of schooling.

The Recruitment of Male Teachers

By far the largest proportion of scholarly literature in terms of the "boy crisis" and the idea of male teachers as "role models" concerns the popular claims that the decline in male teachers has directly led to boys' academic struggles and that schools and colleges of education need to actively recruit men to be educators to counter this discrepancy. Major points or themes commonly found in the literature on this matter include 1) the increased effectiveness of male teachers with male students and how such claims are unfounded (Carrington, Francis, Mutchings, Skelton, Read, & Hall, 2007; Dreissen, 2007; Johnson, 2008; Marsh, Martin, & Cheng, 2008; Martino & Kehler, 2007; Skelton, 2002; Sokal & Katz, 2008), 2) how such claims are based on outdated theories concerning sex-roles and represent a backlash to feminism (Carrington et al., 2007; Dreissen, 2007; Johnson, 2008; Martino & Kehler, 2006; Rouston & Mills, 2000; Skelton, 2002; Titus, 2004), and 3) that pedagogical practices matter more to students than their teachers' gender (Carrington et al., 2007; Johnson, 2008; Marsh, Martin, & Cheng, 2008; Martino & Kehler, 2006).

First, as this study has demonstrated, it is commonly assumed within the dominant discourse that male teachers "naturally" make better teachers for male students compared to female teachers. Initiatives that have been undertaken to recruit more male teachers, whether here in the United States and in other Western nations such as Great Britain and Australia, have been justified primarily based on this assumption. The authors of the

scholarly works cited here argue that such assumptions are unfounded and actually contradict research-based educational approaches (Carrington et al., 2007; Dreissen, 2007; Johnson, 2008; Marsh, Martin, & Cheng, 2008; Martino & Kehler, 2007; Skelton, 2002; Sokal & Katz, 2008). As these articles note, the idea that more male teachers would act as a "panacea" for the problems boys face today is at best problematic and ultimately simplistic and misleading. Most studies show that teachers' gender has virtually no impact on student learning, attitudes about school, or levels of motivation. In fact, the only difference that teacher gender had was that students, regardless of sex, felt they had better relationships with their female teachers (Marsh, Martin, & Cheng, 2008). To demonstrate that the gender make-up of the teacher population is irrelevant, Skelton (2002) argues that, despite the fact that females statistically dominate the profession, schools have actually become more "masculine" in recent years in that they have become more individualized and academically rigid, are based more and more on standards and testing, and have increasingly defined hierarchical structures. The assumption that schools have become more "feminine" because most teachers are female subscribes to the logic of sex roles that says that the sexes can only act in stereotypical ways. As contemporary policies and practices within the U.S. indicate (i.e. high stakes testing, high school exit exams, an increased emphasis on benchmarks and standards, etc.), this logic is patently erroneous.

The effects of "sex role theory" on popular educational policy discourse that Skelton (2002) alludes to is the second point commonly made within the scholarly literature concerning the recruitment of more male teachers. As Carrington et al. (2007) point out, most recruitment campaigns that take place in Western societies are based on

naïve assumptions about male and female roles and the transference of such roles from adults to children. Simply put, sex-role socialization theories cannot and do not account for differences that exist among the sexes and work only to bolster gender stereotypes (Driessen, 2007). The promotion and reinforcement of sex roles in the recruitment of more male teachers indicates for many scholars a backlash against feminism and the perceived "feminization" of schooling (Carrington et al., 2007; Dreissen, 2007; Johnson, 2008; Skelton, 2002), one inspired by the "recuperative masculinity politics" of the "New Right" (Martino & Kehler, 2006) and by the mythopoetic men's movement (Rouston & Mills, 2000). In essence, it is argued that the social advancement of women and the increased success of girls and their female teachers in schools has been perceived as a threat to hegemonic masculinity and male supremacy and has necessarily been combated with a re-affirmation and re-enforcement of traditional "masculine" ideals.

The final point made within the scholarly literature concerning the recruitment of male teachers is that, for students in general, teacher gender means little and is secondary to actual pedagogical practice (Carrington et al., 2007; Johnson, 2008; Marsh, Martin, & Cheng, 2008; Martino & Kehler, 2006). According to a study conducted by Carrington et al. (2007), the British elementary students they talked to were unconcerned with their teachers' gender and were more interested in teachers who were deemed to be consistent, "even-handed," and supportive. The scholars note that while a few male students did in fact see their teachers as role models, those who did were just as likely to nominate a female teacher as a male. Carrington et al. argue that this demonstrates that it is a teacher's pedagogical and interpersonal skills that matter most, not his or her gender. In a study conducted with Australian middle school students, Marsh, Martin, and Cheng

(2008) come to a strikingly similar conclusion. They note that same-sex teachers did not motivate or connect to male students any better than teachers of the "opposite" sex. In fact, it was found that female teachers were more successful at forging relationships with boys compared to male teachers. As the authors conclude, it is the "nature of the pedagogy that is critical and not the gender of the person delivering it."

Modeling Manhood

Coinciding with and related to the popular belief that an increase in the number of male teachers in school will lead to an increased level of academic and social success for male students is the commonly held assumption about these very same teachers acting as "role models" for boys and young men (Ashley, 2003; Bricheno & Thornton, 2007; Carrington et al., 2007; Driessen, 2007; Martino, 2008; Martino & Kehler, 2006; 2007). Like the simplistic notion above that equates more male teachers with the academic improvement of boys, beliefs about male teachers as "role models" are often propped up with taken-for-granted, unquestioned "truth claims" made by the "New Right" (Martino & Kehler, 2006; 2007). Utilizing "evidence" such as the highly disputed studies on the differences in the brains of males and females, the inconclusive effects of the rise of absent fathers, and the aforementioned dominance of females in the teaching profession, neo-conservative researchers, pundits, and think tanks alike have framed "feminization" of schooling and the need for male teachers to serve as "role models" as "common sense" (and therefore, the "truth") within the dominant discourse despite the fact that such "truth claims" lack substantial research-based support. In reporting these claims in a matter-of-fact fashion, the media acts as a political apparatus of the right and has a direct impact on

shaping popular opinion and transforming educational policy and practice in favor of more male teachers as “role models” despite evidence to the contrary (Martino & Kehler, 2006).

In the attempt to interrogate the popular assumptions about “male role models,” Ashley (2003) and Bricheno and Thornton (2007) asked male students about the individuals that they admired and sought to emulate. When asked if they perceived their male teachers to be role models, the students resoundingly said no. In fact, peers, relatives, and celebrities were more likely candidates to become “role models” than teachers (Ashley, 2003; Bricheno & Thornton, 2007). As Ashley (2003) contends, peer attachment rather than attachment to a teacher is what defines a male students’ academic success or failure. Successful males tended to have stronger peer attachments (typically with more popular, socially accepted groups) while unsuccessful or socially disliked males had peer attachments within their own anti-social group but not within other groupings. In this scenario, the teacher as “role model” is literally meaningless. Building upon this point, Bricheno and Thornton (2007) argue that not only do students look at individuals other than their teachers as role models, but that the expression “role model” is too ambiguous in common usage to be sensibly understood in the first place. As a mentor, a teacher can technically be a role model, but so can someone perceived to be a hero or a personal champion. Therefore, one can be an effective mentor but still not be perceived as a “role model.”

Finally, in the attempt to understand the demand for more male teachers to act as “role models” for boys and young men in schools and in the search for future directions educators must consider, Martino (2008) suggests that such claims need to be examined

as part of a "broader cultural project of remasculization" (Martino, 2008). Although there is a major gulf that exists between neo-conservative educational policy discussions about the supposed need for more "male role models" in schools and research-based literature, the intensification of such discussions has increased nonetheless. What does this mean? As Martino (2008) explains, "the intensification of such calls reflects a deep anxiety about the status of culturally accepted versions of masculinity in the dominant culture" in light of recent social gains made by women. As a result of this "remasculization project" and the media attention it receives, gender is once again framed as a strict binary and hegemonic masculinity and other unjust systems of power based on gender are left uninterrupted and uninterrogated. Therefore, if parents, teachers, administrators, researchers, and concerned policy makers earnestly wish to address boys' problems in schools, they must be mindful that "addressing teacher recruitment and boys' social and learning needs requires framing the male role model issue in non-simplistic and non-reductionist notions of gender" (Martino & Kehler, 2006) and to be wary about "common sense" assumptions about masculinity, femininity, and "role models." As Dreissen (2007) warns, "just as male teachers do not always constitute a suitable role model for boys, female teachers do not always constitute a suitable role model for girls. Furthermore, such matching according to sex may simply reinforce and strengthen stereotypes."

Assessing the Scholarly Literature

Theoretically and conceptually, the work of this study is well aligned with contemporary educational research and scholarship. Most of the articles cited above are

highly critical of the homogenous grouping and separation of males and females in schools based on simplified definitions of "masculinity" and "femininity," the recruitment of male teachers to "solve" boys' supposed social and academic woes, and the naïve assumptions about male teachers as "role models" that seems to drive much of the conversation. However, As mentioned briefly in chapter 1, I believe that the scholarly literature is incomplete in that 1) the majority of the studies were conducting utilizing data from either Great Britain or Australia , 2) there is little to no focus on the popular discourse and the role of the media in perpetuating and re-constructing the "common sense" assumptions that support single-sex schools and male teacher recruitment efforts, and 3) there are few if any suggestions for how educators and teacher educators can practically make sense of and address these issues.

With this study, I have attempted to address these limitations. First, Great Britain and Australia parallel the United States in many ways in that they are both white, capitalist, western patriarchal societies. However, if we are to be able to uncover the formation of oppressive discourses in the United States, we must be more specific about the context we choose to examine. That is why all of my data were collected exclusively from sources within the United States, from both regional and national sources.

Secondly, the majority of the scholarly literature does not address how masculinity, boyhood, and "male role models" are being discursively produced and reproduced in the popular written news media. While some do discuss the media to some degree (Bricheno & Thornton, 2007; Dreissen, 2007; Marsh, Martin, & Cheng, 2008; Roulston & Mills, 2000) and a few others examine the dominant discourse (Martino, 2008; Martino & Kehler, 2006; Titus, 2004), most fail to scrutinize how such issues are

being discussed in the media and how that discussion impacts policy and practice. Instead, most scholarly articles cite qualitative studies conducted in school settings and refer mainly to the discourse produced in other scholarly articles. While the critical work that is being produced is important and thought provoking, the dominant discourse and its impact on the production of "truth" simply cannot be ignored.

Finally, these articles fall into the same trap that so many other critical works in education are susceptible to. As a mentor of mine once commented, they are long on critique but short on vision. In other words, they have quite a bit to say about what is wrong with education and educational policies but very few solutions or at least positive steps that can be practically implemented. While I agree with Martino's (Martino, 2008; Martino & Kehler, 2006) assessment that we must be aware of "common sense" assumptions and "truth claims" made within the media concerning masculinity, boyhood, and "male role models" in schools, I also believe that it is our duty as scholars of education to provide those in the field who seek to disrupt dominant discursive practices with tools that will allow them to do so. Hence, I argue that male teachers at all levels of experience, from veterans to pre-service, should closely consider utilizing one such tool, a "mythopoetic model of transgression"—a profeminist, socially-just conceptual model based on cross-cultural myths and mythological archetypes—as a theoretical foundation.

Resisting the Hegemonic Hold

Based on the review of historical, socio-psychological, and mythological literature on masculinity, boyhood, and "male role models" and my analysis of the

contemporary popular news media discourse of the United States on those topics over the last ten years, I argue that a profeminist, mythopoetic approach—one not rooted in an essentialized understanding of masculinity that male teachers must 'model" but rather one informed by a historical, mythological, and culturally aware perspective concerning the diverse range of masculinities one can enact as a man—can have a positive impact on current educational policy and practice. In myth, we are provided with multiple models of manhood in the guise of archetypes, ones that are shared cross-culturally and have been handed down from one generation to the next. These models do not represent an evolution of thinking about how to be a man or universal forms of masculinity; rather, they serve as a vivid demonstration of the diverse roles, or ways of being a man, that students and teachers alike can enact. They also demonstrate that males are not (and have not been, historically speaking) limited to the simplistic definitions of boyhood or manhood that the "common sense" discourse suggests or by the rigid norms of hegemonic masculinity. Instead, mythological archetypes suggest that in being "a man," one can and should embody a range of characteristics considered to be masculine as well as many of those popularly assumed to be feminine.

While males may not be the "role models" many in the media purport them to be (Ashley, 2003; Bricheno & Thornton, 2007; Carrington et al., 2007; Driessen, 2007; Martino, 2008; Martino & Kehler, 2006; 2007), they can still "model" for their students nonetheless. Using mythological archetypes as a template, they can embody, for male and female students alike, a fuller range of human behavior unconstrained by "sex roles" and in doing so can create a literal and discursive space for those students to follow suit, even if it is just within the classroom. This "space" would allow for students to talk about,

grapple with, come to understand, and enact masculinities and femininities in ways previously discouraged, marginalized, and/or silenced. This is what I call the "mythopoetic model of transgression." By openly blurring the boundaries of hegemonic masculinity utilizing myth and mythological archetypes as a foundation, male teachers can expand the limits of discursive possibilities for their students and can help to create the possibility for transgression within their collective consciousness.

The scholarly critiques of the mythopoetic men's movement (Kimmel, 1995; Messner, 1997; Roulston & Mills, 2000) generally dismiss it as a backlash against feminism , a way for men to forget about the social privileges they enjoy as men, or as an attempt to recuperate or re-traditionalize or re-shape dominant masculine ideals. As Messner (1997) writes,

> Unlike feminism, it does not confront men with the reality of how their own privileges are based on the continued subordination of women and other men. In short, the mythopoetic men's movement may be seen as facilitating the reconstruction of a new form of hegemonic masculinity—a masculinity that is less destructive, that has revalued and reconstructed men's emotional bonds with each other, and that has learned to feel good about its own "Zeus power." (p. 23-24)

Some also point out that mythopoetic writers and activists base their arguments on faulty, essentialist understandings of masculinity and an overly-simplified perception of sex-roles and are deeply rooted in patriarchy (Clatterbaugh, 1990, 1995; Kimmel & Aronson, 2004). Others note how the movement caters to almost exclusively white middle class men, ignored cultural, social, economic, and sexual differences among men and how it

appropriated Native American rituals to appear more "authentic" (Kimmel & Kaufman, 1995; Murray, 1995; Kimmel & Aronson, 2004) In many cases, these critiques are correct. But I argue that a mythopoetic approach can also be a pro-feminist one, grounded not in the resentment or avoidance of the feminine but instead in the belief in gender equity, an awareness of multiple masculinities and the destructive and unjust power of patriarchy, and the desire to disrupt hegemonic masculinity through myth and mythological archetypes.

I believe that the power of myth resides in its capacity to bridge cultures, time periods, and physical (and metaphysical) spaces. Rather than perceiving myth as a key to understanding some idealized, universal model of manhood, I see it as a well of knowledge filled with discursive possibilities and numerous, culturally-shared ways of being male and as a tool for changing the discourse of masculinities. What the ancients have to share with us is not a monolithic or teleological definition of masculinity but a polyvalence of strategies that allow us to be more fully human at this time and in this place—simultaneously (and pragmatically) the warrior and lover, king and trickster, wise old man and the child, "masculine" and "feminine." Mythopoeticism has been misconstrued by many (including some of the key figures within the movement) as a way to reclaim traditional definitions masculinity. But as Bliss (1995) states, "'Mythopoetic' does not mean 'myth and poetry'… as some think. It comes from the word 'mythopoesis,' which refers to re-mythologizing. It means remaking, so the mythopoetic approach means revisioning masculinity for our time" (p. 293). Bliss, the originator of the term, explains that mythopoeticism is "change and future oriented rather than conservative and past oriented" (1995, p. 300). It is all about changing men and

masculinities for the better, not about maintaining hegemonic masculinity and sustaining patriarchal power.

This is the mythopoetic approach I envision as the foundation of my "mythopoetic model of transgression." Rooted in myth and mythological archetypes, I believe male *and* female teachers alike can work to disrupt taken-for-granted assumptions that undergird the "regimes of truth" that support unjust social structures and can embody for their students how one can transgress dominant discursive practices. For the classroom (and the teacher's place in it), as hooks (1994) writes:

> With all its limitations, remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility we have the opportunity to labor for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades, an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress (p. 207).

The mythopoetic model that I describe is just one set of tools—one way to reflect upon ourselves, our practice, and what we convey to our students—that will allow us to "collectively imagine" a social world freed from the constraints of hegemonic masculinity and femininity and hopefully allow us to act upon that imagination.

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