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**The emergence of the male Primary school Special
Educational Needs Coordinator: a relational materialist
post-qualitative exploration**

By

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Abstract

This thesis reports on a study of the experiences and perspectives of four men working as Special Educational Need Coordinators (SENCOs) in Primary schools in England, based on interviews between September 2013 and November 2014. Within their schools, SENCOs have 'day-to-day responsibility for the operation of SEN policy and co-ordination of specific provision made to support individual pupils with SEN' (DfE, 2015, p.108). The role has an historic association with forms of motherly, selfless care and can be seen as a key site of tension as masculine-coded managerial and performative forces colonise SEN provision. There is currently no published research exploring men's experiences of working as SENCOs.

The study adopts a 'relational materialist' ontology (Hultman and Lenz Taguchi, 2010), drawing on new material feminist (e.g. Taylor, 2013) and sociomaterialist (e.g. Fenwick and Edwards, 2013) approaches, and inspired by the work of Karen Barad and Gilles Deleuze. In line with this thinking, the research engages a 'material storytelling' sensibility (e.g. Strand, 2012) and is directed by a post-qualitative approach to data analysis (Lather and St. Pierre, 2013). This study pays close attention to how material objects (folders, filing cabinets, suits and ties, photographs, desks, et al.) are entangled with discourses of gender, teaching and SEN with/in the men's narrative becomings. Thinking with relational material-discursive assemblages allows a sense of how these men *emerge* as particular 'male Primary school SENCO' subjects that knot around rigid and mutually-informing axes of hegemonic masculinity, heteronormativity, and neoliberal and neoconservative policy imperatives. This has consequences for the iterations of professionalism and care that emerge simultaneously with this 'male Primary school SENCO', which has potential to affect/effect the becomings of pupils, colleagues, knowledges and practices within their orbit.

The research contributes to and advances the study of male Primary school teachers, SENCOs and SEN practice, and develops the use of relational/new materialist theories.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	1
Acknowledgements	3
Chapter 1 - Introduction.....	4
Chapter 2 - Literature Review	18
2.1 Research on teachers' lives and identities.....	19
2.2 Gender and teaching: feminisation, surveillance, career.....	29
2.3 The roles and identities of SENCos	42
Chapter 3 - Conceptual Framework.....	51
3.1 Beginning in discourse	52
3.2 Towards 'getting out of it'	57
3.3 Post-structuralist research on teacher identities	62
3.4 Assemblages, singularities and haecceities	67
Chapter 4 - Methodology.....	84
4.1 Selves and narratives	87
4.2 Narrative research in educational contexts	93
4.3 The material's role in shaping subjectivities	97
4.4 Research questions	102
Chapter 5 - Method, ethics, analysis.....	105
5.1 Who, how, what?.....	105
5.2 Ethico-onto-epistemology	112
5.3 Post-qualitative analysis.....	114
Chapter 6 - "I don't feel comfortable going there": The haunting of a 'straightened' office.....	121
Chapter 7 - "It's not 'opting in' being a male primary school teacher": hegemonic masculinity as a territorialising force.....	137
Chapter 8 - "Some people feel the need to bring things in": Objects and 'homeliness' in school office spaces	157
Chapter 9 - "I knew what levels they were and what work they could do, I didn't know them as people": Orderliness, filing cabinets and the 'folder-isation' of SEN pupils.....	172
Chapter 10 - "It's telling you that I'm in control, cos I'm fine, and it's cool": suits, ties and the making of the authoritative male Primary school SENCo.....	183
Chapter 11 - "I'm here to model what love looks like": the emergence of care and its transformative potential.....	203
Chapter 12 – Conclusion	225
References	234
Appendix A. Ethical approval letter	262

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

'We are used to [taking] material objects, human bodies, individual selves to be units of being, knots of existence. In fact we might have been wrong all along, and these seemingly separate, stable, and definite objects can exist [only] as long as they relate to each other. In turn, the invisible, elusive and ever-changing *relations* between and among things – only those are real and worth paying attention to' (Sidorkin, 1999, p.143, original emphasis)

Introduction

This thesis reports on a study of the experiences and perspectives of four men working as Special Educational Need Coordinators (SENCOs) in Primary schools in England, based on interviews between September 2013 and November 2014. Within their schools, SENCOs have 'day-to-day responsibility for the operation of SEN policy and co-ordination of specific provision made to support individual pupils with SEN' (DfE, 2015, p.108). The Primary school SENCO has an historic association with particular forms of selfless motherly care, and this gendered nature of the role and the relative lack of men in the job (Woolhouse, 2015; Cole, 2005; MacKenzie, 2012b) were the initial starting points for the project – I thought I might be able to usefully address this 'problem'. But it was through an engagement with relational and new materialist ontologies in the work of, firstly, Jackson and Mazzei (2012), Barad (2007) and Deleuze and Guattari (1987) that set in motion how those issues would eventually be considered in this thesis. This thinking influenced how I conceived of the relationship between the men's narratives, their roles and identities, their colleagues and pupils, their physical and affective work environments, their bodies, and the policy and practice contexts they work in. Understanding these as a dynamic assemblage through which the men emerge as particular 'male Primary school SENCO' subjects, produced in the *in-between* rather than pre-existing these entanglements, opened up the study; with a relational materialist ontology we can enquire as to the conditions and connections that make it possible for such entities to appear as they do (asking not 'What is it?', but 'How did it become that way?'). Inspired by 'material storytelling' (Jørgensen and Strand, 2014; Strand, 2012) and engaging a 'post-qualitative', 'diffractive' take on data analysis, this thesis seeks to map becomings and possibilities

for becoming-other, and not just re-trace (and re-produce) the 'common sense' about men working in Primary schools.

The posthuman inflection (Taylor and Hughes, 2016) to such an approach invites attention to the mundane and everyday objects that are intimately entwined with discourse in the processes of becoming. In this thesis I argue that by decentring the human as a bounded and sovereign being we are able to gain further insight into the ways these 'male Primary school SENCo's' emerge – not (just) through negotiating conflicting identities in response to conflicting discourses of manliness and the SENCo role within Primary schools, but as coagulations forged from all manner of things, from desk-top paraphernalia to an omnipresent neoliberal policy agenda. This rhizomatic connection between quotidian daily routines and the opaque recalibration of education's priorities is made through – and makes - the 'male Primary school SENCo'. And it is this very connection between the micro and macro that, I argue, opens possibilities for resistance to the types of subjects (Ball and Olmedo, 2013; Ball, 2015; 2003) that neoliberalism draws contemporary teachers to become.

The following questions orientate this study then:

- How do the men intra-act with their material-discursive worlds in ways that produce certain becomings and certain knowledges (cf. Jackson and Mazzei, 2012)?
- How are their emerging subjectivities tied with the becomings of other human and non-human entities?
- How does the particular pattern of entanglement work to produce and sustain boundaries of difference (Barad, 2007)? In this process, what becomings are excluded or occluded?

Positioning the research

In keeping with the 'molecular' and rhizomatic (rather than 'molar' and hierarchical) intentions of the research, a range of connections have been made within and between several fields of scholarship to build the substantive and theoretical assemblage for

thinking with. In this section I outline where this study fits within these and highlight the research's contribution to these areas.

The influence of the 'material turn' (Lather, 2013; Hultman and Lenz Taguchi, 2010; Alaimo and Hekman, 2008) has been felt across a range of scholarly fields, and a Deleuzian thread has also wound its way into numerous areas where difference marks a core concern. In order to capture the vibrancy of these growing shifts I have engaged with literature within work and organisation studies, material culture studies, childhood and youth studies, disability studies, social geography, and science and technology studies, as well as from within education as broadly defined. Additionally, work on masculinities has been a focus and the study of narrative has occupied me too.

The most prominent substantive area that this study builds on is teachers' lives and identities research. Emerging and prominent during the 1980s and 1990s in particular, this area of scholarship sought to connect the professional with the personal in order to better understand teaching careers and experiences. More recently Stephen Ball and others, drawing on Foucault, have examined and critiqued neoliberalism's infection of the teacher's 'soul' through performative accountability measures and marketization (e.g. Ball, 2003; 2015), building on the earlier work that identified the conflicts that teachers face as policy remodels their working lives and sense of professional identity. My research plugs into this body of work and its current vein. It contributes a significant development as it opens up the field to a burgeoning theoretical movement that allows a view of the material's influence in this process; teachers' 'stuff' (Miller, 2010) has rarely been considered as part of their becomings and this research illustrates why doing so is important and productive.

This study also contributes to the field of research in SEN and Inclusion. In examining how these teachers with responsibility for operating SEN policy and coordinating provision talk about doing so, the research contributes a close-hand exploration of the lived experience of being a SENCo in Primary schools in recent years. Whilst the policy and procedural aspects of the role are ever-present in their stories, by focusing more on these teachers' experiences of being-SENCo this research foregrounds how the work

involved is mediated by micro-politics and staff dynamics, the local area served by the school, social identities such as gender and age, and the *things* on which their job relies. As such the research offers further insight into the lived experiences of the SENCo role, about which relatively little has been recorded (Mackenzie, 2012b).

Such insights raise important questions about the prominence and priority afforded the complexities of SEN, disability and inclusion by key practitioners in schools; these SENCos were not evidently grappling with these debates. The men in this research instead narrate rumbling tensions with colleagues and contradictory positions of authority within their school hierarchies; they mull over the significance of gender in their role, and outline school procedures, Ofsted inspections and their own career plans. Our interview-conversations tended not to touch on the thornier issues of, for example, pedagogy and social justice in relation to inclusion, SEN and disability, and instead tales of frustrating school politics and uncertain professional identities forced themselves to the fore. The silence around inclusion here suggests that these practitioners are not readily engaging with critical perspectives on policy and practice nor articulating and addressing 'uncomfortable questions with respect to inclusion and disability' (Liasidou, 2012, p.48); as such this highlights the significant - indeed dominant - role of the personal-professional as part of mainstream school inclusion assemblages.

This work also addresses a gap in the field of school leadership; there are few studies examining how such personal-professional factors are at play for teachers working in middle management in Primary schools. Research tends to have focused on functional and bureaucratic issues or managerial and leadership styles rather than examining the everyday factors affecting what it means to occupy that role (Busher, Hammersley-Fletcher and Turner, 2007). In particular, for both middle leadership in general and the SENCo role specifically, the focus on men is original and significant. There is no research published that specifically addresses men in the SENCo role (see Woolhouse, 2015; Smith, 2015) and there is little work exploring gender – and in particular men – in middle leadership or management roles in Primary schools (Brinia, 2011; Choi, 2013).

Drawing all of this together then, I suggest that exploring these men's narratives contributes to understanding the lived experience of being a SENCo, of being a middle manager/leader in Primary schools, and offers an important advancement through the attention paid to gender. This attention is significant because within the Primary SENCo role can be seen a prominent dialectic between 'care' and 'professionalism', which includes knots of associations around touching, hugging, loving, nurturing, dedicating, performing, accounting, succeeding, leading, managing, achieving. These are embodied in - and produce - the 'male Primary school SENCo'. He is a site where these tensions can coalesce, bisected by masculine-coded imperatives of neoliberal policy whilst simultaneously moulded by the 'old iconographies' (MacLure, 2001) of Primary teaching that finds expression in the motherly, caring and selfless image of the SENCo. This tension is perhaps most stark in the Primary school SENCo role, though the present study also contributes to and advances understanding of how Primary teachers more generally are enabled to emerge as particular subjects, a process characterised as a key struggle – and necessary area of critical attention – in contemporary times (Ball, 2015). Within assemblages containing prominent lines of 'care' and persuasive lines of 'professionalism', teachers are composed through the *intra-actions* of these facets (Barad, 2007) along with the human and non-human entities that are pulled into this orbit, and it is this iterative process and pattern of composition in the men's stories that this research contends with.

Furthermore, the theoretical approach adopted affords a way out of an impasse. It is my contention that research with male Primary school teachers has become stuck revising many of the same points since the topic gained popular attention, and although this adds to the stock of knowledge it offers diminishing inspiration for new thinking. In seeking to decentre the *a priori* human subject this study suggests a way of moving thinking elsewhere. If the process of subjectification, or *becoming*, happens in *intra-action* between human and non-human entities *as they entangle* then I suggest that we can avoid dead-end questions revolving around *what* the male Primary school teacher is, should or could be (role model, head teacher-in-waiting, paedophile...) that centre the debate within the male subject. We can think instead about *how* any or none of those subjectifications emerge with/in singular assemblages constituted not just by

discourses about men and teachers but also the material and affective dimensions of working life as a teacher. In opening out to address the wider map within which the men become 'male Primary school SENCo' subjects we eschew just re-tracing the already-said: we seek the 'movement [that] always happens behind the thinker's back, or in the moment when he blinks...During this time, while you turn in circles among [habitually posed] questions, there are becomings that are silently at work, which are almost imperceptible' (Deleuze and Parnet, 2002, pp.1-2). This thinking connects to the necessity of critically interrogating teachers' subjectification; it is the 'mundane, quotidian neoliberalisations' (Ball and Olmedo, 2013, p.85) of teaching that are *silently at work* and *almost imperceptible*: whilst we're busy turning in circles, it is on our desks and pinned to the noticeboard, piled in the corner and in the ways we routinely work, that our professional identities are emerging – that is where our analyses need to be grounded as this is also where resistances are rhizomatically grown.

This study's focus on the material's role in both these 'quotidian neoliberalisations' and potential resistances to them marks this thesis' contribution to the relational materialist theoretical terrain – there is little attention on teachers, and male teachers especially, within this young canon of work.

Positioning the researcher

If I had remained in Primary teaching, I imagine I would have been a SENCo at some point. My mentor at the school I worked in, who had seen me through my PGCE placements and then made sure I got a job there for my NQT year, was the SENCo – as well as Deputy Head, as well as taking Years 5 and 6 for their Literacy lessons. She was an inspiration; an unfalteringly dedicated, sleep-defying, full-throttle, no corners cut, icon. In moments of daydreaming about what I wanted to do, being a SENCo would feature and I'd imagine myself in the role, motivated by what could be achieved in that pivotal position.

But part of those wonderings were tinged with self-doubt too. During my NQT year there was a boy in my Year 4 class who experienced Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties and had a label of ADHD. Teaching him was, for me, a fraught experience.

His potential for unpredictable behaviour and extreme reactions were constantly on my mind, and this effected what I planned to do each day with the class – sometimes positively because I'd carefully scope out all eventualities, sometimes detrimentally because I just wouldn't try other activities. It was particularly stressful and upsetting during the periods that his medication dosage was being changed – sometimes his eyes were dead, he barely moved. Heart-breaking. One day, when he was on less medication, he had raided the sweet cupboard at home and by the time he got to school he was on such an unstable high it scared all of us in the classroom that morning. My feelings that I should be able to deal with all of this better involved a mixture of ideas: I was trying to be the 'male role model' people told me boys needed – so was I not doing it right? (Martino and Berrill, 2003; Sevier and Ashcraft, 2009; Mackenzie 2012c). I felt an incompatibility between caring for him, paying calm and gentle attention to his academic and pastoral needs, but also aligning myself with that imagined male teacher who cares *in a different way*, who has pupil discipline fine-tuned, who can manage a well-oiled class doing the right ('normal'?) things (Mills, Haase and Charlton, 2008; Ashley and Lee, 2003; King, 1998; Vogt, 2002; O'Connor, 2008). I understood the need to be sensitive to his needs, but at times it was so hard to teach the whole class, ensuring each pupil made the necessary sub-levels of progress, and *manage him* too – my burgeoning professional identity as a competent and successful (male) teacher was at stake (Armstrong, 2003; Newman, 2010).

Our SENCo made all the difference to this experience; she made sure that I retained a sense of perspective, she gave me advice and put in place tools, tactics and strategies for us to use in class; she was always there if we needed her, always made situations better. And this all made me question how effective I would have been in the SENCo role – could I ever have achieved what she was able to? Would my interest and desire to *make a difference* have been enough? Perhaps taking the expert positioning would have helped – become the font of all knowledge and impart it in the face of difficulties? Might I have been relentless in my fight to get *all* staff trained to a suitable high standard? An advocate and warrior for pupil and parents perhaps? What were the challenges that I couldn't even imagine? And why is it that I knew of no-one that knew a male SENCo?

These were the sorts of thoughts that re-surfaced as I planned a PhD proposal; after moving from London to Leicester I was coming to the end of my Master's at Sheffield and there was the chance of ESRC funding for a doctoral project. I wanted to explore some of these questions I had about men working as SENCOs in Primary schools. Whilst ultimately the research has also dealt with other unanticipated things, in unanticipated ways, at its heart remains a desire to gain insight into what it is like being a 'male Primary school SENCO'.

Structure and content of the thesis

In this section I lay out the structure and content of each chapter as a way of orientating readers to the prominent points that draw the thesis into a cohering assemblage.

Chapter 2 reviews key literature in the relevant substantive fields. It outlines the development of the central field, that of teachers' lives and identities research, noting how teaching exerts normative pressure on professional and personal lives and that the raft of policy developments in the last 30 years has been a cause of significant changes in the identities teachers are able to adopt. In more recent times, a 'drastic loss of autonomy and professional collegiality' coincides with managerialism and centrally controlled Government 'policies, practice and performance' metrics (Jeffrey, 2014b, p.111), meaning that increasingly teachers' professional identities have become 'individualistic, competitive and bureaucratic' (ibid, p.112). Wood and Brownhill (2016) argue that teachers can now be seen as agents of neoliberalism rather than oppressed by it, and this notion weaves its way throughout the thesis. This discussion dovetails with the proceeding section of the chapter about gender and teaching. This sets out early conclusions about the motherly and nurturing image of the Primary teacher and explores care and professionalism as themes that will also flow throughout the thesis. Arguments around the call for 'more male role models' are discussed and research with male Primary school teachers is reviewed. The literature on the experiences of men occupying leadership and management positions in Primary schools is also considered here.

The chapter then moves on to Special Educational Needs (SEN) policy and coordination, noting the development of the SENCo role and its historically low status that contrasts with current policy discourses positioning it as a strategic leadership role. Nevertheless the post is varied and contextually specific, with research suggesting there is no such thing as a typical SENCo role. What is clear is that SENCos operate 'under the siege of neo-liberal imperatives' (Liasidou and Svensson, 2013, p.3) and 'within a context of heightened performance-driven accountability and regulatory compliance' (Done, Murphy and Knowler, 2014, p. 4). As certain 'hegemonic' traits of masculinity entwine with these neoliberal policy imperatives (Warin, 2013; McKnight, 2016; Lindisfarne and Neale, 2016), men who work as Primary school SENCos can be considered a prime site of tension in the bifurcation of the Primary teacher identity between an historic and residual child-centred imagery and the contemporary accountable, performative compliance officer.

Chapter 3 outlines the conceptual framework for the study. Building on the idea that the assemblage of forces influencing the development of teacher subjectivities (as described in Chapter 2) exceeds the bounds of humanist discursive analysis, this chapter stages a Deleuzo-Baradian critique of post-structurally inflected research on teacher identity. It also considers the approach taken in research on male Primary teachers, agreeing with Jupp (2013, p.428) that this work tends not to go beyond 'rehashing the glass escalator or gender issues of male teachers as classic or privileged tokens in a female workplace' debates. I argue that it is difficult to conceptualise how the 'symbolic/discursive order might change' within the paradigm that could be described as one of 'discursive determinism' (Ringrose, 2011, p.599) – within such paradigms, research can act as 'actualizers of normative procedures' (Taylor, 2016, p.6). In response I make a case for a 'relational materialist approach' (Hultman and Lenz Taguchi, 2010; Blaise, 2013) and, following Davies and Gannon, orientate the thesis around concepts of: 'being as emergent in the encounter; intra-action or the entanglement of agencies; and the significance of matter' (2012, p.358). This thinking draws on key Deleuzian ideas of *assemblage*, *singularities*, *haecceities*, *'the event'*, *qualitative multiplicities* and *quantitative multiplicities*. These are described and made

relevant to the present study. In doing so a 'post-identitarian' view on the constitution of the subject is advanced (Braidotti, 2012).

Chapter 4 engages in a discussion about narrative and narrative methodology. It considers how narrative (and indeed narrators) forge intelligible identities, but ultimately the chapter seeks to disrupt narrative conventions of sequence, closure and agency, and decentre the 'narrative I', taking cues from Deleuzian-inspired scholarship here (e.g. Tamboukou, 2010; 2015b). Through a discussion of the material's influence in our emerging subjectivities, I suggest that discourse-stories-selves-material is/are ontologically inseparable: it is the swirling and darting and rhizomatic *relationship* between these parts that is ontologically significant. The chapter then presents a 'material storytelling' approach (Jørgensen and Strand, 2014; Strand, 2012), which draws on these ideas and Barad's material-discursive *agential realism*, seeing narratives-and-materialities emerging together as co-constructions 'between object, people, artefacts, events and processes' (Humphries and Smith, 2014, p.483).

Chapter 5 entangles with these ideas. Firstly it describes the pragmatics of the research – how the men were recruited, the nature of the interviews – and addresses my own interpellation in these encounters. Consideration is given to interviewing as a subjectifying force, with its propensity to re-produce 'common sense' understandings – not least the striations of masculinity amongst men who may perceive their manly identities to be under threat (see for example Pini, 2005). The chapter then develops some of these thoughts using central concepts from Karen Barad's work. As 'we don't obtain knowledge by standing outside the world; we know because we are *of* the world', she calls us to think in terms of '*onto-epistem-ology* – the study of practices of knowing in being' (2007, p.185). Moreover, since knowing and being are mutual and inseparable and *re/made in action*, Barad argues that each specific intra-action matters – because with each action we open or close possibility. Hence she coins the term '*ethico-onto-epistem-ology*'. An awareness is needed that research practices are creative of the specific phenomenon we are researching, with the key point being that the becomings of these men are not pre-supposed, inevitable or predictable – the mappings made in this research are emergent for/from this specific piece of research, a product of singular

embodied, material, temporal, spatial configurations. This affirms a sense that other becomings are a possibility within, through and as a result of the research. I outline the argument, therefore, for engaging in a 'post-qualitative' and 'diffractive' data analysis that avoids creating 'structure and stasis out of movement and proliferation' (MacLure, 2013a, p.659). This marks a difference between tracing and mapping, where a map is open to new becomings but a tracing reproduces what is already there. In such a vein, a thematic coding was 'practiced unfaithfully, without rigid purpose or fixed terminus', allowing 'something other, singular, quick and ineffable to irrupt into the space of analysis' (MacLure, 2013b, p.164).

Chapters 6 to 11 are the substantive chapters, although there is a good deal of theory wound up with the presentation of data here, the two being used to think each other through (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012). The first two chapters here give particular attention to James (Chapter 6) and Charlie (Chapter 7) as examples of the ways that, in Chapter 6, heteronormativity can infect the becomings possible for men in Primary schools and then, in Chapter 7, how 'hegemonic masculinity' also encloses possibilities. The two chapters together can be seen as grounding in empirical example the assertions that Primary teaching is, for men, trammelled by these dual boundaries of normative masculinity.

Chapter 6 is an exploration of James' office space through his stories about it and himself. Using the imagery of 'ghosts undercut[ting] the narratives' (Silva, 2015, p.191), the chapter discusses James' cloaking of his sexuality from pupils and parents and explores how this 'haunts' his material-discursive environment. I draw on research with gay school teachers and leaders into the stringent heteronormative pressures they often face, referring in particular to the idea of the 'straightened office' (Tooms, 2007). At the end of the chapter I use the *office/closet* as a queer conceptual frame to imagine the work done by James' closeted sexuality as manifested with/in his office – from this finely balanced material-discursive assemblage a particular male SENCo subjectivity emerges doing caring and emotionally supportive work despite a restrictive heteronormativity.

Chapter 7 builds a way of using the structural and hierarchical model of 'hegemonic masculinity' (e.g. Connell, 1987; 2005) in confederation with the Deleuzian rhizomatic assemblage metaphor. Doing so seeks to avoid claims of determinism levelled at some applications of the hegemonic masculinity theory, and gives form to the notion that 'every rhizome [assemblage] contains lines of segmentarity according to which it is stratified, territorialized, organised, signified, attributed, etc.' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p.10). Hegemonic masculinity is imagined as one of the 'focuses of unification, centres of totalisation, points of subjectivation...' (Deleuze and Parnet, 2002, p.viii) within assemblages that operates as a territorialising (ordering) force. Drawing on Braidotti's work that argues 'masculinity is antithetical to the process of becoming' (2011b, p.36), this chapter presents some of Charlie's stories and explores how hegemonic masculinity seeks constantly to recuperate and re-territorialise, such that becoming-other is re-directed and folded back in service of maintaining gendered terms of disconnection.

Chapter 8 takes forward the discussion of gender and materiality, pulling in Simon's and Graham's contributions to the research alongside James and Charlie's. Here the emergence of gendered subjectivities are seen as entangled with school spaces and objects within those spaces. Control and ownership of space in the 'feminised' Primary school environment is considered - through use of the 'extended self' notion (Belk, 1988; Tian and Belk, 2005), it can be seen that stuff in these men's work spaces makes a difference to how they are positioned. I examine an incident in one of the interviews as a rupture to the unfolding becomings, within which the 'affective flows' (Youdell and Armstrong, 2011) of that school environment were glimpsed. Of significance too is that the men tend to talk about their schools as 'homely', and this material manifestation of a key discourse delineating Primary school teaching (as feminine) is examined, leading to new thinking about teaching as gendered work. In order to disrupt this I suggest some material resistances.

Chapter 9 remains in the men's offices but focuses on working practices specifically, addressing the procedures and materials of SEN coordination. I explore the folders, files and filing cabinets the men talk of which are used to narrate dynamic and

competent SENCo identities. As mundane functionaries in the management of SEN provision these items may seem to have little consequence, but these run-of-the-mill material office items are agents of the SEN status quo: assess, record, diagnose, classify, treat, and repeat. The significant outcome is that pupils come to be objectified, or as I put it, 'folder-ised' - they are pacified, norm-referenced and contained. The everydayness of objects within SEN procedures offer, however, small ways of pushing back the neo-liberal managerialism of contemporary SEN provision.

Chapter 10 pays attention to how the men talk about their everyday work clothing, which tends to be the suit, shirt and tie. This amplifies the professional, managerial and in-control SENCo identity discussed in the previous chapter, as the men narrate feeling authoritative in this particular attire. In order for a coherent 'male Primary teacher/SENCo with authority' to emerge, some aspects of 'care' are seen as necessary to drop – *to move on from* - which has clear consequences for the re-iteration of gender norms. The suit, shirt and tie ensemble can also be seen as materialising normative and hegemonic idea/ls about (white, middle class) masculinity. Articulating with neoconservative appeals to tradition, the neoliberal responsabilisation that fuels the 'male role model' script (Burn and Pratt-Adams, 2015; Wood and Brownhill, 2016) constructs an image of the patriarchal smartly dressed male teacher and this delineates pupils (and parents) from deprived areas as subjects needing such a role model. Again, to end this chapter resistances are noted at the quotidian level of clothes choice and dress code policies – if teachers' subjectivities are the site of struggle in neoliberal times then addressing what we wear can play some part in reshaping the tightly-pulled knot of hegemonic masculinity, neoliberalism and neoconservatism.

Chapter 11 is to some extent a weaving together of the threads appearing throughout the previous chapters, as it takes 'professionalism' and 'care' head-on. The chapter firstly considers the surveillance that male teachers experience that leads them to find 'different' ways to care, avoiding physical contact and proximity to their pupils. These orientate around common lines appearing throughout the thesis, including using their expertise, knowledge and following procedures for the good of pupils. A very gendered story so far. But after examining recent calls to 'de-couple' the ties between

gender and care in education (e.g. Warin and Gannerud, 2014), I seek to move into a more affirmative space by harnessing the relational materialist ontological consequences and beginning to think differently - future possibilities are opened up by seeing care as emergent, contingent, as driven by relationality and transformative. I map some of the other stories the men tell and their *more than* gendered dimensions, suggesting that this can lead us to reconfigurations of care and gender in education.

The concluding final chapter then returns to the research questions and brings the thesis to a close, whilst also seeking to set lines of flight in motion by suggesting possible future directions of research travel from here.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

Introduction

This research can be located at the intersection of four overlapping literatures within educational research. These are teacher identities and life histories; gender and teachers' professional/personal lives; Primary school management and leadership; and Special Educational Needs (SEN) policy and coordination. This chapter maps the entangled themes of those terrains, seeking to highlight the place of this research within and at the intersection of those literatures and build a rationale for this research. The aim here is to identify how this research entwines with the literature, pinpointing where it can contribute originally and significantly to these fields.

I begin with a summary of research on 'teacher's lives and identities', noting that this area has a long history of scholarship and continues to be prominent in more recent scholarly work. This lays some key foundations for the current research as it both identifies the theoretical perspectives adopted and pinpoints key themes such as the intermingling of professional and personal lives and identities of teachers, and the seams of gender, 'professionalism' and care that are woven into teachers' accounts of their work. These seams are picked up (and picked at) in this chapter, and indeed throughout the thesis.

I move on to discuss male Primary school teachers in relation to key issues such as 'role models' and normative gender regimes in Primary schools, and highlighting the widespread and well-documented assumption that for men, achieving promotion in these settings is straightforward. This then leads to a section on the study of middle leaders/managers in Primary schools, pointing to the paucity of research exploring the role of gender in the day-to-day experiences of these teachers (Choi, 2013; Brinia, 2011). Following this, the chapter discusses the role of the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) within the Primary school leadership hierarchy and draws attention to the fact that despite research suggesting the role is gendered, to date there is no work published that investigates the experiences of men who work as SENCos (in either Primary or other sectors). The role of SENCo could be seen as contradictorily

gendered as it has nurturing, 'feminine' associations but more recently has been re-territorialised by neoliberal 'masculine' lines that link it with management, pupil achievement and 'raising standards'. Therefore research with these teachers can offer insight into the complex gendered experiences of middle leaders in Primary schools.

2.1 Research on teachers' lives and identities

This opening section maps the development of research on teacher identities, describing prominent research in the field and making links with the present study. It aims to outline key themes and thinking in the study of teacher identity in order to contextualise the substantive content of my research.

Foundational early work on teacher's lives and work

The 'personal' and 'professional' of teachers' identities has been the focus of much research in education (Sachs, 2001), and it is a field with a long tradition. In 1932, Willard Waller's seminal text about American schoolteachers highlighted how the difficulties of a teacher's job are related to the boundaries between the 'professional' and the 'personal'. He argued that the nature of the work and the status of teaching attracts and produces certain teacher identities; thus the initial appeal of teaching is related to one's initial pre-teaching sense of identity, and the role and work of teaching in turn influences the types of identities that develop amongst teachers. Waller's argument that teaching is the refuge of 'unsaleable men and unmarriageable women' neatly introduces the notion that teaching has been seen as low status and that this is bound to normative ideas of gender: in Waller's framing, women choose teaching because they do not have a husband, home or their own children to care for, and men teach because they are unable to secure better employment. The nature of teaching, Waller provocatively suggested, puts off those 'virile and inspiring persons of whom the profession has such need', and attracts only 'persons who shrink from the daily life of battle' (1932/1984, p. 162). Being virile, inspirational and battle-ready are notably hegemonic masculine (Connell, 2005) traits that the teaching profession was seen to lack. This points forward to contemporary concerns about a 'feminised' teaching profession and frequent calls for 'more male role models' in Primary schools especially, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

Nevertheless, Waller's focus was not on the shortcomings of teachers per se, but rather on how the conditions under which they were working, and the historical development of the job of teaching, shaped 'who teachers were' (Francis and Skelton, 2008, p.2). Harry Wolcott's *Man in the Principal's Office: An Ethnography* (1973) could be seen in the same vein; this ground-breaking, detailed study of Ed Bell, the Principal of a suburban American elementary school, noted that his identity as Principal revolved around commitments, motivations and priorities which were bound to the wider set of social and economic relations in which he lived his life. Wolcott highlights the essentially conservative nature of Bell's performance in his role, which entailed maintaining community stability through monitoring and conveying its rhetoric (Yon, 2003). Waller's and Wolcott's studies both suggest that teaching and teachers identities tend to affirm the norms of their locale and era.

The conservative force of teaching work is also a feature identified by Dan Lortie in his classic book *Schoolteacher* (1975). In this large interview-based study of school teachers in the USA, he argues that the isolated nature of teaching (e.g. working in separate classrooms) promotes not just resistance to radical change but also short-term planning and an individualism that discourages collaboration with colleagues – an example of how the historically situated construction of teaching work comes to produce certain identities and dispositions. Whilst Colin Lacey's *The Socialisation of Teachers* (1977) does not counter these conclusions, it is an example from this period that adds a level of complexity to the picture being painted. He uses interviews with UK teachers to examine how new entrants fare in their training and early career, focusing 'on the process of individual change in the context of changing institutional settings' (p.10). Thus the school is conceptualised as a heterogeneous and adapting site, and teachers as purposeful, strategic actors within specific situations. In order to indicate that this is an on-going and contingent process, Lacey adapts Becker's point of view on 'situational adjustment', asserting that 'the individual is *constantly transforming himself* into "the kind of person the situation demands"' (Lacey, 1977, p.72, emphasis added). He identified three types of 'strategy' that teachers adopt to do so, ranging from 'strategic compliance' (compliance but whilst retaining private reservations), 'internalised

adjustment' (compliance with the constraints imposed, believing them to be best), to 'strategic redefinition' (achieving change by causing or enabling those with formal power to modify their interpretation of the situation) (ibid, pp.72-73).

What I take as particularly pertinent for the current research is the idea that teachers have to balance the constraints of a situation in school with their own personal ideas, sense of purpose and actions; there is a complex inter-relationship between these, where one's choice of 'strategy' represents a 'state of constant flux' in which the 'individual is in a constant dialogue with himself [sic] about his position' (ibid, p.68). Where the adoption of a certain strategy, such as 'shouting, threatening or demanding' something of their class, is at odds with 'who they really are', greater levels of justification are required in order to 'obtain reassurance and support' from others (ibid.). Lacey argued that the context of a school - with its priorities, incentives and demands - can breed uncertainty and a need to justify oneself, to reconcile one's *self* with one's *teacher self*. This set of ideas foreshadow the later discussion in this chapter.

The classic studies re-viewed here build a sense that historical and cultural constructions of 'the teacher' and the nature of teaching work impact on the way in which teachers come to see themselves (Francis and Skelton, 2008). All four texts can be seen to suggest that teaching (and ideas about what 'being a teacher' means) exerts normative tendencies on teachers' professional and personal lives - whether that's a general resistance to change (Waller), its monitoring of community norms (Wolcott), its isolating and individualising tasks (Lortie), or its potential to conflict with teachers' personal opinions and values (Lacey). Whilst, of course, these studies were conducted in different eras with differing national and policy contexts, they provide a useful backdrop for developing this discussion of more recent research on teacher's lives and identities since they resonate in later studies' conclusions about teachers and teaching (e.g. Nias, 1989; McNally and Blake, 2010). Moreover, the four brief conclusions outlined above are indicative of the experiences reported by the male Primary school SENCos' involved in this research.

The development of the field, 1980s and 1990s

Teachers' lives and identities emerged as a significant area of research interest during the 1980's, as part of the 'sociology of teachers and teaching' (Hargreaves and Woods, 1984). This field centred on how teachers manage their role in relation to colleagues, pupils, policy, career ambitions and socio-economic circumstances; the aim was to 'try to get to grips with what it is like to be a teacher' (ibid, p.1). The idea that teacher's own individual-biographical identities interact with constructions of teaching and teachers found in popular opinion and policy (Francis and Skelton, 2008, p.2) was a developing feature of this work.

Research in this period established that understanding teachers and teaching requires a grasp of the relationship between the personal and professional (e.g. Hargreaves and Woods, 1984; Sikes, Measor and Woods, 1985; Ball and Goodson, 1985; Thomas, 1995; Day et al., 2000). Jennifer Nias' (1989) foundational research in the field of teacher identity (Day et al., 2006) points to the 'importance in teaching of the teacher as a person, as distinct from...the teacher as possessor of occupational knowledge and skills' (Nias, 1989, p.13). Whether it is useful to seek the distinction between the 'person' and their 'knowledge and skills' is debateable, but certainly the 'personal' was recognised as 'part of the overall holistic activity of teaching' (Woods, 1990, p.11) with prominent voices arguing that teachers' lives and sense of selves are eminently influential over how they enact their role. For example, Ball and Goodson (1985, p.18) point out that the ways in which teachers 'achieve, maintain and develop their identity...are of vital significance in understanding the actions and commitments of teachers in their work', and Nias states that 'identity' is a 'crucial element in the way teachers...construe the nature of their job' (1989, p.13).

A central thread of much of this work was an interest in how teachers reconcile a core or 'substantive' sense of self with the more 'situational', malleable identities demanded by the teaching role (e.g. Woods, 1984; Ball and Goodson, 1985; Nias, 1989). Addressing teachers' concepts of their 'self' (or 'selves') emerged as key to understand the way they teach, their professional development and their attitude toward educational

change (Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop, 2004). This marked a shift away from the 'new sociology of education' (Young, 1971) that was largely influenced by a Marxist perspective, where teachers were often characterised as 'dupes', 'victims' and 'helpless agents in the reproduction of the relations of production' (Ball and Goodson, 1985, p.7). Thus teachers' viewpoints and experiences continued to be foregrounded, and examining the biographies of teachers - and the beliefs and values linked to those - gained credibility as a method of researching teachers' professional lives and outlooks (Beijaard et al, 2004; see e.g. Goodson, 1992; Bullough, Knowles and Crow, 1991; Kelchtermans, 1993; Connelly and Clandinin, 1999). As Bullough and Baughman assert (1997, cited in Skerrett, 2008, p.144), 'teacher development is best understood in relationship to biography, to the unfolding and telling and retelling of a life'.

An appetite for personal commitment was seen to define the identities of Primary school teachers in the pre-1990s before the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA), the introduction of the National Curriculum and first school 'league tables' based on SATs results, with Nias' extensive research leading her to conclude that teachers' feel a strong identification with their jobs. However,

'...the greater the satisfaction they receive from their personal relationship with individuals and classes, and the more outlet they find in their work for varied talents and abilities, the greater the incentive that exists for them to invest their own personal and material resources in their teaching' (Nias, 1989, p.18).

Thus teachers were 'trapped' by a 'double paradox' (ibid) – personal rewards only accrue from a committed self-investment, yet the cost of such investment can be so high that they diminish the enjoyment of those rewards. Bob Jeffrey, who has studied Primary teachers' identities over the past 25 years (Jeffrey, 2014a), agrees, arguing that during this period teachers 'depleted the self' (2014b, p.121) due to such high levels of personal commitment. He suggests that this provides a telling contrast to the ways in which teachers' selves are 'depleted' today, as will be discussed below.

A focus on subjectivities and difference – adopting post-structural approaches

Interested in how teachers negotiated their personal-professional identities, how the 'disparate dimensions of teachers' lives – curriculum, career, home life, pedagogy'

(MacLure, 2001, p.178) were knitted together, researchers began drawing on 'conceptions of subjectivities and difference' (Francis and Skelton, 2008, p.2). This afforded a focus on the cultural and aesthetic (rather than the material conditions, as per Marxist accounts) constructions of social class, gender and 'race', interrogating the intersections of different *identities* and 'subject positions' within discourses of teaching and teachers, and adding a complexity to scholarly understandings of teachers' lives, work, motivations and perceptions (ibid).

Post-modern and post-structural theories provided insight into how we 'channel hop' around versions of our selves (Beynon, 2002), using discursive resources to 'construct different narratives and different narrative identities' (Søreide, 2007, p.35). Teachers' influential personal-professional biographies could be seen as 'biographical projects' (MacLure, 2001, p.171), whereby experiences are incorporated and identities reconstructed in an on-going narrative of self; 'hybridised, bricolage' identities (Evans and Jones, 2009, p.1) that are 'interactional accomplishments' (MacLure, 2001, p.179). In this contemporary view, the *identity work* we engage in is not seen as description, rather it is understood as a performance of justification, explanation and sense-making in relation to ourselves, other people and the contexts in which we circulate (MacLure, 2001, p.168) – hence *identity* is an 'argument', 'used by teachers for particular discursive purposes' (ibid.). For example, Sfard and Prusak (2005, p.17) note that teacher's identity-narratives can change when there is a need for 'solidarity and effective communication' (e.g. with colleagues or a pupil's parents), 'according to the authors' and recipients' perceptions and needs'.

Teachers – indeed, everyone – shift the sense of who they are, via the stories they tell of themselves, depending on the needs of a situation. Conceptualising identities as fluid, performed and produced asks important questions about the 'discursive structures, processes and power relations [that] teachers are inscribed in' (Søreide, 2007, p.31), which enable certain identity narratives to be licensed; we might think of this 'channel-hopping' and these 'bricolage' identity constructions as forms of 'narrative-identity compliance' or 'narrative-identity redefinition', following Lacey (1977). Research with teachers has posed generative questions around their compliance with, acceptance of,

or resistance to competing narratives about the role of teacher as it intersects with personal biographies (e.g. Coldron and Smith, 1999; MacLure, 2001; Flores and Day, 2006; Sikes and Piper, 2010; Jupp, 2013). Certainly the various discourses that circulate around teachers (e.g. in policy, in the news media, in popular culture), can be seen as incomplete and malleable *resources* available to create narrative identities, yet these are often conflicting and therefore a professional identity is a site of tension for teachers as they negotiate a sense of self.

'Post-modern' professional teacher identities – the contemporary landscape

Post-structural understandings of how subjectivities are constructed, often based on narrative-biographical research (Beijaard et al, 2004), delineate the field today (Francis and Skelton, 2008). The idea that competing discourses are negotiated by teachers as they seek out and work on their identities in a post-modern era of complexity and risk (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1994) underpins contemporary research in this area. This has been heavily influenced by the work of Foucault, and in particular his later writing on 'care of the self' (Foucault, 1994), centred on how 'subjects create themselves in relation to social, political and regulatory structures of their environment' (Jeffrey, 2014b, p.119).

A recent ethnographic study by Bob Jeffrey argues that a 'post-modern professional' teacher identity is currently predominant, where a 'drastic loss of autonomy and professional collegiality' coincides with a managerialist drive for teachers to conform to centrally controlled Government 'policies, practice and performance' metrics (2014b, p.111). The influence of neoliberal social and economic policy climates are significant in how teachers' identities are now constructed (Francis and Skelton, 2008; Ball, 2015; Wood and Brownhill, 2016; McKnight, 2016; Done, Murphy and Knowler, 2014; Kirk and Wall, 2010) and in this version of professionalism the distant governmental regime expect self-control and adherence to behaviour defined by Government imperatives (Jeffrey, 2014b). This is secured by a prioritising of accountability, for example regular high-stakes inspections and SATS-based school 'league tables'. Teacher's professional judgement is increasingly eliminated and the former 'broad values established across the profession through theories of learning and professional association are now used

to promote efficient management of policy and institutions' (Jeffrey, 2014b, p.112). Such a professional identity is 'individualistic, competitive and bureaucratic' (ibid). Note here the gendered nature of this professional discourse, a feature that is considered in a later section of this chapter.

Teachers are seen as seesawing between conflicting imperatives and having to negotiate an 'extremely dilemmatic terrain of contemporary educational practice' (ibid). Discourses of 'managerialism' and accountability (Troman, 2007; Woods and Jeffrey, 2002) have constituted instrumentalist subject positions for teachers to adopt yet these often lead to conflicting ethical commitments, for example in relation to SATS tests - teachers may feel a tension between what they see is best for their pupils' broader education and the responsibility to achieve improved test results and thus secure the reputation of their school. Teachers are seen to be leading professional lives more full of highs and lows than teachers in previous eras (Troman and Raggl, 2008), with a wider range of emotions bound to the professional teacher identity (Hargreaves, 1998; Isenbarger and Zembylas, 2006), including extremes of success, failure, fear, elation, satisfaction and dejection.

Stephen Ball coined the term 'terrors of performativity' (Ball, 2003, p.216) to describe the deleterious effects of imperatives to *perform* limitless improvement and professional compliance; in such performative cultures teachers are 'split' between what their own values orientate them towards doing and the duties expected by a standards-focused education system. The 'terror' of performativity is that teachers come to perform certain practices in order to *appear* competent, progressing, and to be accountable – but these actions are stripped of meaning or value in their own right. For example, Ratcliffe (2014) quotes teachers and school leaders describing the teaching and assessment practices they adopt purely in order to meet Ofsted's inspection criteria. Jeffrey (2014b, p.95) sees such fabrications as evidence that the 'habitus of performativity' has now become an accepted part of teacher (and pupil) subjectivities; new kinds of teacher subjects have emerged (Ball, 2003), constituted by the contradictions inherent in such post-modern professional life.

Within this neoliberal context, Maguire (2008, p.53) argues that the job of teacher has been so radically redefined 'that the identities...now possible to "make up" in teaching are no longer as desirable or as congruent with other values that made up...former teachers' identities'. With a similar view, MacLure suggests that the 'old iconographies of teacher-hood', with their ethical and moral axes and values of 'vocation, care, dedication and self-investment' are being eroded and instead new identities – new subject positions of teacher 'professionalism' - are offered (2001, p.176). As market place values come to dominate, identities oriented around ideals such as truthfulness, mutual respect, authenticity, courage and compassion are threatened (Nixon, 2005). In this light, it has been argued that today teachers tend to leave their 'real' identities 'at home' (Woods and Jeffrey, 2002); that they are willing to 'embrace the role of teacher, but want to shrug off the identity' (MacLure, 2001, p.176). Such a change in teacher's identities can be seen within the literature cited in previous sections; research with teachers working 30 years ago (e.g. Nias, 1989; Sikes et al, 1985) confirms that their teaching and personal lives were characterised by a dovetailed relationship – even if not completely realised, the close links between the two formed a convincing characterisation of the teacher identity. These identities were based on broader teaching and learning theories (Woods and Jeffrey, 1996) which ensured an encompassing sense of professional identity based on the 'old iconographies' of teacher-hood. Following this period, in the face of change (post ERA), teachers were likely to resent and resist greater centralisation and the 'de-professionalisation' that came with technicist models of the teacher-professional, and such traits could be seen to characterise teacher identities during the 1990s (Jeffrey and Woods, 1998). There is a sense that teacher identities developed around a shared experience and distrust of what was happening in and to the profession.

Yet such rejection of these 'new' models of teaching, and the teacher identities it encouraged, may not characterise large swathes of the contemporary teacher population. As schools' staff become increasingly made up of teachers educated in the 'post professional age' (Jeffrey, 2014b, p.112) they are more likely to invest their fate in the success of their marketised institution and conform to its norms, 'sustaining a collective belief in both the institutional rhetoric and their voluntary adherence to it,

making resistance seem unnecessary' (ibid, p.118). Of course this does not deny the ethical and moral dilemmas involved (as noted above) since 'old iconographies' run deep, but today teacher professionalism is 'forged through institutional governmentality' (ibid, p.117) which encourages enterprising and entrepreneurial selves (Foucault, 1994; Peters, 2001; Bührmann, 2005) in competitive market conditions, a feature which focuses attention on one's institution's success as the source of personal worth. Wood and Brownhill (2016) have it that teachers can no longer be seen as oppressed by neoliberalism, rather they are agents of it formed from the principles of competition, self-responsibility and individuality. Such subjectivities have emerged in the context of a quasi-market in education (Whitty, 2008; Ball, 2007) and the diversification of the schooling landscape, most notably the rapid expansion of the Academies programme under the Coalition and now Conservative governments (see DfE, 2016). In this environment school leaders' professional identities are 'corporatised' (Courtney, 2015a) and new types of teacher subjects are encouraged through the ready incorporation of discourses and practices from the business field (ibid).

It might be said that 'strategic coping' best describes how teachers manage their working identities within a prevailing, unrelenting 'discourse of improvement, challenge and aspiration' (Jeffrey, 2014b, p.117). Such strategies centre the 'experiential site' of tension in the personal rather than situational or structural (ibid, p.115), as might have been the case 20 years ago, and individual teacher selves are increasingly the locus of professional (self-)regulation and (self-)discipline – hence the 'remarkable attention' given to 'teacher identity' in educational research of recent times (Zembylas, 2005, p.935). Indeed the most recent wave of such research has focused on teacher 'resilience', paying attention to the ways teachers have reacted to neoliberal educational policies 'that have powerfully impacted on the more child-centred ways of working in the classroom and school environment' (Kirk and Wall, 2010, p.627), with the intention of building understanding of teacher retention by exploring how they manage, survive and can thrive in the face of such challenges (Beltman, Mansfield and Price, 2011). The focus on personal competencies and professional development (e.g. Leroux and Théorêt, 2014; Bermejo-Toro, Prieto-Ursúa and Hernández, 2015) tends to place the emphasis firmly on the individual as bounded and autonomous actor and

erases a critical attention on policy and work context; 'resilience' is a neoliberal managerial discourse (Bailey, 2015). Yet there is significant work in this area that points to resilience being 'closely allied to [teachers'] everyday capacity to sustain their educational purposes and successfully manage the unavoidable uncertainties which are inherent in the practice of being a teacher' (Gu and Day, 2013, p.22; see also Day and Gu, 2014). Hence the dialectic in contemporary teaching life requires 'everyday resilience' as those researchers put it, linking job satisfaction, motivation and well-being to how well teachers can reconcile often starkly opposed professional imperatives. This ontological insecurity makes teachers' subjectivity a site of struggle in neoliberal times (Ball, 2015; Ball and Olmedo, 2013; Slater and Griggs, 2015).

2.2 Gender and teaching: feminisation, surveillance, career

The focus of this thesis is men who work at a middle or senior management level (as SENCOs) within Primary schools. It is therefore important to consider, in the context of the above review, the role that gender plays in the formation of the Primary teacher subject. This section begins by noting early conclusions about the stereotypically female image of the role and identity of the Primary teacher, considers care and professionalism as themes, introduces arguments around the call for 'more male role models', reviews research with male Primary school teachers, and ends by noting the gap in the research literature around the experiences of men who occupy middle management positions in Primary schools.

Primary teaching as 'women's work'

As research on teachers' lives and work advanced during the 1980s and 1990s, gender emerged as a central and orientating theme. Scholars began to critically examine how gender shaped female teachers' career experiences (e.g. Grumet, 1988, Biklen, 1995; Acker, 1996) and called attention to 'the obvious and subtle ways in which cultural beliefs about women and men influence the nature of teachers' work and the perceptions others hold of it' (Acker, 1996, p.114). There is a clear resonance here with the early work in the field reviewed above, which suggested that teachers' identities are bound with the profession's historical and cultural development. Feminist scholars such as Acker (1995; 1996), Dillabough (1999; 2005) and Steedman (1985) confirmed

and critiqued the link between women and Primary teaching that has held sway, via notions that early education is akin to domestic work – an idea cemented by assumptions that women possess caring and nurturing, ‘motherly’, qualities. This work often utilised a post-structuralist orientation to trouble such ‘traditionalist discourses of gender essentialism’ (Francis, 1999, p.383) and ‘grappled with the connections among discourse, power, and the fashioning of identities’ (Miller Marsh, 2002, p.454).

Notions of ‘essential’ traits and ‘natural’ characteristics of gendered identities were picked apart, and the process of subjectification – how we are constructed *as subjects* through gendered social, cultural and historical practices – became a prominent concern of research. For example, Steedman’s (1985) work traced how women and ‘the Primary school teacher’ are bound through historical and political constructions that are underscored by notions of the inferior, unintelligent, woman ‘naturally’ suited to child-rearing. Teaching in the Primary phase is tied with the role of bringing children up, and bringing children up has become seen as ‘non-work’ – since it resides in the unpaid domestic sphere, which is coded as female (Drudy et al, 2005). Therefore the construction of Primary teaching reflects the patriarchal ordering of society where such ‘women’s work’ has relatively weak professional status and is relatively low paid, whilst it seems obvious – ‘common sense’ - for men to enter higher status careers and to earn more as the main family ‘bread winners’ (Burn and Pratt-Adams, 2015). Gender is therefore a fundamental foundation of Primary teachers’ professional identities (Dillabough, 2005) and these striations are both a barrier to entry for men and a source of difficulty when entering the profession (e.g. Thornton and Bricheno, 2006; Mills et al, 2008; Foster and Newman, 2005; Cushman, 2005; Oyler, Jennings and Lozada, 2001).

The ‘feminisation’ of Primary education, male role models and professional teacher-subjects

The construction of Primary teaching as feminine (as an extension of motherly, homely protection and care) is opposed to the masculine world of work (which involves going *out* of the home, and being rewarded with suitable pay and status), and this is reflected in the arguments against a so-called ‘feminisation’ of Primary teaching. The idea that it must be detrimental to boys not to have men teaching them (Johannesson, 2004; Sutton Trust, 2009) draws on the assumption that women will inadequately prepare young

males for the *real world* away from their mothers. Female Primary school teachers are thus implicated in the emasculation of boys (see Mills, 2004), which has led to regular calls in recent years for more men to be recruited and retained in the sector (Skelton, 2009). Yet the sort of man required to reverse this 'feminisation' is never specified; as Francis (2008, p.109) points out, policy and reportage concerned with recruiting more male teachers does not outline the *type of man* that is meant to be 'modelled', although she suggests that the 'acceptable masculinity' most likely rests 'on stereotypes of male teachers as disciplinarian and 'robust'' (see also King, 1998; Sargent, 2001; Skelton, 2003; Brownhill, 2014).

This call for 'more male role models' is part of what Martino and Kehler (2006, p.114) call a 'recuperative masculinity politics' and often functions 'as a rhetorical ploy or normalizing strategy intended to reassert and re-traditionalize hegemonic masculinities'. They associate this with New Right, neo-liberal and neo-conservative political agendas, formed in reaction to perceived challenges to male dominance (the underachievement of boys in school is often a catalyst for such reaction [Skelton, 2009]), apparent threats to notions of heteronormative gender, and the 'breakdown' of the 'traditional' family unit (see also Francis and Skelton, 2008; Wood and Brownhill, 2016).

Such issues with the 'feminised' Primary teaching environment are also visible in the drive for a greater 'professionalism' in the sector (see Ashley and Lee, 2003) in the contemporary era. Yet the unquestioned good of becoming increasingly 'professional' smuggles neo-liberal ideals of the permanently improving individual, always striving for *better*, willing to do *whatever it takes* to achieve prescribed goals, and these ideas are gendered (see Rich, 2001; Warin, 2013; McKnight, 2016). The neo-liberal notion of the modern professional is coded as male; ideals of reason, competition, control and management (of oneself and others) delineate a competent professional's skill set and these are linked with masculinity via Kantian and Cartesian philosophies of the rational, instrumental individual that occupies the public sphere, which men were traditionally associated with (Dillabough 1999). Women, in contrast, have resided in the private sphere and are therefore 'constructed symbolically as that which stands in

opposition to rationality' (ibid, p. 377). Therefore disavowing subjective, relational and social attachments – as features of a private, domestic sphere – is required to achieve professional competencies of objectivity and reason. For women this poses problems because their corporeal reality (of living in female bodies) binds them to discourses of femininity, making access to such 'public sphere' concerns problematic (which is at the heart of the intractable issue of women's entry into school leadership roles, which has been much explored in research - see below). For men this poses problems too; not only are they barred from knowing in subjective, intuitive and relational ways through prevalent discourses that frame men as opposite to that, but the assumption that they will (and can) act in objective, reasoned and suitably 'professional' ways concomitant with their gendered social identity exerts pressure to perform in line with such expectations.

Critics of the struggle for 'professionalism' in teaching have argued that the notion acts as a mask to, and justification for, greater intensification of teaching work (Densmore, 1987, cited in Acker, 1996). The ability to complete more work in the same time frame, and the de-skilling that comes with a necessarily more procedural approach to work – not to mention the tighter binds of accountability - has been seen as a form of control whereby teachers become increasingly instrumental, goal-directed, short term and individualistic in their actions and outlooks (Ball, 2003; Acker, 1996; Troman, 2007). This effectively makes dilemmatic the broader goals of, for example, working for social justice through education or a commitment to children's personal and social well-being ahead of their test results.

Furthermore, this trend can be seen as working to reinforce the male/female binary by cementing these poles to the constructed binary of 'professionalism' and 'caring for children'. As noted, the old iconographies of teaching included care (MacLure, 2001) and care is an axiomatic feature of Primary teaching (King, 1998) through its association as a motherly activity; for example, 'caring for' (as opposed to 'caring about') is seen as female (Ashley and Lee, 2003; cf. Tronto, 1993). In neo-liberal professionalization discourses the female is constructed as external to the public sphere where reason and objectivity resides. 'Caring for', as apparently more female, therefore

sits outside of a professional's remit whereas the more abstract and removed 'caring about' is seen by Ashley and Lee (2003, p. 74) to offer a more 'androgynous' professional approach to care in Primary teaching. However, this androgyny ought to more accurately be seen as male, since it 'effectively rationalises teaching (and caring) practices, supporting the ideal of knowledge, competence, control and management of oneself and those we teach' (Pulsford, 2014, pp.4-5). Therefore, embedded in the idea of a modern professional teacher we see an effort to *(re-)masculinize* Primary schooling (Skelton, 2002a; Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2001), in part delivered by effectively dismissing 'caring for' as unprofessional. As Hjalmarsson and Löfdahl note, within the neo-liberal 'new managerialism', where 'economic governance and measurable outcomes of the pupils' are important orientating discourses, 'care will play a less explicit role in education' (2014, p.290; see also Löfgren, 2016). Caring and *being professional*, constructed as oppositional poles, is a problematic dialectic for men who teach in Primary schools to negotiate. In this heady mix of neoliberal imperatives and the gendered notion of care, male teachers can feel excluded from doing recognisably 'caring' duties *because they are men* (Allan, 1993; Oyler, Jennings and Lozada, 2001), and the caring practices that men do engage in might not be recognised as such by them (King, 1998; Hjalmarsson and Löfdahl, 2014). Alternatively men are seen to adopt a 'privileged irresponsibility' when it comes to care - because it is not their 'natural' concern (Tronto, 2002; Zembylas, Bozalek, and Shefer, 2014). However such a debate has not featured prominently in research with male Primary school teachers; this is a relatively under-developed area of examination (see Warin and Gunnerard, 2014). Research in this area tends to have focused on how men manage their identities in conditions where their masculinity in more general terms, and their sexuality in particular, is under scrutiny.

Gender scrutiny, surveillance, risk and adulation

Research has shown that within schools an established 'gender regime' (Connell, 1996) maintains gender norms. Such regimes are supported through everyday practices that entrench notions of what is 'suitable and natural' for male and female teachers to be doing (Mistry and Sood, 2013, p.1). Everyday experience within schools may afford little room for manoeuvre when it comes to teachers' gender identities – thus

cementing stereotypes of men's and women's roles in society – whilst making men who teach, as the minority sex, the subject of on-going gender scrutiny. The relative scarcity of men in the Primary sector – around 12% of the workforce in England are male (Paton, 2013) – means that men stand out, making their identities significant because of this 'otherness' (Smedley, 1997) and this often impacts on their feeling of belonging in Primary schools (Foster and Newman, 2005). Martino and Frank's research suggests a dogged policing of male teachers' gender identities that they term a 'tyranny of surveillance' (2006, p.17).

It is clear that men who choose to teach can face challenges – or at least uneasiness – when negotiating and justifying their professional and personal identities. As one male Primary teacher, quoted by Westland (2009, no page numbers) explains:

'People expect male teachers to fit into one of two stereotypes: sporty and practical or effeminate and 'therefore gay'. I am neither, so I'm in a sort of uneasy third place. People can be suspicious of your motives and feel they need an explanation, which they don't with female teachers'.

This highlights an important theme. Where teaching young children is associated with 'women's work' (Drudy et al, 2005) and feminine traits, male Primary teachers can be seen as 'effeminate and therefore gay' - unless they counter or disavow these assumptions, such as by being seen as 'sporty and practical' or even supporting sexist attitudes (as reported in Francis and Skelton's (2001) research; see also King, 1998). Primary schools are places where 'normative heterosexuality [is] maintained and enforced' (Epstein, O'Flynn and Telford, 2003, p.15; see also Gray, 2013) and male teachers often feel the pressure to consciously engage in identity work in order to manage others' perceptions of them. For the teacher quoted above, the poles of hegemonic masculinity and homosexuality provide a continuum for male teachers to locate themselves (or be located) on, and yet being near to neither is also a source of 'uneasiness'.

Embracing a 'sporty and practical' teacher identity might be expected and encouraged by a school's gender regime, as representative of an 'exemplary' masculinity and symbolic of 'admired traits' in modern Western cultures (Connell, 1996, p.209; see also

Skelton, 2001). Heteronormative practices dominate schools (DePalma and Atkinson, 2007) and being – or appearing - gay comes with risks; there is a common mis-association of homosexuality and paedophilia (Newman, 2010; King, 2004). Ed, for example, in Newman's narrative-biographical research, reports 'playing down' 'feminine mannerisms' because colleagues found them 'troubling' (Newman, 2010, p.46). Although the 'uneasy third place' that the male teacher above describes is neither 'hegemonic' nor homosexual, this still leads him to note that 'people can be *suspicious of your motives* and feel they need an explanation', words that echo throughout research with and about male teachers (e.g. Pruit, 2015; Moss-Racusin and Johnson, 2016; Martino, 2008; Skelton, 2003). Thus it is not only effeminate and/or gay male teachers that feel they're under surveillance regarding child sexual abuse; all men have to 'perform' an 'acceptable masculinity' in Primary schools.

Men in Primary schools feel a palpable need to (re)act in certain ways due to the increased scrutiny (Oyler et al, 2001; Carrington, 2001) encouraged by a perceived danger of men to young children. It has been argued that all men who work with children will have to deal with some level of suspicion (Martino and Berrill, 2003), and there is always the chance of being perceived as 'high risk' at some point, according to McWilliam and Jones (2005). The 'moral panic' around institutional child abuse is a regulatory discourse affecting how all male teachers relate to and interact with pupils in schools today (Sikes and Piper, 2010; Piper and Smith, 2003). Hence self-regulating performances of gender identities and sexuality is often a feature of male teachers' professional, and personal, lives. Even those men deemed to represent an 'exemplary' masculinity are not immune; research confirms that sports teachers – often seen as representatives of the hegemonic masculine type - are certainly not exempt from critical gender surveillance, and indeed are often prime candidates for the panoptical gaze (Macdonald and Kirk, 1996; Wedgewood, 2005; Holland, Gordon and Labelma, 2007).

Men in Primary school settings become certain types of subjects, they develop certain identities, through the surveillance and scrutiny they encounter. Yet this is not all negatively charged, since men are seen as attractive and positive prospects for Primary

schools too. This has led to a conflicting range of discourses that men are subject to, and there is a 'particularly powerful and contradictory set of stereotypes [in circulation]: 'unusual, ambitious, odd and deviant' (Skelton, 2001:1); 'unambitious, effeminate or worse' (Lords, *Hansard* 30.11.98); 'wimps or perverts' (Sumison 2000:130); 'homosexuals, paedophiles or principals in training' (King 1998:3)' (Newman, 2010, p.41). There is an assumption that men will be 'fast-tracked' to senior management and Headship (Skelton, 2003; Francis and Skelton, 2001; Deneen, 2011) and they can find they're hailed as 'superheroes' for teaching in Primary; yet at other times a stronger and infectious discourse of men as 'demons' prevails (Jones, 2007). In short, men who work in these settings 'must cope with discourses of both risk and adulation' (Evans and Jones, 2009, p.1).

It is undeniable that there are advantages to being a man in a Primary school, as some commentators have emphasised: the relative ease of getting a job (because you're 'scarce' and desirable); the privileged position afforded you because you're rare and, as a man in a patriarchal society, important; the supportive relationships with peers (with little harassment); the possibility that colleagues will place lower demands on you in certain aspects of your work; pally relationships with senior male members of staff; and the likelihood that you'll rise to prestigious and well-paid positions more quickly than female colleagues (see Allan, 1993; Williams, 1993; Skelton, 2003; Sargent, 2004; Thornton and Bricheno, 2006; Hjalmarsson and Löfdahl, 2014; Burn and Pratt-Adams, 2015).

Yet whilst there is no denying that some of these advantages will feature in men's experiences as teachers in Primary schools, as much of the research already reviewed here suggests, this adulation, privilege and the benefits need to be weighed against the day-to-day experiences of being 'other'. Indeed, it might be that the dialectical nature of men's position in Primary schools – a series of double-binds (Jupp, 2013) – are at the heart of such troubling experiences: as a man you stand out, but you must not be anything unexpected; be manly, but you should also have traits associated with femininity (e.g. care, sensitivity to children's needs); be sensitive to children's needs, but not so much that people become 'suspicious of your motives'; be a good role model

for boys, but be careful not to go overboard on the manliness – or be too unmanly either; be ambitious and get promoted, but that’s the ‘glass escalator’ for you (Williams, 1992; Gill and Arnold, 2015).

Images abound in the literature of men performing tentative and sometimes damaging balancing acts with their identities. Sargent (2004, p.174) talks about how male teachers must tread a ‘very thin line between behaving in ways deemed “too masculine” and “too feminine”’, often employing ‘compensatory strategies’ (ibid) to ensure their self-presentation is acceptable to others. Martino (2008) suggests the term ‘identity erasure’ for such a process, where men can feel they must avoid referring to ‘previous’ selves, or drawing on identities that trouble the ‘acceptable masculinity’ expected of the Primary teacher role. Foster and Newman (2005) coin the term ‘identity bruising’ to describe the painful turbulence that can result from the mismatch between the ‘available identities’ as a male Primary teacher and men’s own sense of themselves as teachers. Similarly, Mills and colleagues (2008, p.71) describe one man’s troubling first year in teaching and the ‘incommensurable differences between the expectations held of him as a male teacher and his identity as a primary school teacher’. The adulation and the accompanying normative pressures to be a ‘real man’ (see also Sargent, 2001), for example being an effective disciplinarian, were overwhelming and ultimately he left teaching. This case provides an instructive example of how the ‘simultaneous and gendered notions of caring and commanding respect can present considerable obstacles’ for teachers in achieving and maintaining a ‘successful vocational habitus’ (Braun, 2012, p.231). Men who teach in Primary schools are required to live up to an image of professionalism-masculinity that can be a constraining force and a source of stress: ‘expectations from others put the teachers under the obligation to act in certain ways, which may be burdensome and delimiting’ (Hjalmarsson and Löfdahl, 2014, p.289), especially when the ‘old iconographies’ of care and child-centeredness continue to permeate the ideal Primary school teacher image.

Career, promotion and research on middle leadership in Primary schools

Despite these pressures, and the consistent conclusions from research which argue that as men embark on a career in teaching the ‘cultural and socially reinforced taboos [of

being odd, gay or 'potential child abusers'] will continue to impact on men...in a disproportionate way' (Thornton and Bricheno, 2006, p.102), Government bodies responsible for recruiting teachers portray being a male Primary school teacher as 'unproblematic' (Newman, 2010, p.41). Certainly it is the case that men hold a disproportionately high number of leadership positions in Primary schools (DfE, 2011a; Earley et al., 2012), and getting promoted relatively quickly - the 'glass escalator' described by Williams (1992) - is something that seems taken-for-granted by both male and female teachers (Skelton, 2003). This assumption is linked with the positioning of men as 'natural leaders' within patriarchal societies (ibid), as well as driven by individual men emphasising the aspects of teaching that fit with 'proper masculinity', such as leadership and management (Connell, 1985; Francis and Skelton, 2001; King, 1998). There seems to be a consensus that the early stages of a man's Primary teaching career is fraught, characterised by *identity bruising*, *identity erasure* and *compensatory strategies* for example, but surviving this turbulent period is quickly rewarded; as Thornton and Bricheno put it, 'getting men into teaching is difficult, getting them through training is difficult, but getting on once in teaching is not' (2006, p.103).

This assumption of rapid career progress is often central in the Department for Education's drives to encourage more men into Primary teaching. Their campaign in 2012 noted that 'more top male graduates are being encouraged to...take advantage of the great opportunities a primary teaching career provides....career progression opportunities are excellent' (DfE, 2012). Since solving the 'problem' of relatively few men in Primary teaching in the long term would be an onerous task involving addressing the entrenched poor status of teaching and its gendered association (Drudy et al, 2005; Cushman, 2005), and eroding the 'multiple ossified layers of popular belief about men who teach children' (King, 2000, cited in Newman, 2010, p.50), the strategy of suggesting that enhanced status will be achieved in quick time may be the best short-term option for attracting more men. But even leaving aside the issue with this approach in terms of its impact on top *female* graduates and *their* career progression, this further enforces the entrenched bind between gender and professional status since it explicitly connects men with career aspiration. This works to enforce some of the points made above about how men become glued to ideals of professionalism; 'getting

on' in one's career is a masculinised objective linked with neo-liberal imperatives of individual success and improvement. Thus teaching remains 'feminised' whilst leadership becomes ever-more masculinised (Blount, 1999). Men thinking of Primary teaching – and by extension, all men already in the job – must be there for the promotion opportunities.

Furthermore, the press release strengthens the assumption that it is straightforward for men to get promoted in Primary schools. There is little recognition that it might not be so easy in those roles 'on the ground'. The implication of ease is built through statements such as 'Teachers are twice as likely to be in management positions, than graduates in comparable professions after 3.5 years' (DfE, 2012). Yet the question of how difficult it is for men to become middle and senior managers in Primary schools is, I think, open: men might take on those roles in relatively high numbers, but that does not necessarily mean doing so is problem-free. The question is open because there is little research that considers what *being a man* means for men who get promoted into middle and senior management positions in Primary schools (Brinia, 2011). '[N]ot much research effort has been directed at the power and micropolitics embedded in gender identities and dynamics' in middle management and little attention has been paid to how personal and professional lives interact for such men (Choi, 2013, p.39).

This echoes similar calls for more research on the impact of masculinities in *all* male teacher's lives; how men, their personal lives and shifting ideas of masculinity/masculinities interact with and in Primary school settings (e.g. Martino and Frank, 2006; Francis and Skelton, 2001; Warin, 2006; Martino, 2008; Jupp, 2013; Pulsford, 2014; and for a similar discussion about a lack of research on 'everyday' masculinities in other gendered professions, see Robinson and Hockey, 2011; Robinson, 2014; Shen-Miller and Smiler, 2015). The disproportionately high number of men in managerial roles compared with women has been a significant prompt to research on gender and leadership over the past 30 years, but this has centred on the barriers to entry experienced by women (Coleman, 2012). These detailed examinations, often via case study and narrative research methods (Collard, 2001; Smith, 2012; Choi, 2013) contrasts with the more generalised conclusions about why men find promotions easy

to come by in Primary schools; studies focused on men have tended to centre on their effectiveness and 'leadership styles' compared with women (e.g. Diekman and Eagly, 2000; Richardson and Loubier, 2008; Tale, 2010; Coleman, 2012).

The difficulties of a leadership role are mostly seen as bureaucratic and managerial matters in and by research – such as dealing with tricky parents, uncooperative staff, lack of time and resources, addressing Government policies and managing inspection preparation (e.g. Day et al, 2000; Fletcher-Campbell, 2003; Hammersley-Fletcher and Brundrett, 2005; Brinia, 2011). As Busher, Hammersley-Fletcher and Turner argue, 'studies of middle leaders have focused too much on their functions and characteristics, taking insufficient account of the influence of social and political contexts' (2007, p.405), of which gender plays its part. The challenges of middle management do not tend to be seen through the lens of gender (despite its prominence in teachers' professional identities), even if reference to teacher-leaders' personal identities is sometimes made (e.g. Day, 2000).

The micropolitics of gendered teacher identities in everyday school management and leadership contexts has largely been ignored, which affords men and those researching them a comfortable position of distance from any troubling, identity-bruising issues around gender - perhaps founded on a sense that men in promoted positions have fulfilled their designated destiny; once men become leaders in Primary schools it seems that there is less concern over their treacherous gender identities because, as leaders, they're *manly* again. There is a common sense that it is more acceptable, and indeed preferable, for men to occupy management positions within Primary schools (Jones, 2007). I think it could be argued that a lack of research with men in middle and senior management positions in Primary schools tends to support the established discourse that binds men and leadership, and has allowed researchers to avoid 'explor[ing] [their] own [or their participants'] emotional lives and experiences' (Seidler 2007, p.18), to the detriment of understanding more about the experiences of men in Primary schools.

There is some research with male Head teachers and it is worth describing Deborah Jones' (2009) study as it stands out in its focus on (male) gender as a theme of analysis (rather than as a category to label participants). It uses interviews and recounts the sometimes emotional narratives told by the participants, doing so to consider the nuances and complexities of being a man and occupying a leadership role in the Primary context, where there is a notable tension between authority and care. Jones suggests that there are a number of often competing and contradictory discourses that these men draw upon to create their identities; this range of available masculinities (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2013) are on the one hand related to expertise, authority, discipline and status through which the head teachers were located (and located themselves) in a hegemonic masculine role, yet on the other hand there were identities that revolved around nurturing, care and family that showed the men in more 'sensitive' light. Jones argues that these head teachers were able to avoid the 'same slights as some male class-teachers' since their removed position from the 'messy work on the ground goes some way to removing the stigma of "inadequate male"' (2009, p.41). However she notes that these men were keen to distance themselves from such 'othered' identities, and even though they did draw on more sensitive discursive constructions they nevertheless enjoyed assuming 'identities of the competent, efficient and powerful leader' (ibid).

The stereotype of the authoritarian and 'distant head', infused with the hegemonic masculine ideal, was a source of both protection and restriction for the male head teachers in Jones' study, and she concludes that the role of head teacher could therefore be viewed as a 'double-edged sword' for men (2009, p.41). It offers protection from the denigration that male Primary teachers are sometimes subject to (aided by a separation from pupils which avoids most physical contact), yet it also forces men into more distant relationships with pupils, parents and staff than they often desired (p.42). To live up to hegemonic masculinity within the gender regime of the Primary school involves, for the male head teachers here at least, choosing a valorised masculine identity over 'closer, warmer identities' involving affection and emotion around both children and adults (p.38). Yet as Jones notes (p.34), this is not a *choice* as such, since influential others (such as parents, pupils, school Governors) play vital roles in

defining and legitimising the types of identities expected from 'the head teacher' and 'a man' in that role.

It is important to point out the usefulness of the idea that men in leadership positions feel bound to perform their work role and gender identities in particular ways, sometimes using but most often eschewing what might be seen as 'feminine' caring traits. This highlights the persistent challenges for men at leadership level in Primary schools, as although they might be able to more legitimately 'do' hegemonic masculinity and redress being seen as the 'inadequate male', the tensions between the masculine/feminine and also 'professional'/caring aspects of their identities may become more pronounced. In my research, the men are middle (or sometimes senior) leaders in their schools rather than at the top of the leadership hierarchy and this suggests the potential for even greater 'identity trouble' (Caldas-Coulthard and Iedema, 2008). I suggest that these roles could generate considerable tension for these men given the conclusions that Jones (2009) makes. Even without considering the issue of gender, Busher (2005, p.148) argues that middle leaders in schools have to enact 'Janus-faced' performances due to the dual foci and responsibilities they have sitting between the bulk of the staff and the senior school management; thus he argues that 'work-related self-identities are central to middle leaders' work' (ibid, p.137). As Hammersley-Fletcher and Strain (2011) note, Primary school middle leaders' role has changed over the last 15 years as they have become increasingly responsible for accountability and learning standards, often feeling constrained by structures and rules informed by the neoliberal policy agenda even if these are at odds with their own sense of direction. Layered onto this – or rather perhaps assembled and emerging simultaneously - is the gender dimension; these teachers have to negotiate identities that straddle both the class-teaching 'coal face' – that can be seen as feminised – and the management offices that might be seen as a more masculinised domain.

2.3 The roles and identities of SENCos

The recently updated SEN Code of Practice (CoP) states that 'the SENCo has day-to-day responsibility for the operation of SEN policy and co-ordination of specific provision made to support individual pupils with SEN' (DfE, 2015, p.108). The role

includes guiding their colleagues so that pupils with SEN receive 'high quality teaching', 'working closely' with parents and external agencies (such as Educational Psychologists and social care professionals) and they are expected to be advising the head teacher on allocation of school budget to support pupils. Record-keeping is noted as a key responsibility, though the CoP also advises that SENCos should be part of 'determining the strategic development of SEN policy and provision in the school' along with the head teacher and governing body (ibid, pp.108-109). However, recent legislative changes ushered in by the latest CoP (DfE 2015) will further 'impact the documentary requirements of the role' (Qureshi, 2014, p.226), in particular the phasing in of multi-agency Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans to replace Statements of Special Educational Need.

Only since 1994 have schools been required to have a named person leading on special educational needs (Tissot, 2014), and much of the research literature has focused on the definition of the role, its duties and technical or structural concerns in response to rapid and continuing changes in the SENCo role since it was first enshrined in the 1994 CoP - there is therefore 'very little research on the lived experiences of the role' (Mackenzie, 2012b, p.2).

Those working as SENCos face both similar and additional challenges to those outlined in the previous section. It is one of the 'middle leader' roles in Primary schools (Busher, 2005) and SENCos face particular tensions and dilemmas due to the varied role and responsibilities, status, and leadership skills required (Szwed, 2007b; Qureshi, 2014). The role of the SENCo cannot be generalised; as Garner notes, it may be both more accurate and more meaningful to talk of the *roles* of the SENCo (cited in Szwed, 2007b, p.439). Not only are the activities of the position varied, but often the SENCo in a Primary school will have other responsibilities (such as class teaching or Assistant/Deputy headship), meaning tensions arise in fulfilling their *roles*, and variation in SENCo practice between schools is high (Cole, 2005; Layton, 2005; Mackenzie, 2007). Pearson and Ralph argue that although Government guidance delineates the parameters of the SENCo position 'there is a high degree of local interpretation at school level' (2007, p.38), and more recently 'the increasingly dynamic

nature of the SENCo role brings with it a plethora of challenges in the face of a dynamic SEN support system' (Qureshi, 2014, p.227).

The status of the role is also an issue. The literature notes that teaching in SEN is often deemed to be 'low status' (Garner et al., 1995; Burton and Goodman, 2011), and despite the 2001 SEN Code of Practice being the first to explicitly shape the role towards leadership there continued to be no clear expectation for SENCos to be leaders, with even those in the role saying they 'do not believe that key people and agencies see them in a leadership role' (Layton, 2005, p. 55). Kearns suggests that SENCos 'view their leadership as confined within a discrete area of professional practice' and feel they have little influence over wider teaching and learning practices in their schools (2005, p.146). According to Cole (2005, p.299) there is the risk that the role of SENCo is 'perceived as...operational rather than as a senior, strategic management role'. Although the role has been endorsed as a senior management position by the Coalition and then Conservative governments (DfE, 2011b; DfE, 2015), Tissot notes that it is still often the case that SENCos are unable to focus on 'lead[ing] and direct[ing] practice, resource management and the strategic goals' as they are not part of their school's senior leadership team (2014, p.33). There has been a recent drive towards 're-professionalisation' (Cole, 2005) of the SENCo role through the compulsory Master's level National Award for Special Educational Coordinators (NASENCO), and since its introduction in 2009 it has been seen to improve the confidence and status of SENCos within their schools, and heightened awareness and acceptance of the position as a Senior Leadership Team role (Pearson and Gathercole, 2011). Nevertheless it seems that the SENCo is not always seen as an important or central part of school development (Hallett and Hallett, 2010), and Oldham and Radford (2011) conclude that they are caught between the competing demands of leadership on the one hand and management of specialist support on the other. Rosen-Webb notes that this 'lack of clarity surrounding their dual followership and leadership positions increased the stressful nature of carrying out [the SENCos'] complex range of responsibilities and roles' (2011, p.161).

Not only is there conflict in policy about what the role should be but the potential for contradictory goals plays out in the myriad to-ings and fro-ings each day – what might be called the ‘micro-politics of educational leadership’ (Blase and Anderson, 1995) in the face of an SEN policy ‘epidemic’ and ‘overload’ (Ball, 2008; Harwood, 2009). The complex position between strategic leadership and managing the provision of support means that the types of skills required by the role are also open to debate. Much research on SENCOs and leadership emphasises the personal qualities and collaborative outlook required (e.g Liasidou and Svensson, 2013), whilst a more behaviourist and functional model is supposed in Government documents about SEN and SENCOs (Szwed, 2007a). This more technicist or managerial view of SEN leadership does not sit easily with ‘building collaborative cultures and partnerships to drive improvement and development’ at the whole-school level (ibid, p.448). Neither does this readily align with the common framing of SEN work by discourses of ‘care’ (Mackenzie, 2012a; 2011) and the perceived need for SENCOs to create a caring and nurturing environment (Burton and Goodman, 2011). Tied to this, an important motivation to become and remain a SENCO is an ‘urge to serve’ (Mackenzie, 2012a) and indeed teachers of children labelled as ‘SEN’ often see themselves as having different attributes and practices than other teachers – more caring and ‘on the pupils’ side’ (Woolhouse, 2015; see also Jones, 2004). Woolhouse (2015) identifies a ‘warrior persona’ that SENCOs adopt and Morewood (2012) notes their determined advocacy for pupils and parents that have weaker capital within the system. The passion to work for children with SEN, Mackenzie (2012a) reports, is coupled with a drive for wider school change towards inclusion. Such positionings are a common feature of how SENCOs story their career, although it seems likely that this identity is becoming more different to sustain.

SENCOs are seen as the facilitators of ‘transformative change’ in response to inclusion and inclusive schools policy agendas, and are ‘expected to lead a whole school process of development and change with a view to responding to the needs of students designated as having SEN/D in inclusive mainstream settings’ (Liasidou and Svensson, 2013, p.2). Yet this expectation carries tensions around the role and the professional identities required as SENCOs operate ‘under the siege of neo-liberal imperatives’ (ibid,

p.3); for example the inclusive values encapsulated by the Every Child Matters policy encouraged schools to take a 'whole child' approach and the 'inclusive SENCo' was viable – yet this becomes increasingly untenable when a narrow focus on attainment thresholds takes precedence (Morewood, 2012). The latest CoP introduced the requirement for schools and local authorities to publish their 'Local Offer' of services, where 'customer choice' is prioritised in the marketplace and managerial processes of audit and accountability become ever more prominent. Prioritising a more equitable, socially just vision of schooling requires SENCos to be school leaders rather than constrained and distracted by an immersion in paperwork (Tissot, 2013) and managerialist considerations that can eclipse such socially just leadership (Liasidou and Svensson, 2013). In this context, Liasidou and Svensson note that 'the articulation of the SENCO role in navigating the social justice agenda remains opaque and it needs a thorough reconsideration' (2013, p.3).

The role can be seen as subject to 'neo-liberal managerialism' where for example the mandatory (from 2009) accreditation provided by the NASENCO aims to 'micro-manage outcomes within a context of heightened performance-driven accountability and regulatory compliance' (Done, Murphy and Knowler, 2014, p. 4). SENCos are increasingly positioned within a 'political narrative of economic priority and productivity' (ibid, p.1), as exemplified by the DfE's Green Paper (2011b) which introduced academic performance monitoring of children labelled as having SEN, with SENCOs accountable for their progress. Where once SENCos often felt undervalued and unappreciated because the difference they made was not visible or capable of being measured (Mackenzie, 2007, p.217), the enhanced focus on measurable pupil outcomes and the performative imperative that characterises teachers professional lives (Ball, 2003; Jeffrey, 2014b) enables SENCos defined routes and incentives to demonstrate their contribution. SENCos in particular are forged through an 'individualized responsabilization' (Done, Murphy and Knowler, 2014, p.11, citing Rose, 2006) which produces autonomous and self-regulating subjects who are licensed to draw on a neo-liberal managerialist vocabulary of 'technical competences, appropriate interventions, specialist knowledge and enhanced capacity to measure and monitor intervention outcomes' (Done, Murphy and Knowler, 2014, p.11). This could

be seen as a process of de-professionalisation in which 'an un-critical practicality' (ibid. p.9) is encouraged. In many ways this mirrors the changes in the role of the Primary teacher in recent times, as discussed in section 1.1 above.

Male Primary school SENCOs

The SENCO can be seen as a prime site of tension in Primary schools then due to a number of factors, and these can fruitfully be explored through men's experiences in the role, which also serves as a way of providing insight into male Primary school teachers in middle leadership positions. Debates around care and professionalism, with factors including standards, accountability, career, leadership, authority and expertise, all coalesce here in such a way that this group offers an opportunity to explore how the assemblage of contemporary Primary school teaching can produce certain types of teacher subject.

There are relatively few men working as SENCOs in Primary schools (Mackenzie, 2012b) and the role is most likely to be occupied by women in their 30s and 40s with several years of teaching experience (Woolhouse, 2015; Cole, 2005). This demographic informs the intelligibility of the SENCO role where certain forms of femininity are (re-) produced (Woolhouse, 2015), with clear indices of motherliness and care present in the image of the SENCO. Thus the Primary school SENCO can be seen to encapsulate the dialectic between the 'old iconographies' of teacher-hood and contemporary pressures of marketised school provision; the SENCO is seen as the locus of care but they inhabit a shrinking terrain that prioritises nurture and holistic support in the face of encroaching attainment targets, standards and league tables (Morewood, 2012). The care versus professional competence binary that forms a crux of the teacher gender debate (see section 1.2 above) is likely to be a particularly difficult balance for men in the SENCO role in Primary schools. Tensions arise between creating a caring and nurturing environment (Burton and Goodman, 2011; Purdy, 2009), which resonates with a (feminised) vision of teaching as a human, emotional connection on the one hand, and on the other a masculinised, professional, 'competent' or 'standards teacher' who 'should conform to an instrumental, objective and procedurally focused account of teaching' (Bolton, 2005, p.2). As already mentioned, such neoliberal conceptions of

educational purposes are entwined with hegemonic masculinity (Warin, 2013; McKnight, 2016) which could be seen to underpin this care versus standards tension for men working with Primary-aged, vulnerable or academically struggling children.

Ideas of care and nurture signal emotional connectedness that 'real men' are expected to eschew (Sargent, 2001), but the physical aspect of care can also generate warning sirens for men in teaching. In wanting to work with, and care for, young children – indeed with young and potentially vulnerable children in the case of SENCoS - male Primary teachers can be seen as 'odd and deviant' (Skelton, 2001). There are occasional ruptures, but constant rumblings, of concern around paedophilia and child safety in relation to male teachers (Sikes and Piper, 2010). Such discourses are given (a) body by the male SENCo; the nature of the role is likely to mean that safeguarding is a regular, even constant, feature of the work – but they themselves are also subject to those regulating discourses.

As discussed in earlier sections, male Primary teachers are also delineated by expectations that they are ambitious and aiming for Headship. Occupying the SENCo role might be seen as at odds with this due to SEN's historically low status (Garner et al, 1995; Burton and Goodman, 2011; Smith, 2015). SEN might be seen as even less likely than mainstream Primary class teaching to attract 'high aspiring or hegemonically masculine men' (Thornton and Bricheno, 2006, p.142; see also Rice and Peters-Goessling, 2005) - demonstrating one's competence as a teacher (via improvements in your pupils' test results) is problematic if you work in SEN (Forrester, 2005; Benjamin, 2002). Yet the managerial imperatives of the SEN role, its 'strategic' positioning in policy and the Master's level qualification may draw together a suitably 'masculine' set of discourses to be put to use by those in the job. The neoliberal managerialism that orders contemporary SENCoS' work identities (Done, Murphy and Knowler, 2014) finds its home in the 're-masculinisation' of schooling since ERA in 1988 that introduced the 'rough justice of the market place' (Skelton, 2002a, p.89), and the attendant masculinised Primary school management regimes (Mahony and Hextall, 2000; Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2001).

Special educational needs is also characterised by the diagnoses of impairment, and the prescription of appropriate interventions, by experts in the field. Thus SEN tends to be based on medicalised, psychologised and individualist discourses, which come with notions of 'normality', disorder, deficit, control and intervention (Cole, 2004; Riddick, 2012; Lawson et al, 2006). Such a set of frameworks articulate with standards, accountability and efficiency drives, in both financial and educational outcome (test results, 'progress') terms, and both of these sets of discourses activate and legitimise a masculinised vision of rational, logical, solution-focused and managerial professional practice (Bolton 2005; Dillabough, 1999; Forrester, 2005). In the face of a feminised SEN teaching environment founded on care and nurture, or in reaction to being unable to draw on standard models of status and rank, it may be that male SENCos position themselves as 'properly masculine' (Francis and Skelton, 2001) via a set of 'expert' and specialist knowledge discourses and practices.

Conclusion

There is no published research specifically exploring male SENCo's experiences, and I argue that through hearing these men's stories this research offers the chance to examine some important themes about what it means and feels like to be a Primary teacher in the contemporary period. Gender has a central place in the iconography of Primary teaching as it has historically been associated with the care and nurture of young children; however this is in tension with managerial, accountability and professionalising forces, and these are increasingly inflected by corporate and business logics. Such a shift draws on masculinist notions of rationality, expertise and competition. Those working as middle leaders in Primary schools experience these tensions, and SENCos in particular acutely feel the dissonance inherent in their work. Men in this role can be seen as a locus of these pressures, as subject to the caring discourse of Primary teaching and SENCo work, but as subjects of masculinity that informs their sense of themselves as men. The hegemonic form of masculinity articulates with neoliberal and neoconservative socio-political trends that are visible within education policies from the introduction of the market and the logic of competition to the 'male role model' debate. It is this complex and mutually informing assemblage within which male Primary teacher subjects emerge, and if we are to grasp

a sense of how this works, how neoliberal teacher subjects are 'realised and constituted within mundane and immediate practices of everyday life' (Ong, 2007, cited in Ball and Olmedo, 2013, p.88), then - as the next chapter argues - we could do with a particular set of theoretical tools.

Chapter 3 - Conceptual Framework

'Persisting challenges in education, however, call for more than repetitions of the same' (Ulmer and Koro-Ljungberg, 2015, p.149)

Introduction

The previous chapter noted that there are powerful but contradictory discourses enframing male Primary school teachers that men often find hard to negotiate, and that this tension has been the focus of much research and debate. It can be seen that an assemblage of forces are at play in the present time from which emerges male (and female) teacher subjectivities, although – as this chapter will argue - this exceeds the bounds of humanist discursive analysis that has been paradigmatic. This chapter therefore seeks to make the case for thinking differently about these issues, since getting caught up in the gendered discourse binaries (authoritarian/care-giver; superhero/wimp; role-model/paedophile, for example) does little to assist in transforming – let alone dispelling - those injurious binaries. We might be able to live differently if we can conceive the world differently (Hultman and Lenz Taguchi, 2010; St. Pierre, 2004).

I work with the idea that the processes of subjectification are dispersed within unfolding events, happenings and settings and that the material is significantly embroiled in this process. Following Davies and Gannon, this chapter rides lines that are threaded throughout the rest of the thesis, orientated around the concepts of: 'being as emergent in the encounter; intra-action or the entanglement of agencies; and the significance of matter' (2012, p.358). This is seeking to understand that 'socially constructed' notions such as gender, social class, professionalism, care, teacherliness are emergent in contingent relational fields, 'through co-constitutive entanglements of and between meaning, practices, material artefacts, humans and things of all kinds' (Allen, 2015, p.944) rather than pre-existing those engagements. Developing a case against privileging discourse in the construction of human subjects, the chapter considers a 'material-discursive' (Barad, 2008; 2007; 2003) approach teamed with a Deleuzian sensibility which invites attention on the 'becomings that are silently at work, which are almost imperceptible' (Deleuze and Parnet, 2002, p.2). This could be

called an 'intra-active relational materialist approach' (Blaise, 2013, p.193; Hultman and Lenz Taguchi, 2010). The aim is to set off on these several and connected directions in order that the proceeding chapters have roots around which they can rhizomatically entwine. The chapter also sets some lines in motion for a 'post-qualitative' (Lather and St. Pierre, 2013; MacLure, 2013a) approach to the research, which will be developed in Chapter 4.

3.1 Beginning in discourse

I began this piece of research *in* discourse (Smith, 1992). My research proposal for PhD funding rested on references to discourses about male primary school teachers, and about SENCos. As outlined in the previous chapter, the literature offers firm guidance as to what the issues – the clashes of competing discourses - might be: the wealth of research suggests that men in Primary schools can tend to be seen as 'mousy' and 'submissive', as 'effete pseudo-women' (Bloom, 2014, p. 29), be viewed with suspicion because they desire to work with young children, or they might adopt/be expected to adopt a particularly masculine demeanour (e.g. as effective disciplinarians and/or ambitious to enter school leadership). Meanwhile, discourses around SEN and SENCos tend to contrast caring and management imperatives, which offers a clear 'discourses of gender' divide ripe for cleaving open if one was seeking to transpose gender onto SEN coordination debates. I was, and I did: SEN is often framed as requiring a 'caring' aptitude, which is associated with femininity, so men taking on the role might veer towards the 'management' component, as that ties with the expected trajectories and competencies of men. This might well be what the research would 'find', if framed around a bifurcation of gender in discourse. A consequence of those findings might be that alternative discourses are allowed space to breathe – men forging new understandings of what 'caring for' SEN pupils means, which confounded gendered stereotypes perhaps (cf. King, 1998; Ashley and Lee, 2003). This could be useful, but nevertheless would remain couched in those framing discourses; it would begin by assuming those discourses about gender (and being a teacher) are important and encompassing, and would conclude in terms of those same discourses. It was this realisation – perhaps fear – that I would probably be rehashing worn debates about

men as Primary school teachers that produced in me a desire for some other way of thinking about who and how these men become.

The lack of manoeuvrability when remaining in discourse was a prominent feeling then; in beginning researching the experiences of a pre-defined group it felt too clearly delineated that those pre-definitions had to feature centrally. It seemed hard to wriggle free from – and the point is to ‘get out of it’ (Deleuze and Parnet, 2002, p.1); to ask different questions, rather than regurgitating responses to the same ones about *those types of people*. But there is a further, concomitant and intractable issue often embedded in a solely discursive approach to identity research: when we talk about contradictory discourses that construct subjects in different ways, and note that this is troublesome for the subjectified human, we tend to assume that these ‘schizoid’ conditions (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) of contradiction are problematic because they dislodge or disrupt the formation of a coherent ‘unitary subjectivity’ that is deemed desirable (Ringrose, 2011; Hultman and Lenz Taguchi, 2010). These incongruities must be struggled over and ultimately erased if we are to become suitably intelligible to ourselves and others. Much is made of teachers’ professional identity being at odds with a personal sense of self; fluctuating between superhero and wimp is untenable; you’re a man – why would you want to teach young children? But what if we trouble the notion of a coherent human subject in our analyses? What if we understand contradiction as affirmative potential, as a rhizomatic opportunity for becoming-other (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987)? This might be a way of avoiding folding *becoming-other* back within *being-same* which works in the service of recuperation or reterritorialization: a man doing caring work is seen to be countering gender discourses, yet this thereby frames the man and the practice he is engaged in as both gendered and sitting outside of gendered norms.

Moreover, where discourse is seen to enframe or constitute the subject (St. Pierre, 2004) in social constructionist and post-structural research there is the risk of reification, of reiterating the existence of a certain type of human subject in the course of assessing how it is constituted in this way or that way. Such research begins with abstractions such as ‘the Subject’, and then looks ‘for the process by which they are embodied in a world which [the researchers] make conform to their requirements’ – in doing so, the

abstract is realized in the concrete (Deleuze and Parnet, 2002, p.vii); we find what we imagined we would (human subjects negotiating discourses in various contexts). There remains a 'knowing humanist subject that lingers in some poststructuralist analysis' (Mazzei, 2013b, p.778) where identity formation is seen 'as an exclusively human affair and as a rational self-reflexive mindwork' (Lenz Taguchi, 2013, p.709) – an image of a bounded and de facto coherent human subject pulled and pushed by - yet also resisting and reforming- discourses that have been formed through human sense-making.

Thus there is an enshrined 'Cartesian habit of mind' (Barad, 2003, p.807) in such approaches – the determined notion that there is an 'inherent distinction between subject and object, and knower and known' (p.813) and that human beings are supreme in their capacity as masters of their terrain. Yet the representationalist triad of words, knowers and things as separable and hierarchied (things exist because we (humans) know them through our definitions) precludes alternative ways of viewing – and living in – the world. The issue of remaining in discourse for our research on identities then is that since language is a human register, such meaning-making – which emanates from already-subjectified human subjects – is the only pathway open to conceiving how the social world is constructed (Alaimo and Hekman, 2008). The world this envisages is forged only through human meaning-making, where no other force can be seen at play (Hultman and Lenz Taguchi, 2010). The 'underlying structuralism' of such research can lead to a 'discursive determinism' in that it is difficult to conceptualise how the 'symbolic/discursive order might change' (Ringrose, 2011, p.599). The human subject is central and sovereign and there are few ways out of the circularity of discourses constructing subjects that construct discourses. And when such discourses are forged as binary dichotomies and distinctions we end up in encased in a rigidly striated circularity – and so, our research could aim to think-otherwise in order that becoming-other might be glimpsed.

Louise Allen, drawing on feminist materialist and Deleuzian thinking, argues that social constructionist and post-structuralist research, which privileges language and discourse, encloses our 'conceptual limits' (2013, p.3). I wonder whether the production

of gendered, professional teacher subjectivities could be understood as *more than* 'identity, practice and discourse' (ibid)? What might we notice if we do not search out the 'uni-directional oppressive effect of discourse on individuals', and rather see the subject as emergent in moments formed through an entanglement of the discursive and material and relational (Davies and Gannon, 2012, p.359) – less the *a priori* subject negotiating a sense of coherence through discourse, and more an awareness of how the assembled human and non-human parts of interactions compose in certain ways to bring about moments of subjectification, moments that encourage an identity to coalesce whilst blocking or decomposing other lines of becoming. Is there a possibility to explore and nurture 'lines of flight', the de-territorialisations of striated forms which burst or seep out, creating more branches and producing 'multiple series and rhizomic connections' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 15)? This might help explore and nurture the 'processes in which we depart from our given or constituted selves' (Rajchman, 2001, p.97). What are the 'becomings', 'tiny connections' and 'movements' which are operative at the minute or molecular level' (Beddoes, 1996, cited in Ringrose, 2011, p.603) that a discursively-charged identity-category-based analysis might bulldoze? This signals an aim to address the becomings of a more molecular kind that flow and zig-zag over and around and through the molar being of rigid segmentarities (gender, race, class...), and which are less tangible, more fleeting (Deleuze and Parnet, 2002).

Considering such a possibility might serve as a response to the charge levelled by Jupp that many studies of the 'double-binds' that male teachers face (e.g. of being a 'male role model' yet facing social stigma about their 'maleness') do not go beyond 'rehashing the glass escalator or gender issues of male teachers as classic or privileged tokens in a female workplace' debate. Clearly, Jupp goes on, 'there is more work and understanding [needed] for fostering male teachers' professional identities in classrooms' (2013, p.428). Drawing on recent masculinities research, Jupp argues that on-the-whole there is a limited understanding of male teachers' *lived masculinities* and this stems from an enclosed conception of the issues (based in discourse) at hand.

I think this is particularly important for the present research with men who teach in Primary settings. Both schools and their staff have become increasingly beholden to

masculinised imperatives of rationality, control and accountability (as discussed in Chapter 1), and for men in those environments there appear to be ever-greater disincentives to trouble the gender binary. For those who do, research suggests they have a turbulent and possibly career-ending time doing so (see Chapter 1). These are important issues to explore, though I also wonder if their apparent prominence might bind the teachers that participate in research to such embedded frameworks. It is the nature of such powerful grids of intelligibility that, when asked, men may readily account for their selves-as-teachers in ways that adhere to normative discourses of 'the male Primary school teacher' – disciplinarian, ambitious, caring-but-not-in-a-feminine-way. Or to explicitly narrate the self as an opposite/resistant reaction to discourses of hegemonic masculinity. There is plenty of research arguing that men call-up dominant or at least expected masculinities when in research situations (e.g. Schwalbe and Wolkomir, 2001; Pini, 2005; Robinson, Hall and Hockey, 2011); certainly it seems a viable argument that asking men to account for themselves and their experiences invites use of 'common sense' reference points or frameworks to make oneself make sense.

Because of this it would also be easy for research to recount the ways that those discourses are variously utilised to narrate experience, noting how they both afford men access to certain privileges (speedy promotion) but also hem them into an image of manliness that might be difficult and troublesome to live up to (e.g. disciplinarian, ambitious). But in representing these men's interpretation of their experiences, even acknowledging that they might *do masculinity* in certain ways in/for the research, we still remain *in discourse*. And I wonder if this tends to fold the 'male Primary school teacher' subject back onto itself: a representation of a representation that reproduces the 'male Primary school teacher' subject, re-plays it, re-iterates it. The subject we assumed to be forged in a certain set of discourses turns out to be forged in those discourses. Maybe this misses something about men who teach in Primary schools – perhaps it misses a lot. So is there a way of troubling the thinking that ends up reproducing discourses that either celebrate or bemoan (Dyke, 2013) the situation that male Primary teachers find themselves in? Is the notion of a 'double-bind' that these men face a straight-jacket to *getting out of it*?

3.2 Towards 'getting out of it'

As a way of addressing such concerns, I want to think with Deleuze's call to analyse 'the state of things, in such a way that non-pre-existent concepts can be extracted from them' (Deleuze and Parnet, 2002, p.vii). In other words, to take actual states of affairs and nurture the 'lines of flight' that seem possible; to explore *becomings* that are 'distinct...from the history in which they are developed' – 'to find the conditions under which something new is produced' (ibid, pp.vii-viii). For Deleuze, the actual is one possible outcome of all that was possible; other potentials are immanent to it and hence 'there is always more to the present than the present reveals to us', as May puts it (2005, p.56). What seems evident, taken for granted, is just one of the pregnant possibilities. May goes on to summarise the Deleuzian perspective on ontology, pointing out that addressing ourselves to 'what exists' can amount to 'a pallid reinforcement of what presents itself to us as natural or inevitable', whereas for Deleuze ontology is not the 'study of what is, if by that we mean a study of the identities of things. It is a study of what is *and of what unsettles it*' (ibid, emphasis added). From being to *becoming-other*; from stagnation to *movement*. The dynamism that unsettles 'what is' can be seen as the virtual: 'that which is already in movement and might most effectively be considered as the potential of the actual' (Dyke, 2013, p.146). This thinking has the potential to trouble the bordered individual who is enclosed and enabled by discourse, even if that is how those subjects present themselves to us in research; an invocation to explore both what is and what unsettles it, the actual state of affairs and the *becomings* immanent in them. This is, then, about mining concepts from participants' storied experiences that provoke new territories to be actualised, not stopping at re-tracing their steps through striated discursive spaces.

In aiming to explore *becomings* that break from their history – to look for lines of flight – it is important to re-conceptualise how we think of 'the subject' since it is very hard to *get out of* the idea that subjects are 'real' (even if we follow post-structuralist theory that the subject is non-unified, transient, unstable) when research remains tied to analyses of the discourses that produce those subjects as unified, fixed and separate, and individuals as uniquely agentic. The persistent pull of representationalism incites us to

represent the world as 'composed of individual entities with separately determinate properties' (Barad, 2007, p.55), including the bounded human subject, which 'poststructuralist philosophy abandons and [yet] poststructuralist social science...nevertheless tend[s] to rely on' (Davies and Gannon, 2012, p.370). In Deleuzian and Baradian thought the relational and the intra-active, 'the complexity, the mixture and interpenetration of things' (Mansfield, 2000, p.139), are primary - meaning that the focus shifts to processes of assemblage and entanglements in/of the world that are subjectifying, and away from a centring of the human in this process.

I am keen to think through an assemblage of ideas that opens things up, that attempts to *do something* else; asking 'what more can we think' about male Primary school teachers' subjectivities and experiences, considering these as '*more* than textually or discursively construed' (Allen, 2013, p.2, original emphasis). I want to think-other, avoiding 'rehashing' worn debates about a male teacher shortage, the role model question, the glass escalator. I wish to explore ways of thinking about subjectification that *gets out of* the enclosure of seeing *identity and discourse* as primary, that explores the subjectification of moments 'that are simultaneously discursive, relational, and material (Davies and Gannon, 2012, p.359): as Deleuze argues, '...subjectification has little to do with any subject. It's to do, rather, with an electric or magnetic field, an individuation taking place through intensities..., it's to do with individuated fields, not persons or identities' (1995, p.93), and such subjectifications are processes involving assemblages of human and non-human agencies. The particularities of our momentary becomings, how a sense of self is affirmed or disrupted, delineated or under erasure, are entangled with the becomings of the more-than-human moment: 'each subject is one facet of a whole much greater than individual selves and much bigger than human lives alone' (Davies and Gannon, 2012, p.359).

Post-identitarian educational research

The matter of disrupting the subject as conventionally, comfortably, understood goes to the heart of aims to unsettle the taken-for-granted in teaching and learning: 'All of education and science is grounded in certain theories of the subject; and if the subject changes, everything else must as well' (St. Pierre, 2004, p.293). Hekman's material

feminist stance is aligned with St Pierre's Deleuzian outlook: she also encourages a re-imagining of the subject since 'another ontology of the subject would result in a very different social world' (Hekman, 2008, p.114). St. Pierre outlines the case for employing an enlarged, dispersed, entangled understanding of subjectivity as it has the potential to crack open Foucault's 'grid of intelligibility' that 'structures the subject, education, and science so tightly' (ibid). If the subject is re-thought then perhaps some of the contemporary constraints on what it means to be subjectified as a 'teacher' or a 'pupil' might also be re-framed.

Done, Murphy and Knowler (2014) take up this challenge, determinedly arguing that SENCos and pupils are situated within 'a political narrative of economic priority and productivity' (p.1), and 'teachers continue to be positioned as individually responsible for the realization of conflicting political objectives' (p.12). A heady mix of 'marketization, autonomization and responsabilization now characterizes advanced neoliberal democracies and is evident in education' (p.2), creating certain subjects. Resisting such an envelopment entails re-engineering 'the subject' since understanding it as enclosed, bounded, rational – human-centred - lends individuals to the governmental imperative of *working on oneself*. Akin to Jupp's (2013) point about the well-worn debates around male teachers, Done, Murphy and Knowler (2014) wish to go 'beyond reiterating statements of intervention fatigue on the part of [SENCos]', for example, as a way of contesting neo-liberal managerialism. This is because re-stating well-made points doesn't *get us out of it*, since the fundamental basis of analyses remains the human subject that has been co-opted.

The potential of opening our sensibilities up in a Deleuzian manner (Roy, 2003) is that it can shift attention past the individual (teachers or pupils) and on to the wider set of relations and conditions of possibility for becoming-teacher or becoming-pupil. Beighton argues that this is afforded by 'seeing subjectivity in the terms of an assemblage [which] militates against *a priori* forms of subjectivity' (2013, p.1302). Thinking in assemblage terms invites investigation of 'the external and mutually defining relations between [practitioners] and their milieu'. This is a call for a type of research that attempts something different:

'If some qualitative research in education insists on a hermeneutics which seeks to converge interpretations and experience, it seems likely that the creativity which results from dispersion or convergence between disparate phenomena will be missed' (Beighton, 2013, p.1302)

If in research on teachers' identities we begin with a certain idea about subjectivity (that the human is central, constituted in certain ways by discourse, and that this is inevitable), and then try to see how those subjects interpret their experiences there is a certain inevitability to what will be found. The relations between *disparate phenomena* that may evade analyses of a subject's experience are opened to scrutiny in assemblage/rhizome/self-as-multiplicity thinking since we are challenged 'to *think* the complexities and convergences of educators' roles' (ibid, p.1304, original emphases), as well as the objects and spaces and policies (and...and...and) that they assemble with, rather than accept the common sense appeal of unpicking how teachers orient themselves around their identities, objectives, motivations and concerns. Such an approach seeks the 'movement [that] always happens behind the thinker's back, or in the moment when he blinks...During this time, while you turn in circles among [habitually posed] questions, there are becomings that are silently at work, which are almost imperceptible' (Deleuze and Parnet, 2002, pp.1-2).

I want to suggest that we are at an impasse in understanding male Primary school teachers' lived experiences since we continue to ask questions that turn us in the same old circles. These circles trace outlines of discourse and place human agency, along with a sense that human subjects are separable from their contextual (material-discursive-relational) milieu, at their heart. As such, this research struggles to really say anything new. Two recent examples attest to this: Brody's (2015) research with six men in different countries working in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) usefully explores the relationship between professionalism and care and their gendered points of reference. However, the conclusions centre strongly around the character of these men in negotiating those contradictory discourses, suggesting that their inherent manliness (their *core* masculine identity) is a point of orientation for future development:

'The resilience of these men to outside criticism and pressure is bolstered by their single-minded commitment to do their job well. The strong masculine component of their professional identity may contribute to this resilience and its salubrious outcome. Their comfort with themselves as men bolsters their professional commitment. Thus fostering development of a robust masculine identity within the profession is a positive step towards achieving gender balance in the ECEC workforce' (p.359).

Hence gendered types of practice are reinforced and the idea of 'balance' re-iterates the binary dichotomy of gender. Moreover the onus is placed within individuals for stepping towards this 'gender balance'; there is little sense of how the more-than-human contributes to the gendered becomings of ECEC staff – how assemblages produce becomings.

Secondly, Mistry and Sood (2016) examine the 'views of men and women from 12 English primary schools and one ITE institution regarding the cause and effect of gender bias'. Their suggestion is that 'leaders in primary schools need to take a more active role to help change and shape the perceptions of men teachers in education. We conclude that leaders also need to help close the teacher gender gap in schools and ITE institutions through collaborative dialogue' (p.284). Here cause and effect are seen to be fathomable from the views of human agents, and that further talking – facilitated by leaders taking an 'active role' - is required to 'help change perceptions'. Yet Mistry and Sood state at the end of their paper that 'a major lesson from our research is that recruiting more men into education and keeping men in teaching for more than five years is huge and will require more than enlightened and courageous leaders' (2016, p.294). I think the impasse I am discussing is exemplified here; approaching the gender-based challenges faced by men, and indeed women, in Primary schools requires thinking that is *more than* centred on just the human agents and discourse.

Moving elsewhere requires a shift in how we understand subjectivity, achievable by de-territorialising the ontological ground that the subject tends to be situated on within much recent teacher identity research, as the above discussion has started to introduce. To that end, the following section outlines some key features of how post-structuralist (and allied social constructivist) approaches have been used to understand 'teacher identities', building on Chapter 1, diffractively reading these with Deleuzian/new

materialist theory to build an assemblage with open borders (Roy, 2003) ripe for extending in coming chapters.

3.3 Post-structuralist research on teacher identities

The stories that the four men in this research shared with me often reflected the themes and issues highlighted in the literature (see Chapter 1). The discourses that constitute their identities as ‘male Primary school SENCOs’, which frame their self-understandings and influence their embodied and emotional practices, were present as might have been expected - and examining those would be a useful endeavour. As has been the aim of much contemporary work on teacher identity - which tends to adopt a post-structuralist perspective - the objective would be to interrogate how the teacher (and male, and SENCO) subject is formed as such:

What the encounter with post-structuralism does is to enable the subject to see not just the object it appears to itself to have become, but to see the ongoing and constitutive force of language (with all its contradictions). It is through making that constitutive force visible that the subject can see its ‘self’ as discursive process, rather than as a unique, relatively fixed personal invention. Post-structuralist discourse entails a move from the self as a noun (and thus stable and relatively fixed) to the self as a verb, always in process, taking its shape in and through the discursive possibilities through which selves are made. (Davies, 1997, p.274)

It was Bronwyn Davies’ contention here that an already discursively constituted subject is the maker of the self, which is an active ongoing process, utilising the available discourses to do so. The agency afforded the subject here is important in Davies’ feminist stance since this allows change to occur – the role of post-structural analysis of the subject is to aid the subject in recognising the constitutive power of discourse, to see the self as ‘text’ and opening possibilities of playing with these conventions (ibid.). It is certainly noteworthy that Davies’ position has shifted through her engagement with Deleuze and Barad (e.g. Davies and Gannon, 2012; Davies, 2015) in more recent years, from the effects of discourse on individuals (and how one can resist this) to flows and intensities of encounters that dislodge the (un-intentional) human centeredness of the previous thinking.

Nevertheless, the feminist post-structuralist objectives of Davies' 1997 paper resonate with the work on teacher identity by Alsup (2006), Danielewicz (2001) and Munro (1998) amongst many others, who have taken up post-structuralism to analyse the discourses that generate identities – notably female identities - in educational settings. I have selected these three texts as they stand out as book-length scholarly pieces, focused on teacher's stories and employing post-structuralism to analyse their material, and I will refer to them in places throughout this chapter as I develop my theoretical framework. Munro summarises some key tenets of the post-structural perspective:

'Reality is not out there but is constructed through discourse; through language. This [post-structuralist] deconstruction includes the rejection of a unitary, rational, autonomous subject. A primary concern...has been to analyse how 'individuals are constituted as subjects and given unified identities or subject positions' (Best and Kellner, 1991:24)...I believe that [post-structural analysis] offers possibilities for reconceiving the subject, resistance and agency in more complex and powerful ways' (Munro, 1998, p.28).

Taking up a similar position to Davies (1997), scholars working from a post-structural position to explore teacher identities note the transformative potential of being critically aware of the constitutive discourses and the subject positions they afford. As Alsup notes, student teachers 'must develop a holistic understanding of their personal and professional identities and the intersections and contradictions among them. Such understandings can be realised through the...critical interrogation of conflicting subject positions or expressions of self' (2006, p.15). The aim of this for Alsup, which reflects the consensus of academics writing from similar post-structural positions, is for teachers to 'occupy the space between' these subject positions and identities, a 'space in which to experience a richer, fuller, and more complex understanding of self and other' (ibid).

Post-structuralism's potential then is compelling. It is about understanding the process of subjectification - how human beings are made subjects – and deconstructing these processes in order to bring about potential change in/of the subject. Though these aims are pertinent for this research, the approach encounters two related critiques as precluded in the above discussion; firstly that the privileging of discourse and language

in the formation of subjects doesn't recognise or account for the role of the material in this process, and secondly that it locates agency and intentionality with the human subject when we might productively see such things as emergent through assemblages of human and non-human entities.

Scholars have built such critiques around the burgeoning theoretical work on the agentic role of the material alongside the discursive (e.g. Alaimo and Hekman, 2008; Barad, 2007), seeking to recognise, conceptualise and consider the consequences of things-in-intra-action, including human bodies and discourse. Such thinking informs my approach to this study of men's life stories and experiences as teachers. I use it alongside the notion of a de-individualised subjectification that seeks to see how the processes by which people become subjects are located in moments, events, encounters that are subjectifying, not emanating outwards from the individual: subjectivity-as-rhizomatic-assemblage. These ideas are developed as I continue to consider a number of underlying assumptions or consequences of the way that post-structuralism has been used in research on teacher identities.

Representationalism and discursive determinism

Representationalism, the temptation to take language and discourse as representative of reality (Hekman, 2008), is evident in post-structuralist research on teacher identities. Despite post-structural theory dissolving the boundaries between representation and reality, research conducted within the paradigm tends to seek a transparent representability (Davies and Gannon, 2012; Taylor, 2013; Mazzei, 2013a) as a result of the 'linguistic turn' that foregrounds the 'discourse systems that purportedly construct or represent' material realities (MacLure, 2013a, p.659). This can be identified in Alsup's (2006) study of teacher identities, and is manifested in the way that the work relies on discourse as both the *problem* and the *solution* to teacher identity issues. She argues that in order to develop a sustainable professional identity teachers would benefit from engaging with a 'borderland discourse' that includes the 'multiple cultural-contextual understandings of 'teacher', personal beliefs and experiences, and understandings of professional expectations and responsibilities' (2006, p.126). These facets include lived encounters, but as mediated – articulated and then re-packaged -

by discourse. There is a sense that the world is knowable and representable, divorceable from the transitory experiences of ambiguity, mobility, flux; as possible to compartmentalise, enclose and control with a greater level of self-within-discourse awareness. Elizabeth Adams St. Pierre draws on Lyotard to argue that, rather, we need a way of thinking the world that allows for the 'discontinuous, catastrophic, nonrectifiable, and paradoxical', because 'the world is not continuous and predictable and cannot serve as the stable object of 'observation' and 'representation'' (2013, p.650). The modernist view centres human intention and assumes that discourse can adequately represent our engagements with the contingent, mobile, more-than-discursive world.

Despite drawing on the post-structural theoretical notion of 'non-unitary subjectivities' (Alsup, 2006, p.181), Alsup's study nevertheless suggests – although 'finding this realization troubling' – that successfully achieving a teacher identity is most likely for those women 'whose personal, core identities most closely match those of the culturally-defined teacher figure' (p.146). With this she slips into an assumption that such a thing as a 'core identity' exists – and posits it as something separate and separable from the discourses circulating, that there is an interiority to the self to understand (which is either oppressed or enabled by discourse). Moreover, the idea that a 'personal' identity is discernible from a 'professional' teacher identity is taken for granted here – the impression being that fixed selves (one or the other, personal or professional) form a relationship of ambiguity when they meet, rather than ambiguity and flux being the primary state of things that are then, in the ongoing processes of intra-action and reconfiguration (Barad, 2007), *produced and maintained as* differing entities. Alsup's conclusion might be accurate – if who you feel you are 'matches' the culturally-expected vision of who you are striving to be, it is probably easier to achieve that goal – but it doesn't *get us out of* thinking in terms of subjects and discourses; we begin and remain thinking about individuals and discursive representations of them.

This is at issue because 'we continue to produce ourselves as a subject on the basis of old modes which do not correspond to our problems' (Deleuze, 1988, cited in St. Pierre, 2004, p.292) - the problem here being that the complexities of becoming for men who

teach in Primary schools are not adequately grappled with by using concepts of individuals and discourses alone. We continually re-present them as sovereign subjects when addressing the challenges of being a 'male Primary school teacher', even though the problems associated with *being* that subject remain intractable *because they are beholden to those subject positions* (this dead-end is played out, but not acknowledged, in recent research with men who teach young children – e.g. Brownhill, 2014; Mistry and Sood, 2013). Incrementally there is value in building knowledge of 'the male Primary school teacher' subject. But with this, the man that teaches young children can be 'reduced to a single line of potentiality and reduced in its capacity to form other relations and to become-other' (Malins, 2004, p.99). Perhaps mapping some different lines of flight is better than incrementally edging around striated territory.

When we are wedded to a belief that language and discourse represents or creates social reality we cannot easily dislodge our (and other) selves-as-subjects from those representations. To aid men in Early Years teaching Mistry and Sood call for more of 'an understanding of how society manifests...views of gender, male or female', noting that stereotypes need to be challenged (2013, p.10); in effect saying that we need to *better understand* how reality is represented and constructed through discourse. But what about, instead, troubling the foundational idea that representations create social reality? Because with representationalism there is a focus on changing the representations in order to improve social reality: changing how the subject is represented can change how the 'real' person is seen/sees themselves. But what if there is more to it than that? Don't we just get caught in circles of 'relativism and objectivity, truth and skepticism' (Hekman, 2008, p.108)?

The question of how accurate a representation is takes the debate elsewhere, and thus 'never seems to get us any closer to solving the problem it poses because it is caught in the impossibility of stepping outward from its metaphysical starting place' (Barad, 2008, p.130). Barad sees this as 'much like the infinite play of images between two facing mirrors, the epistemological gets bounced back and forth, but nothing more is seen' (ibid, p.122). Using a similar argument, Deleuze uses metaphors of mapping and cartography when discussing how to employ his approach, rather than photography or

tracing which 'merely reproduces its object fixed in representation' (Holland, 2013, p.40). As Ulmer and Koro-Ljungberg argue, adopting a cartographic approach '...could prevent scholars from remaining unproductively stuck in tracing and analyzing experiences again and again in the same ways and thus enable them to escape overly structured educational discourses and practices' (2015, p.139). We need to resist the pull to produce better, 'more accurate', *reflections* of human subjects' reality and think ontologically – how might the very *state of being a subject* be unsettled? A push in that direction is the re-working found in new material feminist studies, which shift attention from representation and language on to how 'language, bodies, technologies, and other elements' (Hekman, 2008, p.114) intra-act to create 'collective assemblages of enunciation/utterance' (Gatens, 2000, cited in *ibid*). Interrogating how the entangling of human and non-human bodies of all sorts of order achieve some form of collective sense – how the process, the act, of entangling generates a sense or sensation that is subjectifying. Reality, or a core self, is not properly or inaccurately represented in discourse, rather discourse plus other composite parts forge the reality of that contingent moment.

3.4 Assemblages, singularities and haecceities

From within collective assemblages (of discourse, the material, the relational, the spatial, the temporal, the affective) that configure and reconfigure, generating subjectivity, becomings are produced. These assemblages might more aptly be called 'assemblings' – from noun to verb – and their inherent dynamism is the flux in which becomings take flight:

'What counts in such processes [of subjectification] is the extent to which, as [subjects] take shape, they elude both established forms of knowledge and the dominant forms of power...for a while they have a real rebellious spontaneity...They appear for a moment, and it's that moment that matters, it's the chance we must seize' (Deleuze, 1995, p.176).

From being to *becoming* – as a line of flight flees the established is when matters, that's *the chance we must seize*. This point ties with the critique of reposing on discourse, as what Deleuze encourages is a nurturing of those becomings that have a 'rebellious spontaneity' when they evade that which is established and dominant, or in other

words the discourses that frame an issue, an individual or group. Dorothy Smith's writing about a 'standpoint feminism' is useful here since capturing that *something* of a life that eludes established and dominant frameworks of definition motivates her argument. She takes the view that beginning one's inquiry in discourse is to assist the operation that claims 'a piece of the actual for the relations of ruling, of which that discourse...is part', and thereby research risks reproducing a normative vision of the world (Smith, 1992, p.90). She seeks instead a method of sociological inquiry that begins with the 'real life' person:

'Inquiry starts with the knower who is actually located; she is active; she is at work; she is connected with particular other people in various ways; she thinks, laughs, desires, sorrows, sings, curses, loves just here; she reads here; she watches television. Activities, feelings, experiences, hook her into extended social relations linking her activities to those of other people and in ways beyond her knowing. Whereas a standpoint beginning in text-mediated discourse begins with the concepts or schema of that discourse and turns towards the actual to find its object, the standpoint of women never leaves the actual. The knowing subject is always located in a particular spatial and temporal site, a particular configuration of the everyday/everynight world' (ibid, p.91).

It is striking to me how similar Smith's argument is to Deleuze point cited above, that when researchers begin with abstractions such as 'the Subject' it is inevitable that subjects become visible in a world which '[researchers] make conform to their requirements' (Deleuze and Parnet, 2002, p.vii). Smith's argument is that the particularities of lives, notably including the material and affective, are not inherently discursive – discourse makes sense of those experiences for us, framing it. So to begin, and remain, in those discourses adds support to their framing of our experience and subjectivities. It has the potential to exacerbate the problem: there is a risk of condemning the men who teach and work as SENCOs in Primary schools to their discursive categories: Male. Primary school teacher. SENCO. These interiorise thinking (to within discourse), rather than exteriorise; to think beyond the bounds inscribed.

The idea that research should 'not leave the actual' and that this spatial and temporal site is a 'particular configuration of the everyday/everynight world' is an important one; it is within those singular assemblings that the processes of subjectification are

encountered. This calls up Braidotti's argument for a 'politics of location' that aims to account 'for the diversity and complexity within any given category' (such as 'man', 'teacher') and analyse the specifics of 'multiple power locations one inevitably inhabits as the site of one's subjectivity' (2011a, p.15). The Deleuzian use of haecceities – 'that which makes singular events what they are, their 'thisness'' (Beighton, 2013, p.1302) – is useful here:

'It should not be thought that a haecceity consists simply of a décor or backdrop that situates subjects, or of appendages that hold things and people to the ground. It is the entire assemblage in its individuated aggregate that is a haecceity' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.289).

That which marks something out as a particular thing is a haecceity. The particular way that a happening or setting unfolds in its unique and singular fashion, is a haecceity. Deleuze uses this idea to get at the wholeness of an assemblage and the way that the relations between its parts generate particular becomings, how particular configurations produce singular moments that are un-replicable, that are qualitatively different. Places and things are not the stage on which situated subjects act, but agentic intra-active components in the becomings of a moment. With other connections, other assemblages are made, and other becomings are possible. Haecceities can be seen as denoting properties that both 'exist' and are 'amorphous' (Gale, 2014, p.1000): the idea of the haecceity gets at that which is 'perfectly individuated, yet retains an indefiniteness, as though pointing to something "ineffable"' (Rajchman, 2001, p. 85). The singular nature of the 'entire assemblage in its individuated aggregate' produces its haecceities as it goes; those 'properties' are not prior or transcendental but generated through the unique entanglement of the aggregate parts. The 'this-ness' of an event/becoming is non-replicable, that which makes it what-it-is is of its moment, singularly.

This idea is important because it encourages a mapping of how all components conspire to produce contingent becomings, including non-human entities of things and affects. Each aspect is an integral piece, without which the haecceity differs. This therefore leads to the vital notion that when language is used to account for experience and selves (for example in a research interview) it is not representing something else

that 'exists'; rather the experiences and selves narrated are emergent in that singular context – the discursive, material and relational, contingent haecceity. 'Language and reality exist together on the surface' (St. Pierre, 2013, p.649), and as the 'tripartite division' between the field of reality, field of representation and the field of subjectivity (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.23) is dissolved so this takes us from thoughts about what the core essence of a person - or true meaning of a story - is and towards an idea that there are just singular events generating particular, located subjects and stories.

Events replace essences

In trying to think towards the idea that human subjectivity (our sense of self within the world) is produced and indeed might reside beyond the bounds of the human subject we are questioning the notion of the bounded, rational, Cartesian human self as the repository and generator of subjectivity – and this is troublesome because the assemblages we are entangled within often, habitually, produce that sense. This invites a dual challenge – first, to interrogate and unpick how 'the flux of existence comes to be experienced otherwise – as a constellation of fixed identities, closed facts and unified subjects' (Done and Knowler, 2011, p.844). The second challenge is to go further, to seek to reframe that notion of 'I' through mapping it as 'the contingent effects of interactions between events, responses, memory functions, social forces, chance happenings, belief systems, economic conditions, and so on, that make up a life' (Stagoll, 2005, cited in *ibid*), to consider the 'complex embodied, relational, spatial, affective energies' of multiplicities (Ringrose, 2011, p.599). This reframing of subjectivity – away from the internal consciousness of a person processing all these things and developing an 'I' that retains an inherent central form – moves toward the idea that subjectivity is a dispersed sensation, a fleeting intensity felt as circumstances and processes such as those listed above intra-act. Subjectivity is hence 'constructed in a multidimensional field and...always posited as collective and plural' (Semetsky, 2006, p.3).

The singular nature of events or happenings (the particularities of their configuration) generate subjectivity but this is a subjectivity of a mo(ve)ment, it is 'individuation without subject, the way in which a river, a climate, an event, a day, an hour of the day,

is individualised' (Deleuze and Parnet, 2002, p.viii). This is a sense of self 'not limited to just a person but encompassing the whole event in a context...an experiential situation' (Semetsky, 2006, pp.12-13). Subjectivity is in this way a qualitative multiplicity, a continuousness, an entity with 'porous boundaries...defined provisionally by its variations and dimensions'. It is a 'purely unique event' – a singularity – that might attain some form of roughly-defined consistency for a period, but nevertheless is in 'constant flux' (Tampio, 2010).

The notion of a 'subjectless subjectivity' (Done, Murphy and Knowler, 2014; Semetsky, 2006), conjures up a sense of this for me. It is decentred but sentient; not exclusively of the subject but feeling and sensing nevertheless. This is a qualitative multiplicity: a dynamic web of parts, a rhizomatic collective assemblage ever-ripe for re-arranging, constructed through affinities – infectious sensations, vibrations, diffusions that allows apparently solid lines (between self/other/spaces/things/past/future) to melt; it affords thinking with the idea of porosity, permeability, seeping. It chisels a hole that might become a crack spreading in unforeseen directions. Imagine a sense of self as emergent within moments, spaces, with objects, within then, now and to-come, as if within an ocean of intensities saturating all of those aspects with a *subjectless subjectivity* – a sense of *something* but without *separate things*. A 'qualitative duration of consciousness without self' (Deleuze, 2001, cited in St, Pierre, 2004, p.294). Events replace essences (Deleuze, 1994). A 'nonpersonal individuality' where events have 'proper names' not persons; 'it's a question of something passing through you, a current' (Deleuze, 1995, p.141). A 'post-identitarian' view on the constitution of the subject (Braidotti, 2012).

Grappling with the 'this-ness' of becoming with/in events is to locate selves on a par with events: 'It is the wolf itself, and the horse, and the child, that cease to be subjects to become events, in assemblages that are inseparable from an hour, a season, an atmosphere, an air, a life...[These] are not of another nature than the things, animals, or people that populate them, sleep and awaken within them' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, pp.289-290). What is called for is researchers to invoke how 'the elements in play find their individuation in the assemblage of which they are a part, independent of the form of their concept and the subjectivity of their person' (ibid, p.291), to tie a

'statement to the collective assemblage...rather than to a subject of the enunciation ' (ibid, p.292). If we imagine subjectivity as a current passing through the *individuation of singular events* then mapping the unique configurings – the haecceities – of those episodes marks a way of undercutting the assumption that subjects have primacy, which in turn unsettles well-worn binaries (e.g. male-female, professional-personal, caring-disciplinarian) and the 'issues' that educational research seeks to address around those.

In this way of thinking, subjectivity ought not to be seen as the property of 'any centred being, body or entity. Instead [Deleuze] draws upon life processes that we might share with the world around us...to release meanings and understandings rather than totalize or define them' (Pearce and MacLure, 2009, p.252). We're invited to understand our becomings as caught up in the 'life processes' of which we are a part, that hold potential for becoming-other if we can stay our impulse to interpret to the point of totalization or utter definition. Or, indeed, quell our temptation to fall back on common sense understandings such as those implied by the stratifications we started with: Male, Primary School teacher, SENCo.

'Life processes', events, moments, do not just forge human subjectivities, rather human subjects are produced - in flashes, stutters, bursts, in slow motion, as intensities - along with other phenomena as the event unfurls; intra-actions within those assemblings are an entangling of agencies, and these can involve 'all manner of matter: corporeal, technological, mechanical, virtual, discursive and imaginary, that carry affective [agentic] charges' (Renold and Ivinson, 2014, p.364). All orders of entity are embroiled as the subject emerges 'in each moment, moments that are simultaneously discursive, relational, and material' (Davies and Gannon, 2012, p.359). The Deleuzian self is a rhizomatic multiplicity, 'the collection point of infinite and random impulses and flows...that overlap and intercut with one another, but that never form any but the most transitory and dynamic correspondence' (Mansfield, 2000, p.136); Deleuze puts the human subject under erasure through dispelling its primacy:

'For ages people have used [concepts] to determine what something is (its essence). We, though, are interested in the circumstances in which things

happen: in what situations, where and when does a particular thing happen, how does it happen, and so on? ...What we're interested in, you see, are modes of individuation beyond those of things, persons, or subjects: the individuation, say, of a time of day, of a region, a climate, a river or a wind, of an event' (Deleuze, 1995, pp.25-26).

'When, where and how does a particular thing happen', not 'what something is'. This is an important distinction when thinking about subjectification because it locates the formation of a sense of self within happenings rather than as transcending those contingent circumstances. Without taking the 'existence' of the male Primary school SENCo subject as *a priori*, it emerges as more possible to map becomings-other. Perhaps to be attracted by 'hotspots' or 'shining points' (Taylor, 2013, p.698) in the men's stories that enable us to notice and nurture other assemblages with the force to rupture habitual thinking: as, for example, Taylor's 'chair-body assemblage' (ibid); Renold and Iverson's (2014) 'pit-pony-girl assemblage'; Malins' (2004) fire-smoke-breath-mouth assemblage; Jackson and Mazzei's (2012) body-suit-desk assemblage, all of which recast the boundedness of human subjects (respectively, a male Sixth-form Sociology teacher; poor rural girls; addicts; a black female graduate student) to re-route the worn circuits of identity-based thinking.

In assemblages such as described above, it is 'the set of relations per se that counts, and not the terms that are related to each other by virtue of the relations, that...maintain an ontological priority' (Semetsky, 2006, p.2). It is the organisation and arrangement, and the patterns of these relations that is the focus (Puar, 2012, cited in Goodley and Runswick-Cole, 2014). The *relationship* between the elements in an assemblage are paramount and productive of becomings, rather than apparently distinct parts relating and causing effects: 'separately determinate entities do not pre-exist their intra-action' (Barad, 2007, p.175) – things are constituted through entanglement, and don't 'exist' prior to that. The power of an 'ontology of becoming' then is in its troubling of pre-existing entities (it just *seems* as though they are *a priori*), which allows alternative configurations to be explored. For example the 'pit-pony-girl' assemblage becomes visible and potent through 'recognising how traces of place and history become revitalised within acting assemblages [that] can provide some powerful insights into resources and barriers that girls encounter in their everyday lives and how they

imagine themselves forward through dreams and aspirations' (Renold and Ivinson, 2014, p.364). This thinking unsettles the fixing, the territorialising, that molar categories such as gender, class, sexuality, religion, can do and in that case allowed the researchers to make 'explicit those micro-moments of deterritorialisation, when girls and horses come together in dynamic ways to create, if only temporarily, something Other' (Renold and Ivinson, 2014, p.373).

In research with teachers, Semetsky (2006, p.104) reminds us that they 'are always already part of the whole of the educational system and depend on its vitality for their own survival'. This gets at the key point that it is possible to see the world in a different way than people (teachers) conjoining with their environment (e.g. 'the educational system') and then resisting or acceding or seeking to modify it. This is at the crux of Ball's argument about the 'terrors of performativity':

'...the policy technologies of education reform are not simply vehicles for the technical and structural change of organizations, but are also mechanisms for reforming teachers (scholars and researchers) and for changing what it means to be a teacher, the technologies of reform produce new kinds of teacher subjects. Such reform changes one's 'social identity' (Bernstein, 1996, p. 73)....This is the struggle over the teacher's soul' (Ball, 2003, p. 217).

Although Ball does not take the radical step that Deleuzian ontology invites, nevertheless the case is that teachers are enmeshed in educational practice (and reform) in ways that alter them as subjects – it alters what it means to be them. Webb makes a similar point in his study of the 'teacher assemblage'. He notes that the teachers in his research became 'grafted or assembled onto the accountability machine' (2009, p.105). Teachers become embroiled in the accountability process as they reproduce its intent, and accountability processes remodel as teachers iteratively co-construct those intents; their becomings are reciprocal.

What has not been widely pursued, however, is how a 'teacher assemblage' might include facets other than the obvious such as educational policy and practice. Scholars such as Webb (2009) and Roy (2003) have employed the Deleuzian assemblage, and other concepts, to examine educational reforms and pedagogical concerns, but there is

a dearth of work with teachers that utilises such thinking to explore and indeed disrupt the striated axes of 'teacher identity' research – the social cleavages that are seen to influence the 'personal' for teachers: gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, for example. Moreover, there is scant research attempting to situate some of these broader categorisations within assemblage thinking that also brings in the new material feminist concern with the things, the 'stuff' (Miller, 2010), that are agentic partners within subjectifying assemblages. A notable exception is Carol Taylor's study of a male Sixth-form Sociology teacher as noted above which explores 'how objects and bodies work to produce the classroom as a gendered space' (2013, p.688). Educational research using such a conceptual framework tends to have focused on the development of subjectivities among pre-school children and school pupils (see for example Allen, 2015; Ringrose 2011; Renold and Ivinson, 2014; Blaise, 2013; Renold and Mellor, 2013) rather than seeking to examine teachers' subjectification within similar assemblages. There are questions under-explored about how gendered teacher subjectivities emerge in relational material-discursive fields.

Quantitative and Qualitative multiplicities

As a final section to this chapter, it is worth outlining how engrained social cleavages (such as gender) might be accounted for in Deleuzian post-human material feminist approaches that I have been discussing. The emphasis so far has been on the rhizomatic assembling nature of the self, and of subjectivity as emergent within happenings that permeate bodies to generate 'subjects'. Our sense of self is contingent and forged through a disparate soup of human and non-human bodies, and is generated within moments, events, durations that are singular aggregates of their parts. But does that mean broad typologies which don't seem to 'change' as such, and are abstractions from the complexities of 'real' lived experience (like gender, class, ethnicity), rejected as irrelevant?

In a Baradian sense, the question might be 'how do these come to matter?'; how is it that those socio-cultural differences become apparent, become seen as definitional and prior, from within a constant reconfiguring flux of experience and circumstance? How do the entangled forces of human and non-human entities produce striations such as

gender? A Deleuzian answer might be that the dominance of an ordered 'being' (I am a man. I am white. I am gay, and so on) happens through an 'over-coding' of the rhizome's heterogeneous dimensions, which is a function of power (Holland, 2013). Selves emerging from with/in assemblages can be understood in relation to broader social categories through an analysis of how such divisions work to striate what is a heterogeneous, undulating flux of self-in-motion. Rhizomatic networks of becoming intra-act with, and are interspersed with, tree-like structures of ordered being. We are contingent living time, of moments (of speeds, flows, sensations, intensities, swarms), but we are also striated (we have tramlines, hierarchies, knots, organisation): indeed, Deleuze and Guattari counsel against 'an oversimplified conciliation, as though there were on the one hand formed subjects, of the thing or person type, and on the other hand spatiotemporal coordinates of the haecceity type' (1987, p.289); 'every rhizome contains lines of segmentarity according to which it is stratified, territorialized, organised, signified, attributed, etc. as well as lines of deterritorialization down which it constantly flees' (ibid, p.10). As Braidotti has it, we have the capacity to be 'both grounded and to flow', to speak of the variables that 'structure us' in time and place, as well as to transcend them (2012, p.33). Thus rigid striations and unruly off-shoots are 'separate melodic lines in constant interplay with one another' (Deleuze, 1995, p.125).

We are both 'qualitative multiplicities' and 'quantitative multiplicities'. These dimensions - one continuous, smooth, intensive, and the other compartmentalised, hard-edged, ordered - coexist and interpenetrate: 'Each type of multiplicity captures a side of being and perception. [Quantitative multiplicities are] one side of reality—the one that coheres into regular patterns that can be observed and catalogued... [while] qualitative multiplicities require a broader palette to colour in the nuance of each thing... to capture the elusive singularity of each society, language, politics, or individual...the lived sensation of being a qualitative multiplicity' (Tampio, 2010, p.1). Holland's metaphor of the 'amorphous soup of becoming' (2013, p.56) acknowledges the foggy and jumbled character of rhizomatic selves-in-moments, and yet we can and do feel *structured*. Such a 'notion of unity appears only when there is a power takeover in the multiplicity by the signifier or a corresponding subjectification proceeding' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.9). We might often feel definite and unified, a

'quantitative multiplicity' of firm-edged differences - I am a man (not woman), I am white (not black), I am Muslim (not Christian), and so on, including I am human (with control over objects), I am of culture (having mastered nature) - but this sense is a product of power that seeks to capture and delineate.

We spend a great deal of our time and effort 'creating and sustaining the concepts and practices through which [our] lives are made to make sense. Habitual, repetitive citations and explanations work to keep each of us (more or less) in place and in character' (Davies and Gannon, 2012, p.358). The regular re-iteration of our habitual selves is expected, anticipated, drawn out by the milieu we move within, where the event-assemblages we compose with 'wait for us and invite us in' (Deleuze, 2004, cited in Dyke, 2013, p.153) – our will to make sense is really the will of the collective entanglement; our becomings are the actualisation of events in us.

And so to focus on the quantitative type of difference is to serve the 'violence' inherent 'in our very constitution as subjects or selves' (Rajchman, 2001, p.103). To consider qualitative multiplicities opens up for experimentation the rhizomatic experience of living. Since within this ceaselessly connective expanse, this tumult of heterogeneous parts 'that can be connected to anything other, and must be' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.7), our 'others' seep into us; within the self-as-rhizome we cannot help but be striated by 'our' identities, and simultaneously saturated by that-which-we-are-not. There is a certain freedom in this that sidesteps the 'violence' of straight-jacketed subjectivities and contemplates how our bonds with these 'others' – of human and non-human orders - are generative of and immanent in *who we might become*. Conceived as not just 'individualised, fixed and categorised' our becomings can be open-ended and incremental (Dyke, 2013, p.152). Our research might then open up to movements that forge new understandings of how subjectivities emerge in the relational-material-discursive tumult; 'We are subjected to, as well as being the subjects of, forces that cut across us, splitting us open, but also – and by the same gesture – connecting us in powerful and often obscure ways' (Braidotti, 2011b, p.130).

Yet often in teacher identity research, which habitually begins with or orientates itself around social divisions such as gender and class, those identities (those subject positions) become proxies for *who those teachers are*. *Being* tallies with subject position (male, teacher, middle class, etc.) – as points of focus, nodes, knots, stratification – whilst *becoming* is a process of travel, of movement: ‘a line of becoming has neither beginning nor end, departure nor arrival, origin nor destination’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.323). Thinking of becomings complicates the very ground of identities (as *being*) since becoming doesn’t ‘come from’ anywhere nor posits its direction and hence refuses to be tied to majoritarian models for what being ‘a man’, ‘a teacher’ and so on looks like or acts like. As Rajchman summarises:

‘We should understand our identifications with a social order in terms of the roles they assume within the unfolding of our singular, indefinite lives rather than trying to reinsert the complicated lines of those lives back into a master law of our relations to the “symbolic order”’ (2001, p.91).

An example of *being* that occludes *becoming* is seen in Danielewicz’s study of teacher identity. She argues that developing ‘an identity as a teacher’ is vital – ‘so that teaching is a state of *being*, not merely ways of acting or behaving’ (2001, p.3, emphasis added). In this thinking, those who teach must embrace the label of ‘teacher’ since to be ‘a good teacher...is to be an invested teacher, someone who identifies him or herself as a teacher’ (ibid); to define oneself in accordance with discursively constructed categories is to be able to operate within a striated world – a point that wouldn’t necessarily be disputed by Deleuze; there is pragmatic and political value in claiming such a norm (Goodley and Runswick-Cole, 2014). But he might well also point out that this doesn’t get us, as researchers, past ‘re-inserting’ teachers’ *singular, indefinite lives* back into the master narrative of ‘what it means to be a teacher’.

Danielewicz takes a firmly post-structuralist stance on identity, noting that it is fluid, multiple, contingent and never completed. Yet her take on this is that identity is a fluidity of *categories* - identity is essentially a cataloguing of subject positions: ‘not only do I view myself as a teacher; also I am a woman, a mother, a friend, a writer’ she notes (ibid, pp.3-4), calling up notions of inter-sectionality. There is no denying that such a conception of identity reflects a dimension of lived experience, which can involve

tension and dissonance between subject positions packaged by discourses, yet this only interrogates the 'molar segments' of experience (Goodchild, 1996, p.159): what about the productive subjectifying processes that lie alongside them? What of the encounters and environments that lie beyond the boundaries that quantitative differences allow us to notice? Invoking an *Alice in Wonderland*-Deleuzian style riddle, Dyke asks of such countable, inter-sectional identity categories: 'If I am x, y, z: what am I?' (2013, p.155).

If I am a man, a Primary teacher, a SENCo, a Jehovah's Witness, with Crohn's disease:
what am I?

If I am a man, a Primary teacher, a SENCo, a new father, an aspiring Head teacher:
what am I?

If I am a man, a Primary teacher, a SENCo, gay, a Granddad: what am I?

If I am a man, a Primary teacher, a SENCo, working class, former juvenile delinquent:
what am I?

If we think of participants' identities in terms of categories – even in multiples – we may well struggle to escape those knots that bind us; those who participate in our research can become defined by those knots, and remain subject to/of those discourses. Lather (2013, p.642) notes that a post-qualitative approach recognises the limits of such thinking, suggesting that we need to acknowledge that human and more-than-human experience is 'in excess of intersectionality' – it is not a matter of adding up all the categories and calculating their sum. This is not even to mention the issue that if we start with the assumption that a group of people exist in somehow definable and coherent terms (male, Primary teacher, SENCo) there are a raft of other relevant – because everything is connecting/able within the rhizome – definitions (gay, juvenile delinquent, Jehovah's Witness) that quite easily get erased or down-played; moreover, the full 'sum' of intersecting subject positions would not be possible to calculate because that sum would have different elements to include each time, as the moment of telling constitutes a particular configuration of the self. Such thinking, the basis of 'identity politics', is 'grounded in essentialist descriptions of gender, race, sexuality and so on and so remain[s] within Enlightenment humanism's enclosure' (St. Pierre, 2013, p.648).

The idea of seeing a 'self' emerging through assemblage or rhizomatic multiplicity – forged through the coagulation of forces and things intra-acting with/in events - gets at this sense of being both bound together yet not unified or a totality (Deleuze and Parnet, 2002). Indeed, assemblages are non-unified wholes that emerge from the interactions between heterogeneous parts (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). They are rhizomatic multiplicities, 'that is, each is composed of innumerable elements co-existing in the simplest...relation possible, as designated by the logic 'and...and...and'' (Holland, 2013, p.37), where all parts can be connected to all others – no hierarchies, no trees. They are not unities in their own right, but a contingent entity made up of many components, and it is in the process of intra-acting that assemblages form; 'an assemblage isn't a thing, it's a *process* of making and unmaking the thing' (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012, p.1, original emphasis). In an assemblage, 'the elements put together are not fixed in shape, do not belong to a larger pre-given list but are constructed at least in part as they are entangled together' (Law, 2004, p.42). The relationships between elements are key, not the elements in themselves; how the assemblage assembles to become, even if momentarily, that which it appears to be.

Seeking to push the boundaries that a discursive approach imposes, Deleuze invites a working into the nooks between the nodes, into the relations between the elements, which play a role in the process of subjectification but often remain invisible when focusing on the parts ahead of the relations between them. Subjectivity 'is always immanent within the assemblages of practices, objects, places and people' (Mannion, 2007, p.416), and so rather than looking for/at the standardized moulds that orientate and constitute 'the subject', as pursued by Foucauldian-inspired thinking (Bogard, 1998), Deleuzian thought attunes us to how becomings are *modulated* within these assemblages. How does a 'web of connections and codes, flows of energy, segments, and strata', the 'diverse lines and registers' (ibid, pp.56-57) produce a contingent yet sense-able impression of self? How do the events, encounters and practices of intra-acting bodies (re)produce categories such as gender, rather than vice versa (cf. Iverson, 2015; Goodley and Runswick-Cole, 2014)? The rigidity of such categories can strengthen or weaken depending on the intra-acting elements: as Deleuze states,

'When a body "encounters" another body, or an idea another idea, it happens that the two relations sometimes combine to form a more powerful whole, and sometimes one decomposes the other, destroying the cohesion of its parts...' (1988, p.19). Thus in paying attention to the configuration of, and relations between, elements in assemblage we are dealing with questions of how powerful molar forms retain or lose their power. As Jackson and Mazzei state, 'an assemblage...is the process of arranging, organizing, fitting together. So to see it at work, we have to ask not only how things are connected but also what territory is claimed in that connection' (2013, p. 262).

Indeed a significant feature of Deleuzian philosophy that makes it so useful for thinking 'beyond impasses of discursive determinism' is that it 'offers strategies for mapping both modalities of social/subjective 'capture' through notions like territorialization or striated space, for example, but also the possibilities of transformation and becoming, through notions like 'lines' of flight'' – enabling 'the mapping of the complex and contradictory nature of social transformation and recuperation in education and beyond' (Ringrose, 2011, p.599). Assemblage thinking enables a conceptualisation of both order and flux through the sense that there is the immanent potential for reconfiguration:

'rather than analysing the world into discrete components, reducing their manyness to the One identity, and ordering them by rank ... [the assemblage] synthesizes a multiplicity of elements without effacing their heterogeneity or hindering their potential for future rearranging (to the contrary)' (Massumi, 1987, in Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.xiii,)

Therefore if we see the self as becoming within assemblages it is important to acknowledge its transient, constructed and changeable nature. Caution is needed so as not to reproduce 'the impasses, blockages, incipient taproots, or points of structuration' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.15) that delineate selves and may appear most obviously. 'The advantage of creating the image of ourselves as a rhizomatic multiplicity is that rhizomes have open borders and are constantly changing in architecture' (Roy, 2003, p.172); bearing in mind the unfinishedness and reconfiguring potential of such selves means to be alert to the becomings lurking in between and at the edges and sidling along in the shadows.

Becoming is seen as a passing 'between [points], carrying them away in a shared proximity in which the discernibility of points disappears' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.324). Analyses like Danielewicz's (2001) usefully discerns the points (the subject positions) but not the becomings forged (and possible to forge) in the in-betweens. A Deleuzian analysis would explore an assemblage's 'focuses of unification, centres of totalisation, points of subjectivation, but as factors which can prevent its growth and stop its lines' (Deleuze and Parnet, 2002, p.viii), and then also ask what becomings there are amid the entangled lines – of, in this case, maleness, teaching, SENCo-ing. Deleuze invites us to explore the set of lines that every thing is made up of (Deleuze and Parnet, 2002): 'we set out to follow and disentangle lines rather than work back to points' (Deleuze, 1995, p.86).

The interspersal of tree-like order (implying solidity, linearity, stratification – root, trunk, branch, twig) with/in the openness of a multiply-connecting rhizome is a powerful metaphor to play with. Experimenting with the idea that striated selves can be uprooted by multiple and varied inventive connections is important because it is through this that *becomings* (not just *being*) might be glimpsed – that the framing work discourses do for male teachers' narratives can be disrupted, affected, by noting the ruptures - where the rhizomatic shoots take leave of the trees – and paying due attention to the co-constitutive role that the material plays too. These are 'lines of flight' or 'deterritorializations' away from habitual ways of thinking and acting, away from familiar terrain; in using and developing this approach my aim is that movement and becomings are generated, 'releasing new capacities to act, respond and think' (Done, Murphy and Knowler, 2014, p.6).

Conclusion

This theoretical chapter has sought to develop a critique of post-structurally inflected research on teacher identity, staged by an examination of Deleuzo-Baradian thinking about the emergence of subjectivities. It makes a case for an intra-active relational materialist approach, conceiving of assemblages composing in singular events and making possible certain becomings that are (or are not) gendered, classed, and so on.

The chapter began to consider how the material and discursive are confederates in forging these contingent becomings, as intimate partners whose entwining is a quiet but vital feature of the haecceity of becoming. Assemblages may be 'over-coded' where the striations of identity and role categories impose upon – territorialise - the flux of rhizome-selves, drawing out some and blocking other subjectivities. Yet the immanent possibilities of transformation and becoming-other are also highlighted for attention through this philosophy.

The chapter has therefore provided a set of interconnected notions that will be re-examined and re-formed as the empirical chapters grapple further with these concepts, nurturing and re-directing the lines of flight through putting them to use. Before doing so however, the next two chapters engage with how research might be conceived within this theoretical paradigm – and, most pertinently, how this research project entangled with these ideas.

Chapter 4 - Methodology

In my PhD research proposal I wrote:

...How are male SENCOS 'discursively constructed' (Dillabough, 1999)? What societal and institutional dynamics effect male SENCOS' professional and personal understandings? How is the male role and Special Educational Needs (SEN) constructed and negotiated within the school? ... Masculinity discourses inform how men who teach construct themselves and are perceived by others. Also influential are expectations around SEN teachers and members of school leadership teams ... Consequently a qualitative narrative approach is considered the most appropriate vehicle for gaining holistic insight into male SENCOS' personal and professional understandings...

Introduction

The decision was made early to use narrative interviews, and was based on what felt like the solid ground of hundreds of teacher and professional identity studies. As my research entered into composition with this literature there was a pathway illuminated; the men would tell their professional and personal stories and this would inform an analysis of how identities are forged through experience, are multi-faceted and made sense of through discursive resources.

But the project emerged in its current form as rhizomatic lines of flight diverted from that brightly lit path. These mazy, winding alleyways included: a conviction that research on male Primary school teachers had met an impasse; the things (literally *the things*) the men talked about as we discussed their experiences and work; the interview-events that formed through the glow of a sunny end-of term afternoon or drizzled with steel-grey morning skies – the pulse of events individuating; Pat's recommendation of Jackson and Mazzei's book *Thinking with Theory in Qualitative Research* (2012); the other literature that this rhizomatically led me to read; the growing sense – an affective flow - that a discourse/narrative approach to identity was going to discount something else that moved simultaneously with it, but somehow on a different plane.

On the one hand the interviews with the men for this research, and the accounts these generated, felt normal and mundane – the stuff of everyday situated conversations. On

the other hand this was discombobulating because these men and their stories were grounded and particular and intimately entwined with the material, spatial and temporal moment, and thereby seemed to *carry my theoretical starting point elsewhere* and dislodge the rigidity of what discursive resources alone seemed to be offering. There was a familiarity and a normality to hearing these men speak of people, work and stuff, but there was also something ineffable about these encounters – as if both everything and nothing occurred in these moments - that cried out for another way of thinking them through.

The research paradigm I had intended to plug into felt like one of Deleuze's 'rigid segments', whilst emergent was 'what happens beneath it, the connections, the attractions and repulsions, which do not coincide with the segments...but nevertheless relate [to them]...as if something carried us away, across our segments...towards a destination which is unknown, not foreseeable, not pre-existent' (Deleuze and Parnet, 2002, p.125). I have come to see these interview moments as infused with the 'specificities of particular times and places' and married to 'the affordances and capacities of worldly things and affective flows to shape [our] desires and ways of being in the world' (Gannon, 2016, p.128).

And yet I might have changed tack - an alternate possibility within this burgeoning theoretical terrain might have been, for example, to develop an ethnographic study (e.g. Taylor, 2013; Renold and Ivinson, 2014) or it could have conceived of collaborative writing projects (e.g. Gale and Wyatt, 2008; Davies and Gannon, 2012), maybe planned to analyse audio/visual data (e.g. Hultman and Lenz Taguchi, 2010; Lorimer, 2013; Allen, 2015).

However the interviews have allowed me to – have made me - grapple with the entanglement of discursive and material agencies in shaping the becomings of and in those encounters. As the definition of a human-centred and discursive approach (Tamboukou, 2015a), yet with rich seams of material-discursive entanglements erupting and non-human forces at play, these narrative interviews have encouraged an engagement with 'different starting points for educational research and new ways of

grasping educational experience than those afforded by humanism' (Taylor, 2016, p.5); they have forced a constant unpicking of the 'normalised and normative codes of dominant contemporary research' (Taylor and Hughes, 2016, p.1). The interviews have sometimes resisted such an unpicking though, sometimes drawn me back towards those normative codes of categories and identities and linearity, and this tension – or rather, this intimate connection between planes – is present in the substantive chapters in this thesis; the men are at once segmented and deterritorialised, seem detached from their material environment and immanently produced within it, are being and becoming.

In this chapter I first outline some central tenets of narrative and the study of identities as a grounding for the approach I have taken. This considers narrative's (and indeed the narrator's) role in forging intelligible identities and then addresses how contextual dimensions have been taken as central to this process. Following this, the main focus of the chapter forms an assemblage with such thinking but ultimately seeks to decompose its boundaries and striations. I discuss how a narrative approach can be made to work in exploring how subjects, and positionings such as gender, are emergent in material-discursive-relational entanglements within singular events. Here I take cues from recent Deleuzian developments in narrative theory that disrupt conventions of sequence, closure and agency (Tamboukou, 2010; 2015b) as well as decentres the 'narrative I', and note that my research assemblage (Fox and Alldred, 2015) is informed by the related idea of 'material storytelling' (Jørgensen and Strand, 2014; Strand, 2012) which draws on Barad's material-discursive agential realism.

There is a tension in being convinced that research based on the unique stories of individuals is fundamentally important to sociological inquiry when part of that inquiry questions the vision of the human as a fixed, bounded, autonomous, teleological, self-actualising agent that is the centre around which the world turns - a tension similarly articulated by, for example, Plummer (2001) and Barad (2007). This was the juxtaposition I found myself negotiating in this research as I was inviting

men's stories of teaching, career, life – asking them to complete a very human and 'self-actualising' endeavour – whilst simultaneously feeling a shift of the humanist ground in which such stories were planted. Yet challenging the image of the centred, meaning-making human is not to discount human experience or to see humans as any less important; rather, the challenge is to that particular framing of the human, with the aim being to become more adept at mapping how human experience comes to be lived out as it often is in contemporary times. Questioning the linearity, neatness and (human) agency assumed from/in narrative accounts, and allowing ourselves to hear/feel the influence of the material on contingent narrative becomings, is a task with better human (and non-human) living at its ethical heart.

4.1 Selves and narratives

Exploring how humans give meaning to their lives through narrative has brought significant and 'challenging perspectives to our understanding of human identity construction' (Brockmeier and Carbaugh, 2001, p.1). Aligning the study of identities with the study of narratives involves acknowledging that because *what* we know, and *how* we know, are both entangled in webs of narrative (ibid), then *what* and *how* we know about ourselves, about our identities, are also both grounded in stories. As such narrative is seen as inseparable from the self since it is employed to construct and enact identities (Bathmaker, 2010; Coates, 2003; Harré, 2001) and orient us in relation to other people, times and places. When we tell of our experiences, interests, hopes, and recount tales of (and to) our friends and families, we are making sense of 'how we experience ourselves and how we would like to be understood in order to bring structure' to our lives (Søreide, 2006, p.529). Narrative is used to make meaning from, and assign meaning to, experience and cause and effect; it is a 'sort of reflective interpretive device' that helps us to understand 'who and what we are and the things that happen to us' (Goodson and Sikes, 2001, p.41). Since 'humans need stories in order to represent experiences that remain inchoate until they can be given narrative form', those 'stories shape whatever sense we have of ourselves' (Frank, 2012, p.36). Indeed 'there is no identity outside narrative. Events or selves, in order to exist, must be encoded as story elements' (Munro, 1998, p.6). Through story-telling, pasts are reshaped, futures imaginatively projected, positioning in relation to others and groups

is negotiated: a sense of self is revised (Frank, 2012). Søreide (2007) borrows Somers and Gibson's term *ontological narratives* to describe the stories we tell involving our self since they help us understand and explain who we are.

It is a compelling idea that a self is 'composed' through stories (Kirk and Wall, 2010) as we use narrative frames to give meaning to experience, negotiating and adapting the hegemonic forms that delineate the boundaries of that life. McAdams' notion of *narrative identity* resonates within this perspective, whereby the self is bound to stories because they are how we manage the possible tension between our sense of self and ascribed social identities:

'...the stories we construct to make sense of our lives are fundamentally about our struggle to reconcile who we imagine we were, are, and might be in our heads and bodies with who we were, are, and might be in the social contexts of family, community, the workplace, ethnicity, religion, gender, social class, and culture writ large. *The self comes to terms with society through narrative identity*' (McAdams, 2008, pp.242-243, original emphases).

Coherence, linearity and neatness

In the contemporary dynamic, global and digital late/post-modern period stories become especially important for the self since choice is prolific. The self has come to be the central locus of dilemma and tension because former givens and certainties about who we are have been transformed into *decisions* we must make from a range of possible choices (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). In this context *narrative identity* is seen as a vital crutch as it provides a basis, a *template for experience*, on which to make choices from the options on offer – even if the options themselves are not limitless. We use narrative to re-present our polysemic (polyphonic perhaps) experiences, trying to herd those cacophonous meanings into some order – to make them make sense in totality. When we don't, can't or won't do this, questions might be posed about our membership of particular socio-cultural communities (Reissman, 2008) and can invite social sanctions (Bamberg, 2012).

To avoid discordance then, we need self-stories that are managed and manageable – one's identity in late modernity relies on 'the capacity to keep a particular narrative

going' (Giddens, 1991, p.54). This process involves integrating new experiences and sorting them into that ongoing story of the self. As Erkkilä and Mäkelä (2000, p. 1) note, 'the meaning of each event is generated in temporal relation to the totality of life and in view of its role in this whole'; 'a given event is not meaningful if it does not fit into the narrative'. The challenge this entails, of both seeming (to oneself and to others) the same through time whilst also incorporating change and difference, is one served well by the malleability of narrative (Bamberg, 2010). 'Through narration, people construct their identity, that is, they integrate old and new experiences, identify the ordinary and the exceptional, and give personal accounts expressing their intentions, interpretations, and evaluations in coherent chains of events' (Akkerman and Meijer, 2011, p.313). Following Paul Ricoeur, Leyshon and Bull (2011, p.164) argue that this 'storied' or 'narrative self' is an attempt at 'unifying human action...with the causation of those actions' – it is about trying to marry what happens in our lives with our role in those happenings, and to see that in some form of logical, coherent sequence. In telling stories of our lives we are developing 'meaningful constellations' that connect 'subjects, actions, events, and their consequences over time' (Holstein and Gubrium, 2012, p.6).

Preserving this self-coherence is important for our everyday functioning, since it defies convention to change our stories - and identities – or to start telling different ones, with possible consequences for the stability of our relationships with friends, family, colleagues and bosses, and so on. However, such coherence is only 'a product of the person's reflexive beliefs about their own biography' (Giddens, 1991, p.53). In other words, our ontological narratives tend to maintain some semblance of coherence because the idea of a consistent self-identity forged from our biographical experiences is a socio-cultural norm; there is a 'master narrative' that locates identity within a developmental framework, for example as having its origins in childhood (Mishler, 1999) and evolving sequentially through time and space. The archetypal narrative study explores the 'triangle of sequence, coherence and closure', considering these as 'an essential prerequisite for narrative meaning to emerge' (Tamboukou, 2015b, p.93) – clearly such a conceptualisation is imbued with an image of a particular type of subject that is both telling and hearing such narratives.

Narrative then, classically, is seen as structuring life's inchoate melange for us in particular ways, and this also binds us to the belief that certain narratives are *appropriate for people like me*; certain story trajectories fit us more readily than others because stories are bound to experiential material foundations. Since the master narrative determines that we see our identities as developing from childhood, and via our subsequent life experiences – and as those experiences are storied and understood in certain ways - it follows that we can only access certain identities, though particular stories of particular experiences. White, male, middle class stories fit white middle class men. Here we hear ourselves being hailed as certain subjects; in these stories we instantly recognise ourselves – no real choice: we are interpellated (Law, 2000).

'Borrowed goods'

In this way we begin to see that power and socio-historical context are at the heart of a narrative approach; '...no story is ever entirely anyone's own. Stories are composed from fragments of previous stories, artfully rearranged but never original' (Frank, 2012, p.35). Whilst experience may be unique, ultimately 'selfhood always trades in borrowed goods' (ibid, p.36) – the social and shared storylines that exist and are more or less legitimate to tell at certain times and in certain places (Goodson, 2013; see also Plummer, 1995). Moreover, the narrator themselves must be seen as a legitimate user of these stories for that telling to be credible at that time and in that place: I understand my experience as a man in certain ways because there are stories – about career, fatherhood, emotions, responsibility, and so on – that provide frameworks for me to do so. These stories speak of the social, cultural, historical and material moments I am embedded in. And because I am a man I am able to access and adopt those narratives. I cannot, without social sanctions, choose a woman's story - think of men working with young children in Early Years settings (see for example Warin, 2006). We are compelled to recognise ourselves within stories addressing *people like us*, pulling us here and barring our ways elsewhere. In this way stories are parts of wider assemblages infused with socio-cultural expectations that tempt us towards certain becomings:

'To the extent that events are actualized in us, they wait for us and invite us in ... Everything was in order with the events of my life before I made them mine; to live them is to find myself tempted to become their equal, as if they had to get from me only that which they have that is best and most perfect' (Deleuze, 1969, cited in St. Pierre, 2004, p.291)

Stories interpellate us - they loiter, tempt us, invite us to become certain subjects. They tie us to our pasts, and to our bodies, and to the places within which we narrate our selves. We can be tethered by stories.

Lives in context

Building on these ideas, there is a long tradition of narrative research focusing on how selves and stories are made in context. Central to this tradition of thought is that humans 'cannot be understood if they are taken out of the contexts of time and space of which they are always a part...and this history and culture is always in process and changing' (Plummer, 2001, p.262). In a review of the prominent conceptual frameworks utilised to understand teacher identity, Beijaard and colleagues conclude that most work sees:

'...that identity is not a fixed attribute of a person, but a relational phenomenon. Identity development occurs in an intersubjective field and can be best characterized as an ongoing process, a process of interpreting oneself as a certain kind of person and being recognized as such in a given context' (Beijaard et al., 2004, p.108).

This resonates with the contention Olsen makes when describing a socio-cultural or socio-historical perspective on identity. In pulling together recent trends in studies of teacher identity, he suggests that the central foci are 'the self in practice; ...the various interdependencies among person, context, history, and others; and ...the situated, continuous nature of self-development' (Olsen, 2008, p.4). This work draws out context and history as essential fulcrums around which identities turn and notes the connections and relationships between these aspects, for example by seeing teacher identity as 'mediated' by both prior experiences and influences, and the current context (Lasky, 2005; Flores and Day, 2006; Bullough, Knowles and Crow, 1991).

Our understanding of what we go through is focused through stories, and those stories are of their particular time and place. 'It is through story that we gain context and recognise meaning' (Atkinson, 1998, p.7). Cole and Knowles argue that researching lives in context 'is about understanding the relationship, the complex interaction, between life and context, self and place', and that making visible 'the complexities, complications, and confusions within the life of just one member of a community' (2001, p.11) provides insights into the social settings within which that life is lived (Goodson and Sikes, 2001). In particular, the stories that people tell of their lives connect personal concerns with public issues. Goodson and Sikes (2001, p.2) note that such research 'acknowledges that there is a crucial interactive relationship between individuals' lives, their perceptions and experiences, and historical and social contexts and events'. As we knit together the disparate parts of our lives we utilise stories that 'offer themselves for our adaptation' (Munro, 1998, p.6), and such a use allows researchers insight into 'the times in which we live and the opportunity structures which allow us to story ourselves in particular ways at particular times' (Goodson, 2013, p.6). In moving from individualising and personalising life stories, life history research intends to 'understand the pattern of social relations, interactions and historical constructions in which the lives of women and men are embedded...; [it] sets...life stories within an understanding of the times in which we live...' (Goodson, 2013, p.6). Such an approach is an effective way of illustrating the inter-relationship between culture, social structure and individual lives, and addresses the necessity in social science research to explore the relationship between the individual and the social (Sikes, 2009). As such this work takes heed of C. Wright Mills' advice:

'Know that the human meaning of public issues must be revealed by relating them to personal troubles and to the problems of individual life. Know that the problems of social science, when adequately formulated, must include both troubles and issues, both biography and history, and the range of their intricate relations. Within that range the life of an individual and the making of society occur...' (Mills, 1970, cited in Plummer, 2001, p.6).

The potential to live lives that are different from their current trajectories is at issue here – a thread that is also woven into my approach for this research.

4.2 Narrative research in educational contexts

This approach has been used extensively to understand teachers' lives. Korthagen argues that narrative is ideal in educational research since 'the ways in which teachers think about education is embedded in the stories they tell each other and themselves' (2004, p.81), and in emphasizing the 'role of organisations, crucial events, and significant others in shaping subjects' evolving definitions of self' (Bogdan and Knopp-Biklen, 2007, p.63) a narrative approach can add to understandings of issues regarding teaching practice, professional development or institutional/organisational factors.

Teaching, as an especially all-encompassing career, is a site within which personal and professional lives connect - the personal is entwined with the professional which makes such methods apposite for research with teachers (see for example Sikes et al, 1985; Maguire, 2008; Findlay, 2006; Jones, 2003; Korthagen, 2004; Day et al, 2000; Kelchtermans, 1993; Bullough, Knowles and Crow, 1991). 'The self is a crucial element in the way teachers construe the nature of their job' (Nias, 1989, p. 13) and opting for a career in teaching is seen as 'a choice of personhood' rather than a choice of job (Pomson, 2007, p.648) – thus understanding teaching and teachers requires an understanding of the selves that they construct, and therefore narrative is seen as a prime approach. Goodson and Sikes (2001, p.10) state that 'holism' is demanded here; the personal and professional need to be seen side-by-side, and work experiences viewed within their broader personal as well as social contexts (Cole and Knowles, 2001).

To this end, life history narrative research with teachers often connects the personal-professional identities, beliefs and values expressed within their stories to particular (and intersecting) social cleavages, such as ethnicity (e.g. Jupp and Slattery, 2010; Lynn, 2006), social class (e.g. Goodson, 2013), sexuality (e.g. Newman, 2010; Wallis and VanEvery, 2000; Brockenbrough, 2012) and of course gender (see Chapter 1, and below), as well as examining public or policy concerns such as Sikes and Piper's (2010) study of male teachers accused – but acquitted - of sexual misconduct with pupils.

The use of narrative research with teachers to study gendered identities and gendered aspects of the profession is well-established, with Löfgren noting that 'because teachers are at the centre of gendered constructions in school, their stories and constructions...are vital' (2012, p.80). Narrative has been employed to interrogate how women's lives as teachers are tied with the social construction of the feminine role (e.g. Munro, 1998; Cole, 2004; Smith, 2012), where a more structured research approach is seen to offer a limited view of the nuances of gender, life stories and their interactional construction. In gendered organisational cultures, that schools tend to be, storytelling is 'an implicit way to define the characteristics that persons possess, or must possess, to be deemed competent members of a specific gender culture', and 'patterns of behaviour and explanations of gender relationships are often established and tacitly reproduced through narrative' (Gherardi and Poggio, 2007, p.32). Since gender is a crux of teachers' identities, as it affects professional experiences and opportunities (Choi, 2012), and because it is established and performed through stories, a narrative approach is appropriate in this research. Especially, as noted in Chapter 1, because there seems to be a dearth of research with men who teach in Primary schools that seeks to examine their gendered identities beyond the prominent transition periods of training and the induction year.

But wait

In this thinking, categories such as gender provide powerful resources for storying – for understanding and directing - the self, even if these are *called up* and modified in relation to contextual circumstances. But wait: 'called up' here suggests that these categories exist somewhere else (in our mind? In our memories? In other people's minds? Our collective mind? Is this what 'socio-cultural' is?). It seems so straightforward to write 'called up', to think that way. In positing the dynamic construction of selves through stories by agentic human beings there is an assumption of external and internal realms – the person is separate from the narrative resources they use to form their identity, and are thus dis-entangleable from the context. The human has somehow a set of core characteristics or traits that allow it to negotiate the context and the array of narrative resources (discourses) which also 'exist' somewhere

– but this vision encases the self within itself (within ‘a’ self), and that boundedness encourages fixed impressions of a process which could be conceived as re-arrangeable.

A processual, Deleuzian ontology would instead envisage such a sense of ‘being’ as a snapshot of the flux of selving (cf. Gale and Wyatt, 2013); ‘the current is not what we are but what we are in the process of becoming’ (Deleuze, 1992 cited in Done, Murphy and Knowler, 2014, p.12). As Jackson and Mazzei (2008) argue, in research asking for the ‘narrative I’ it is all too easy to assume that the subject (the ‘I’) precedes and directs the experience being narrated, rather than being produced through the experience and its repetitive narration. A relational and processual ontology encourages us to conceive/concede that the qualities of being (such as the ‘core’ of identities, like gender) ‘do not pre-exist but are the emergent accomplishments of becoming’ (Introna, 2013, p.332).

Self-storying is an outcome of an event’s parts assembling (discourses, bodies, objects, place, affect); as these entwine, ontologically different beings become with each new (re)configuration – selves de- and re-compose as assemblages wax and wane. As webs of relations enact certain becomings ‘new possibilities open up as others that might have been possible are now excluded: possibilities are configured and reconfigured’ (Barad, 2007, p.177). The selves made through stories in here-and-now assemblages need to be explored with the premise of exposing ‘the uncertainty of ‘who’ that ‘I’ could become, and to open up what can be known about the ‘I’...[which] has endless, indefinite possibilities for transforming itself because it is never a fully expressed product...’ (Jackson and Mazzei, 2008, p.305).

Rhizomatic selves

Sermijn and colleagues state that any ‘unities’ of story and self (Jackson and Mazzei’s *fully expressed product*) can be viewed as a ‘temporary takeover by one story construction with the result that other possible constructions at that moment...are excluded’ (2008, p.641). They thus conceive of selfhood as a ‘rhizomatic story’ with multiple entryways (ibid), and they encourage researchers to interrogate narrative data as told by multiple subjectivities (Loots, Coppens and Sermijn, 2013). This image of the

rhizome-self troubles the ontological and epistemological security of narrative selves since rather than seeing identities performed by someone alongside others (as separate entities), it conceives of selves emerging as a response to the entanglement of the social and interactional context. The rhizome-self encompasses the researcher too, but may also be seen as extending beyond the bounds of human individuals and ordered by the flux of the broader assemblage; the self is a flow among flows (Sheerin, 2009, p.65). We might imagine stories threading through assemblages, playing a collaborative role in ordering the human and non-human entities, 'over-coding' it such that striations form and subjectivities emerge. Evoked here is Deleuze and Guattari's 'ontology of becoming' which sees subjectivity as 'constructed in a multidimensional field and... always posited as collective and plural' (Semetsky, 2006, p.3).

Such thinking marks a recent line of flight in the field of narrative research. As a challenge to the linearity, coherence and closure of narrative, theorists are encouraging understandings that prioritise a focus on the 'process within which narrative entities emerge' (Tamboukou, 2015b, p.94); this is rhizomatic and assemblage thinking wherein such 'entities' (stories, selves, contexts...) are not pre-supposed or prior. Multiplicities inhere in narrative through the un-said, the silences, the ambiguities – within narrative there is a 'depository of forces that can always take it elsewhere, divert it from its initial aim or meaning, create bifurcations, sudden and unexpected changes, discontinuities and ruptures in sequential flow' (ibid). Narrative can invite and provide coherence and adherence to the self, but the discontinuities, ruptures, fault lines and gaps in stories are present if we're willing to hear them (Sheerin, 2009). The unstable, incoherent and fractured are integral to narrative seen as process (see for example Boje, 2011; Gale and Wyatt, 2013; Jørgensen, 2011). Sheerin suggests that in such instances, which Deleuze refers to as stutterings, can be seen the 'forgotten, the eclipsed and the events of the pure past' that are barred from being readily told (2009, p.152). The flashes of contradiction, the shifts in identities, the gaps in stories: the moments when novel things take off. Indeed, aiming to 'destabilize the narratological conventions of sequence, closure and agency' (Tamboukou, 2010, p.32) is a fruitful goal when seeking to glimpse possible lines of flight that might open up the future and make things happen (Tamboukou, 2015b; Loots et al, 2013). This again calls up Massumi's

elaboration of Deleuze and Guattari's nomad thought; as rhizomatic relations, assemblages, have the potential for 'future rearranging' (1987, p.xiii), so in viewing selves as rhizomatic stories forged within broader assemblages we can understand any temporary rendering of selfhood as one possible arrangement - and that the stutters, ruptures, incongruities and overlaps offer hints at alternate future configurings.

This calls for the task to be, as noted in Chapter 3, one of re-casting 'I' through mapping it as 'the contingent effects of interactions between events, responses, memory functions, social forces, chance happenings, belief systems, economic conditions, and so on, that make up a life' (Stagoll, 2005, cited in Done and Knowler, 2011, p.844); hence not to reject 'I' but to work more on seeing it as a 'performative' or 'becoming I', which:

'...might produce a fragmented and incomplete narrative instead of functioning as it often does to become the "ground" of imaging the narratives of...first-person narrator[s]... with the result that "life's potentiality for connection, creation, mutation, deflection and becoming becomes limited by that image through which we perceive all other images" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/2004, p. 141). And so to merely think more stories or more perspectives is not what we are proposing, but in keeping with Deleuze, an assemblage of multiplicities that occur in the act of becoming. Not more versions of me, or more versions of the story... but more differences, contradictions, and folds' (Jackson and Mazzei, 2008, p.309).

It is important to recognise that notions within narrative research of 'a' voice or 'a' story is a misnomer (ibid), and that doing so is in fact a vital ethical imperative; it goes some way towards breaking the habit of enforcing on participants a unified and unitary subject position with a linear story trajectory – a tidy tale of man defying all the naysayers and making it as a Primary school SENCo! – and thereby opening up through incompleteness rather than closing down to a narrow set of foretold stories.

4.3 The material's role in shaping subjectivities

The image of the assemblage is a powerful tool for re-imagining the rhizomatic intermingling (intra-mingling) of the social, cultural, historical and material in the formation of subjectivities. This shifts us from social constructivist ideas of 'context', which separate out individuals from the background, to Deleuzian and

Baradian/material-discursive ideas which conceive of a flattening of self, story and context. This allows for heterogeneous connections across these dimensions rather than a hierarchical and deterministic relation between them. It helps when trying to imagine the influence of features within the context – such as objects. This section develops an argument that *stuff* (Miller, 2010) is integrally bound with stories and selves and their mutual becomings.

Context, in the formulations described above in this chapter, tends to be taken as social, historical and cultural. Humans are seen as *situated* and *embedded* with each other within these contexts, yet paradoxically it is hard to envisage them moving and doing in places and spaces, with and in relation to objects in their world. We have a social context, dialogic relationships with other people and embodied human experience (Plummer, 2001) but the physical world – where social, relational and embodied experiences are actually done - remains invisible.

It can be argued that such conceptual approaches therefore overlook the ‘relational materiality’ of the everyday by being bound to ideas that ‘privilege the intentional human subject’ through its treatment of the material as merely a backdrop context within which humans act (Fenwick, Edwards and Sawchuk, 2011, p.1). There is a growing case within the social sciences to instead look for and describe the ‘active processes of materialisation of which embodied humans are an integral part, rather than the monotonous repetitions of dead matter from which humans are apart’ (Coole and Frost, 2010, p.8); to flatten the hierarchy of human and non-human agencies. The ontology of new materialism avoids such ‘dualism or dialectical reconciliation by espousing a monological account of emergent, generative material being’ (Coole and Frost, 2010, p.8).

Material culture anthropologist Daniel Miller has stated that ‘the play between persons and things...has much more to do with actually constituting the people themselves rather than just standing for them’ (2008, p.158). We can, similarly, envisage that the material ‘...can function as a discourse – that is, as an *effective force*, something not only imbued with meaning but which itself can help provide experience with meaning.... [It

can] shape our subjectivities and enable some possibilities...while constraining others' (Rogers, 1998, pp.266-267, original emphasis). Objects have affiliative powers, offering and materialising a multiplicity of subject positions (stories) for us - plainly, 'objects interpellate us' (Law, 1999, cited in Rich, 2014, p.17). We are encouraged to do and to be certain ways through objects and spaces that invite us into particular intra-actions with/in them. Here then there is a case for the strength and influence of the material in shaping subjectivities - in *constituting* people - and materiality is bound to the discursive as orders of the same effective force. Moreover, stories 'perform themselves into the material world—yes, in the form of social relations, but also in the form of machines, architectural arrangements, bodies, and all the rest'; '*there is no important difference between stories and materials*' (Law, 2000, p.2, original emphases). This calls up the new materialist contention that 'the discursive [is] always-already material, and the material [is] always-already a discursive construction' - the two cannot be separated (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012, p.115).

Relating this to narrative and our purposes here, we have seen above in this chapter that there are strong arguments for a sense of who we are and narrative being intimately and inextricably bound together - there is no identity without its stories. And what with stories and materials seeming to be related without reference to human intention too, there is a sense - following Arthur Frank (2012) - that the material-discursive has a symbiotic relationship with us. Extending this a little further, in line with a new materialist ontology, when faced with this nexus of selves, stories and the material as a mutually informing indivisible cloud we could suggest that these are ontologically inseparable: stories-selves-material. It is the swirling and darting and rhizomatic *relationship* between these parts that is ontologically significant.

Material storytelling

By way of drawing together these ideas, and those of the previous section on deterritorialising directions in narrative research, here I outline a few key points that take their cue from the notion of 'material storytelling' (Jørgensen and Strand, 2014; Strand, 2014; Boje, 2014; Strand, 2012). This informs the approach taken to the men's narratives in this research.

'Material storytelling' is a development of the 'living story' notion (Strand, 2012). *Living stories* are seen to undercut the structure and striations of narrative coherence and plot (see for example Boje, 2014) and are related to 'ante-narratives' that are exploratory stories which point to possible futures or transformed pasts rather than narrative closure (Boje, 2011). In this way the perspective resonates with the directions described above by Tamboukou and propounded by Jackson and Mazzei in which the ground of the 'narrative I' is troubled and the chance of newness or becoming-other is inherent. *Material storytelling* draws on these ideas and can be seen as a 'supplement and alternative to narrative and storytelling approaches', offering a view of 'human beings as material-discursive of-the-world becomings rather than narrative beings or historical-discursive constructions' (Jørgensen and Strand, 2014, p.53).

The approach emphasises the contingent, in-the-now moment story performances that result from particular and local material-discursive configurations and as such can be directly tied to Deleuzian thinking about haecceities (as discussed in Chapter 2). Specific inclinations for some stories rather than others are not human decisions as conventionally understood but emerge from the make-up of the assemblage. Stories are seen as enabled and constrained by material-discursive assemblages of which they are a part; 'the material-discursive configuration invites us to inhabit and perform particular stories' (Jørgensen and Strand, 2014, p.65) - 'whatever you do or whatever you say are the results of iterative material-discursive intra-activity' (ibid, p.60). Narratives-and-materialities emerge together as co-constructions 'between object, people, artefacts, events and processes' (Humphries and Smith, 2014, p.483). Influenced by Karen Barad, this thinking sees storytellers as 'of the world' and encourages a shift from a humanist narrative view of separability; 'material storytelling' is not storytelling with passive material props, it is rather the world making itself intelligible in the storytelling (Boje, 2014; Strand, 2012).

We can see such thinking within socio-material and new material feminist approaches, where the material is conceived as alive with imminent potential to generate becomings – via stories - through its intra-action with human and non-human bodies.

Aberton's study of how learner identity is formed through material objects in action is informative here – identities depend on the intra-actions within the 'assembled people, places, bodies, texts, technologies, artifacts and architectures' (Aberton, 2012, p.115). It includes, as integral and influential, the stuff of lived experience. This approach means:

'[a]ccepting that objects, like human subjects, will take different forms in different places and practices (Law 2002; Mol 2002), phenomena such as learning and identities are effects of networks or assemblages of many and diverse practices (e.g. textual, technical, social, spatial, temporal, corporeal, institutional...) which enact identities or allow them to emerge from different sociomaterial practices as they are enacted in different patterns' (ibid.)

The task of narrative research from this perspective then is to understand *how the assemblage works*: how are material-discursive entities configured in relation to each other to enable certain becomings and to exclude others? It is in recounts of experiences, values, priorities, institutions, other people, things and places that the configurations – the order, logics, accordances as well as the discordances, the segregations, the omissions, the others - of assemblages can be felt.

In sum then, a material storytelling approach incorporates the idea of narrative rupture and transformation in a Deleuzian sense, whilst also addressing the 'event' – *the movement of the moment* – that produces becomings. These are seen as products of material-discursive configurations (assemblages) that draw out particular stories at particular times:

'material storytelling...implies exploring the movement of the moment and to play with multiple scales of time, space and materiality that are entangled in the moment... it supplements narrative and storytelling approaches...and offers a new way of dismantling the organizational apparatus and to create something new' (Jørgensen and Strand, 2014, p.70)

Stories are then inseparably bound with the material in mutually productive entanglements. Listening for how objects and spaces are embroiled in 'living stories' can tell us more and different things about how the humans become with/in the world than taking a humanistic and solely discursive view on narrative's role.

4.4 Research questions

In order to envisage how such thinking might map onto this project, it is necessary to outline key questions that the research will consider. The questions address the intra-actions that produce certain becomings; the material-discursive entanglements that bring forth certain selves and ways of knowing:

- How do the men intra-act with their material-discursive worlds in ways that produce certain becomings and certain knowledges (cf. Jackson and Mazzei, 2012)?
- How are their emerging subjectivities tied with the becomings of other human and non-human entities?
- How does the particular pattern of entanglement work to produce and sustain boundaries of difference (Barad, 2007)? In this process, what becomings are excluded or occluded?

It is also useful to consider an example of how such thinking, and such questions, might be addressed to an existing and significant piece of research.

Sikes and Piper's (2010) work with male teachers accused of sexual misconduct with pupils engages with the relationship between individual's stories and socially sanctioned scripts or narrative resources. This, of course, also has relevance for the substantive content of my research with male teachers working with potentially vulnerable young children. In re-presenting stories from allegation through to acquittal the researchers problematize the 'normalising and normative [child sexual abuse] narrative' (p.137), 'examine critically the current system of child protection and... acknowledge that serious injustices have been done' (p.6). The narratives that the men share are connected with contemporary 'moral panics' about paedophilia within a seemingly prevalent 'risk society', with Government policy and to professional practice (p.7). When these remain private issues, injustices are legitimised through the 'no smoke without fire' adage – the fault of the individual, guilty or not. When, however, they are made public matters it is clear that the current historical moment produces certain frameworks of understanding which tie together discourses about teaching,

gender, children and childhood, and legal and educational policy – with notably iniquitous and unjust outcomes. They discuss the ‘colonizing...pervasive and deeply entrenched...master narrative of child sexual abuse’ (Cavanagh, 2007, in Sikes and Piper, 2010, p.137) which infiltrates and inflects/infects other discursive frameworks and practices.

Yet the men’s stories re-presented in that research include reference to the material too, to objects and architecture (desks, chairs, cupboards, doors, skirts, ties, pens, classrooms, offices, science equipment, school buildings, towns, streets, bedrooms, Job Centres, courtrooms, prison beds, telephones, etc.) and, of course, to bodies (backs, knees, legs, shoulders, hands, necks, bottoms). These are material *and* discursive entities. They entangle – assemble, configure, gather - with each other, and with other discursive-material entities such as legal, economic and educational artifacts (e.g. CRB checks, Jobseekers Allowance forms, curriculum documents, Child Protection policy, letters from solicitors, police interview recordings, advice on websites, etc.) to generate certain becomings and certain knowledges. They interweave, intra-act and can shift. There is a ‘swirl back and forth between’ bodies, entities and artifacts in intra-action (Connolly, 2010, p.180).

Hence we may attempt to examine in this work how pedagogy, child protection policies and school architecture – as material-discursive configurations - entangle to bring forth contemporary understandings about teachers, children and child abuse. We might consider how the grounded, physical, material (-discursive) world makes a difference in narratives of becoming, and ‘moves us from the trap of representational meaning that is supposed to provide knowledge about human activity...and instead [our] ontological practices are analyzed as entangled and performative’ (Jackson, 2013, p.747). For example, the closed door of a male teacher’s classroom accrues certain meanings within an assemblage heavy with child protection concerns – and hence this door becomes influential in the types of stories, and therefore the subjectivities, that can emerge from the possibilities of an event.

Thinking further about how diverse and multifarious ideas (discourses) and objects gather, we might use the example that assemblage theorist Manuel DeLanda (2006, p.2) borrows from Ian Hacking:

'I do not necessarily mean that hyperactive children, as individuals, on their own, become aware of how they are classified, and thus react to the classification. Of course they may, but the interaction occurs in the larger matrix of institutions and practices surrounding this classification. There was a time when children described as hyperactive were placed in 'stim-free' classrooms: classrooms in which stimuli were minimised, so that children would have no occasion for excess activity. Desks were far apart. The walls had no decoration. The windows were curtained. The teacher wore a black dress with no ornaments. The walls were designed for minimum noise reflection. The classification *hyperactive* did not interact with the children simply because individual children had heard the word and changed accordingly. It interacted with those who were so described in institutions and practices that were predicated upon classifying children that way.'

Hence becomings are products of material-discursive entanglements. Objects, spaces, bodies, clothes, words gather together in ways that produce certain meanings, certain disciplining practices, which connect with how we make sense of ourselves through the self-narratives that emerge as tellable.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined developing directions in narrative research that draws on Deleuzian and Baradian philosophies, highlighting that fragmented, incomplete and contradictory stories can be seen as sources of becoming-other; in dislodging the 'narrative I' and de-privileging the coherence and linearity of narrative there is an opening up to other possible becomings. Coupled with the notion of 'material storytelling', which dissolves the hierarchy of self-story-context and conceives of material-discursive configurations giving rise to particular stories, I have set in motion an approach to the men's stories that the substantive chapters can emerge with/in.

Before that, the following chapter examines the method of interviewing as relevant for my encounters with these men and describes the post-qualitative data analysis approach that the project adopted/adapted. These issues are entangled with ethics and as such form an integral part of this research assemblage.

Chapter 5 - Method, ethics, analysis

'...entanglement makes all the categories of humanist qualitative research problematic. For example, how do we determine the "object of our knowledge" – the "problem" we want to study in assemblage? Can we disconnect ourselves from the mangle somehow (Self) and then carefully disconnect some other small piece of the mangle (Other) long enough to study it? What ontology has enabled us to believe the world is stable so that we can do all that individuating? And at what price? How do we think a "research problem" in the imbrication of an agentic assemblage of diverse elements that are constantly intra-acting, never stable, never the same? (Lather and St. Pierre, 2013, p.630)

Introduction

Entangling with the previous two chapters, here I address a nexus of ideas related to the production and analysis of the men's stories and selves in our interview-moments. This begins to wrap the theoretical considerations of Chapters 3 and 4 around the pragmatics of interviewing and data analysis, an on-going process of deliberation that will continue in the substantive chapters. The organising line here is that troubling oneself over how stories and selves emerge for research, and are then analysed and re-presented by it, is a principle of ethical research. Again, Deleuzian thought and in particular Karen Barad's elaboration on this idea are drawn upon. I begin though with a brief outline of how the men came to be part of the research, what format our interviews took, and offer a sense of the men involved.

5.1 Who, how, what?

I tried local councils, local schools, two providers of the NASENCo award, the SENCo Forum (<http://lists.education.gov.uk/mailman/listinfo/senco-forum>), set up a participant recruitment blog, and asked former colleagues if they knew anyone. Via one or other of these routes, I received emails from men interested in taking part. Two men didn't stay in touch after my initial reply, but four did and it is their stories that this thesis is built with.

We arranged a convenient time to meet, which for some was during school hours and for others after the pupils had left. I usually got made a cup of tea, and we sat and spoke in private in their office (which in one case doubled as their occasional teaching

room). Based on my literature review I had a set of themes I wanted to, and thought we might, cover but I began with a general opening question (which tended to be something like, 'just introduce yourself, and tell me how you came to be SENCo here') and the interviews flowed, and only occasionally stuttered, from there. I met two of the men (Simon and Charlie¹) just once and both of those interviews lasted for around an hour and a half. James and Graham I met twice, both roughly five months apart. Across the two interviews I spoke with Graham for three hours and with James for almost four and a half. The interviews took place between September 2013 and November 2014.

Without wishing to fix the men in place by reifying who they *are* (and closing off who they might *become*), it is nevertheless useful to provide a sense of the characteristics of the sample. All four men lived and worked in cities, although of varying size; three are in the South East of England and one is in the West Midlands. Three of the men grew up in the cities they now work, although in different areas, whilst one moved to his city from a town in a more rural area. Three are currently full-time SENCos (meaning they don't also have their own class to teach or another role such as Deputy Head) whilst the fourth man had recently become a Local Authority SEN/D advisor after working as a SENCo in his school. One man is in his mid-late twenties, two in their early-mid thirties, and one in his early sixties. One of the men is married with a young child, one is co-habiting with a female partner, one with a male partner but has grown-up children, and the other is single. All of the men are white and English. One places particular importance on his faith, one isn't at all religious, and for two this didn't feature in their stories. Whilst one of the men has been in teaching for around 30 years, the other three are around 5 years into their careers.

In their shoes

I really liked the four men that were involved in this research. They were often chatty, sometimes funny, always welcoming and generous with their time. I came away from each meeting feeling energised and enthusiastic about the research, engaged with the issues we discussed and the stories they shared. This wasn't just because they'd *told me*

¹ pseudonyms have been used for all participants

some good stuff; it wasn't simply that I seemed to have – *thankfully* - something worth writing about in my thesis. More than that, I often felt inspired and impressed - for example how they described their approach to teaching and SEN, how they'd overcome difficulties to get where they were, and their commitment to their work. I could imagine times when I'd been in their shoes, or otherwise I was invited to try theirs on.

This feeling of being *on their side* is not one I want to take at face value. If I left this alone would I be ignoring something important about researching other people's lives? I think it must matter that I could identify with all of the men in some way; might this lead me into re-counting the men's stories in ways that simply shore up the identities that they constructed for and with me? Might I be led to affirm certain of my own identities that were constructed within the interview-meetings? Is this helpful in *getting us out of it*? Is there space afforded to *lines of flight* when we're quite comfortably getting along and agreeing, sometimes laughing, often being flippant or ironic or pally; could we become-other at the same time as negotiating a shared sense of who we are and what is important in our mutual worlds?

Of relevance is that I am, at face-value at least, similar to the men I interviewed for this research. We have all worked as Primary school teachers, we're all English, white, and I am around the same age as three of the four participants. These are the types of things that we've come to believe are important and significant – job, nationality, ethnicity, age – as quantitative markers of *who we are*. Such immediate recognition of mutuality brings the potential for what Coates refers to as an 'exchange of recognition' (2003, p.40), whereby an easy sense of who we are is affirmed through storytelling in relatively comfortable conversation. Indeed, some of my own experiences, and how I've come to understand them through the narratives in our shared culture/s, are the same or similar to these men. And yet I could quite conceivably have felt misaligned with the men; it would be possible to pick up on the manifold differences between us. However even those seemed to submerge – for me at least, I can't speak for the men – within the back-and-forth of agreement and bonhomie when we met.

But there are contradictions in this for me too; surface similarities aside, the men offered a range of stories, constructing different selves, and yet regardless I could identify with who they were becoming as we spoke. On the one hand I felt some resonance in Graham's commitment to a religious life, and yet also in Charlie's confessions of a young adulthood punctuated by drink, drugs and sex. Both tended to story their lives as a search for meaning – the struggle to make sense of themselves against a backdrop of precarity in earlier life. Maybe it was that search/journey narrative that appealed to me? I could also locate myself within Simon's story of career-focus, ambition and rapid promotion, yet also within James' more itinerant tale of career-change, re-location and opportunism. Whilst it certainly doesn't do justice to these men or their stories to characterise them so simply, or dichotomously, doing so helps me mull over the capacity there seemed to be within the interview-meetings for alignment.

And yet I was becoming-myself differently in the time spent with different men, and maybe the men were too as they spent time with me: selves as rhizomatic assemblages perhaps. But maybe this idea implies too much that stories and selves are the property of individuals - one self with many entryways (cf. Sermijn et al, 2008) – as some sort of transcendent self, shifting and aligning from a central pole. This tethers me – and them – to starting points and known trajectories; 'shifting' and 'aligning' both imply an original point of departure and anchor points on arrival. The locus of that conception is a (hu)man who controls the production of their selves. Thus a core self is assumed and this is prone to framing by a certain sets of assumptions – gendered, raced, classed, dis/abled - about what it means to be 'me'.

With the new material feminist/socio-materialist perspective it is possible to see, instead, that the 'I' becomes in the moment, as 'performed into existence in webs of relations' and 'emerg[ent] as effects of connections and activity' (Fenwick, Edwards and Sawchuk, 2011, p.3). This helps to think about how we are interpellated by an event, in an encounter, such as an interview. This productively re-angles our attention on to how research participants and researchers are hailed by moments – in their material-discursive entirety - to address ourselves to certain issues, in certain ways,

and in this way become certain subjects. This opens up as an ethical issue because if this is the ground on which research data rests then it is imperative to be concerned with how we emerge as those subjects at that particular point.

Research interpellating male subjects

Actor-Network theorist John Law (2000) borrows from Louis Althusser to explore how, in the course of his interviews and writing about a failed military aircraft project, he was 'interpellated'. He was hailed to become a certain type (or types, actually) of subject through his engagement with the aircraft that he found mesmerising as a child, and with the stakeholders he was later interviewing about its demise:

'I started to become uneasy about my relationship with this aircraft, and especially with its high-status spokespersons. These were people, invariably men, who were always successful and impressive, usually thoughtful, and often attractive. But as I talked to them, I gradually found that these conversations seemed to be laying a charge on me: I was being constituted as the person who would document this project, as it was sometimes said, "definitively"' (Law, 2000, p.19).

Law wishes to bring to the surface how research 'findings' are constituted by these interpellations that – in his case – involved childhood memories of exhilaration and fascination with the plane, and the professional and justificatory imperatives of the policy makers in later years. He interrogates the forces and different 'modes of ordering' (ibid.) that push and pull him in many directions, but that ultimately invite an unthinking acceptance:

'If we are interpellated then we are being made or remade as particular subject positions, made to constitute our objects [of study] in particular ways. In particular, we are being made to constitute our objects in ways that are obvious, recognized, and made *even before we come to see them and think about them*' (ibid, p.16, original emphases)

The subject positions to which we are interpellated effects how our 'objects' of study come to be constituted then; who we are becoming in the research affects our construction of the research issue and those involved. This is a similarly 'troubling/troublesome' issue for Carol Taylor (2013, p.698) in her study involving a

male Sixth-form lecturer, 'Malky', and his (gendered) command of his classroom. Taylor's data testifies 'to the power of Malky's glamour (in the archaic sense of casting a spell), which caught me out (as novice researcher) and caught up the students (another funny day in class) in its allure' (2013, p.698). Hers is an observational rather than interview-based study, yet the point is the same – as researchers we are subjectified during interactions with the people we involve in our research. There are clearly consequences of this, even if they're not commonly acknowledged in research with teachers: how is our portrayal of the people involved in our research – and the issues made sense of through doing so – diffracted by our own subjectifications in the process? How do the people in our research – and the research encounters in their entirety - interpellate us in ways that affect our understandings of the issues?

Calling up participants to their subject positions

The research also, of course, hailed the men to recognise themselves as certain subjects. We might imagine there was a sort of mutual, reciprocal, intra-active swirl of hail-and-response between the humans in these interactions – each anticipating something/someone of the other, each responding in kind. Or maybe it is that the event was waiting for us, an imminent configuration inviting us to live up to *its* call.

The rationale for the project was clearly based on questioning why there were not many men in the role of Primary school SENCo (and that there is no current research on this) – yet where does setting out to talk about these issues in these terms lead us? What subject does it produce? As the research invited talk about 'male Primary school teachers' – about gender, careers - so our becomings are percolated with those striations as normatively understood. But surely such identification of categories, assumption of pre-existing identities and definition of the 'issues' in advance risks fixing and reifying these as part of research that is trying to counter them (Lenz Taguchi, 2012; Butler, 1990)? It is therefore relevant to consider how research with men has often concluded that they display an hegemonic masculine ideal in interview scenarios, especially when that male identity is felt to be in some way insecure (see e.g. Seidler, 2007; Francis, 2008; Mills et al, 2008; Robinson, Hall and Hockey, 2011; Davison, 2007; Robb, 2004). Schwalbe and Wolkomir (2001) note that men often take

the opportunity in research interviews to 'signify masculinity in as much as [they] can portray themselves as powerful, in control, autonomous and rational' (p.91). However research interactions also pose a threat to men's masculinity as they ask 'questions that put these elements of manly self-portrayal into doubt, and [do] not simply affirm a man's masculinity displays' (ibid; see also Pini 2005; Bloom, Hand and Tovey, 2006). Interviews might have the potential for unsettling usual, everyday gendered routines, and this apparent 'threat' might actually spur performances of accepted or expected (*hegemonic*) masculinity - and so for men who take on roles which are not traditionally masculine (Primary school teaching for example) when asked about their 'threatened' gender, may be drawn to present certain *manly* selves. As Seidler argues, this 'works to silence an exploration of diverse cultures of masculinity' as there is a disconnect between men's 'own diverse masculine experiences' and the processes and forms of language permitted by academic understanding that are taken as credible (2007, p.11). In this way, academic understandings of men - enabled by discursive/representationalist ontologies - reflect everyday discourses of manliness and both enable versions of masculinity that avoid 'having to explore [their] own [or others'] emotional lives and experiences' (ibid, p.18).

In a Deleuzian/new material feminist ontology the notion of *our own emotional lives* is contentious, but leaving that to one-side Seidler's point can nevertheless be read as a call to disrupt *the academic understandings that are taken as credible* - if such 'tracings' of masculine selves reproduce 'common-sense' categories and hierarchies then maybe it is 'mapping' that is required - rather than just outlining the segments, become cartographers and chart broader territories and off-shoots that connect with these (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; MacLure, 2013b; Mazzei and McCoy, 2010). Such a re-framing of the researcher's role is tied with the objective of *getting out of it* (Deleuze and Parnet, 2002) - getting out of the stories from, and about, male Primary teachers that are *made even before we think about it* (cf. Law, 2000). This would entail avoiding easy, monologic understandings and embracing the rhizomatic, un/enfolding and unfinalisable processes of becoming (Frank, 2012; Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; see also Holquist, 1990), which thereby also troubles notions that these men (the 'objects' of study) can be captured in aspic for an objective examination. In part there is also an

imperative here to 'sensitively confront' the identity claims produced in the interviews so as not to reify or accept such assertions (Martino, 2008; Convery, 1999) – when there is no critical interrogation of the ground on which such identities form there is little affirmative potential for transformation.

A revised cartographical role locates the researcher as in the thick of the intra-action – mapping as we go, exploring, uncertain, not from a privileged all-seeing vantage point. This located knowing-in-doing requires an acknowledgement of one's positionality, yet this differs to being open from the beginning about beliefs, values and previous life experiences (Sikes, 2010), instead recognising that *such things emerge in intra-action*. They become as part of the relationalities of the individuating event. As a map-maker casts around for the landmarks and open plains and pathways of their new terrain so their position changes; and so such things as the researcher's beliefs, values and understanding of their life experiences (indeed, the researcher's subjectivity/becoming) are also modified – *diffracted* - through on-going intra-action with/in the world (Barad, 2007). To conceive of these as fixed binds us to stasis - and could conceivably limit a map's horizons. Therefore paying heed to how we become *with* our research and its participants is vital.

5.2 Ethico-onto-epistemology

All of this means that ethical considerations are integral and threaded throughout research assemblages, this one included. In shifting the humanistic ground from identity and an understanding of subjectivity as defined by autonomous, knowing, free-willed and transcendent being, ethical responsibility becomes about proceeding especially carefully and slowly since *each and all of our (intra-)actions* have consequences for the becoming of the world. When we are always 'starting up again in the middle of a different temporality, in new assemblages, never fully constituted, fluid, a flow meeting other flows' (St. Pierre, 2004, p.291) then there is no jurisdiction over or passing on of responsibilities when it comes to ethical action. This chimes with Deleuze's stance on ethical living: to do so means *not being unworthy of what happens to us* (ibid) – as events and their becomings unfold so we must do justice to the diffractions that are made possible through/with/in us. As Karen Barad states, 'we have

to meet the universe halfway, to move toward what may come to be in ways that are accountable for our part in the world's differential becoming. All real living is meeting. And each meeting matters' (2007, p.353).

Karen Barad's post-humanist, agential realist approach to ethics is founded on her view of the insoluble relationship between knowing and being. Key to this is that 'we don't obtain knowledge by standing outside the world; we know because we are *of* the world' and hence she calls us to think in terms of '*onto-epistem-ology* – the study of practices of knowing in being' (Barad, 2007, p.185). The focus then is on teasing apart the relationalities that produce certain knowledges and certain ways of being, as the case has been made for in Chapters 3 and 4. As knowing and being are mutual and inseparable and re/made in action, Barad argues that therefore each specific intra-action matters – because with each action we open or close possibility. Hence she coins the term '*ethico-onto-epistem-ology*', described as:

'...an appreciation of the intertwining of ethics, knowing and being – since each intra-action matters, since the possibilities for what the world may become call out in the pause that precedes each breath before a moment comes into being and the world is remade again, because the becoming of the world is a deeply ethical matter' (ibid).

If each everyday moment contains latent and consequential possibility then research needs also to acknowledge that its methodologies, analyses and reporting are all ethical matters. We have to see such research practices as inextricably part of – creative of – the phenomena that become visible through the research. This influence is not confined to just the interview moment – though this is a key site of focus; '...there is something fundamental about the nature of measurement interactions such that, given a particular measuring apparatus, certain properties become determinate, while others are specifically excluded' (Barad, 2007, p.19). Certain subjectivities will be brought into the (ever-becoming) present of the research-event *through* and *for* our research, and others will not. 'Our knowledge-making practices are social-material enactments that contribute to, and are a part of, the phenomena we describe' (ibid, p.26). We must be aware that the practices of research are a constitutive part of that which we research (for examples of this in studies of male Primary school teachers see Pulsford, 2014).

This has significant consequences for conceptions of data, and practices of data analysis and reporting. If from the singular configurations of research happenings the entities of study emerge then it is unethical to imply through our re-presentations that those entities (the stories and the selves) are fixed and unchanging. This is not to say that these spring afresh in the research and then subside again forever once the interview is done, since facets of the assemblages that I/the research plugged into were not new and did not dissolve once I had left. But the configuration was slightly reshaped – expanded - through the research, and maybe its diffractions will reverberate through those assemblages and iteratively work to alter them. Hence, the point: the becomings of these men are not pre-supposed, inevitable, predictable even - what I map in this thesis are the connections emergent for/from this specific piece of research, a product of singular embodied, material, temporal, spatial configurations. Becoming-other is just a line of flight away.

5.3 Post-qualitative analysis

It is therefore a re-imagined, 'post-qualitative' current (Lather and St. Pierre, 2013; St. Pierre, 2015) that this project plugs into, along with research and researchers that have turned 'their attention to multi-directionalities, post-human bodies, intra-actional networks, contingency, non-mastery, and incalculables', taking on 'issues of messy conceptual labor, difference, otherness and disparity, and incompleteness as a positive norm' (Lather, 2013, p.642). Reading/hearing/seeing/sensing/imagining the interviews within such a post-qualitative sensibility it becomes clear that it is not possible to sustain an image of interviewer as objective collector and describer of static data. Such 'post-qualitative' research seeks not to control and define, to master and marshal knowable evidence, but rather to sit with uncertainty and *use* the slipperiness of enigmatic data.

It is the norm in qualitative research to 'separate, tidy up, cut, classify, contain, clean up, and simplify data', but this 'reduces [its] chaotic richness' (Benozzo, Bell and Koro-Ljungberg, 2013, p.311). The fixed meanings and stable subjects that are produced in standard analyses 'creates structure and stasis out of movement and proliferation' (MacLure, 2013a, p.659). It slows it down, stands it still. Acknowledging this and

analysing data as a snap-shot of life's chaotic movement is one strategy – but it nevertheless confirms the passivity of data and places the researcher at centre-stage. A rhizomatic and vital strategy is to conceptualise the data *themselves* as movement; in seeing them 'as waves and vapors, data become and happen, and we can glance at them in a completely different way' (Benozzo, Bell and Koro-Ljungberg, 2013, p.311). Awareness that interview data is always partial and incomplete, a product of singular and shifting assemblages – that where one story was told there could have been a different version, or a different story altogether, and that even the data collected *doesn't come into existence* until we engage with it (Benozzo et al, 2013; Allen, 2015; McLeod, 2014) - leads to the possibility that our analyses could also be something different; if the data exceed themselves, so could our analyses of them (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012). This therefore encourages 'researchers to open up data, to diffract it, and to imagine what newness might be incited from it' (Lenz Taguchi, 2012, p.270).

Hence a shift is marked from seeking 'meaning' in data, a priority emerging from two related critiques. First is that interpreting data assumes a 'transparent relay between data and meaning in which data is envisaged as inert, passive' (Taylor, 2013, p.691). When data is fixed in place in this way it is easier to *understand*, and this understanding is premised on 'reflecting sameness (as in mirroring), or identifying differences from something previously identified and acknowledged; a thing, an identity, a category, a discursive theme or a subject position' (Lenz Taguchi, 2012, p.269). This thinking throws the new data under the microscope of the previously known; the lens is trained to look for 'differences from'. This oppositional categorical thinking confirms an ontology of asymmetrical separateness: man/woman, white/black, working class/middle class, able/disabled. Rather than exploring multiple instances, interpretation seeks patterns and themes and blocks as if these are signifiers of what is *really* out there. But this can do a kind of violence to the becomings immanent in data by petrifying and stultifying them through majoritarian whitewash. In contrast, Deleuze's 'pure difference' (1994) is not one of negation but of affirmation: 'difference as positive emerges as an effect of connections and relations within and between different bodies, affecting and being affected by each other' (Lenz Taguchi, 2012, p.269). This tumult is in constant flux as connections proliferate inexorably.

Second, meaning-seeking analyses imply an ontologically separate, intentional subject located outside of the data who is 'digging behind or beyond or beneath it, to identify higher order meanings, themes or categories' (MacLure, 2013a, p.660). Analysis is a mental process conducted by researchers poring over the data, manipulating it, calibrating it into codes and themes. This invisible hand of a researching 'I' (St. Pierre, 2015) may outline its analysis techniques, show its coding trees with their branches and roots, but it remains divorced from the data and confirms its bird's eye view. But if we know because we are of the world – *onto-epistemologically* – and this knowing is an embroiled, bubbling, active, reciprocal engagement, then analysis cannot just be an inner mental activity. In a materialist ontology, if data can no longer 'be seen as an inert and indifferent mass' then 'we are no longer autonomous agents, choosing and disposing [of data]. Rather, we are obliged to acknowledge that data have their ways of making themselves intelligible to us' (MacLure, 2013a, p.660).

As Louise Allen's new materialist photo-elicitation project with young people learning about sexuality at school suggests, all elements of the research are 'intra connected' and thereby become together:

'Ontologically then, it is impossible to see where in the production of knowledge about sexuality at school, the photograph and researcher (as two possible examples of matter implicated in this becoming) begin and end. Sexuality's a/effects are no longer what the researcher (or participants) deem these photographs to mean. Instead, sexuality (within this project) is now emergent in the same moment as the data-becomes with the researcher (Hultman and Lenz Taguchi, 2010) in an endless series of (waves) of becoming in which neither researcher, photographs or sexuality are ontologically prior, but emerge via intra-active entanglement' (Allen, 2015, pp.949-950)

In data analysis it is not therefore that research events happen, data is 'collected' from them and then later interrogated to yield their meaning. Rather, the substantive issue under study, the researcher and the research materials all emerge as the entities they appear to be *in the same moment*. In a different moment, in different configurations, those entities become-other.

This is why new materialist, post-qualitative researchers do not look for beginnings or ends. Don't look for origins or essences or create neatly rounded-off case studies. '...we start in the middle to look for what emerges in the connections among...different fields and flows' (Lenz Taguchi, 2013, p.714). We're always in the 'middle', forging a multiplicity that 'necessarily changes in nature as it expands its connections' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.9) – research does not represent, rather it intra-acts with 'reality' and reformulates it through the way it intra-jects. The middle is the tumult of flows and connections, where becomings fizz, where connections 'grow wildly like weeds or grass' (Lenz Taguchi, 2013, p.712). The middle is 'the necessity of plunging into particularity, of getting down and dirty in the empirical details' (Taylor, 2013, p.701), because in avoiding 'the interpretive question 'what does it mean?'...and instead ask[ing]: 'how does it work?' and 'what does this text or data produce?' (Lenz Taguchi, 2012, p.268), we invite uncertainty through turning ourselves around with data to experience 'patterns of configurations that open up to unexpected readings of and listenings to materials' (Lather, 2016, p.127).

Diffraction readings

Following Barad, new materialist studies often note that their method is 'diffractive' (see for example Hultman and Lenz Taguchi, 2010; Lenz Taguchi, 2012; Allen, 2015; Taylor, 2013; Davies, 2014; Renold and Ivinson, 2014; Mazzei, 2013b). Such 'diffractive analysis' or 'diffractive reading' means to encounter 'insights through one another in ways that help illuminate differences as they emerge' (Barad, 2007, p.30). *What do these data do when they intra-act with theory? What happens when these data mix with those?* For Lenz Taguchi this is a 'process of interference and overlapping' which requires us to engage in a becoming-with data (2012, p.272). Moreover, she notes that this way of approaching analysis 'also relies on the researcher's ability to make matter intelligible in new ways and to imagine other possible realities presented in the data' (ibid, p.267).

It is no easy feat to imagine other possible realities or to make matter intelligible in new ways if we remain bound to 'norms and rigid...habits of thinking' (ibid, p.272) – but when data has agentic power through its rhizomatic creeping intra-actions with us in assemblage, we may let ourselves be drawn by 'the often insistent invitation data

makes to us to follow it on nomadic theoretical journeyings, on to-and-fro zig-zags and 'backwards' readings as we work 'on' it to make sense of it' (Taylor, 2013, p.691). To give in to the feeling 'on occasions when one becomes especially 'interested' in a piece of data – such as a sarcastic comment in an interview, or a perplexing incident, or an observed event that makes you feel kind of peculiar' (MacLure, 2013a, p.661). Explore the data provocations that are 'not simply of the mind, or totally articulable' (Allen, 2015, p.945). Allow the data to absorb you; fan the flames of desire they ignite; attend to the pain as their splinters wedge into your flesh (Benozzo et al, 2013). Feel the wonder of the data and bask in its glowing hotspots (MacLure, 2013b). Confront the data that is haunting your sleepless nights (Taylor, 2013; Allen, 2015). And as the data moves you around, pulls you out of place and out of shape and out of mind, make maps – chart the (new) territories explored. Possible realities and new intelligibilities can flow from/through mapping which 'is entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.12).

It is these knowing-in-being, embodied, affective and material involvements with data then that make 'it possible for the hu(M)an rational subject to disrupt hierarchical thinking and to think instead through zigzagging networks of minoritarian differences that move beyond constituting and stabilising dichotomies' (Lenz Taguchi, 2012, p.267).

Such imaginings of how we might engage with, explore and 'use' data are 'simultaneously about intervention and invention; responsibility and ethics' (ibid, p.278). The production of knowledge is also the production of reality, and through inciting different connections we are engaging in shaping possible futures – through the fact that these imaginings will influence a chain of reactions in some form. A diffractive methodology thereby calls us 'to account in new ways for the choices we make by including these data and [certain] incidents and not others' which serves to separate out some things as significant and thereby excludes others from view (Taylor, 2013, p.691). We are therefore ethico-onto-epistemo-logically entwined with the data and its reporting.

This draws us towards the point that although imagining 'other possible realities' - seeking signs where 'lines of flight' are taking off and 'becoming-other' might be burgeoning - are vital and transformative endeavours, it is also ethical to trace the lines of flight that are recuperated and reterritorialized, where becoming-other has been cut short. The realities of stifled change and restrictive boundaries. Therefore the 'tracings' that Deleuze and Guattari are so keen to avoid have an important role - they mark out the territories and striations that most trammel the lived experiences of participants and this recognition is an ethical responsibility. Making records of the well-worn terrain can also be seen as a pre-requisite for then engaging with the transformative hope of a diffractive reading and mapping. It was thus that I engaged in a thematic coding of the transcribed interview data, though it was something I 'practiced unfaithfully, without rigid purpose or fixed terminus', allowing 'something other, singular, quick and ineffable to irrupt into the space of analysis' (MacLure, 2013b, p.164). It was an activity that I, as advised by MacLure, never became abstracted from; I remained "inside' the *process* of coding, folded into movement and becoming' (ibid, p.175, original emphasis) rather than moving away from the middle in false hope of a view from above or below.

Seeing tracing as just one part of the bigger map is the task then - a tracing represents the impasses and blockages, whilst the map might see the smooth savannahs. So we have to remember that '*the tracing should always be put back on the map*' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, 13, original emphasis); when tracings are overlain on a map the chances of escape might become visible; so that as the research entangles with the world there are footholds and leg-ups - or spades and pickaxes - to support its future attempts over/under the wall.

Conclusion

The task set for this thesis then is to provoke possibilities for thinking-other through mapping the patterns of configuration and possible connections in/of the data. This entails zigzagging between and within the men's stories, also tracing but then shooting-off from the blockages and re-territorialisations; iteratively wondering what the niggling, glowing, insistent data can yield. The intention we - as a research-

assemblage – have is to incite further and unknown (unknowable?) connections past the boundaries of the thesis.

The following chapters start and stay *in the middle* – a linear story is not developed and there is no identification of beginnings and ends, no genesis or teleological final outcome to what the men have to say. Just engagements with, and explorations of, lines that threaded themselves through the material-discursive assemblage of this doctoral research. This is in order for connections and possibilities to continue to sprout rather than being cut short by closure; and now that this assemblage includes you, the reader, too there are infinite more possibilities let loose.

Chapter 6 - "I don't feel comfortable going there": The haunting of a 'straightened' office

Introduction

James considers that there is a need to repress his sexuality at school in response to the perceived social stigma attached to being gay - he assumes that (some) parents will fear for their children's safety. He manages this through use of a set of sanctioned and sanitised narratives that compose a certain self for certain purposes. Yet this repression of his sexuality 'haunts' (Silva, 2015) the narratives he tells, and in particular these apparitions are revealed when he gives account of the things in his office. This is because as an assemblage of objects they speak of that which is made invisible - what 'personal and social life represses and goes unnoticed' can be traced in these objects (Silva, 2015, p.193). It is as if 'ghosts undercut the narratives' (ibid, p.191) that James tells, lifting the cover story and throwing loose fragments of the past found in those items. In the entanglement of these memories, objects and identities a chain of meaning can be mapped which shows how James' cloaked sexuality haunts his material-discursive environment.

In moving objects 'out of the shadows' we come to see how James' identity is entangled with these things as within a 'seamless web' (ibid). In James' becomings, the objects that surround, define and 'extend' him (Belk, 1988; 2013) are bound with various narratives and discourses (about teachers, school middle managers, gay men, and so on) and constructed in the sociocultural context of relationships with specific and generalised others. This discursive-relational-material entanglement, (re)-produced moment-to-moment, takes shape in ways that cloak James' sexuality. By taking a rhizomatic nomadic journey of thought it is possible to sense a 'mode of ordering' (Law, 2000) to the narratives that James tells within this assemblage that doggedly pull towards themes of the hidden, of the replicated, and of identity dialectic- which I suggest illustrates the *haunting* of his denied sexuality. The *ghosts of that-which-cannot-be-said* creep into the mode of telling about a self through objects and insatiably points to the shrouded or repressed in James' sociocultural context - and hence looking in such a way (even if this is just one of multiple possible readings) can

point us towards different and more complex thinking around how a male Primary school teacher both manages, and yet also can't help but tell about, the repression of a stigmatised sexual identity. I end the chapter exploring a rhizomatic connection between James' office and 'the closet', wondering what the rhizomatic queer concept of the *office/closet* can help us think.

I don't feel comfortable going there

James determinedly avoided talking in detail about his personal life with me, until well into our second interview – after more than three hours together. It felt disconcerting not to have more detail and to feel I knew 'who' he was. Why did I get the sense that he was avoiding something? And why did this feel so important to me? Bamberg notes that personal stories have 'become an important resource for relational work' and they are the 'pre-requisite for answers to the *who-are-you* question' (2012, p.100). Such 'personal stories' tend to provide a sense that the person has arrived at, for here-and-now at least, some cumulative idea of who they are. Grasping why this wasn't being offered by James is aided by Bamberg's assertion that because stories are told for certain and specific purposes, in response to local contextual concerns, it is those purposes that need to be examined. We know more about 'who James is' if we consider that the purpose of telling decidedly impersonal stories may actually be to *avoid telling stories about himself*; of the several purposes of storying, one is 'to avoid getting into things that may turn out to become harmful' (Bamberg, 2010, p.3). James was cautiously and adeptly managing his professional identity without reference to what he felt is a stigmatised personal life, since he had a clear idea of the problems this might cause him – when I found a way to ask if he could tell me something more about himself, he nevertheless responded frankly:

Mark: [...] I wondered if there was anything – a different life that might give a different side of it?

James: Yeah, very much.... My sexuality. With a gay partner. It's a complete change of lifestyle [from when I was in a heterosexual marriage previously]. I don't...the staff know, but I don't know that the parent body do. And then I use the cover of my children and grandchildren...so (*chuckling*), yes. So....in 2014, does it really matter? And is it any of their business? I'm here, I do my job...

Mark: Yeah, yeah. Are you cautious about saying it – cos, yeah, what does it matter, but..?

James: ...with this parent body, with the various religions, I don't feel comfortable going there. At school in North America, I was out, open, it was absolutely fine, no problem. [...] It's people's naiveté, homophobic tendencies – that I'm going to molest their young sons: No! That's not what it's about. The confusion between homosexuality and paedophiles.

The negotiation of one's sexuality is a common feature of gay school teachers and leaders' lives, who tend to 'avoid conflict concerning their sexual identity by making efforts to downplay that aspect of their personhood' (Lugg and Tooms, 2010, p.81). Normative sexuality continues to be a pervasive and durable organizing force within educational institutions (Rottmann, 2006; Courtney, 2014; DePalma and Atkinson, 2007), with leadership roles a particular locus of this force due to the prominence of school leaders in representing community norms and values (Lugg and Tooms, 2010; also see Chapter 2).

In the contemporary era's bifurcation of the professional and personal in neoliberal discourses of teaching (Rich, 2001; Warin, 2013), there is a sense identified by researchers in this area that teachers justify downplaying or 'covering' their sexuality because it is seen to have no relevance in how professionally effective they are. Newman found when talking with Ed, a gay man setting out as a Primary teacher, that although he was candid about his sexuality he seeks to deny that the personal has anything to do with the professional. He says: 'As long as you're a good teacher and are professional about your job your personal life is not an issue' (Newman, 2010, p.49). This resonates with James' defiance noted above '...is it any of their business? I'm here, I do my job'. Similarly, Leo in Brockenbrough's research states that he doesn't 'bring his queerness' to school 'because it doesn't have anything to do with the classroom' (2012, p.752). These denials of the personal-professional overlap signal an acceptance of the heteronormative hierarchy.

Berrill and Martino's research included Ari, a gay Primary teacher, who offers a different reason for separating the personal from the professional; Ari assents to the normalcy of heterosexuality and concedes that 'connecting that normal sphere with the

public sphere in teaching is seen as beneficial' (Berrill and Martino, 2002, p.66). Since homosexuality is established as 'deviant' it is a 'distraction' and thus Ari feels he must separate out his sexuality from his work identity. He does this by fashioning 'himself first and foremost as a *normal* male in his role as teacher in a site where deviating from the heterosexual norm risks attribution of pedophilia' (ibid, pp.66-67, original emphases; see also Mills et al, 2008; Newman, 2010; King, 2004). This is a concern noted by James too. It is a pernicious and power-laden 'over-coding' that aligns male teachers' becomings along heteronormative barbed-wire lines.

Shhh

One of the most prominent things in James' small office is a large brightly coloured canvas print. The stylised – 'pop art' – picture caught my attention with its primary colours, size and imagery. It depicts a woman holding a finger to her mouth to signal silence, or as I imagined to accompany a '*shhh*' sound; it shows a close up of the lower part of the anonymous woman's face focusing on the hand and her extended finger.

Mark:Right, I've just noticed that picture as I turned around – tell me about it?

James: Ikea! And I just thought it was peerfect! Cos what is said in this room, stays in this room.

Mark: Ah I see, yeah yeah

James: It's not so much it's a secret, but it's private.

Mark: Yeah. So you saw it and instantly you thought, that's it.

James: Yep, yep. And I kind of like the Lichtenstein, Claus Oldenberg, pop art style.

James offers a straightforward and 'safe-guarding-conscious' rationale for the picture – things said in his office are private, but not secret; a phrase that modifies his first statement that 'what is said in this room, stays in this room'. It is a 'peerfect' fit for the types of conversations he has here. We could see the picture as a signpost of the concerns prevalent in contemporary school contexts around safeguarding and child protection, and about the role of key personnel such as the SENCo on this front. The

picture speaks – through James - of these concerns; a material-discursive assemblage that provides and reinforces the surveillance that safeguarding concerns lead to: private issues cannot stay secret. James says that he purchased the picture to illustrate that this room was a safe place for private revelations, that he can be trusted with confidential information. And yet there are boundaries to what is allowed to remain confidential, and I wonder if a finger to the lips effectively implies keeping your secret to yourself if you don't want it to go further than that room.

In that way it is what James does not speak of, what is silent in his self-storying, that is also (maybe especially) interesting. In thinking about the presence and prominence of this picture alongside James' reticence to reveal his sexuality in our first interview – and the related aim not to let pupils and parents know – the *Shh picture* became a 'hot spot' in the data for me, it 'glowed' and drew me ever closer to it (Taylor, 2013; MacLure, 2013a). It immediately and persistently posed the question: *Who is this picture for?* Does it say to visitors to James' office that this is a space where private matters can be discussed confidentially? A notice *from James* to his visitors? Possibly. But might the picture also be *for James*? The picture hangs to the right of his desk, so that with a slightly angled look up he is faced with the over-sized message - it struck me that it serves as a constant admonishment to beware of unruly stories or ruinous rumours; to be careful what you say and to whom. To self-surveill. The anonymous woman encourages caution when it comes to revealing too much of oneself.

The picture might therefore be understood as a 'haunting' (Silva, 2015), a hint at that which ought to remain silent in the sociocultural context of James' Primary school workplace and in his role. A shiver down the spine that keeps him on his toes perhaps. Through the silence James maintains about his personal life and sexuality he ensures a certain peace of mind for himself – whilst also allowing to go unchallenged the idea that heterosexuality is preferable to homosexuality for men working with young children. The 'Shh picture' can be seen as a reminder to quieten his disavowed self, a strategy that Fraynd and Capper (2003, p.101) – whose research focused on gay school leaders' sexual identity management strategies - might term a *passive* way of 'covering' his sexuality.

James manages his role identity within a school and wider societal environment that tacitly encourages those in school leadership positions to 'fit' the majoritarian norms of heterosexuality (Fraynd and Capper, 2003; Tooms, 2007). Since one's suitability for a leadership role within a school (e.g. SENCo) and one's sexuality are often conflated, there is the requirement to find strategies to manage any disjuncture (Fraynd and Capper, 2003).

In James' case we can most explicitly understand this strategizing in his use of the photographs of his grandchildren. These can be seen as 'settling' objects – they 'enable continuity' and avoid contention (Silva, 2015, p.188). James was open about using his personal-social role as a grandparent to deflect concerns about his sexuality when talking with parents at school. The prominence of the photographs, which are framed and on a cabinet next to his desk facing the visitors' chair, is not therefore accidental – they are a prop via which he can adopt a heterosexual (parental) identity, and such objects are key 'extensions of the self' that help James to state and position his identity in his workplace (Belk, 1988; Tian and Belk, 2005). Thus James can be seen to be downplaying his sexuality – and, indeed, actively seeking to 'pass' as heterosexual (Fraynd and Capper, 2003) - through a 'straightened' office (Tooms, 2007, p.610), which involves editing what is on display so that visitors assume he is not gay.

The photographs provide an intelligibility for James as a middle leader in school (he 'fits' with expected norms) as well as 'settling' (not challenging) any concerns that parents have about homosexual men being paedophiles. Objects here afford James a certain identity that maintains the status quo, co-conspiring to actively produce a narrative that allows James to 'pass' as heterosexual for the sake of avoiding problems that he perceives parents might have with a gay man in his role.

So, on the one hand the immanent meanings embedded in such objects (the 'shh' motif in the picture, and the photographs of children) are manipulated by James to afford him the opportunity to present himself to me (and others) as someone that cares about listening confidentially and who has children/grandchildren so understands what it is

like to be a parent (and allays any fears about his homosexuality). James' preferred self-narrative and his stuff therefore work together and co-order James' dynamic rhizomatic identity in line with the constraints he feels on his identity, by helping to operationalise normative conceptions of teachers, mid-level leaders in schools, and indeed men.

But on the other hand, the objects *leak*. I think it is possible to argue that as James accounts for himself by accounting for the objects in his office (Hurdley, 2013) we might fruitfully pay attention to the subtle syncopations (and silences) that can enhance 'our understanding of how culture works through small stories 'about' things' (Hurdley, 2013, p.102). By using Silva's (2015) concept of 'haunting', James' cloaked sexuality can be seen as a noisy silence with a ghostly presence, and which runs through the material-discursive assemblage produced as we spoke. In entangling with the haunting of James' cloaked sexuality, the objects that he accounted for in his office seem to me to draw out an irrepressible sense of the hidden, of the replicated, and of identity dialectic that the 'Shh picture' opened up for me. This repeated set of related themes is identifiable in these tellings, and are explored below as I discuss more of James' account of his self-objects assemblage.

It's the acting job

James has quite a long, thin office so most of the things in it are visible in waves as you sit in the visitors' chair close to the door; first the desk stretches lengthways down one wall, standing past that is a filing cabinet, and then further back a gloomier area with shelves that leads into a warren of small interconnecting rooms that seem to be used for storage, meetings and one-on-one or small group 'interventions'. It is in this gloomy area that a puppet sat slumped on a chair, mouth agape. It was one of those designed to sit on your lap, controlled with an arm through the torso and where your hand did its talking.

James: ...Oh, the doll over there. Um... when I got back from [overseas] it was an opportunity to do something different, and I did train to do [sign language classes for babies and parents] and I got the franchise but it didn't work out as I wouldn't have made enough money...I'd be lucky if I earned like 12 thousand a year, so...

Mark: And that's the doll that...

James: That they use, yep, yep.

Mark: So do you use it at school?

James: We do sometimes, yeah. Different times, to...you know, it's the acting job. And you can teach the child through the puppet – it's that one step removed, which they enjoy, but it can still be forceful.

James' reference to 'the acting job' is not uncommon in how teachers frame the role (O'Connor, 2008; Griggs, 2001) and reflects the other men's comments about teaching too. Yet it is the point that the puppet allows for teaching pupils at 'one step removed' that rhizomatically binds this telling to the pattern of haunting that James' masked sexuality manifests; in James' office the assemblage of objects that he chose to tell stories about all order around the themes of keeping things hidden, quiet, separate, about denying an othered identity. It is as if the ghost of his quietened-self articulates itself in how the office stuff is told, drawing particular stories out and producing a narrative that can be heard – and felt - as a haunting that James experiences in his everyday working life at this school. The telling of the puppet story leaks a sense that one must perform at a distance, behind or through something else.

Amongst the folders, pen pots, glass thermometer and teaching games - and behind his laptop – on James' desk sat another doll, this one small and fabric. Held one way up it was Little Red Riding Hood, but by pulling her red skirt over her head the Big Bad Wolf is revealed:

And this is really sad; when I was teaching, um, [I mentored] a PGCE student and this is her Grandmother's, and she left it here. It's Jekyll and Hyde, Little Red Riding Hood. I've phoned her, left messages, emailed her, and she's never come to reclaim it... [So I'm] looking after it, yeah, hoping that she's going to come and - because she talked about it quite passionately, um, so it's waiting for her.

The doll represents the two main characters from the Little Red Riding Hood story, and was used during lessons that the student teacher planned. James describes the doll as 'Jekyll and Hyde' though, which suggests the dual nature of its character – a

character that can be utterly different if turned on its head, a self with conflicting identities. This is the story of a character that goes to great lengths to conceal a risky other identity, bound up in one doll – and that doll has been cared for by James for some time now. Again, an entanglement of tales and objects and identities, haunted by the risk of revealing a side of oneself that is stigmatised.

The puppet allows for James to be ‘one step removed’, the doll tells a story of dual, conflicted/ing identities; the narrative-object assemblage emergent in James’ office in these moments of telling can be seen as haunted by the spectre of troubled and shrouded identity.

Exact replicas

I asked James to talk me through his office and the things in it, picking out what he wanted to talk about; thus the objects are filtered by the narrative he seeks to tell (Miller, 2008; Hurdley, 2013). Yet the narrative is unable to constrain the haunting. As James swivelled in his seat he briefly noted the range of certificates from courses he’d been on, a model Buddha that some parents originally from Sri Lanka had given him, some small trinkets that he’d bought during a charity fundraising day at school. Perched on the ledge of the high-up internal window was a postcard depicting the façade of a restaurant, a photograph shot in sophisticated black and white.

James: And a postcard from my favourite restaurant. It was in [the city I lived in overseas] but now the guy has now opened one [here too] and it’s an EXACT replica; you walk in and it’s like WHOA! The bar is exactly the same, all the furniture, the floor, it’s an exact copy – it’s incredible... the owner is English but he’s lived out [there] for 30-odd years. Entrepreneur. He’s got at least 5 restaurants out there, and one [was used in a film recently]

Mark: Right, OK. So famous

James: Oh, very. Very. Really difficult to get in.

The postcard co-conspires to give James the opportunity for a ‘dinner-party story’; he is able to tell of his noteworthy lifestyle when abroad and link himself with the glamour of famous places and people. In that way we could offer a fairly straightforward reading of this object and its relationship with James – a male Primary

school teacher using his stuff to emphasise his significance and worldly-wisdom in a context in which he feels cowed as one of only a few men in his work environment. But my aim is to *get out of* straightforwardness, to take some lines of flight in order to rupture the first-look taken-for-granted we most easily see.

To that end, the image of social repression as a haunting (Silva, 2015) glimpsed through objects and woven into the ways narratives emerge through the telling about those things, offers potential for 'nomadic theoretical journeyings' (Taylor, 2013, p.691). Such journeys accept meaning-making as a 'messy multiplicity' and fruitfully interferes with the 'presumed linearity of 'rational' sense-making procedures' in social science research (ibid). What I offer here about James' postcard is such a nomadic journey, building on the sense sketched out above that the *ghosts of that-which-cannot-be-said* creep into the modes of telling (cf. Law, 2000) about selves through objects, generating material-discursive assemblages that insatiably point to the shrouded or repressed in socio-cultural contexts. This might therefore offer us a glimpse of other possible arrangements through exploring how a gay man in a Primary school works to cover his sexuality, yet consider how that shrouded sexuality leaks from under that cover and finds some shape of expression regardless.

There is a haunting of James' former lifestyle in the postcard. It reminds him of his favourite restaurant when he lived overseas and he looks back on that period of his life with not only fondness but also a strong sense of how it represented freedom from the constraints of the heterosexual marriage that he had recently left. There is therefore the related and significant haunting of his sexuality; in his school abroad he was 'out' and open about being gay, a fact that haunts his present situation on returning to the UK where he (again) feels he has to make effort to keep his (homo)sexuality from parents and pupils. Thus the postcard is an object that hints at what social life represses (Silva, 2015), or more specifically represses *in some contexts*; James' sexuality and his other - 'out' – self found expression and solace within the world glimpsed through that postcard, yet this is a self which he disavows in the everyday practices of identity work in his current school.

Taking this on nomadically, and rhizomatically, I want to think and play with the idea of representation and replica that are implied in the photograph of the restaurant and feature in James' narrative. It occurs to me that the restaurant – and the postcard of the restaurant - can be seen as allegories of James' own story.

The first aspect of this is that the restaurant owner is English and had made a big success of his time overseas, now owning several successful and famous eateries. James' admiration of this entrepreneurial flair is clear. It ought not be ignored that part of James' life story involves him, also an Englishman abroad, living a well-resourced and late-night lifestyle – and who has now come home and is trying to make a go of it; opening a new chapter/opening a new restaurant. But whereas the restaurant has been fashioned as an 'exact replica', 'exactly the same', an 'exact copy', for James himself this has not been possible. Any desire to replicate the type of lifestyle and the freedom to be 'out' has not been mirrored on his return to the UK, unlike the restaurant that appears to have achieved an exact transfer from continent to continent; hence the postcard is a haunting about what might have been possible had circumstances been different for James.

As James and I talked about him moving away after his acrimonious divorce he said that 'life starts at 40' – after becoming a father and homeowner in his early twenties there is a sense in his talk of the release that moving gave him:

I'm glad I've got the kids, I wouldn't be without them, but there was that being a [PGCE] student for 4 years, [then in the years after that we] couldn't afford to go out, couldn't afford to go to the cinema, the theatre, couldn't go to restaurants. So there was that, moving away, I was able to do all of that

And, moreover, he was able to feel comfortable becoming what he had not been able to before – a gay man who teaches young children: 'At school [overseas], I was out, open, it was absolutely fine, no problem'. The idea that his life did not begin until he moved abroad is powerful if we allow for what this implies, rather than take it as an off-the-shelf short hand. It tells us of the strength with which he felt hemmed in prior to that time. I think it tells us of how being allowed to be gay, without having to account for concealing it for so long, can feel like being re-born. This leads me to suggest that on

returning to England James could be seen as a replica of his 'true' or 'authentic' self, a copy of the self that he nurtured when he was overseas.

It is by thinking over the relationship that James has with his favourite restaurant - as depicted in the material object of a postcard in his office - that these ideas have developed. I want to explore this line of thinking further, into territory that seeks the nomad's tent in which to shelter tentative images of thought (Tamboukou, 2010) found outside of established realms of social scientific analysis. It is about stopping, re-thinking thoughts a few times - about opening space for the indefinite, for heterogeneity and variation; creating 'possible image[s] of the world, of our experience of the world, and indeed of ourselves' (Law, 2004, p.6).

My thinking goes like this: the postcard is a representation of the restaurant, and the new restaurant in England is also a copy, an 'exact' one in fact. These are both, therefore, likenesses or replications. On coming back to England James is an exact replica of James-overseas - and yet the likeness falters as he finds himself in a socio-cultural context where being that 'exact replica' has risky consequences, or so he perceives it. In this way James becomes a simulacra, following Baudrillard (1994) - a copy that is without, or that has lost, its original: James is a replica of his 'authentic' (most comfortable, most happy) self that was afforded the chance to become overseas, but who is unable to refer to the defining feature of that identity (being gay) now in his everyday work. He thus comes to represent that period in his life by referring to 'surface level' (thin, flimsy, like the postcard) concerns - famous people, interesting life experiences, 'dinner party stories' - stories that avoid him 'getting into things that may turn out to be harmful' (Bamberg, 2010, p.3), which cloak the 'authentic' part of himself. Hence, a simulacra.

The postcard provides resources for James' obfuscation of his sexuality and enables continuity for the self he has shaped in his current context. But the postcard can also be seen as haunted by the ghost of James' sexuality that he represses at work. It is his talk of replicas and 'exact copies' across continents that for me binds James' identity to the restaurant and allowed a rhizomatic and nomadic adventure into this territory, to a

place where it is possible to consider how such a haunting is manifested in the way that objects and selves are narrated.

Cloaks, masks and dual identities

The 'biographical objects' (Hoskins, 1998) of the Shh picture, the puppet, the doll and the postcard in James' office can be seen as his 'everyday experience made into...thing[s]' (Morin, 1969, cited in Hoskins, 1998, p.8); he represses and covers his sexuality and yet his daily endeavours to make this invisible are nevertheless visible in the way that this assemblage of things is made sense of. I think the presence of a haunting is palpable, intractable and indefatigable, seeping out of apparently innocuous accounts and revealing itself as it entangles with/in the collection of objects and their irresistibly similar stories. The noisy objects of James' office 'haunt' (Silva, 2015) the room with his (hidden) sexuality since the cloaks, masks and dual identities immanent in James' object-stories are obstinate, once you first see them. These cast ghostly shadows over James' avoidance and obfuscation around matters of 'who he is' – the items in his room that serve his everyday work identity contain spirits of past lives and of at least one alternative self, which seem prone to reveal the ghosts if we're willing to look. The assemblage of these things with each other and with the narratives told in that place produces a sense of how James' identity construction is haunted by the repression of his sexuality as part of an ongoing practice of ambivalence about revealing to some members of the school community who he 'really is' – a gay man living with his male partner. Through exploring James' office objects and what he said in relation to them we bring out of the shadows the way that a certain duality haunts this material-discursive assemblage – chasing the ghosts that pass across, or beneath, the surfaces James relies upon is a way of making more familiar that which has been made invisible.

The closet

A rhizomatic connection: James' small office is not much wider than a cupboard - you could even call it a closet. 'The closet' is a metaphor for keeping one's (homo)sexuality private; a place where queerness is locked away (Brockenbrough, 2012). At work

James' sexuality is covered up, it is closeted, although the very fabric of his office's material-discursive (object-narrative) array can be seen to be haunted by his private life. As a final section to this chapter I explore the line of flight offered by the 'closet' concept – what can thinking with the idea of James' *office/closet* allow us to do?

A common-sense conclusion from the issue that generated the explorations in this chapter is that James shouldn't have to cover his sexuality; he should be free to *be himself*. A way of tackling this stubborn heteronormative hierarchy is for alternative identities to be visible and available to inspire other male teachers. There needs to be a wider range of models of manliness on show; 'other' male identities need to be nurtured in order to challenge the gender and sexuality status quo. For homosexual teacher identities to become more readily accepted without the stigma, perhaps we need more 'out' gay teachers and school leaders? It is thus tempting to idealise the 'openly queer educator' as much academic literature does (Brockenbrough, 2012), which can be seen in recent media reporting of male teachers 'coming out' to their pupils which often valorises the act for its bravery in the face of homophobia, sometimes drawing on the discourse of positive male role models (see for example Buchanan, 2014; Williams, 2012). But this sort of 'identity politics' inspired solution – where people are encouraged to *be their true selves* and thereby act as role models for others - is bound up in notions that we have fairly fixed identities, as one thing or another (Rottmann, 2006; Warin, 2006). This is akin to the intermittent pushes for 'more male teachers' that seek greater numbers of men but ignore the challenges they face in Primary schools and the pressures they experience to conform to certain normative identities. As James' concerns show, to be 'out' would mean being wracked with worry over the assumptions some might make about him.

The notion of being either 'in' or 'out' then can be seen as overly restrictive to the becomings that might be possible. This binary is disturbed by queer theory (Rottmann, 2006), which seeks to break down this dichotomy that does little to challenge the construction of gay as aberrant; being 'out of the closet' can have negative consequences and yet being 'in the closet' has associations of invisibility and also secrecy, and as such the in/out binary 'enforce[s] the suppression of queerness while

concurrently shining a taunting spotlight on the act of queer hiding' (Brockenbrough, 2012, p.746). Whether you're 'in' or 'out' does little to alter perceptions of those who are gay - and being 'out' will not straightforwardly or universally lead to positive outcomes, whilst remaining 'in the closet' does not necessarily equate with passivity or powerlessness (ibid).

In conceptualising in/out not as a binary but instead a continuum, as 'degrees of silence and disclosure' (Brockenbrough, 2012, p.746), we are more able to see that disavowing or owning 'out' gay identities are contingent, strategic and productive acts with/in rhizomatic material-discursive assemblages. For example, James' strategic 'straightening' of his office protects him from the backlash he fears from some parts of the school community, to the extent that he is now proud of his 'open door policy' for parents:

...more and more, now I'm more established within the school, the school community, the parents knowing who I am, what my role is, sit in that chair, start talking about problems with their child and then they open up and open up, and then the tears come – thank goodness I've got my box of tissues!

James' office/closet is implicated in the emergence of this SENCo-self. The metaphoric and literal open door, chair, tears and tissues bring-into-being a caring SENCo subjectivity and this leads to emotionally supportive work with pupils and parents. Without the confidence that he has in his office/closet it is conceivable that such a SENCo-parent-pupil configuration would not emerge – different (less welcoming and open?) becomings may be forged if this assemblage was constructed differently, such as if it included a man that was openly gay, some parts of a school community assumed to be homophobic and the 'colonizing...pervasive and deeply entrenched...master narrative of child sexual abuse' (Cavanagh, 2007, in Sikes and Piper, 2010, p.137).

Thinking in a post-qualitative assemblage way allows for this potential to become clear because other imminent possibilities are always-already burgeoning – as new entities plug-into assemblages so they strengthen or decompose and in James' case we can envisage his delicately balanced configuration crumbling if being 'out' entered into the

composition, with a possibly different way of SENCo-ing emergent. Moreover, this post-humanist approach to thinking undercuts the '*I'm doing a good job so what does it matter if I'm gay/black/male/disabled...*' discourse; such facets are intra-actively delineated components within singular entanglements that simultaneously work to co-produce other becomings, they are not erasable or by-the-way inconsequential. Here it allows us to challenge the notion of a personal and professional divide in teachers' work by addressing ourselves to the wider material-discursive lines that bisect human becomings. This also leads us to think about how 'choosing' to be 'out' or 'in' as a gay teacher is a more than human consideration; all our possible becomings are embroiled with the hauntings of/in our accumulated stuff and emergent from within finely tuned personal-professional material-discursive assemblages.

Conclusion

Objects can settle. They can be called upon to steady the status quo by being used to quieten or deflect attention. But things also confess their complicity in these moments as the haunting seems irrepressible – in the emergent assemblage in James' office can be heard a certain repetition of themes: of the hidden, of the replicated, of identity dialectic. Paying attention to this tells us about how disavowed identities are prone to seep into the fabric of a material-discursive environment and haunt it. It also suggests that thinking with objects can be productive of new lines of flight via which we can interrogate teacher identities afresh, since I hope that in opening up different metaphors or images of thought there is the chance that a certain pause might be taken; that in taking time to see, hear, think and write the intricate textures of teachers' sociocultural-material worlds there is the possibility of apprehending this world in different, even if uncertain and experimental, ways (cf. Law, 2004) and from this alternative ways of imagining might be fostered. It was in this vein that the use of the *office/closet* was used as a queer conceptual frame to imagine the work done by James' closeted sexuality as manifested with/in his office – this finely balanced material-discursive assemblage forges a particular male SENCo subjectivity that produces caring and emotionally supportive work in the face of restrictive heteronormativity.

Chapter 7 - “It’s not ‘opting in’ being a male primary school teacher”: hegemonic masculinity as a territorialising force

Introduction

In this chapter I map a set of narratives constructed for this project by Charlie. These allow a discussion of the lines that segment his becoming-male-Primary-school-teacher, in particular how idea/ls of masculinity territorialise his rhizomatic assemblage of self as it emerges in entanglement with/in his school. The chapter uses the hierarchical model of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ (Connell, 1987; 1995; 2005; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005), drawing on the large body of research that applies this theory to the study of masculinities in education (e.g. Hjalmarsson and Löfdahl, 2014; Hearn et al, 2012; Martino, 2008; Haase, 2008; Warin, 2006; Francis and Skelton, 2001). Doing so helps to consider how Charlie positions himself as a gendered being (Martino, 2008) within a setting where men are relatively uncommon.

I also build from/with that theory, based on the criticism that its ‘types’ of masculinities have been used as a deterministic ahistorical construct that reifies structured gendered relations (cf. Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Hearn et al, 2012; Whitehead, 1998). By employing a Deleuzoguattarian rhizomatic assemblage metaphor and seeing Connell’s gender identity framework as a grid that orders or ‘over-codes’ this flux, we are provided with a way of thinking about both the fixities of, and flights from, gender identities within local contexts. Working with both a hierarchical and an assemblage metaphor enables a mapping of hegemonic masculinity as a striating force that constantly seeks to reinforce its dominant position, reclaiming and re-bordering terrain that cements normative gender divisions.

This, therefore, is an attempt ‘to capture the nitty gritty, lived experience, of the process by which hegemonic masculinity operates and achieves ascendancy’ (Warin, 2006, p.528). Most research with male teachers tends to focus on how to recruit and retain them, and there is less work on ‘the ways in which men experience, understand, and

navigate challenges to their masculinity' in these 'female dominated' contexts (Shen-Miller and Smiler, 2015, p.269). In response to such calls for more 'fine-grain work' (Wetherell and Edley, 1999) on men and the negotiation of masculinity in 'everyday' education settings (e.g. Martino and Frank, 2006; Francis and Skelton, 2001; Warin, 2006; Jupp, 2013; Pulsford, 2014), the chapter presents 'information-rich cases, which are strategically deployed to present a more nuanced analysis of masculinities in male [Primary] school teachers' lives' (Martino, 2008, p.576). By doing so I seek to 'sensitively confront' (Convery, 1999, p.145) the gender, sexuality, race and social class identity claims within this teacher's narrative and see these as related to the 'lure of hegemonic masculinity' (Martino, 2008) that male Primary school teachers are subject to. This lure might be conceived as a feature of patriarchal power that seeks to territorialise and stabilise the inherent flux of gender relations within contexts of alienation and adulation (Jupp, 2013; Skelton, 2001) that men in Primary schools encounter. Drawing on the metaphor of the open and synaptic rhizomatic assemblage, this chapter is driven by a notion that proximity and connectedness to 'others' are catalysts for becoming-other (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; Ahmed, 1998; Braidotti, 2011b), yet explores how these potentials are curtailed by the hierarchical structuring machine of hegemonic masculinity that works to limit fledgling identities – the re-territorialising work done by this machine is painfully experienced by Charlie, resulting in his increasing segregation from colleagues.

Hierarchies of gender and the 'gift' of being a male Primary school teacher

This first section works with the idea that gender identities are hierarchically structured, with hegemonic masculinity the symbolic pinnacle. During my interview with Charlie this can be seen to orientate his positioning as a man working in a Primary school.

Charlie refers to the 'gift and the curse' of being a male Primary school teacher; the gifts are female attention and the possibility of numerous sexual encounters:

I'll be really clear, those Pupil Referral Unit days, teacher training, I was banging everyone. Literally everyone, and you can see why - there was no key relationships in my life. And d'you know, I didn't know how to keep those

relationships, or if I wanted them, but I definitely knew I wanted to bang them. And then I went to do teacher training and if I didn't know I was me before I went I would have thought I was Brad Pitt. Only male, relatively well turned out, bit of a tan: bang. And when I started teaching, and I slept with a couple of people within my first 6 months and I thought: 'I can't do this, you're fucking your life up'. You essentially can't go back to [where you grew up] for that, no-one's speaking to you [where you did your teacher training], you can't do this as a teacher... And I'm not saying that people are throwing themselves at me, I wish that was true – I probably wouldn't have a girlfriend if that was the case...

Charlie tells me about his sexual exploits and prowess from a vantage point of reflection a number of years later. It is clear that he is establishing himself as heterosexual, attractive to women, untethered, and as a risk-taker – yet doing so from the relative safety of a present in which he has to some extent 'repented'; he narrates taking control and regulating these tendencies that he now re-frames as destructive. As Charlie lets me in on this aspect of his life history, perhaps inviting me to affirm such an identity and experiences, this performance can be seen to marshal the boundaries of heteronormative masculinity; not only is he heterosexual and had success 'playing the field', but he now adheres to the convention of a stable monogamous relationship and demonstrates a rational justification of his earlier actions.

It may be that Charlie felt especially comfortable 'confessing' – or boasting – about his past as he and I are of similar age and have a shared experience of being men in Primary schools. Coupled with the parameters of the research interview about the experiences of being a man in an especially female-dominated role within Primary teaching (the SENCo), it could be that such an assemblage produced this particular narrative of his identity. Also plugged into this assemblage are the negative sexual associations sometimes attached to men who work with young children; it might be argued that Charlie seeks to achieve this type of heterosexual masculine identity as a way of equalising a fragile masculinity deflated by the type of 'banter' that men working in Primary schools are subjected by:

[As a male Primary teacher] you are kind of putting yourself out there with your mates. And you have to say you're going to 'get it'. I'm from a relatively working class background, well middle class by '70s standards, and yeah I had to prepare like 'you're a nonce', 'what's this a fucking pervert blah blah' and they, you know it was just banter...

This subjectification as a 'pervert' is perhaps most easily negated by determinedly performing a heterosexual masculinity (see Pruit, 2015), even if this performance does, as per the previous excerpt, have resonances with the misogyny and sexism that Francis and Skelton (2001) report from some male Primary school teachers. We may see Charlie's performance as one of 'complicit masculinity' (Connell, 1995) in relation to hegemonic masculinity; in the out-of-school broader context (e.g. when with his friends, and perhaps this extends to his conversation with me) he cannot achieve a fully-fledged hegemonic type due to his awareness of being 'marked' (Piazza and Fasulo, 2014) as *deviant* due to his profession. However, he draws on the conditions of possibility offered by the hierarchical gender order and narrates an identity that casts him in the glow of hegemonic masculinity; a virile heterosexuality tempered by a rational analysis and control of his actions.

Charlie is fully aware that choosing to teach in Primary schools is not the 'standard' male option. In fact, it is acknowledged as a female route and far from what men who 'opt in' choose:

Male primary school teachers, again, it's more unique, often, and it's quite a different journey to why certain women have got involved, cos it's not 'opting in' being a male primary school teacher. You know it's not 'go to Durham University, after going to a public school, and then go and work in banking and get a wife, and move to Surrey'

In Charlie's telling there is a very clear narrative for those men who 'opt-in' to normative gender job roles, exemplified by the hegemonic (even if recently sullied) ideal of a rich and successful banker. Meanwhile the narrative associated with becoming a Primary school teacher is aligned with women; thus men who end up in Primary teaching have a 'more unique' and 'quite different journey' from those women and most other men. The stereotypical routes that Charlie is navigating around gives a sense of the hierarchical gender order, and the work required to carve one's own position in relation to that. Charlie locates himself as 'unique' within this framework where he is unable to fully own either of the female or male narratives that are set up as a binary. Nevertheless he narrates a self-reliance and trail-blazing identity here,

borrowing from hegemonic masculinity's store of adventurous manly traits. This can be seen as a reaction to the way that men in Primary schools – or, at least, Charlie here – become subject to/of the discourses of heteronormative gender; he feels he has to fashion a niche that manages the 'pervert' stigma, avoids the feminine narrative of choosing Primary teaching, whilst addressing the social expectation that being successful as a man requires a certain set of achievements (good academic record, business acumen, wife, expensive house).

Within the school domain however all men are similarly 'marked', allowing Charlie a freer run at locating himself as the *top man*. The theory suggests that the construct of hegemonic masculinity asserts (a particular type of) male dominance over women but also over other 'marginalised' and 'subordinated' masculinities (Connell, 1995). Gay men are in the 'subordinate' group and are 'the repository of whatever is symbolically expelled from hegemonic masculinity' (ibid, p.78). 'Marginalised' masculinities are related to social class, race and dis/abled identities. Hence the hegemonic masculine model is heterosexual, middle class, white and able bodied and 'others' are dynamically (in theory at least) positioned as 'beneath' it. The material, embodied and social capital available to position oneself and others (cf. Aavik, 2015) can be seen as bound to such a hierarchy – these play agentic roles in co-constructing identities as they entangle with discourses and performances of masculinity, as Charlie's narration of his arrival at his current school illustrates:

Um, right, in this school there aren't many men...when I joined there was one gay music teacher, and a guy downstairs called Phil who's like 5 foot 4, wears running shoes ...with trousers – d'you know he's not making the effort with how he looks, and I turn up and usually I wear a tie, got trousers, had a haircut, relatively well presented – it was just after summer so I'd been to the gym - and you go out and all of a sudden you're flavour of the bloody month. First Christmas here I had so many bottles of wine I couldn't carry them – I was giving them away in the pub like Santa. But that's not because you're a SENCo, that was because I was a male member of staff who had time for people and would listen, and had done things to help people.

In this excerpt, Charlie is talking about how he was greeted at his present school and picks out the sexuality of one of the other male teachers as a place-holder for him; he is more-or-less dismissed (he is not even named) in Charlie's telling of his entry into the

socio-material terrain of the school. As Connell puts it: 'these other masculinities need not be as clearly defined, indeed achieving hegemony may consist precisely in preventing alternatives gaining cultural definition and recognition as alternatives, confining them to ghettos, to privacy, to unconsciousness' (1987, p.186). The second teacher mentioned by Charlie is physically and materially positioned as inferior to the masculinity that Charlie hopes to claim; his diminutive stature and fashion sense mark him as no match. A hierarchy of masculinities is palpable in this excerpt, offering a sense of how in the constant struggle for hegemony, dominance 'needs to be achieved by obliterating alternative patterns of masculinity' (Skelton, 2001, p.50).

Although there is an air of the accidental in Charlie's narration of his fanfare arrival, where 'all of a sudden' he was loved, in fact he describes a set of practices and 'props' that supports this presentation of self (Goffman, 1990; Plummer, 1995; see Chapter 10). Nevertheless in this narrated display of a desired and desirable masculinity he is intimating that he was *the right sort of man* (cf. Mills et al, 2008; Jones, 2006) to make an impact, whilst the others weren't. Simultaneously though, he wants to suggest that his Christmas haul of wine is down to his particular way of working, and not *just because* he is male. Thus he is positioning himself as superior to the other men as well as the female teachers. We can therefore, in the above excerpts, hear Charlie drawing on a nexus of hegemonic masculinity tropes to make his case for the role of leading man - (hetero)sexual prowess, self-reliance, physical superiority and professional competence.

Hierarchies and assemblages

Working with the metaphor of hierarchy allows a view of how differences are ordered and how some gender and sexuality identities appear to be readily narratable as privileged. Adherents to the theory point out that it does not posit actual, empirical men as necessarily or deterministically located in particular social positions, as the model 'represents not a certain type of man but, rather, a way that men position themselves' (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p.841). But how can men *position themselves* as anything other than that which their social, material and embodied credentials allow them? If you are gay, poor, black and disabled there are probably

limited moments when your masculinity is experienced as hegemonic. Whilst in some circumstances and social milieu different masculinities are ascendant, the cultural dominance of the particular cloud of characteristics known as 'hegemonic masculinity' ultimately holds sway. 'Othered' male identities cannot legitimately access these and that gets at the crux of the theory: the socio-historical moment has constructed certain traits – including 'physical strength, adventurousness, emotional neutrality, certainty, control, assertiveness, self-reliance, individuality, competitiveness, public knowledge, reason, objectivity and rationality' (Kenway and Fitzclarence 1997, cited in Warin, 2013, p.5) - as dominant, and these have come to be associated with heterosexual, successful, white and able-bodied maleness. Hence the hierarchical theory of hegemonic masculinity is well-placed to explore the lived experiences of gender within late-modernity characterised by the mutually informing and enforcing neoliberal, capitalist and patriarchal forces that produce racist, classist, ableist and sexist injustices. This is what is so compelling about the theory of hegemonic masculinity - that it has the potential to capture the way in which wider socio-political forces and the inequities flowing from them are transposed onto the relational doing of one's gender identity.

Connell states that 'the public face of hegemonic masculinity is not necessarily what powerful men are, but what sustains their power and what large numbers of men are motivated to support'. This support is given because 'most men benefit from the subordination of women, and hegemonic masculinity is the cultural expression of this ascendancy' (1987, p.185). Orientating around this social and culturally hegemonic way of doing masculinity – whether we get close or not – affirms its outcomes as desirable and perpetuates its injurious consequences. Within the logic of the theory (and indeed within lived experience too) there aren't many ways out of the straight-jacket of an 'inferior' masculinity/gender category, other than to perform traits associated with the hegemonic ideal – but by this throw of the dice you become complicit in the maintenance of gender inequities, perhaps including your own - and this, of course, touches on how hegemony is achieved.

Yet within applications of the theory there is a noticeable reductionist tendency, since the rungs of 'hegemonic', 'complicit', 'marginalised' and 'subordinated' masculinities

encourage a research focus on how individuals are dynamically positioned within that structure; there is a sense that these are fixed and ahistorical or universal categories that individuals will *inevitably* orientate around (Gottzén, 2011; Hoel, 2015). There is nothing outside of or beyond those categories. Because of this assumption, the masculinities of non-white, non-heterosexual, non-able-bodied men are automatically precluded from ever achieving a 'hegemonic' position. Whilst this may be a useful conclusion to do with access to power, it could be argued that this merely traces the theory's parameters rather than mapping what is or could be experienced. There is a certain circularity that reproduces the negative framing of these men as inferior, and this in itself can work to further marginalise them (Morrell and Swart, 2005).

Concerns over essentialism and determinism trouble this theory then (Hoel, 2015), leading to arguments that changing patterns of masculinity (and shifting social relations more widely in relation to these) may not readily be detected (Seidler, 2006). Evolving trends in masculinity have been shown to be present however, and it has been theorised that as homophobia declines so 'inclusive masculinities' become visible. These undercut the rigid policing of gender in relation to the hegemonic masculine ideal (Anderson, 2011) and make possible a wider range of masculine becomings. Yet in circumstances where heteronormativity still reigns, the traits of 'hegemonic masculinity' are seen to retain their dominance (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2013; Cann, 2014). Thus whilst changing and heterogeneous masculine identities are theorised and encountered in some places, the structural order remains a default position for even this new theoretical development. Other researchers have therefore argued that there is a need to explore ways of opening up and disrupting the limiting constrictions of masculinity theory that ultimately enforces its own static hierarchies (Hoel, 2015; Rogers, Rowan and Walker, 2009; Hearn et al, 2012).

In social constructivist ontologies a separation of individual and structure is posited. In Deleuzian/Baradian assemblage thinking however, the two are seen as embroiled and co-constitutive. This troubling of the assumption that individuals/agencies and structures pre-exist encounters has potential to productively disrupt the homeostasis of structural models of masculinity. By re-framing the notion that an individual's place

within a hierarchy of masculinity is one of self-propelled positioning within deterministic structural constraints we are encouraged to see how these emerge *together* simultaneously. Both are (re-)made in the doing. In dislodging the notion of a deterministic and dependent relationship and replacing it with a *relational materiality* (Fenwick and Edwards, 2013) can also widen the net for what might be embroiled in this mangle of becoming-masculine. Identities are hodgepodge compositions of gendered *and* non-gendered subjectivities (Gottzén, 2011) that organise in more or less coherent – rhizomatic – ways, and male subjects and masculinities emerge as an effect of varied discursive, material, human and non-human flows. In this way a more explicit acknowledgement of the context as ‘event’ (Deleuze and Parnet, 2002) is also encouraged since the political, embodied and affective also accumulate and distribute to produce ‘affects’ of gender (Iverson, 2015).

Since ‘all things – human, and non-human, hybrids and parts, knowledge and systems – emerge as *effects* of connections and activity’ (Fenwick and Edwards, 2013, p.53, original emphases) – because assemblages are synaptic and accommodating - it is also necessary to account for the ways in which ‘others’ are imminent in our becomings, through which the *differences* that a hierarchical model necessarily highlights are blurred: we are not *this* or *that*, we are composed of elements of *this and that*. Hegemonic masculinity theory posits dynamic and multiple masculinities (Connell, 2005) but these stand apart from each other as fixed, different positions in applications of the theory. In assemblage theorising however, oppositional differences make way for difference in its purest form, a state of being that is never ‘different from’ or even the ‘same as’. The stabilizing, standardising molar unities of binary gender give way in Deleuzian thinking to molecular traversals, dynamism and seepages:

‘...the two sexes imply a multiplicity of molecular combinations bringing into play not only the man in the woman and the woman in the man, but the relation of each to the animal, the plant etc.: a thousand tiny sexes’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 235)

Not only are masculinity and femininity bound up together, but these are also dissected and drawn elsewhere, obtusely connected and configured with all manner of other matter. We can imagine this to be the case within masculinities too; the

rhizomatic configurations of molecular assemblages lead to a thousand tiny masculinities. Since assemblages are constantly recomposing as other elements connect with them, there is a greater sense of dynamism and change implied with an assemblage compared to a hierarchical model. It opens up space for more and other identities to be 'done and undone, constructed, imagined, performed' (Mellström, 2015, p.1) in material-discursive contexts of intra-action.

Stultifying the restless fizzing blur

But rather than setting up hierarchical and assemblage metaphors as in opposition what if, in the spirit of molecular rhizomatic traversals, we experiment with the idea that these can be connected. There is tension in pushing together a structural model with the openness of assemblage thinking, but that tension can be productive. In such a vein, Lucas Gottzén suggests that:

Masculinity would therefore not be regarded as an identity or position within a hierarchy, but as a territorializing process of gender assemblages; attempts to stabilize multiplicities into coherent "male" identities, bodies, and practices. What Connell calls hegemonic masculinity, would in a Deleuzian framework possibly be the assemblage or element territorializing other masculinities and femininities (2011, p.235)

Following and extending this idea, I want to imagine that assemblages can be coded and territorialised by hierarchical structures convening around hegemonic masculinity. Working with Deleuze and Guattari's statement that 'every rhizome [assemblage] contains lines of segmentarity according to which it is stratified, territorialized, organised, signified, attributed, etc.' (1987, p.10), hegemonic masculinity could be envisioned as one of the 'focuses of unification, centres of totalisation, points of subjectivation...' (Deleuze and Parnet, 2002, p.viii) within assemblages that operates as a territorialising (ordering) force. It might be seen as 'a point of resonance in the horizon', or a 'resonance chamber' for all other points (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.247). Imagine the facets of hegemonic masculinity (such as emotional neutrality, competition, authority, physical strength, rationality; Hearn et al, 2012; Francis and Skelton, 2001) forming a multi-dimensional grid that captures and stultifies within its

bounds the restless fizzing blur of lived experience, such that becoming-masculine moves, only lethargically, around these rigidly-ordered territories.

The powerful force of such territorialisation could be seen as limiting gendered becomings as it magnetically pulls into line the unruly off-shoots that divert from the norm. This resonates with Connell's claim cited above that the struggle to retain hegemony involves 'preventing alternatives gaining cultural definition and recognition' (1987, p.186); as Deleuze and Guattari argue 'molar or rigid segments always seal, plug, block the lines of flight' (1987, p.246). A similar point can be picked up from Rosi Braidotti's (2011b) assertion, following Deleuze and Guattari, that masculinity is the adversary of becoming. She argues that since 'Man' is the 'privileged referent of subjectivity, the standard-bearer of norm/law/logos', that 'masculinity is antithetical to the process of becoming' (p.36). It is not empirical men that are being singled out here, rather the subjectifications ('topological positions, degrees, and levels of intensity, affective states', p.37) orientated by notions of *hegemonic* masculinity which disallows movement in the name of maintaining maleness' dominance of the gender order.

Braidotti goes on:

'Deleuzian becomings emphasise the generative powers of complex and multiple states of transition between, beneath, and beyond the metaphysical anchoring points of masculine and feminine' (2011b, p.37).

We are encouraged to examine the flux around the 'dead heart of the system' (ibid. p.36) - the 'anchoring point' of masculinity - in order to identify lines of flight and nurture any affirmative fledgling becomings. There are latent possibilities captured within and between the striations of hegemonic masculinity, if the connections can be made for long enough to take hold. 'Multiple states of transition' conjures up the many and pluri-directional potentials possible within assemblages that might rupture the structures of gender identities. The image of 'between, beneath and beyond' offers a multi-dimensional form through which we might conceive of ways that a hierarchical structure can be turned upside-down, interrupted, entered and exited at alternate angles.

Whilst assemblages are prone to territorialisation by the gender hierarchy, however, the integrity of those 'centres of totalisation' is not stable – there is a struggle for hegemony (Connell, 1995), for control of the territory – within assemblages are always 'lines of deterritorialization down which it constantly flees' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.10). There is an imminent itching for de-territorialization within such entanglements, generated through insatiable rhizomatic desire that means anything 'can be connected to anything other, and must be' (ibid. p.7). Rhizomes/assemblages are tumultuous, reconfiguring, shifting and folding over within themselves and in this process making connections, which have potential to generate change. This process also involves connecting outwards, making links with other things too and expanding the assemblage's boundaries, thus re-working the whole.

Since assemblages are by definition singularities – they are unique even if patterned similarly – any coherence of gendered identity is imperfect because a variety of human and non-human, material and discursive, entities intra-act within those assemblages and might, for example, disrupt and re-shape the hegemonic masculine ideal. Or in certain local contexts mount a challenge and wrestle the hegemonic crown from that type of masculinity. It is, therefore, important to locate and ground the becomings of men within specific material-discursive assemblages so that the hegemonic masculine construct does not become a stereotype or unchanging monolith (cf. Hearn et al, 2012), and instead nuanced understandings of gender identities can be explored. An assemblage approach helps here because seeking transformation and lines of flight away from categorisations is its *raison d'être*, yet any hint of unbridled fluidity – which has been levelled as a criticism of it (see Gottzén, 2011) - is reined in by the idea of structuring, re-territorialising forces of patriarchal social relations that are ever-vigilant in monitoring other-becomings. This is the lens through which I present the following stories from Charlie.

Disrupted hierarchies of gender and the 'curse' of being a male Primary school teacher

The *curse* of being a male Primary teacher as Charlie describes it is the same as the 'gift' - attention from women. As one of only very few men in his workplace he is acutely

aware that his encounters with women in school had become sexualised, but rather than him being in control of this – as per the sense above where he dictates the terms of these sexual encounters – the ‘curse’ is when his female colleagues take charge and treat him in ‘ridiculously unprofessional’ ways. From the very first week in his new job he was given an indication of how things would go:

D’you know, they discussed my arse in a full-staff meeting within a week of me being here – yeah..... I mean that’s fucking ridiculously unprofessional.... One of the mums had tweeted about my arse ‘quite nice for a white guy’ – bit racist, we’ll deal with that – but then they fucking talk about it in staff meetings, they [write] it up on the bloody [board in the staff room].... but obviously you just take it, you’re new, and you don’t give a shit really do you, but yeah...

And although he says that ‘you don’t really give a shit do you’, there is clear exasperation and hurt in his telling of this and other significant moments:

Well there is a theme like, ‘the Mum’s come in because she fancies you’, not cos you’re good at your job. And we had a Challenge Partners review – it’s like community Ofsted; you all go into other schools – so I [went] and it was a really harsh lady, and she was really slating some people... and I had everything tight, my folder was fucking brilliant, d’you know I’d done everything I can for Ofsted – presented it, she loved it - ‘best thing about the school’. ‘Well that’s cos she fancies you’... You’re a mug. Just fuck off and say thank you, d’you know? But I know, and I knew before that, that that’s how it is.... But then a bit of me after that died, I was like, you’re fucking idiots I don’t want anything to do with you. But you know it’s [a particular senior teacher’s] fault, that’s a year’s worth of work gone into that, and you know why it’s done, it’s cos you’re a challenge. You’re a threat to their authority, blah blah blah.

There is a sharp sense that within this Primary school setting, anchors of normative/hegemonic masculinity are used to invert the gender order. In Charlie’s account here it is possible to feel how his investment in a heterosexual and dominant masculinity is turned back on him; his sense of self decomposes when his efforts become re-coded by attention to his sexual attractiveness. The material-discursive elements through which Charlie’s maleness emerges – his gymed body (arse), the public space of the staff meeting, the competitiveness engrained in inspection regimes, the folder of ‘brilliant’ work, his effort – are re-composed and sexually charged in a

way that reduces the authority that such aspects of masculinity might have in other circumstances attracted.

In these critical incidents it is notable how the assemblage established through the earlier narrations (within which Charlie is emergent as a hegemonic male through the intra-actions between his body and other male teachers' bodies, their clothing, gifts from parents) is reconfigured through the introduction of new entities. In the first rupturing incident, it is the Mum's tweet that injects a different energy through the assemblage, sparking a re-territorialising of gendered space and indeed gender norms whereby the man is treated – openly and explicitly – as a sexual object, reversing the 'male gaze' (see Skelton, 2002b). In the second narration, the 'really harsh lady' representing the regime of school inspection plugs into the assemblage and 'necessarily changes [its] nature as it expands its connections' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.9). These expanded connections are with machines of audit, competition and professionalism, but again these masculine-coded aspects of contemporary education (McKnight, 2016; Skelton, 2002a; Smedley, 2007) are pulled apart by the female teaching team and Charlie (as the wannabe hegemonic male) loses the chance of status he might have anticipated.

These new connections alter the terms on which hierarchical gender identities are configured; these incidents act as lines of flight that dislodge the certainties in the normative hierarchy. Some sort of becoming-other was glimpsed for Charlie here, but these re-compositions were painful for him. In response, as he talks with me, he attempts to re-claim the lost territory, to recover his lost ground, by feigning indifference or calling it as a coup d'état. His female colleagues are framed as 'unprofessional' and he feels he's only treated in this way because he 'is a threat to their authority'. Notably his explanations for these events are a re-assertion of ideals associated with hegemonic masculinity – professionalism and authority – a wrestling over the terrain he covets.

Charlie had to deal with being dismantled in these incidents. His reaction to this is one that further entrenches gender differences, through adding deeper striations in the

collegial assemblage, and this results in fewer possible connections: *'I don't want anything to do with you'*. On starting at the school, Charlie emerged in line with hegemonic masculinity, but this takes a decisive push back as events unfold – however, he seeks to continue *regardless of his colleagues*. As rhizomatic assemblages we are afforded the chance to become-other through proximity and connectedness to 'others' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; Ahmed, 1998; Braidotti, 2011b), whether they be human or non-human (things, moments, intensities), yet the narratives of this male teacher illustrates how this on-going process of connection can be short-circuited. As Deleuze and Guattari warn, 'once a rhizome has been obstructed, arborified, it's all over, no desire stirs; for it is always by rhizome that desire moves and produces' (1987, p.15): *'then a bit of me after that died'*. As the bridges burn no desire for transformation, for becoming-other, stirs; the potential imminent in connection is lost.

For the purposes of our interview at least, Charlie says he is able to brush these incidents off, pointing out that as a male teacher you just have to accept it, you have to 'take the punches':

There's an academic paper [that I found when I did my MA] called 'some people just aren't up for it' and I think it's about EBD [Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties] kids, or it's got a similar title, about teaching in EBD, and actually there are certainly personality traits you need, and actually it's the same for men in primary school – you could be a fantastic teacher, you could breeze through the fucking practice, but unless you can take the punches when you're there – and the punches are female attention, and dealing with that, and monitoring yourself, all of that shit – then you're just not gonna go anywhere.

This supports the point about segregation and transformation. Charlie feels apart from his female colleagues and comes to the conclusion that being able to 'take the punches' is a necessary feature of that separation; there is here a rhizomatic connection to be made with Foster and Newman's (2005) term 'identity bruising' that they use to describe the 'knock backs' male Primary teachers face. The prominence of Charlie's maleness in his school setting encourages an idea that attention from women is inevitable and that marshalling the boundaries of those relationships – and dealing with those boundaries being marshalled by others - is essential. It is thus 'female attention' that becomes the problem and a defensive, enclosing solution is suggested;

'monitoring' one's performance of self is key, rather than interrogating this division or seeking out change. This is an insulating tactic that blocks becoming-other and affirms difference, etching the lines that divide women from the rarefied male Primary school teacher. We might see this as a re-territorialisation produced by hegemonic masculinity which reinstates boundaries and mops up the seepages that risked troubling the normative gender order within this Primary school.

Territorialising assemblages

In the final section of this chapter I pick out two parts of Charlie's interview that involve social class and ethnicity, which work as further striations that mesh with gender to produce certain (teacher) subjectivities. This affords us some insight into Charlie's singular becoming as a teacher in relation to deep social cleavages and within the 'feminised' occupation of Primary teaching.

The intra-sections of gender, class and ethnicity emerge as Charlie talks of a childhood friend and their respective career (and indeed life) trajectories. Following some complicated and messy teenage years, Charlie went to University but afterwards was adrift, overweight and drinking heavily:

...the line that sticks with me was my mate Luke, he said 'Charlie, just play the fucking white man. Just go into school, get a fucking cushy job', d'you know 'move to [a more affluent area]'. And I always remember thinking, 'shit, that's an option for me' and I'd never really seen that as an option. As horrible as the words were, and he wasn't meaning it in a mean way, what he was saying was 'I'm a six foot seven black guy with a criminal record, who's 26, who lives in..., who's got no GCSEs, don't boo hoo me down you prick, go and sort it out'. And actually, 7 years later, that's what I'm doing really. And it's not just his advice obviously, but it really has always stuck with me.

The 'cushy job' that Charlie's friend advised him to pursue speaks of the subtle acknowledgement that being a white male affords you privilege, and that in a school this might allow you a very comfortable position. Playing the 'white man' here is equated with playing the *middle class* white man, an informative elision that illustrates the centripetal pull of the white-male-middle class image. It is intriguing to read this as

an example of Connell's hegemonic masculinity working to order identities hierarchically – being white and male gets you in at 'cushy job' level, above the women and other (non-white) men. But it also shows how this identity is not intrinsically *of* or owned by any specific man - Charlie is white and male yet his friend still tells him to '*play the white man*' – it offers him a *way of positioning himself* that is seen to attract certain benefits. Having the embodied opportunity to perform a certain type of maleness enables Charlie to seek the 'cushy' job that is barred for his friend, a realisation that he says he never really saw for himself.

The draw of a white male identity – with its associations of 'cushy' white collar work and privileged status – is an appealing yet territorialising force. This 'lure of hegemonic masculinity' (Martino, 2008) can be felt in how Luke compelled Charlie to 'sort [his life] out' by conforming to it; a life in free-fall can be swapped for order and success. It can be imagined that the bifurcation of direction for Charlie and Luke emerged in part as a result of this frank moment that 'sticks with' Charlie. It was a moment that re-territorialised Charlie (and Luke), enveloping and shaping his becoming in line with normative and majoritarian narratives of gender, class and ethnicity. This line of flight was a route out, but also a line of segmentation that drew Charlie in, aligned him with – and made him a participant in – such divisions.

However, this alignment has not been an easy one for Charlie:

Teaching is a very middle class thing. And it was very hard for me joining teaching and to leave that group [of childhood friends] behind, and I still don't see myself as 'in-group'. I'm still 'out-group' in my head, even though you meet me and I'm a white male, my family moved [from a less well-off to a more affluent area], and I now live in [a very affluent area], do you know, that's not a fault to get that, but when I socialise with peers, educational peers, those [old friends] are my base, those I grew up with, at the weekends. I've got a problem I'm not ringing the Head teacher here, I don't have anything in common with the mind-set. I do have lots in common, but I don't feel we can share ideas; we don't have the same history.

Thinking with the idea of territorialisation, we can read the to-and-fro of Charlie's positioning as an indication that entering teaching encouraged a troublesome re-evaluation of aspects of his identity – it could be seen that this line of flight effected the

ways he was able to compose himself (perhaps in both senses). He narrates this choice as resulting in a separation from his friendship group, and by leaving them 'behind' there is a suggestion of teaching as an upwardly mobile trajectory. This is amplified through a physical re-territorialisation as well, as successively moving house to more affluent areas. Such becoming is an expansion of connections that effects the selves he is able to assemble, but this also *affects* that self; this flight towards becoming-other is dilemmatic and uncomfortable, and as such this narrative resonates with other men from working class backgrounds navigating entry to Primary teaching (e.g. Newman, 2010). As Charlie holds on to his 'base' of childhood friends and his working class 'mind-set', his adherence to those segmenting lines produces a blockage that limits his connections with his 'middle class' teacher colleagues. In Charlie's narrative there are stabilities and movements; *being* working class means bedrocks whilst *becoming* middle class equals shifting terrain. Charlie is somewhere in between the two in this telling, in what might be a sort of smooth space, affording him potential for other becomings that de-territorialise the classed assemblage of teaching – yet this in-between-ness turns out to be a troubling terrain for him to grapple with. Sitting between, or straddling, lines is uncomfortable.

It is also intriguing how Charlie describes the embodied nature of this dilemma, the trickiness of *looking like* you fit but not feeling that you do: 'I'm still out-group in my head, even though you meet me and I'm a white male...'. Perhaps especially interesting is that although he often points out in our interview how rare men are in Primary schools, he draws on the idea that being a *white male* ought to afford him a sense of fitting in there; the generalised others he conjures up in the above excerpt would, he imagines, readily think he'd have no problem being 'in-group'. The hegemonic bind of whiteness and maleness is significant here, with Charlie's comments suggesting a sense of entitlement that, nevertheless, he feels unable to access due to the way his social class background intra-acts with this powerful entanglement. Charlie's identification of what being 'in-group' should look like offers an important point to think with around some male Primary teacher identities. Being a white man in so many other scenarios affords easy passage and yet on-the-ground experience in Primary schools is not as straightforward; having to *manage* one's identity and deal

with its challenges quite so explicitly is troublesome because there remains a kernel of belief, a certain habitus of confidence perhaps, that you *ought* to be 'in-group'. That Primary teaching, if you're a man, ought to be a 'cushy' job.

Conclusion

This chapter presents an account of one man's experience of being a Primary school teacher, offering a sense of the nuanced and complex identity work that he engages in. Thinking with an assemblage *and* a hierarchy metaphor has allowed a consideration of how hegemonic masculinity territorialises gender assemblages, attempting to 'stabilize multiplicities into coherent "male" identities, bodies, and practices' (Gottzén, 2011, p.235). This led to the idea that it is the lines of flight *between, beneath and beyond* the anchors of binary gender identities (Braidotti, 2011b) that offer us the chance of transformation.

The image of the rhizomatic assemblage helps in considering the dynamic shaping of identity pulled into line by hegemonic masculinity. It also provides a way of incorporating dimensions of class and ethnicity as entangled entities in gendered (teacher) becomings, seeing how these are entwined with 'hegemonic masculinity' in mutually enforcing ways; assemblage thinking here can accommodate the complexities and intra-sections of entrenched social cleavages, ground these powerful segmentarities in context without reifying them and as such it foregrounds the fluidity and flexibility of relational gender identities that Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity sought to understand.

Charlie's narrative can be read as a determined portrayal of himself as a 'hegemonic' masculine figure. It would be straightforward to stop at the conclusion that he exercises his agency in doing this, so as to avert concerns about a deviant sexuality in his role, affirm his relative position of authority as a middle leader, and manage/maintain his masculine working identity in a 'female-dominated' environment. But there is more unfolding within the steps of that conclusion. It is important to pick-out how Charlie's initial emergence within a hegemonic masculine

assemblage is deconstructed and recomposed as material-discursive entities (the tweet, the work folder, the inspector) crash into his first-term confidence. His female colleagues are part of the reconstruction team that shape the material of Charlie's assemblage along a sexuality line; 'hegemonic masculinity' is not allowed to occupy a pinnacle and its composite parts are unceremoniously stripped out and remoulded so as only sexual attractiveness is allowed to be visible. These seem to be acts that intentionally disrupt the gender order and Charlie, as the repository of hegemonic traits, feels this intensely.

Yet rather than these critical and disruptive incidents leading to an opening up of that repository, a softening and exchange across borders between gender segments, Charlie is drawn to regroup. 'Hegemonic masculinity', as an over-coding machine, picks up his shattered parts and re-territorialises; in reaction to these events Charlie becomes more determined to assert his claims to such a masculinity, opting to 'take the punches' and just stop trying with his colleagues. The strategies and responses outlined by hegemonic masculinity for him – to go it alone, to be defiant, to compete - reinstate patterns of normative gender relations. The opportunities to become-other through proximity and connectedness to 'others' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; Ahmed, 1998; Braidotti, 2011b) are short-circuited as Charlie closes himself off and takes solace in the certainties of being 'out-group'. This resonates with research that notes how men working in 'female-dominated' environments tend to shore-up established and normative gender identities rather than engaging in moves towards new notions of what it means to be male or female (Shen-Miller and Smiler, 2015; Pruitt, 2015; Gill and Arnold, 2015; Sevier and Ashcraft, 2009; Simpson, 2004). The molar, binary segments of gender exert a powerful organising force on the ways that masculinity can emerge; the grid of hegemonic masculinity recoups and re-territorialises any beginning lines of flight. This means that even though the women in Charlie's school dissolve some of the authority that a 'hegemonic masculine' positioning made claims on, creating the conditions for alternative gendered becomings to emerge requires more and varied attack lines against this powerful adversary - to quote Braidotti again, 'masculinity is antithetical to the process of becoming' (2011b, p.36).

Chapter 8 - “Some people feel the need to bring things in”: Objects and ‘homeliness’ in school office spaces

Introduction

The way that space is organised, moved within and defined, and the negotiations and contestations over this, constitute identities (Massey, 2005; Cresswell, 2004; Cudworth, 2015). School spaces ‘quietly and decisively participate in the production of male subjectivities and masculine identities’ (O’Donaghue, 2006, p.18), and yet the ways these are ‘played out, produced, policed and regulated have largely gone unexamined, are taken for granted and under theorised’ in studies of schools (ibid, p.17). As a response to that under-examination, this chapter explores the emergence of gendered subjectivities as they are entangled with school spaces and objects within those spaces. In particular the men’s material stories about their offices are explored and mapped in terms of the control and ownership they are able to claim. Using the notion of the ‘extended self’ (Belk, 1988; Tian and Belk, 2005) I consider the effect that stuff – and particular types of stuff – has on the becomings possible for the men in their school contexts. Addressing the dynamism of space in one particular incident, the chapter also thinks about the ‘affective flows’ (Youdell and Armstrong, 2011) and their intra-action with school micro-politics and wider discourses of men in ‘feminised’ work environments. This leads on to a discussion of the men’s references to staff spaces in their schools as ‘homely’ and an exploration of this material manifestation of a key discourse delineating Primary school teaching, leading to new thinking about teaching as gendered work. This aims to set in motion some lines of flight about the vital role of the material in disrupting established and normative gendered teacher identities.

How stuff affords the control and loss of a working space

As noted in Chapter 6, James’ personal things could be read as a ‘haunting’, cloaking but also revealing his sexuality. Yet there is other stuff in James’ office too which relates to his working practices. During his account of his office paraphernalia, he describes an A4 sheet of paper with a typed list of pupils’ names on, blue-tacked to the magnolia coloured wall by his desk:

James: ...they're a reminder, also they're in my diary. But also it's a, a bit of an ego boost, a "yesss"!

Mark: Yeah, well I can see when you said about [the Statements of special educational need earlier] that you're proud

James: Well yeah I am! It's really hard to get a statement [of special educational need] through, and it's getting harder and harder. Those are all my cases that I've got through, and there are more who've moved on. So, no, I am proud of that bit.

He later paused on a display of certificates:

Um, just some certificates of the courses I've been on, and then the one there, the top one, that is NASEN [National Association of Special Education Needs] training, and on that day's training I met [a prominent person in the SEN field].

James' certificates and the list of pupils with statements of special educational need are symbols of his knowledge and expertise. But more than that, each statement he has secured – which outlines the provision a pupil is legally entitled to based on evidence submitted - is a mark of honour for him, an 'ego boost'. Achieving these statements is a source of pride in his own hard work, and it is interesting that being awarded one is seen as the prime indicator of effective SENCo-ing for James; as he says elsewhere, each one is 'definitely recognition that I'd helped children. And for me, the two levels of progress [that class teachers are held accountable by] is getting those statements in'.

His statement list is prominently stuck to the wall in his eye line as he sits at his desk, and clear for any visitor to read when sitting on the comfortable chair adjacent to his desk, whilst the certificates are arranged on a wall that faces towards the office door. Although doing so certainly raises questions over confidentiality and therefore professional judgement, it is significant that he chooses to display the list of statemented pupils there. Similarly, the specific location of his course-attendance certificates does not seem accidental. The significance of these positionings is I think related to how he manages his relationship with the Head teacher, as suggested in the imagined scenarios narrated within specific school (office) spaces:

Um, I think I'm really lucky in this school because the Head has allowed me to carve out my role as I want. And I feel that she trusts me to get on with the job; she's not at the door or calling me to her office "What you doing?", she just lets me get on with it – I've got evidence, I've got statements through, so that sort of proves that I'm doing my job.

In this scene that James envisages, the Head (doesn't) stand at his office door to hold him to account for what he is doing, nor alternatively is she calling him to her office. James draws strength from the items – 'I've got the evidence' – to insulate himself against a possible critical visit from the Head that might lead to his sense of autonomy being curtailed. Within this there are intriguing signs about how space is owned and controlled in this context; through the statement list and the certificates that he chooses to display he marshals how his role is understood and evaluated, and thereby ensures a right to own his space and to direct his own movements. Note that he narrates the (female) Head teacher as standing at his office door rather than over the threshold – James' space is his own. He is also able to avoid being called to see her, as a misbehaving child might, thereby emphasising his control over his own movements around the school. The items give him material, tangible evidence to demonstrate – without necessarily having to verbalise – his effectiveness and trusted position, and quash any (potential) concerns about his being in the SENCo job. He is engaging in 'the material work of crafting, maintaining, and narrating an identity' (Rich, 2014, p.16), and I think the way he does this speaks of a certain sense of precariousness that inflects James' working experience (see Chapter 6) which generates a performative orientation as he goes about his role.

Within this equation too, of course – as noted in Chapter 6 – is that James has a lot of *personal stuff* in his room; stuff that clearly identifies that space as his own (Elsbach, 2003; Tian and Belk, 2005; Hurdley, 2015). The imagined challenge from the Head is fended off from within his *very own* bunker. In thinking in these terms, there are informative contrasts to be drawn with Charlie's ownership of his own office space.

As the other men do (see Chapter 9), Charlie highlights 'mess' as a feature of his office – yet the responsibility for it does not lie with him. Recently there was a re-organisation

of rooms at the school, and his office (which also doubles as a small-group classroom) now has to accommodate four other (female) members of staff:

Yeah [this is the room I work in], and if you could imagine now we have 5 people in here, there used to just be me. So, there has been adaptations, but not major, it's just messier really.

The mess that has crept in suggests a physical as well as symbolic encroachment on Charlie's domain. Now there is some disorder and a sense of uncertainty, whereas previously he owned the space and controlled the stuff in it, maintaining order and organisation and managing his 'extended self' at work via this practice (Belk, 1988; Tian and Belk, 2005). Yet this self did not 'extend' much, having little need for stuff and offering few hints to colleagues of a personal life, as the following exchange shows:

Charlie: I just don't have personal items in life really. I don't have anything. I've got a couple of pictures of, like, bits of art that I hang, but I don't have any pictures.

Mark: But nothing here?

Charlie: Nothing here, nothing. I've got my bag and I might bring my coat, but that's about it [*short interruption when two members of staff come in looking for the Year 6 leavers' gifts*]. That's the Head, the lady with the grey hair...Yeah, so no, I don't have anything.

Mark: Is that a conscious choice?

Charlie: Nah, I just don't carry stuff around. Like, when I moved – my CRB, well it's not anymore, used to take up 4 pages, I had about 14 addresses in 5 years. It's just like, I don't really value stuff at all.

Mark: Is there something about *not* making it personal to you, as well?

Charlie: Well I did all this, that's personal to me. It's my room and that's why Karen [the Deputy Head] is like 'it's the Inclusion Room now' and everyone calls it Charlie's room and it pisses her right off. Cos it is my room, I put up everything. I ordered that [Maths poster], I modelled that [Literacy activity shown in a photo display], and that's it. I don't need a picture of my Mrs or...

Mark: ...Bits and bobs and knick-knacks

Charlie here talks about how he doesn't 'value' stuff, almost as if it weighs him down. There is a sense that he feels stuff hampers him from being on his toes, dynamic, and mercurial even. He employs a model of rugged and independent masculinity; wherever he hangs his coat is his home – he can move on at any time, a rolling stone gathering no moss. This can also be seen as a feature of a masculinity that draws upon the ideal of a detached, unencumbered rational being that is above the fripperies of homely aesthetics (Miller, 2010) and is instead concerned with higher – or at least away-from-home - ideals. Charlie adds:

I'm never going to be that guy with his own mug, d'you know, that guy or those people. 'Who's got my mug?' It's just a mug, drink your tea. Yeah, so no, I haven't got anything.

And yet in staking out an elevated position which, on the face of it, protects him from the mundanities of everyday school politics, his lack of stuff can be seen to have consequences for the ways in which his colleagues perceive and react to him (Elsbach, 2004) as a member of the school organisation and culture. Whilst James seems to have paid much attention to his office 'identity markers' (ibid.) and can be seen to use those things to defend his role by marking his physical and therefore symbolic territory, Charlie has not explicitly located himself – via his stuff – in his office. So whilst he enjoys the fact that, for the time being, his co-opted space continues to be called 'Charlie's room', there is significant threat to his ownership of this corner of the school. This can be seen in the Deputy Head's insistence that the re-branding gain traction and that 'Charlie's room' become 'the Inclusion room'. Without personal things which 'establish a sense of ownership and possession' of a workspace (Tian and Belk, 2005, p.307) there remains a fragility to one's workplace identity (Belk, 1988). It is difficult to instantiate a positive sense of personal distinctiveness as well as social status (Elsbach, 2003). Hence Charlie's room can be colonised and re-named – the wall displays are insufficiently distinct as 'Charlie's' to serve as a delineation of his space – and without a territory to defend, his social status can be undermined.

Affective flows of gender and space

In the excerpt above, some staff members come into the room when we're talking. They're looking for a set of small present bags that are about to be given out to Year 6 pupils gathering in the hall along the corridor – we're a few days from the end of the summer term. This interruption (eruption) is an important part of this interview-event - a subjectifying moment - and a 'data hotspot' in my view. Within the square brackets I have added to the transcribed excerpt above, the glass-paned office door opens and this happens:

Female teacher: Charlie have you seen the Year 6 leavers' gifts, have they been left here by any chance?

Charlie: Umm, nuh, uh, I don't...yeah, are they here? Are they pink
[pointing to beneath a desk]

Female teacher: Uh, no, that's the presents

Charlie: This...

Female teacher: ...is *our* presents

Charlie: Oh um, well, I haven't seen them then, I don't know anything about them....

[3 seconds of rustling and chairs moving, yet no human voices, whilst bags are searched for]

Charlie: I'll get that... [helping with the door as the teachers carry the bags out]

Female teacher: Yep. Thanks

These teachers' lack of engagement with me was the thing I was initially struck by; as a visitor in school meeting with the SENCo I would have expected them to apologise for interrupting. Or to look at me, at least. I don't point this out because I was affronted by the episode, or to complain about borderline rudeness. I think it is significant because, customarily, people knock at closed office doors and/or apologise for interrupting a meeting. In the bending of expectation here is captured an intriguing moment where the discursive, material and relational are entangled (Davies and Gannon, 2012). Conventional politeness is eschewed and the door remains un-knocked – yet opened widely - as the space is over-taken by talk and bodily activity around misplaced bags.

The apparently quite tense relationship between Charlie and his colleagues manipulates and operates this material-discursive encounter. The material of the office becomes differently engaged as new bodies with unexpected questions break in and move around, re-configuring the assemblage of human and non-human forces and intra-acting to produce a set of different becomings (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012). I was the questioner, centre-stage on child-sized plastic chair, but become a mute and static observer – a presence unacknowledged - as fresh action erupts through the door and envelopes the room. A flash of becoming-other for Charlie too, from hero of his own tale of adventure to playing catch-up as the new forces overwhelm; he loses some of the swagger so far displayed in the interview – as the different, prickly intensity is introduced Charlie stumbles over his words, gets emphatically told he’s pointing to the wrong presents – significantly *our* (and definitely not his) presents – and receives a curt ‘thanks’ as the rupture subsides with Charlie closing the door.

In this case – the case of Charlie’s room that has recently taken on four more proprietors and a mooted new name – there is a significant micro-political battle underway over the sovereignty of the space. Yet this battle is perhaps indicative of a wider war; Charlie had already told me that the Head teacher is leaving – the day I met Charlie was her last day – and she was in the room searching for the Year 6 gift bags with the other teacher. The Head did not speak during the search though, instead the other teacher managed the decidedly cold exchange. In an environment where people are jostling for position, negotiating where they stand within re-shaped management structures, control of space is important (cf. Tian and Belk, 2005; Elsbach, 2004). Indeed, power and space are intimately entwined (Massey, 2005; 1994; O’Donoghue, 2006; Tamboukou, 1999; Cresswell, 1996; Lefebvre, 1991). Charlie’s status and social position within the school is evidently fragile, given the stories he told during the interview (see Chapter 7), despite a certain bravado that he adopts in the telling. This presentation of self is ruptured by incoming - uninvited and unapologetic - colleagues though, seeking stuff from *his room* which is not his and that he doesn’t know anything about; Charlie’s office is now fair game.

The particular dynamism - the affective flow - of this event (Youdell and Armstrong, 2011; Ringrose and Renold, 2014) emerged as the two female teachers entered, changing the pace and shape of the moment. Flowing around the room as Charlie and I sat (though he was drawn to stand in response to this reconfiguration) the female bodies in this moment de-/re-compose the assemblage and alternate subjectivities emerge. The female teachers entwine with the material of doors, desks, chairs, gift bags, and direct the pacified male bodies struck with inertia amid this enactment of control. Thinking here about how 'spaces, subjects and affective flows are implicated in relations of power' (Youdell and Armstrong, 2011, p.146) and noting the 'affective choreographies' of the event (ibid), invites us to think about the ways that subjectivities emerge within collectives of space, objects and feeling. The subjectifying intra-actions here bind with the on-going micro-political battle at this specific school and wider discourses around men within 'female-dominated' Primary schools; the material-discursive ecology of Primary school assemblages can be seen to generate certain relations of gender whereby men might feel challenged and women might feel at ease.

Carrie Paechter argued in 1998, building on a body of feminist work about girls' subordinate position within educational institutions, that males tend to dominate educational spaces – and in more recent research by Carol Taylor (2013) from within a material feminist paradigm this is given shape and space. The male Sociology A-Level teacher in Taylor's research is seen to occupy a dominant position in his classroom via the manipulation of objects and masculine discourses which re- and co-produces gendered subjectivities for both himself and his students. From a similar theoretical perspective and drawing explicitly on Deleuze and Guattari (1987), Gabrielle Ivinson presents empirical examples to explain how 'gender can emerge as a phenomena within an assemblage' (2015, p. 124); how objects and discourses and spaces and bodies work to produce gendered subjects, rather than the other way around. A *feeling* emerging from this assembling can be all it takes to produce a gendered subject: a feeling of familiarity that encourages us to walk into a space, a feeling of exclusion that makes us back out (ibid). The two teachers that entered 'Charlie's room' in the middle of our conversation could be said to have felt very comfortable about walking in to that space, which for me suggests something important about Charlie's position within his

school but also implies a wider question about how spaces in Primary schools become-gendered. Or, to put it in another way, how *being male* does not necessarily equate with power and domination of space within such settings.

Without wishing to over-state the role of the material in Charlie's social positioning within his school – the co-option and appropriation of his office is clearly not *just* down to how ineffectively he has stamped his self, via possessions, on his work space – this does invite a journey toward a provocative area of thought. Since the material is entangled with the discursive and relational – political, affective - dimensions of this assemblage, what if Charlie had have had a 'picture of his Mrs' on his desk? What if, like James, he had displayed certificates from courses attended and qualifications achieved? Would such *belongings* have made him seem like he *belonged* (cf. Rich, 2014)? What if, as per his comment below, he had on show knick-knacks from his holidays, and had tried to make his space more 'homely'? These questions are picked up again towards the end of the chapter.

Homeliness and feminised work spaces

But first I want to map more of the gendered Primary school spaces that started to emerge in the previous section. Charlie continues:

Yeah I can't stand that shit personally, but you know it's nice when people do it, it looks homely, it's just not me. It's not my bag. And [the former SENCo] was a big one for having an ornament from Chicago or whatever, it's just not really what I do. It's also a bit muggy, like 'Oh what did you do [in the summer holidays]? You're from an area of degradation. Oh me, I spent 4 weeks driving across Canada in a muscle car'. D'you know what I mean [...] So yeah, I don't, whilst I want to tell them I have a personal life, I don't feel that telling poor kids I'm going to Croatia for a week is really gonna help our relationship. Is that a bit...I dunno, I've never really thought it through.

Here Charlie is expanding on his theme of disliking stuff, in particular in a school context. The notion that stuff adds a *homeliness* to a working environment which is 'nice when people do it' resonates because Graham says something very similar:

Yeah – we've got a department that sprinkles fairy dust in this place – it's true, it's a story I'll tell you later. Um, I don't know, it's just. I think the functionality

of it is...it's just in the way. [...] some people feel the need to sort of bring things in and make themselves surrounded by this stuff, so work's a happier place, and a better place, or more homely. Whereas I think I'm a bit more black and white as regards to, right: work, so, we'll do that. And perhaps, you know, I have worked in some really nice places that have felt quite homely anyway, like you were welcome – so whether that's the reason why, I don't know.

...I had a, my niece brought something back from holiday, it was a rubber and a pencil, or something like that, so that was in my little desk tidy, but that's about as personal as [my desk gets]...

For Charlie and Graham, *other* people choose to make the work environment homely and while they both say this is nice, it's not something they want to engage in themselves. These *home-making others* are their *female* colleagues who are seen to be creating a congenial working environment. The control of the physical space via things – certain types of personal things that are judged to be un-useful and inappropriate – binds this consideration of the material with the discursive and historical. It is a feature of the literature on the dearth of men teaching young children that Primary schools are feminised environments (e.g. Mistry and Sood, 2013; Dillabough, 2005; Skelton, 2002a); since such work is 'often associated with nurturing and care and, as a consequence of such constructions, primary teaching is often viewed as a quintessentially female domain by potential recruits to the profession, practising teachers and the general public' (Carrington and McPhee, 2008, p.109). The historical positioning of child-rearing as 'domestic' and 'private' – *homely* - functions has meant that the teaching of young children, with its attendant nurturing and caring requirements, is associated with women's work (Dillabough, 2005; 1999; Tamboukou, 2000). This is all compounded for those who work as SENCOs because the development of the role and nature of some parts of the work is tied to similar axes. This is all significant in the context of Charlie and Graham referring to their 'homely' school office environments and yet – importantly – not wishing to be aligned with its implicit femininity. Primary school office spaces are gendered and gendering environments; through the entanglement of material and discursive entities these are arenas where a male/female divide is played out.

This divide calls up the gendered striations of labour whereby men are assumed as 'public' beings – out in the world and distanced from the emotionality of domesticity –

whilst women are posited as 'private', at home *looking after* the domestic sphere and/or working in caring or service sector jobs that draw upon assumptions about women's 'natural' relationship-based faculties. An accumulation of *stuff* tends to be bound with the female gender in such a divide because building and maintaining a home requires things; if home is symbolically female then the sorts of personal objects that transform a house into a home – personal, sentimental, *meaningful* items – become female too (see Hurdley, 2013; Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton, 1981). This is not to say that there is ever a simplistic or tangible divide between private and personal, between home and work, between meaningful and utilitarian objects, or indeed between male and female – but that in the historically and culturally situated nexus of materiality and discourse these things come to align as opposites, with tangible effects.

Take, for example, Graham's talk (above) about the stuff that produces the homeliness he quite likes: he says that when it comes to work this stuff 'gets in the way', it's not 'functional', and that he's 'more black and white'. This reflects King's (1998) male teachers' narration of their work in which they draw on rational and instrumental resources to differentiate themselves from their female colleagues who they see as more emotional. There is also a sign of this in Simon's talk about his work practices:

I sort of detach myself – when I leave [work], that's it [...] when I'm in school, my priority is school. And then when I leave – obviously when I work in the evening my priority goes back to school – but for that sort of family time my priority is them. But I don't feel, I never feel, sort of torn between the two.

Simon is keen to get across that the personal/professional divide is one he is managing consummately, since because he is able to 'detach' himself he never feels 'torn' between home and work. The rationality of this response tallies with – like Charlie and Graham – his lack of personal stuff at work. *He leaves nothing of himself there*. I think it is possible to argue that for these male teachers, all around 5 years into their careers, this sort of detachment – or at least a self-narration which performs this detachment – is a strategic choice when seeking to accomplish a legitimate and intelligible male identity whilst also locating oneself as part of the fabric of a Primary school setting. There are social stigmas that striate this territory (as Charlie says, you have to be able to 'take the punches' as a man in a Primary school) and holding on to a certain sense of maleness

by utilising the tropes of rational and work-focused masculinity may be preferable to any alternative becomings. Emphasising that it is a masculine enterprise you are engaged in – e.g. work - could be seen as an exercise of resistance to the historical-cultural association of Primary schooling with femininity, and a way of insulating the (male) self from becoming-(female) Primary school teacher.

Coming back to Graham's description of the homeliness he thought was pleasant at his school – but not functional for the business of work – there are important threads to pick up in relation to the discussion above. It is intriguing how Graham pinpoints the fact that he hasn't *needed* to create a homely environment where he's worked because the places have been made to feel welcoming and 'quite homely anyway'. The women in these scenarios have made the teachers' office areas a congenial – happier, better, more homely – place. As per the discussion of Charlie's room, this does suggest a certain control that women have over the shared teacher spaces within Primary schools. Whilst this takes us to a reading that locates power and agency with the female staff – and 'their' stuff – within the Primary school, there is a different refraction that also needs to be explored.

A further implication of the thinking here – and not an insignificant one – is that female teachers are seen as ensuring the right level of homely atmosphere within school so that the men can get on with the proper work. In their narratives about stuff and spaces at school, these men make the point that *other people* – the women – take responsibility for, and care about, creating a pleasant working environment. These men admit that it is nice, but it's not the sort of thing they want to spend *their time* thinking about; if they're at work, their focus is on work. It is difficult to escape the idea that within this assemblage of discourse, space and objects, the labour division and hierarchy of gender is perpetuated. Similar conclusions – though with a focus on the discursive aspect - were drawn by Haase (2008) and by Francis and Skelton (2001) whereby male Primary teachers seeking to affirm a sense of manliness end up reinforcing gender stereotypes and the privilege enjoyed by hegemonic masculinity through contributing to the maintenance of gender work-role segregation.

In being seen as making and maintaining a 'homely' environment conducive to a happy and positive workplace, female teachers are implicitly positioned as responsible for setting the scene so that men can complete their important work. Hence although the female teachers have control of the physical, material environment – it is 'feminised' – this control is layered with the same symbolic associations of the home: as a supportive environment, as pleasant, as personal. It is not dissimilar to the stereotypical ideal of a housewife managing a family home that provides a relaxing place of solace and support for the husband to return to after a long day out at work.

There is an intriguing parallel here in recent research by Hempel-Jorgensen (2015). She spent time with Primary school children exploring their views on what makes an 'ideal pupil'. The research found that boys tended to be seen as intelligent and good-humoured and thus were most associated with being 'ideal' pupils. The girls were positioned – by the pupils themselves – against a female pupil ideal that was expected to support the boys' role by creating a facilitating environment for the boys' learning. When girls did not, or could not, match up to this expectation they were subject to social sanctions. Much other research also supports the conclusion that girls downplay their abilities and are encouraged to fulfil subordinate roles to boys – including supporting and caring for them – and hence privileging masculinity in schools (e.g. Walkerdine et al., 2002; Skelton, 2001). It can be seen that the men in my research are narrating a privilege they have in their Primary school environments, where their work is facilitated by female teachers making a 'happier, better, more homely' environment in which it can occur.

Conclusion

So, more stuff or less stuff? It is a key – yet perhaps counter-intuitive – conclusion of Daniel Miller's work in Material Culture studies that people with strong relationships to other people also tend to have effective and fulfilling relationships with the material world, to things (2008; 2010). Rather than weakening people's relationships, stuff tends to act as a cohesive – giving people something to talk about, constituting mutual interests and communities, (re-)orientating priorities, negotiating troubling times, connecting past, present and future. For me this conclusion is worth reflecting on with

regard to the men in this research; those that have the least stuff at work tend to have the least easy relationships with their colleagues. It might be said that the men – James in particular – who do leave something of themselves in their school spaces are able to draw on those material-discursive resources, as also suggested in Chapter 6, and negotiate environments where being male is relatively unusual. Deneen (2011) makes similar conclusions, as I go on to discuss in Chapter 10.

In relation to that point, I posed a number of questions above about Charlie's 'extended self': if he had displayed personal items in his office might he have been able to *defend his territory* more effectively? Might the threat he was facing over his space, and therefore his status, have been averted? Clearly these are unanswerable questions, but they are useful because they open on to a point about how men's personal stuff might be a catalyst – a *material intervention* – for disrupting the feminised environment of Primary schools, and thereby smoothing a space amongst demarcated terrain containing 'women's stuff' and not 'men's stuff'. This would be about encouraging men to be *present* in these work spaces in other ways than intellectually and bodily; to give something of their emotional and personal lives that develops a sense that this terrain is *for* and *of* men as much as it is women. As Rich argues, desegregating gendered occupations 'must not only attend to their discursive construction, but also deeply engage the material conditions of that job' (2014, p.21). It is not enough just to note that Primary teaching is 'female dominated' or 'feminised', we need to explore how this is (in often banal ways) materialised and comes to segregate men and women's work roles and identities. It is quite conceivable that this impacts on retaining men in teaching and plays its part in women's career trajectories too.

Gender is embedded in the material of objects and spaces, emerging within everyday interactions that are always located in place and surrounded by stuff (O'Donoghue, 2006; McGregor, 2004; Massey, 2005) – indeed, as the material-discursive assembles and intra-acts, so phenomena such as gender are emergent. The *affective choreography* of bodies, spaces and objects can (re-)produce gendered habitus, (re-)constituting the material and discursive 'feminisation' of Primary schools but also – through this very phenomena – the maintenance of segregated male/female work-roles. Therefore a

material intervention such as that mentioned above around a feminised environment might also generate a shift in the gendered balance between who is positioned as there to *do work* and who is conceived as there to *make-work-a-nice-place-to-be*. This is a call for the affective force of the material to be harnessed in a way that might afford different sets of becomings to emerge, so that normative teacher identity narratives might become less tenable.

Chapter 9 - “I knew what levels they were and what work they could do, I didn’t know them as people”: Orderliness, filing cabinets and the ‘folder-isation’ of SEN pupils

Introduction

This chapter remains focused on the men’s office spaces but shifts attention to their stories of their working practices as SENCOs specifically within these material-discursive arrangements. In particular I explore the folders, files and filing cabinets they talk of which, as mundane functionaries in the management of SEN provision, appear unremarkable. However, a sociomaterial approach allows for an exploration of the ways that these objects entangle with the processes of SEN identification and assessment, and come to delineate and define pupils in certain ways – as passive, norm-referenced and contained – which contrasts with the dynamism and control narrated by the men themselves in their role as SENCO. The hegemony that assessing, recording, diagnosing, classifying and treating SEN has attained is seen to organise these SENCOs’ work narratives, with the outcome identified here that pupils are objectified, or as I put it, ‘folder-ised’. Some thoughts are offered at the end of the chapter about how the mundanity and everydayness of objects within SEN procedures offers immediate and meaningful ways of intervening to curtail this quietening of pupils identified as having special educational needs.

Tidiness and dynamic SENCO-readiness

In two recent publications designed as practical guides for busy SENCOs, the authors make it plain that effective management of one’s time and priorities is vital (Cheminais, 2014), and refer to the ‘perfect’ SENCO as efficient and organised (Packer, 2014). Such imperatives of order and control can be heard in the male SENCOs’ talk about their office spaces. Through their tendency to ‘confess’ their untidiness (Hurdley, 2013) and rationalise their everyday at-desk working practices, it is also possible to gain insight into how these men manage their role as SENCOs and gender identities within their school contexts.

I asked Simon to talk to me about his desk and the things on it:

...it's not really organised; like I couldn't really tell you what was in that pile, and that sort of annoys me. I sort of think tidy desk, tidy mind. It doesn't necessarily work like that, like during the day – like when I come in on Monday it'll be like this but by break time it'll just be full of stuff. I'm quite a messy, as I work I'm very messy, so I'll have lots of stuff out but I'll make a point of, like I'll never leave without it being tidy. Cos I think then the next day you come in and you're already sort of on the back foot. And again I'm thinking, I'd want anyone to come in and pick this up. Like I've spent a long time, cos there hasn't been anyone doing the role, picking things up and sorting things out, and I find that very frustrating. And I wouldn't want anyone to come in after me and feel the same; I'd want them to come in and yes change the way they work and change the things they do, things like that, but have a good basis of everything filed away, everything's got its place, everything is organised. I sort of feel that's the case here.

Simon positions himself as taking charge of and 'sorting out' what was a disorganised SEN provision until he arrived. He prioritises things having their place, being filed away and being organised. Part of this keenness to emphasise and achieve tidiness after a busy work day may also be related to a felt need to demonstrate to others that he has his work – as exemplified in the material environment of his working space – under control. As Simon says, 'I'd want anyone to [be able to] come in and pick this up'. There seems to be a desire here to make it plain to his colleagues – and to me - that his work is not causing him unbearable strain. 'Mess' and disorder are physical and material, but the way these spatial relations are experienced is mental and affective (Holland, Gordon and Lahelma, 2007). Simon states that a 'tidy desk' means a 'tidy mind'; an ordered office shows he can handle the pressure of his varied responsibilities as SENCo, Assistant Head and manager of the specialist Speech and Language unit attached to the school.

It is, I think, also important that Simon wishes not to be 'on the back foot' and he sees that a messy desk might hamper his ability to respond as necessary to a new challenge each morning. This office tidiness, because of the ability he feels this gives him to be *on the front foot*, facilitates a dynamism that he seeks to express. It tells of his self-positioning as active rather than passive in his role, resonating with SENCo role

expectations as well as intimating a certain form of professionally competent masculinity that is powerful and dynamic (cf. Hall, Hockey and Robinson, 2007).

Being organised seems therefore to be about both pragmatics and presentation. If Simon can keep his desk space in order *it makes him feel as if* he can respond more effectively to any new challenge; it makes him feel as if he is doing his job properly. Having a tidy desk – or at least talking about having a tidy desk - is also a way of presenting himself as organised and in-control and this *makes him feel as if* others would think he is doing his job properly (because someone else could come in and find everything they need easily). Hence maintaining a tidy work area can be seen as related to resilience for Simon since it makes him feel in control and it makes him feel that his colleagues would feel he is too.

In a similar way to Simon, James spontaneously ‘confessed’ to the untidiness that is generated by his busy job, but emphasised the enjoyment he gets out of having to work like that:

Yep, and I’m not the tidiest of people!... part of the thing is that I’ll come in, open up the computer, or get a phone call, um, and I’ve got cases I’m working on but I need to refer to somebody; email them, phone them, I want an instant response. And of course it doesn’t happen. So I can’t do the next bit on that one. So I get the next one out, so now I’ve got 6 folders out, but then I do get a response – either phone or email – huuuuuh, where did I put that folder!? So it’s stop-start, stop-start all the time which is a bit frustrating, but that’s what it’s like. But I kind of enjoy that, that sort of unknown component, like I never know what’s going to happen next.

James wants an *instant response* when he’s working on his ‘cases’. The impatience that he narrates here tallies with these men’s positioning as active, taking charge, and making things happen. When James talks about the ‘unknown’ aspect of his SENCo role here, as expressed through the mess of desktop material, there is also a link with these men’s articulation of a dissatisfaction about being anchored to the classroom (see Chapter 11).

Graham’s telling of his office space is markedly similar to Simon’s and James’:

Um, it was a big school so often [my office] was quite messy. Because people would be coming down and leaving something on [the desk]. I'd got sort of data tracking files and SEN files sort of generic stuff, so they were always out so that anybody that would come and ask me about a child I could instantly – because that's the thing about working at the top end of the school [in Key Stage 2] you didn't know what was coming up, you just got names, and so attaching levels and difficulties and class categories, sort of IEP targets, to children was nigh on impossible. So yeah I kind of had that stuff out ready, ready to come out, but then I used to have a tray for useful, basic stuff. So when people [teachers] were coming to me with a brand new child and it was just a tick list, like 'have you done all that first of all, don't talk to me until you have that' – I wouldn't be that rude, but it's kind of – 'go through that, make sure it's all been done, and then bring it to me and we'll have a conversation'. Um, but we were, I had an assistant as well so we had quite a lot of, we had a big massive noticeboard, bigger than that one, and everything was quite organised in that sense of things, and obviously the filing cabinets with individual children um, but yeah, and there'd usually be some sort of journal or some sort of book that's been, report that I've got to read from somebody, that would be there as well.... Um, so yeah, I'd say organised chaos...

Graham talks about his work practices at his former school through his narrative of the material office environment. There is, as with the other men, mention of being 'instantly' prepared to respond, having 'the stuff out ready, ready to come out'. It is remembered as 'quite messy', a quality influenced by the come-and-go of colleagues, and yet this chaos is narrated as organised and controlled through files, filing cabinets and notice boards that he and his assistant were in charge of. The everyday functional stuff of these men's desks and offices – the phone, the laptop computer, the folders, books, in-trays – enable the men to become-male-SENCo. Objects allow a crafting of certain work identities by entangling with us as we go about our work practices, influencing the stories we can tell by putting literal parameters on what we can do but also drawing us in to their network of associations (Humphries and Smith, 2014) – they thus enact certain alignments of professional identities (Suchman, 2005). For these men, practices and stories of busy work, quick responses, control and competence are enabled by the workplace objects in assemblage, through which their dynamic SENCo identities emerge.

Folders and filing cabinets – the inertness of the object-pupil assemblage

The sheer busy-ness of the SENCo job is captured in the way that James and Graham talk about their use of stuff in the landscape of their offices, yet in these accounts are

also indications about the nature of their relationship with pupils. We can hear in the men's narrations how pupils feature fleetingly in the 'stop-start' of jumping from one 'case' to the next, and we know how pupils are often 'just names' to a SENCo responsible for administering SEN across the whole of a large school. Conclusions might be drawn about the distance between SENCos and pupils that is cleaved as workload piles up (and gets strewn across a cluttered desk) and the consequences of this for the SENCo role and the pupils involved (see for example Cole, 2005; Abbott, 2007; Burton and Goodman, 2011). Folders and tick-lists and filing cabinets are the *backdrop* to these SENCos' non-stop days, and it is this busy-ness that causes a certain lack of involvement with pupils as individuals.

In such a reading/listening, the material is a bystander as human subjectivities are performed. However in both James' and Graham's narrative about their desks and their working practices it is possible to pick out some important ways that the material is *entangled and conspires* with the imperatives of the SENCo role and shapes a certain assemblage of the men, the stuff of SEN administration and the pupils. Rather than holding firm to an ontological division between the SENCo, their folders, filing cabinets and the pupils, there is fruitful thinking to be done by conceiving of them in *intra-action* (Barad, 2007) whereby subjects emerge in a mutual production, in action. Adopting a socio-materialist perspective it is possible to develop a line of thought about the way in which pupils can become object-ified; how object-pupil assemblages emerge, are made present but also made inert through the material-discursive practices of SENCo-ing these men talk about. This is therefore not about identifying cause-and-effect (e.g. heavy workload leads to weaker involvement with pupils as individuals), and is instead aimed at mapping how certain subjects emerge through particular material-discursive intra-actions (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012). Understanding this production might lead to re-workings of material-discursive arrangements and begin to draw alternatives, beyond 'problem reported/solution offered' thinking (e.g. too much bureaucratic work/re-think the type of work SENCos do) that features in much research with this group.

In the earlier excerpt, reproduced again below, James describes how the folders he is using for each of the 'cases' he is working on are moved around and pile up on his desk when he comes up against a dead-end:

...and I've got cases I'm working on but I need to refer to somebody; email them, phone them, I want an instant response. And of course it doesn't happen. So I can't do the next bit on that one. So I get the next one out, so now I've got 6 folders out, but then I do get a response – either phone or email – huuuuh, where did I put that folder!? So it's stop-start, stop-start all the time...

In this account, the folders 'switch from latent background to foreground and back again' (Rinkinen, Jalas and Shove, 2015, p.880). As James engages with each 'case' its folder is taken from the latent background of the office and foregrounded – brought into action, brought to life – only to recede again when no further progress can be made. Then, another folder replaces it as forefront in the dynamic working practice of SENCo-ing. James notes that he has to search for discarded folders as he receives email or telephone responses needed to progress each 'case'. The folders, full of forms and assessments and letters, make up a case, and each case is a pupil. As the folder is brought into view so the pupil is brought to mind; then when it is placed back on the messy desk it – the pupil – recedes. There is a conceivable inseparability of the folder and the pupil here, where each pupil emerges through the contents of the folder as it is engaged with. This point can be felt more clearly through Graham's articulation (above, and shown again below) of how he worked:

I'd got sort of data tracking files and SEN files sort of generic stuff, so they were always out so that anybody that would come and ask me about a child I could instantly – because that's the thing about working at the top end of the school [in Key Stage 2] you didn't know what was coming up, you just got names, and so attaching levels and difficulties and class categories, sort of IEP targets, to children was nigh on impossible.

It is 'nigh on impossible' to know a child without knowing the contents of their file. Similarly, Simon recalls that when he was a class teacher the pupil's attainment levels dominated his impression of them:

...the classes I had were between 30, 33 and 34, and I just don't think you get to know the children well enough, you know I don't think I knew them as individuals, you know, I knew what levels they were and what work they could do, I didn't know them as people.

Such information about the pupils - the currency of an SEN (and wider contemporary educational) discourse that seeks to norm-reference, label and categorise (Glazzard, 2013; Goodley and Runswick-Cole, 2010; Graham and Slee, 2007; Fielding, 2007; see also Gibson, McArdle and Hatcher, 2015) - is recorded and logged, put into folders and files - it becomes material - and then these file-pupil entanglements become substitutes for the pupils 'as people'.

Rinkinen, Jalas and Shove's (2015) socio-materialist approach to the study of stories shows how narrative 'accounts of everyday life...provide insights and understandings of how materials, practices and practitioners intersect' (p.880). One of their key insights is that 'object relations switch between passive and active forms' (ibid), and in James' narration of his work (above) it is possible to hear how objects switch between being 'active' and 'passive'; each folder is enabled and then disabled within the practice of his work at his desk. The file-pupil assemblages he works with become active as he engages with them, but passive again as his attention shifts. Taking forward the idea that each folder or file affords its pupil a particular becoming within the doing of SENCo work, we can productively think about how the material-discursive practice of SEN produces and re-produces pupils as passive and norm-referenced object-subjects.

Graham's comments are important in advancing this exploration:

So when people [teachers] were coming to me with a brand new child and it was just a tick list, like 'have you done all that first of all, don't talk to me until you have that' - I wouldn't be that rude, but it's kind of - 'go through that, make sure it's all been done, and then bring it to me and we'll have a conversation'. ...everything was quite organised in that sense of things, and obviously the filing cabinets with individual children, um but yeah

Graham's description of how he managed the provision for pupils that have particular needs is telling. Reading with a socio-materialist lens, the 'tick list' and the 'filing cabinet' in Graham's account are data hot spots through which to interrogate pupils' becoming-SEN. It is important, I think, to consider the way that Graham describes the

pupils that teachers suspected of having some form of additional need as ‘brand new’ children. Before they come to Graham they are conceived as pre-existent, and only do they begin to appear real to him through the tick list that teachers are asked to fill in about that pupil. He describes not being willing to have a conversation about the pupil unless it is informed by the completed tick list. Knowing the ‘SEN child’ is only possible through the bounded criteria featured on the tick list. The pupils and the paper list are entwined in the discourse and practice of SEN management: the teachers came to him ‘with a brand new child and *it was just a tick list...*’ The pupil begins and ends with/in their tick list.

When the tick list is empty there is no knowledge of the pupil; the pupil is vacant until filled up/filled in with standardised SEN assessments. Expanding this thought, in James and Graham’s narrative we find cases, folders, files and cabinets. All of these objects are holders, receptacles for information, empty until filled with knowledge. Discourse, practice and the material mesh here to delineate the SEN pupil.

As Graham recalls his SENCo office at his former school he mentions the ‘filing cabinets with individual children [in]’. Here the elision between the pupils’ folders and the pupils is complete. The pupil first comes into existence through the tick list and then is filed away in a drawer in a cabinet. It is key to think through the positioning of, and affordance given, the pupil with SEN here. As with the example above of James moving his folder-pupils between active and passive states within his working practices, so Graham is able to put away and bring out the pupils. Most of the time they are stored in the filing cabinet. When the pupils are ‘folder-ised’ in this way we might describe them as *symbolically annihilated* since they are quietened and fixed in place; materialised as mundane office objects over which the SENCo, acting within established SEN protocols, has control. Through such subjectification/objectification – via the *territorialisation* and transmogrification of their bodies – the relative powerlessness of pupils with SEN is enforced. The frameworks and practices of SEN knowledge striates and encloses them; they are categorised and then filed away to be accessed when others require. As Löfgren (2016) concludes, when there are increasing pressures being placed on documentation and the attendant accountability

imperatives, care becomes a 'noisy silence'; as it is with these folder-ised pupils, their silence is deafening. As objects they are settled, their becomings stunted.

According to socio-materialist theorising there is not a state of being before, or transcendent of, engagement with other entities (Coole and Frost, 2010; Alaimo and Hekman, 2008). Things – human and non-human - do not exist prior or independent to their entangled relations with other things. The boundaries we *do* see are products of particular material-discursive arrangements emerging through the ebb and flow of intra-action (Barad, 2007; Rinkinen et al, 2015; Shotter, 2013; Gioia and Patvardhan, 2012). This is important because it allows an interrogation of the way in which some entities/subjects legitimately appear to have agency whilst others do not. For example in the narratives presented above, the SENCo's agency is prominent, whereas the pupils – since they are encased as objects – have little, other than as material resources that support the routines, practices and identities of the SENCo. The 'folder-isation' of pupils within these SENCo's narratives demonstrates the dominance that procedure and expert knowledge have attained. This hegemony is (re-)produced through material-discursive arrangements of practice that conspires to perpetuate the objectification and pacification of these pupils.

The boundaries that we most readily see and take for granted between things 'reflect and reproduce forms of judgement and evaluation regarding the conduct of daily life and the social order as a whole' (Rinkinen et al, 2015, p.880). The value attributed to SEN knowledge and expertise informs a set of judgements which legitimise the quietening of SEN pupils' voices (Bines, 2000; Armstrong, 2007). This can – and does - become embedded in the practice of doing-SENCo when that role revolves around management and organisation of this otherness (Dunne, 2009). The materials of this practice sit and passively wait on shelves and on desks – or, more accurately, sit and actively affirm the legitimacy and credibility of such knowledge and management, aiding the emergence of SENCo and pupil subjectivities within a tick list-folder-filing cabinet-pupil-SEN-knowledge-SENCo assemblage. The position within the school system of pupils with special educational needs is subtly but stubbornly affirmed by the way they become-object within these SENCos' practice.

Conclusion

We habitually take office objects (in this case files, folders, cabinets) as a backdrop to daily working life, barely noticed, and yet all the time they are intra-acting with the event/s of that office life and other non-human and human agencies to shape the subjectivities emergent in those and other spaces. We have considered the objectification of pupils identified as having an SEN and the silencing and passivity that this invites, and yet - paradoxically - those objects (the folders etc.) are immanently *active* in co-producing the conditions and priorities which sustain their quiet indispensability to SENCo work. The pupils with SEN have little chance of becoming-other since they are encased within their files, and those files are quietly busy keeping things running as usual, ensuring their own efficient, officious, influence.

From a first reading of these men's account of their work and their office spaces it is tempting to understand their distance from pupils 'as people' being down to time-constraints and heavy workload. That is clearly an important factor, and one extensively reported on in research with SENCos (e.g. MacBeath et al., 2006; Abbott, 2007; Szwed, 2007b; Pearson, 2008; Burton and Goodman, 2011), whereby with less time comes the pragmatic necessity for SENCos to focus on the special need rather than the pupil more holistically. However, from this investigation adopting a material-discursive sensibility, we notice an invidious set of boundaries being drawn amongst the human and non-human agencies involved in some standard practices of SENCo work. Considering these disrupts the ready response that SENCos need more time, because having that might lead to a more effective/affective, 'whole-child' approach to SEN management (Davies and Lee, 2001; Morewood, 2012; Woolhouse, 2015); when the SEN file mediates the relationship between pupil and SENCo to such an extent it is not necessarily more time or revised workload that will make a difference to this problem.

It is worth thinking with the idea that pupils may become 'more human' in the SEN administration process if their 'folder-isation' was not so pacifying. What if *more than* SEN admin and assessment forms were included in the files? Why not pupils' own

photographs, notes written about their SEN by them and their friends, something about their interests and hopes and worries? Their own version of the SEN tick list? What if the pupils designed their own covers for their files? What other ideas can be considered to make the necessity of keeping SEN information about each child involve the actual child 'as a person'?

I hope, as Pearson and Ralph conclude from their study exploring SENCos' photographs of their daily working practices, that such a 'differing perspective is valuable in helping [SENCos] with clarification of roles, models and paradigms' (2007, p.44). More than clarification though, it is by thinking in these sorts of alternative ways that I hope it might be possible for SENCos to break any routinized backgrounding and quietening of pupils with SEN through the all-too-easy elision of the child, their standard-issue folders and the one-size-measures-all SEN assessments. Following Liasidou and Svensson (2013, p.1) who argue that 'SENCos should be empowered to embrace a social justice discourse in tackling power inequities and systemic educational inequalities', it is hoped that raising awareness of the way mundane daily working practices can produce pupils as passive is a step towards countering inequitable procedures of 'inclusion'. Taking such a step might result in attempts to create different – more enabling – delineations of the SEN pupil, ones that afford more-than-SEN identities to emerge for them within the processes of SEN management, and for SENCos to feel more connected to pupils beyond piles or cabinets full of files about them.

Chapter 10 - "It's telling you that I'm in control, cos I'm fine, and it's cool": suits, ties and the making of the authoritative male Primary school SENCo

Introduction

This chapter discusses the men's talk about their everyday work clothing, which tends to be the suit, shirt and tie. This ensemble draws on discourses of male teachers as authoritative, as leaders, and as role models. Yet I take things further than the notion that being smartly dressed is a physical representation of symbolic/discursive attributes of an ideal male Primary school teacher. I think with the idea that such discourses are contextually manifested through the 'specific material agents' (Ringrose and Rawlings, 2015, p.4) of the suit and tie, and how the intra-actions of the discursive and the material produce an assemblage of the 'male Primary teacher with authority'. This consideration focuses on the discursive, material and relational aspects of clothing, developing an account of how these intra-acting agencies conspire to forge particular subjectivities for both the teachers, their colleagues and their pupils. The question of whether 'care' has a place within the 'male Primary teacher with authority' assemblage is discussed. The chapter begins with a short review of pertinent substantive and theoretical literature before moving on to explore a set of empirical examples.

'World's Greatest Teacher'

Ted, the teacher adept at negotiating his gendered professional identity in Deneen's research (2011, p.199), narrates a critical incident in his teacher becoming:

'So, it's my first year and nobody, none of the parents anyway, really knows me. I get morning duty because I'm the new guy. I have to get there early, stand in the playground, and supervise as the busses unload and all the parents are dropping off their kids. Well, it's raining the first day and I'm wearing a trench coat. I'm tired. And all these parents are looking at me like, 'Who is this weird guy in a trench coat, standing in the playground watching our kids get out of our car?' They kind of knew I was supposed to be there, but none of them would look me in the eye as they went past'.

After this incident the way Ted attends to his presentation of self (Goffman, 1990) becomes key to how he avoids 'identity bruising' (Foster and Newman, 2005) during a long and successful teaching career. In a critical moment of 'self-reflexive engagement' (Woodward, 2007, p.7) in response to the event described above, Ted 'visibly assert[s] himself' (Deneen, 2011, p.200) by purchasing a mug with the words 'World's Greatest Teacher' emblazoned across it. The next time he's on bus supervision duties, he takes the mug with him. He thereby manages parents' and pupils' understanding of who he was at that decisive early point in his relationship with them. The mug worked to position him not just as a teacher – and therefore as a legitimate male presence – but as 'the *World's Greatest*'; the shift from predator to prize-asset was achieved through calculated material intervention. What is especially interesting is how this material identity work by Ted drew on established and accepted frameworks of intelligibility, in that it played on credible associations and discourses about male teachers – that they are especially effective, that they make a particular impact – that they are superheroes (Jones, 2007).

This example illustrates the poles between which male Primary teachers are positioned and position themselves. Clothing in particular can be seen as a key site in which this dialectic is played out and negotiated, where we could see the trench coat as symbolic of the *dirty old man* at one extreme and, as for the men in my research who I will be discussing in this chapter, the suit and tie as emblematic of the other pole. As Giddens notes, dress 'is, manifestly, a means of symbolic display, a way of giving forms to narratives of self-identity' (1991, cited in Sikes and Everington, 2003, p.397). These 'displays' sit at the intersection of social convention, role stereotypes and personal biographies. The male teachers' response to pressures to conform to normative expectations of gender and the 'male teacher' role, as these are entwined with personal career and life histories, are articulated in this chapter.

The prominence of gender at work for these male teachers seems to invite a degree of self-scrutiny about their clothes choice. I prompted the men to discuss their clothes – it was not spontaneously offered initially - yet the topic opened a set of important points about the daily nature of performing the role of SENCo and mid-level leader in their

school settings. Sophie Woodward's work on women's clothes choice tells how particular special social occasions (such as a ball) lead to 'self-reflexive engagement' with the usually 'un-thought out and naturalised' aspects of identity such as gender when it comes to what to wear (2007, p.7). Such occasions call for the 'mobilisation of certain aspects of the self' (ibid.). But because gender is so prominent in the social role that the men in my research play in their everyday work contexts, it is possible to argue that their clothes choice *regularly* requires this self-reflexive engagement and can rarely be 'un-thought' out and 'naturalised'; they are constantly called upon to 'mobilise' aspects of their self, through their clothing choices, in order to manage their gender identities.

Thinking here about these men's dressing habits and preferences begins to address something of a gap in the literature; by and large men have not been the focus of such investigations (van der Laan and Velthuis, 2016) despite their often deliberate and strategic use of 'clothing to manipulate their appearance to meet cultural ideals of masculinity' (Frith and Gleeson, 2004, cited in ibid., p.26). Furthermore, whilst there is some reference to clothing in research on the formation of 'male teacher' identities (e.g. Brownhill, 2014; Deneen, 2011; Holland, Gordon and Lahelma, 2007; Skelton, 2002b; Macdonald and Kirk, 1996; Weber and Mitchell, 1995), with the exception of Taylor's work (2013), the prevalent understanding is that clothing is an influential yet passive material projection of the symbolic (discursive). As Rutherford, Conway and Murphy confidently assert, 'clothes are discourses' (2015, p.331) - yet they can be conceived as more than this, and research tends not to have addressed attire as itself a material-discursive force in the formation and maintenance of subjectivities. Taylor (2013, p.698) argues that doing so would aim to 'bring new attention to the powerful but usually unremarked material-discursive work [clothes] do in installing gendered practices through their entanglement with bodies and space'.

In thinking with the notion of entangled and emergent human and non-human agencies within material-discursive assemblages, and considering the entwining of the discursive-relational-material (cf. Davies and Gannon, 2012) in the production and reinforcement of subjectivities, this discussion hopes to offer new lines of flight for

thinking about how gendered (male) teacher identities are constructed and maintained. This contrasts with the centrality and pre-eminence of the intentional human subject that is expressed in Giddens' take on dress as self-display; clothes are for him a passive projector of human meaning. Similarly, in Woodward's understanding human actors choose to 'mobilise' certain aspects of the self through particular clothes – the subject is here deemed to have core attributes that can be mobilised through intentional symbolic action. However we might instead, and productively so, reconceive the role of clothing as agentic – as influential, directive, restrictive, transformative, enabling - through its *intra-actions*. Such a reading 'undoes the dualistic presumption of the Enlightenment ego that clothing is exterior to us, mere cover, or surface, there to hide or represent the 'real me' within' (Taylor, 2013, p.699). Following Ringrose and Rawlings' line of flight with pupils' skirts and hair, in this chapter we see suits, shirts and ties as 'not only signifiers of meaning, they are material agents of [masculinity] that intra-act in specific school apparatuses [assemblages] of meaning and matter' (2015, p.19). Considering how clothing intra-acts with the men's own and other bodies, discourses and other objects we can think with the idea that there is a mutual becoming of the male teacher subject along with their clothing (cf. Mazzei, 2013b; Lenz Taguchi, 2013; Jackson and Mazzei, 2012). The suits, shirts and ties work to produce particular subjectivities for/with these men. This enacts certain consequences and moves us in a different direction from a concern with the symbolic display of a pre-supposed self-identity.

'When I put my suit on I then become that person at work'

It is worth noting that all of the men referred to the suit and tie as a costume that facilitates the performance of a certain role. James notes the 'acting job' of teaching and this resonates with how the men articulate what this particular attire does:

Well I suppose I sort of feel that when I put my suit on I then become that person at work. Um, so always a suit, always a shirt and tie... (Simon)

I would say that [wearing a suit and tie] is part of the role that you play. I mean, especially in this job [as a Local Authority SEN advisor], it's that kind of: you're 32, you know, who are you to be doing that? ...And I think, whether it just sort of psychologically gets me ready (Graham)

Graham suggests that assembling with a suit and tie provides him a sort of material force-field, setting him ready to manage challenges to his authority and knowledge. As Lugg and Tooms put it, school leaders' suits can become 'a kind of Samurai battle armour; worn when it was necessary to steel oneself' (2010, p.78). In his suit, Simon becomes 'that person at work'; he directly attributes such a transformation to that outfit, invoking the agency of the object in creating his changed state (Caronia and Mortari, 2015).

The 'costume' of the smart suit is felt to offer up a certain persona to be adopted:

...I think in this job you go in looking like that and instantly you get people's attention. So I think the look is – and I don't mean wearing the best or looking the best or being best looking it's just that kind of, you go in with a persona. It's almost that kind of costume you put on (Graham)

The suit opens up the possibility for Graham that he will 'instantly' have the floor on entering a room. It is not that his 'persona' alone achieves this – but nor does the suit grab attention by itself: there is a mutual becoming of the two in assemblage. Taylor makes the case for 'how clothes as materialities become with us as we become with them in an open, contingent unfolding of mattering' (2013, p.699); for Graham one of several possible personas is made possible by wearing a suit, and the suit – with all its potentialities - becomes an instant attention grabber by the way Graham intra-acts with it.

A further example of this emerges in another of Graham's accounts about his suit-wearing.

I've got one school just round the corner that's absolutely great, and me and the SENCo get on really well and me and the Head get on really well, and so sort of the first thing will be we'll sort of comment, 'what you wearing' and there's a certain colour that we have to wear – bright in your face blue (not the suit, the shirt and tie) you know so there's that kind of, and there are people that feel comfortable with that, but there's another school that I'd only wear sort of white shirt with very plain tie, very much that kind of, I wouldn't wear loud colours. And when I do certain kinds of training, some things that you... when I'm training I think I come over a little bit say flamboyant, bouncy-roundy kind of person – quite camp um – so it's that kind of, so there are certain things that I would wear that would perhaps play with that kind of personality, but then when doing the high school it was very plain.

Here Graham and the suit become differently as they assemble with/in different contexts – they form alternative compositions in the different schools and with the different staff, and this produces alternative becomings. His ‘flamboyant’ and ‘quite camp’ becoming emerges through an entanglement of bright ‘in your face’ blue shirt and tie with relationships that are ‘absolutely great’. When the suit is in composition with ‘white shirt and very plain tie’ it has the potential for producing a ‘plain’ sort of training delivery from Graham. This is an example of the way that the subject emerges ‘in each moment, moments that are simultaneously discursive, relational, and material’ (Davies and Gannon, 2012, p.359). In the events described by Graham, the discursive (professionalism; masculinity) and the material (suit, shirt, tie) are embroiled with social relationships (the bonds with particular staff) and assemble in ways that mutually-(re)produce each of those as particular entities.

The material then is important for understanding how ‘particular concepts are given definition, to the exclusion of others’ (Ringrose and Rawlings, 2015, p.13). For example the ‘camp’ man as a ‘concept’ or discursive category is given definition by both bodily actions and the particular involvement of material agents in the form of the *bright* shirt and tie. The ‘not-camp’ man is performed and emerges through different material agents - the *plain* shirt and tie. So the material here can be seen working in federation with discourse to help make intelligible certain types of masculinity. This alliance reinforces campness as ‘in your face’ and risky (for Graham it is only acceptable because ‘people feel comfortable with that’) whilst a ‘straighter’ masculinity is the safe choice within more difficult social circumstances. The reference to *plainness* in achieving this is important; this subject is thereby unmarked and ‘normal’ – the ‘clean body’ of the ‘privileged subject’ (Ahmed 2000, cited in Taylor, 2013, p.699) - from which others are seen as different. Normative (heterosexual) masculinity finds expression through the material of clothing, and together these discursive-material entities re-produce striations and hierarchies of masculinity, delineating and (re-)producing the appropriate male teacher subject.

The suit does not therefore provide a universal or static statement of meaning as here, in different assemblages, it is part of becomings that are demure and understated, or

lively and over-the-top. Yet the historical and cultural discourses of suit-wearing, conjuring images of 'classic' masculine (Taylor, 2013) professionalism and success, remains relevant in 'mapping the contextual specific meanings of this agent [within]...events' (Ringrose and Rawlings, 2015, p.14). Suit-wearing embodies for Graham a centrality within events that is lent by the outfit's discursive weight, and whilst there are modulations around this within specific assemblages as other entities make 'themselves intelligible to each other in events of knowledge-production' (Barad, 2007, p. 185), the suit continues to work with the male body to generate a subject that *feels* important.

As is also seen in the following section, such an intelligibility as a particular type of subject is unremarkable and 'natural'; in these men's talk about what wearing a suit and tie means there is an unproblematic acceptance that when *they* put a suit on *people* listen to them. The gendered, classed and raced discourses that surround the smart suit entangles with these white, middle class male bodies to delineate subjects that are inevitably central, in control, in charge. They are able to fulfil the 'traditional 'male manager in a formal suit' stereotype' (Burn and Pratt-Adams, 2015, p.117).

'It's telling you that I'm in control, cos I'm fine, and it's cool'

Charlie is clear of the message that wearing a suit and tie projects to others:

People listen to people that wear a tie. And it's telling you that I'm in control, cos I'm fine, and it's cool.

That your voice gets heard when you're wearing a tie is an uncontested notion here. It portrays – or rather, it produces - a calm and collected subject that has everything in hand. The suit and tie are unproblematically construed as a directive to others that the wearer is confident and able - there is no 'suggesting' or 'implying', here the suit 'tells'.

The 'suit, shirt and tie' combination can exert a powerful force within assemblages, serving to segment and striate. As Graham talks about the entangled bodies and clothes of a recent parent-teacher-Educational-Psychologist-SENCo-LEA Advisor

meeting, the material-discursive suit works with the relational dynamics to produce leaders and those-being-led:

I did one just before half term – in an infant school and the parent was talking to me all the time, and I was again meeting the parents in the certain way I'd want to look and somebody was the Psychologist who should know a heck of a lot more than me – and does know a heck of a lot more than me – and the parents were talking to *me* all the time, and asking me for the advice.

...and you sort of look at that meeting – sort of stepping outside of that situation – I think if you were to walk into a meeting with somebody in a suit, shirt and tie, there's a lady in a dress, and then there's another person in jeans and a top, and two parents in jeans and you would kind of look to those that were more smartly dressed as those that were leading the meeting.

Being 'smartly dressed' materialises a set of discourses and practices around meeting management, which delineates certain possible subjectivities. Normative gender markers and roles are nodes or reference points within this unfolding assemblage. In Graham's 'stepping outside' description, the 'somebody' in a shirt and tie does not need their gender marked, whereas there is prominently a '*lady* in a dress'. Whilst there is another 'person' and 'two parents' all wearing jeans within this event, such gender-neutral clothing offers gender-neutral subjects, and it is only the lady/dress that is singled out. This dress-lady assemblage, with its mutually-constituting entities of an archetypal piece of clothing and the word 'lady' (not 'woman'), forms a node of femininity that can be read as contra masculine notions of control and leadership, and the 'suit, shirt and tie' – infused with masculine discourses - stands in the central location and as standard for leader. As Rutherford and colleagues note, the image of a professional teacher is 'inextricably linked to a specific type of embodied and constructed teacher identity' (2015, p.337), and these orientate around masculine coded ideals of management and performance (McKnight, 2016; Forrester, 2005). Since these are readily opposed to feminine 'nurture' and 'care', being made intelligible as 'feminine' ('there's a lady in a dress') can preclude access to the material-discursive-relational rhizome of leadership – and protect men's symbolic ownership of this territory.

'I'm the most senior person, so people think 'well I would also like to be authoritative''

However it is *between* men in their settings that a hierarchy is most clearly emergent through their talk about clothing, where the intra-actions of the material agents 'materialise subjects into appropriate [male teacher] – or not' (Ringrose and Rawlings, 2015, p.19). When discussing suits and ties, Graham notes some men's failure to live up to expectations in terms of their appearance, and this resonates with Simon's suggestion of a values-based differential between him and a male colleague:

...there are some [male] teachers that even if they're trying just don't quite look the part (Graham)

So [the other male teacher at the school] wears a shirt, to be fair. But no tie, and rolled up sleeves or short sleeves. Whereas I'd never wear a short sleeve shirt in school. Only long, and maybe rolled up sleeves... I suppose I feel I take more pride in my appearance that he maybe does, but that's maybe just me (Simon)

That Simon takes 'more pride' in his appearance is emblematic of the divide between himself and his colleague, and is indicative of other comments he makes about the differences between their classroom management styles, for example. The way his colleague wears a shirt though – short sleeved and without a tie – materialises this man as a less suitable role model than himself; in Simon's context, the shirt and tie enact a discourse about having pride in how you look, and in assemblage this forms a hierarchy of (male) teachers organised on such locally-prized values.

A hierarchy of male teachers is also evident in Charlie's tale of joining his school, as already noted in Chapter 7, though here we can explore the force of the material in assemblage with discourses that make intelligible particular 'male teacher' identities which are deemed more or less appealing, which establishes a hierarchy.

Um, right, in this school there aren't many men...when I joined there was one gay music teacher, and a guy downstairs called Phil who's like 5 foot 4, wears running shoes ...with trousers – d'you know he's not making the effort with how he looks, and I turn up and usually I wear a tie, got trousers, had a haircut, relatively well presented – it was just after summer so I'd been to the gym - and you go out and all of a sudden you're flavour of the bloody month.

The elements here work in confederation (Taylor, 2013) yet also serve to differentiate. The particular assemblage of height, running shoes and trousers draws a boundary

between Phil and Charlie, whose physically fit body composes with tie, trousers and a haircut – a ‘choreography of materialities’ (ibid, p.699) – to materialise the discursive construction of a ‘hegemonic masculinity’ and thereby produce its others. Here we can see the assemblage of body and clothes producing versions of maleness that are ranked based on the extent to which they adhere to degrees of ‘effort’, which is judged on how well the ensemble *coheres*; in Charlie’s talk above, it is not so much that running shoes or trousers in themselves are *wrong*, but that they don’t *go together*. Charlie becomes intelligible as an appropriate (hegemonic) male subject through his attention to the whole assemblage, where parts must *make sense* in composition. Here the ‘appropriately gendered body’ is performed by Charlie through the combination of ‘physical attributes of the body itself, dress, grooming...’ and the parameters are set by notions of ‘a perceived acceptable...masculinity’ (Braun, 2011, pp.288-289).

The notion of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1987; 2005; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, see Chapter 7) is productive here, thinking of this as a powerful organising force that stratifies specific and contextual material-discursive assemblages and producing particular subjects. The hierarchies of masculinity generated, including a ‘hegemonic’ form, are local and emergent – for example, wearing a suit and tie for Simon materialises a stratification based upon the discourse of ‘taking pride in yourself’, for Charlie it is similar (‘making the effort with how you look’) although this seems to have less to do with a particular set of values, whereas for James (below) there is a different local and contextual hierarchy at play in his school:

It’s very casual. I could wear jeans everyday if I wanted...I could wear a tie, but I don’t. I’d be the only male that does wear a tie...It’s probably the sort of clothes I’d wear at the weekend. Casual, comfortable, practical (James)

Here the ecology differs to Simon’s and Charlie’s; the judgement offered about clothes choice is how functional they are rather than what the degree of smartness/effort implies. Yet it is important that the first and immediate reason James gives for not wearing a tie is that he would be alone in that choice amongst the men he works with – there remains a stratifying potential. Keeping in-line with expectations of a group you are identified with is a powerful affective force. As van der Laan and Velthuis found in

their research about men's everyday clothing selection, it 'is primarily directed at conformity to meet social and situational requirements', and their participants sought to 'construct coherent and authentic identities' (2016, p.23). It is the case for the men in my research that such identities are locally produced through a contingent entanglement of the material, discursive and relational; their 'male teacher' identities, as inextricably produced with/by their clothes, have to make sense with reference to contextual norms, logics and values so as to become-intelligible as a member of that particular community.

Such conformity has, in a mutually-enforcing web of consolidation, an influential effect on the becomings of those subsequently entering the staff community. Norms of appropriate dress, and of associated manliness, are re-produced. As Charlie recounts, the practice of wearing a shirt and tie has 'spread' throughout the school, 'down to' a young volunteer who emulates this tried-and-tested way of appearing 'authoritative' – note the hierarchical language that positions Charlie as top and others beneath:

...if you notice a lot of the men here wear a shirt and tie. Down to, there's a kid called Scott who comes in – the Deputy Head's oldest son, he's like 21, he's doing a degree in Childcare or something or Psychology – he's started to wear a tie. And it does spread, the idea that actually...and you know, who has authority out of the men – I'm the most senior person, so people think 'well I would also like to be authoritative (not authoritarian)'

Charlie makes direct reference to the authority that emanates from a tie-wearer. The 'gendered authoritative body' in schools is sexed as male (Braun, 2011, p.289) and this entity is scaffolded by masculine associations of authority invested in the shirt and tie. The material-discursive assemblage of (male)body-shirt-tie-authority becomes hegemonic and reproduces striations of masculinity that position others in relation to that node. As a middle-leader in his school, Charlie – and indeed Graham and Simon too – is party to creating 'norms under the guise of 'professional dress', which may be professional, but are also political and hegemonic' (Lugg and Tooms, 2010, p.77).

For these men, who are relatively new to their middle leadership positions and seeking ways to affirm their legitimacy in those roles, the clearly defined image of what a male

teacher with authority might look like informs their own becomings. However this definition of what is suitable to wear – and to *look like* more generally – can operate to maintain and reproduce dominant power relations (Braun, 2011). The composition of these men's teacher identities is formatted by the 'lure of hegemonic masculinity' (Martino, 2008) - as Charlie repeats the advice of his friend (see Chapter 7) he makes the direct association between wearing the right clothes, ensuring you're intelligible to people, and the gendered and raced associations of doing so:

...every day I wear a tie...getting dressed, playing the white man as Luke would say, presenting in a way that people are happy with d'you know what I mean, proper [upmarket area]

The appeal of acquiescing to normative frames of intelligibility is evident here; it makes your life easier – keeps people happy - if you fit within the expected terms of reference. Suit and tie wearing promotes 'a white, elite professional norm' (Lugg and Tooms, 2010, p.78) that encases leadership, authority and power within certain assemblages and excludes them from others. In Deleuzian terms, the material-discursive entanglements of white male bodies, suits, shirts, ties and positions of leadership 'combine to form a more powerful whole' (Deleuze, 1988, p.19); this assemblage is rigid, resilient, restricting and reiterating.

'...to them it was a bit like 'oh good grief, he looks different'

Not only does such an assemblage mark out territories that are more or less viable for staff, (re)constructing lines of difference and forging a 'centre of totalisation' (Deleuze and Parnet, 2002, p.viii), but these same striations also exert a tangible division between these male staff and the communities served by their schools – 'normative whiteness and middle-classness become fused and projected onto the bodies of teachers' (Mac an Ghaill and Haywood, 2014, p.767) and produces difference. The suit and tie outline an easily interpretable 'male teacher that has authority' subject, and such a construct can serve as a differentiating force between these teachers and the pupils from the local area:

I think that's the misconception and I think with the very young ones, I think it's just not being used to having a bloke around. And I think as well it was

very much suited and booted, you know, and because it was a very rough council estate – sorry to use that word – but very deprived I should say – to see somebody, to see a bloke but then to see somebody in a suit and looking smart and.... it was a bit of a misconception, to them it was a bit like ‘oh good grief, he looks different’. (Graham)

I’d try to be the role model because they wouldn’t, like I say and it sounds very stereotypical, but a lot of them were not used to that kind of person or realise that that was, you know going back again I would tell my children [pupils] that none of my parents went to university, they had very poor jobs, and you know you can still be somebody that’s...so yeah I’ve always had that in mind – that you look a certain way...you go in looking [smart] and instantly you get people’s attention. (Graham)

The presence of the male body is amplified by the smart suit and this material-discursive confederation of forces constitutes a ‘misconception’ and generates ‘difference’. The material intra-acts with discourses about male teachers as role models and suits as symbols of authority and success to produce these imagined affective responses of disjuncture and dissonance. This can be informatively compared with Deneen’s (2011) teacher Ted mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, who when standing outside school in his trench coat was on the receiving end of suspicious looks; Graham also has a sense that he seems out of place. Graham works to perform a ‘role model’ identity and this is his equivalent to Ted’s ‘World’s Greatest Teacher’ mug – he actively draws on the discourses available about male Primary school teachers to make himself intelligible.

But we can take this further by considering how the involvement of the suit in these intra-actions delineates possibilities for not only Graham’s becomings, but also for the pupils. The suit, in its intra-actions, materialises a set of relations between this male teacher, the pupils, and the ‘rough council estate’. The material-discursive assemblage of male body-suit-role-model-deprived area makes possible the pupil-subject that suffers from a ‘poverty of aspiration’ (Adonis, 2008, cited in Curtis et al, 2008). The compelling composition of the ‘male role model’ draws an outline of those-that-need-a-role-model, and so those living in these ‘rough council estates’ are further encircled as particular subjects through the ‘male Primary school teacher’ construct. Returning again to Deleuze: ‘when a body “encounters” another body, or an idea another idea, it happens that the two relations sometimes combine to form a more powerful whole...’

(1988, p.19). The male Primary school teacher and the council estate pupil are powerful discursive frames that are mutually informing.

This resonates with recent research from Wood and Brownhill (2016) with male Primary school teachers. The men they interviewed consistently referred to 'inadequate' or 'absent fathers' as the reason their male pupils had poor social, emotional and behavioural skills (p.4) and in line with their positioning as male role models they acted as 'replacement father' figures for those pupils. Building on Stephen Ball's critiques, Wood and Brownhill relate this responsibility-taking to recent social welfare and education policy imperatives that have made teachers agents of neoliberalism – the principles of competition, self-responsibility and individuality make them accountable for their own and others' performance (p.11). Burn and Pratt-Adams, similarly, relate the 'inadequate father' discourse used by their participants to the 'male role model script' (2015, p.182), and argue that this has its origins in the charitable intentions of the 19th century patriarchs that founded the London Board Schools. Teaching was a missionary calling to control and correct the deficits of poor children. There are hints that such neoconservative 'traditional' notions are re-affirming themselves again (Courtney, 2015b), with the rising numbers of Academy schools requiring pupils to wear blazers (see Scott, 2015) being a material-discursive indication. It could be seen that this gendered and classed lineage lives on in the contemporary male role model discourse too, serving to reduce the focus on quality teaching and learning since these scripts orientate (male) teachers' efforts on to becoming effective 'substitute patriarchal parents' (Burn and Pratt-Adams, 2015, p.183). These lines can also be seen to construct the teachers in the present research, where the pull of appearing authoritative, being listened to and inspiring pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds is evident.

Simon provides an informative example here, where he notes that the pupils in his school require the guidance of teachers in dressing and behaving appropriately:

I think there's very much, here especially, if we're expecting children to wear the uniform with pride... if we want children to take pride in how they look and how they behave then we should be able to demonstrate exactly the same

things that we want to see in them... So I sort of take on that role I suppose; I would only ever take my tie off after school when there aren't very many children around

The notion of 'pride' is again utilised by Simon to explain how 'here especially' the pupils need to be shown the correct way to act. Layered with the thoughts above about the constitutive nature of the 'male role model' position, we might consider how this addition of a moral purpose – to instil pride in the pupils – further delineates these families as lacking, and supports the subjectifying notion that there is a 'poverty of aspiration' here.

Through this we can also think again about how the material agents make possible some courses of action for the men. The suit, as it intra-acts with discourses around role models, masculinity, authority, tradition, council estates, is a panopticon that regulates the wearer's practices (Lugg and Tooms, 2010). Simon states that he would only ever take his tie off after school when there were few children around - he is acutely aware of being watched and having to act a part (Gill and Arnold, 2015); the 'male role model' subject that is produced takes deliberate effort to maintain and this means there is no 'down-time' from such a lofty position, which includes taking care not to present an alternative image to pupils.

'I could have been a caretaker in a suit'

This final section of the chapter further considers how the suit and tie ensemble functions as an agent that produces male Primary teachers as subjects that are distanced from pupils. More generally than the above discussion related to pupils from deprived areas, though clearly linked with those themes, here we can see that as these men wear smart clothes to fit an image of masculine authority, the subject assemblage that emerges is not one that readily includes close relationships with, or a particular type of care for, pupils. Charlie describes his process of 'moving on':

And when I shave, and I'm 33 going on 34 and I look about 12. So if I turn up in – as I used to in EBD [Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties] - in Nike Airs, jeans and a t-shirt, I'm not authoritative... it's part of you getting into role of being a bit senior and changing shit in your own head that you're not everyone's mate and you're not a go-between anymore. You know, your job

isn't just care, which was maybe important for me – reminding myself that, yeah, that's not it. And you're not street, you're not [in a deprived area], going into people's houses afterwards dropping people's kids home, d'you know arguing with people in the market over stuff, d'you know that's gone. You're [in an upmarket area], do this, the job has changed and yeah, I do think that's important... it's all part of it, and it's all part of moving on from something, moving on from that and not letting that be your very very dull life story, d'you know

The suit, shirt and tie are transformative for Charlie. Wearing the 'right' clothes for his more senior role is a way of suggesting he has some authority, and is actively used to counter a concern that he looks too young – a similar worry that Graham expressed above. The appropriate attire is a way of signalling legitimate membership of a group when that membership feels shaky, and owning a different set of responsibilities. It is a way of 'getting into role of being a bit senior and changing shit in your own head' – the clothes generate a different feeling about who he can become in the context of his life story.

But there are consequences of that becoming; it closes off other ways of becoming-senior teacher through its material-discursive delineations. The suit assists in making relevant and prominent certain activities and priorities rather than others – for Charlie it precludes being amongst the pupils and their parents, suggests a hierarchical position above their daily concerns, and locates 'care' as something you *move on from doing*. Thus there is a physical and philosophical (as in, the way of being/doing 'teacher') distance constructed between the teacher-with-authority and pupils. It conjures up images of the be-suited male teacher sitting in his office whilst the melee proceeds below. The complexities of pupils' out-of-school lives and caring for them in a holistic and involved manner seem to be eschewed.

This is important because most research about the physical distancing of male teachers from pupils tend to focus on the discursive constraints (fears of predatory paedophiles, or just that it's not manly to be 'caring'/'nurturing') and the policy/practice panopticon that causes this (e.g. Sargent, 2001; Sikes and Piper, 2010). However here we see how there are further material and discursive (material-discursive) entities that entwine with and encourage the perception and practice of distancing oneself – the notion of

masculine authority and leadership, and how this emerges with the wearing of a suit and tie, has a part to play in organising this male teacher becoming. Rather than this distance from teacher to pupil being an externally imposed condition, we can feel how the gulf can become part and parcel of the career progression of the male teacher as the assemblage gathers weight and an upward trajectory. The logic of 'moving on' includes *moving away* from pupils.

It is significant that care is framed as something a more junior member of staff might do, and indeed what Charlie was doing but came to realise he needed to move on from. This adds to previous research conclusions about the 'contradictory discourses of care and authority' as gendered (Braun, 2012, p.231; see also Forrester, 2005; Sissons and Iverson, 2014). In line with early assertions (Acker, 1996; Dillabough, 1999), caring work is not only gendered but it is also deemed inferior through that association (see Chapter 2 and 11); as Charlie seeks to 'move on' and become more senior, doing so through drawing on masculine tropes of authority and paying special attention to his attire, 'care' seems a necessary load to be jettisoned. There are links to be made here with Löfgren's (2016) research, albeit in Early Years settings, that found as teachers engaged with professional discourses, via increasing paperwork, so narratives of care became silenced. As Braun notes for trainee teachers, the 'simultaneous and gendered notions of caring and commanding respect can present considerable obstacles for the acquisition of a 'successful' vocational habitus' (2012, p.231), but even for Charlie – who is several years into his career – this represents a thorn to be removed as he transitions into a senior role; 'performance has no room for caring' (Ball, 2003, p.224). As he is a middle-leader in what is seen as a caring role (Primary school SENCo) this marks a new and important set of thoughts because it invites questions as to the consequences for 'care' if it struggles to maintain a foothold in male teacher-authority-SENCo-pupil assemblages.

Getting towards that area of exploration, it is worth considering how Graham describes his position when his SENCo role became full-time and he was no longer attached to a particular class as its teacher. He becomes a suit without authority:

The thing is, children get used to in school there are people who don't do any teaching, that don't tell them off. You've got the office staff, your business manager and people like that who don't have any kind of – they're in an office, they're constantly at a computer, or on the phone or got paperwork surrounding them, and the children might know their names if they're lucky, but if that person ever turned round and tried to follow the hierarchy of behaviour management with them, they'd be like 'who are you, who are you to tell me' ... [And as a SENCo] it was almost that kind of the children just didn't see you, because you weren't their sisters' or brothers' or cousins' or best friend's brother's mate's or whatever teacher, so there was ...almost that kind of 'who are you?'. Particularly with the younger children coming through, those that hadn't gone over to the next key stage so hadn't – yes, you'd been a face - but hadn't kind of made that link. Um, yeah. There was almost that 'who are you to be saying that', um, because I suppose to them I could have been a caretaker in a suit

Akin to a member of the backroom administration staff, Graham's SENCo identity feels impotent in this account. Given the lack of men in the environment, the closest analogy comes in the form of the caretaker - Graham's status and authority feels significantly reduced. In this change, the hollowness of the suit is stark. It can no longer secure the authority and respect that it seemed able to before.

It is key to think through why the suit no longer seems to function as anticipated. Graham is not 'seen' by the pupils because he does not have the *relationship* with them that he previously did. There is a missing part of the assemblage – the affective. When previously the suit-SENCo-teacher worked because Graham had reason to know and be known by the pupils, now it has lost something of its makeup. The suit seems like a costume worn by someone that it doesn't fit; it is as if without this element of the composition the effective, authoritative male teacher-SENCo decomposes. Following Deleuze and Guattari, Ringrose (2011) works with the idea of an assemblage's 'affective capacities' – we can evaluate the work assemblages do by their capacities to affect and be affected by another. For Graham, without the relationship to pupils his suit-SENCo-teacher assemblage *loses its capacity to act*. It could be argued that a closer, caring, relationship with pupils is a precursor – or underpinning - to being granted any authority amongst the pupil body; to get that attention Graham clearly associates with wearing a suit and tie, there are personal bonds that need to be nurtured too.

The constructing of a coherent, intelligible identity as a male Primary school middle leader through the becomings offered by the smart suit and tie is, conceivably, an obstacle in forming bonds with pupils when there is no other reason for such a relationship to exist (i.e. he's also your teacher, or your friend's teacher). There are a good many reasons why a SENCo – and the school they serve - might need or want to have close or at least functioning relationships with pupils in order for their role to be executed with pupil-need at its heart (see Mackenzie, 2012c; Burton and Goodman, 2011; Crowne, 2005). Whilst a man in a suit might be taken as a symbol of the rising status of SEN within a school context, it can also be seen as a barrier to the emergence of strong pupil-SENCo relationships and thereby effective SEN provision. A distance between the suit-wearer and the pupils may be felt, both in terms of the disjuncture of seeing a man in a suit in some local contexts, and the related cold and uncaring connotations of seniority, authority and discipline.

Conclusion

In the perceived need of the men in this research to demonstrate their aptitude for a more senior role, in part doing so to protect themselves from barbs about their readiness or suitability for leadership, they opt to play to expectations and wear a suit and tie. There are consequences opened up that stretch beyond their concerns over legitimacy though - these include the potential to affirm gendered teacher stereotypes, to construe learners in certain deterministic ways, and effect the fundamental relationship between staff and the school community.

The suit and tie combination, as a 'costume' worn to command attention and mentally prepare themselves, is a material agent that brings into possibility the 'male Primary school teacher with authority'. This can be seen to tightly define what a 'real' male Primary school teacher and role model looks like (cf. Lugg and Tooms, 2010), an image forged in normative and hegemonic idea/ls about (white, middle class) masculinity. This also sketches an outline for pupils too; a 'male role model' requires an object whose deficits require attention and the suit and tie re-trace a distinct dividing line between the patriarchal teacher and poor lacking pupil. There is, however, an indication that some aspects of 'care' need to be dropped when pursuing a coherent

senior teacher identity - and yet there are also signs that *without* sustaining relationships with pupils the suit and tie can be a sort of emperor's new clothes, as they no longer seem to produce authority and seniority when the pupils don't pay you attention.

All of these issues seem intractable, with long histories and powerful contemporary forces enshrining these discourses around male role models and normative gender identities. Yet by taking the material – in this case clothing - as a significant entangled aspect of the everyday becomings of teachers (and therefore colleagues and pupils), so mundane sites of resistance open up. If, as Ball (2015) claims, 'subjectivity is a site of struggle' against neo-liberal policies and priorities, and as we have seen the ways that clothing is an integral part of emerging subjectivities, then immediate lines of flight present themselves. These might include men being encouraged not to wear a suit and tie at school every day. It might be that school communities develop staff dress-code policies that take account of clothes' influence on the formation of subjectivities and the subsequent possibilities for relationships between staff, and between staff, parents and pupils. Reviewing such policies or guidelines, taking into account the intra-active entanglement of the material and discursive, might encourage a shift of focus from a normative perspective on how clothes just project individual mores and status, towards a sensibility that addresses posthuman performativity (Ringrose and Rawlings, 2015; Barad, 2007), understanding these material agents as central in (re)forming relationships and affect, which are significant in what becomes possible as bodies, objects and ideas meet each other and potentialities compose.

Chapter 11 - "I'm here to model what love looks like": the emergence of care and its transformative potential

Introduction

This chapter firstly traces how the men go about negotiating 'care' when it is associated with female and motherly actions such as hugging. Conveying the certainty of a culturally recognisable identity, by pressing into service masculine-professional tropes that make intelligible their role and professional identities (control, expertise, knowledge and action-orientation), is seen to ward off unwarranted yet damaging questions about their motives to work with young children. Thus whilst these discourses around care might be problematic in that they affirm and reinforce gendered binaries (King, 1998), they can be seen to play an important role for men as they manage their troublesome but inescapable identity as male in a Primary school. The distance that this appears to enshrine between men and pupils builds on the previous two chapters' conclusions that the way SEN is managed and expert knowledge prioritised can work to pacify and quieten pupils (Chapter 9), and how 'care' might be jettisoned in attempts to achieve a professional 'male teacher with authority' identity (Chapter 10).

However the chapter then seeks to move into a more affirmative space, suggesting that through engaging with the ontological consequences of a relational assemblage approach offers both a different way to think about the issue of gender and care in education, and to consider how future possibilities are opened up by seeing care as emergent, contingent, directed by relationalities and transformative. There are stories the men tell that can be mapped for their *more than* gendered dimensions and this, I argue, can lead us towards ways of imagining reconfigurations of care and gender.

That's the culture that we live in at the moment, and it does make it difficult

There is an imperative for the men to maintain their physical distance from children, which for Simon has led to a need to find a different way of showing his 'caring and nurturing side':

...you know a woman would probably give a cuddle, would probably have a child sat on their lap and things like that, whereas I wouldn't, I don't feel I could do that. Even if that's what the child needed, it still probably wouldn't be any more than a hand on the shoulder or something like that. I think that links again to stereotypical views of men and things that have been in the press and things like that. I think that's the culture that we live in at the moment, and it does make it difficult. Because you then have to show a caring and nurturing side in a different way, whereas a woman I think wouldn't hesitate about giving a child a cuddle if they were upset. Actually I'm hesitant to do that because there'll always be someone who doesn't necessarily say something but will think it; or there might not be but I still have that idea.

His concerns resonate with research addressing the issue of touch in educational settings, particularly for men (e.g. Piper and Smith, 2003; Jones, 2007; King, 1998) and the influence of what Piper, Duggan and Rogers refer to as the 'managerialisation of safeguarding' (2013, p.211) whereby physical contact with children is a risk to be routinely managed. The consequence of this inescapable discourse is that 'technical and defensive specifications of good practice' obscure any ethical considerations in the debate (p.209) and indeed Simon's critique only extends as far as his practical and resigned solution to the strictures he feels, with no comment on the benefits that such 'caring for' might bring. Pervasive and prioritised is a 'risk-averse and self-protective modus operandi' (p.210), as is evidenced in Simon's comment that he is 'hesitant' to cuddle a child because '*there'll always be someone who doesn't necessarily say something but will think it; or there might not be but I still have that idea*'. The discourse is powerful enough that Simon is led to doubt that his actions will be perceived as innocent, and he comes to self-surveil (Jones, 2001), having accommodated a way of being that avoids risky situations and potentially damaging allegations (Sikes and Piper, 2010).

It is important that Simon states '*you then have to show a caring and nurturing side in a different way*', a strategy also noted by male teachers in other research (e.g. Hansen and Mulholland, 2005; Pruit, 2015). His assertion that a woman 'wouldn't hesitate' to give an upset child a cuddle suggests that his interpretation of 'caring and nurturing' centres on a gendered binary – and that therefore he, as a man, has to find an alternative manly way of performing care and nurture.

Performing care

Simon's way of operationalising a 'different way' of caring and nurture is to be on hand to talk with and listen to pupils and *then take action* – when asked about care as part of the SENCo role he said:

I just think being available, being someone to talk to. And I think children here all like action, so if they come with a problem and you can do something about it, I think they take that on as caring – you've done something about it. You know, you've listened, you've acted and that's it. I think they appreciate that. So yeah, I probably do it that way.

It is telling that such a take on the male SENCo position is echoed by the three other men involved in this research. Graham notes that female SENCos are able to occupy the 'lovey-dovey' role and that this 'has a big impact' on parents, but that some parents appreciated how things started to 'hurry along' when he – 'a bloke', 'this young lad' – arrived and followed the procedures meticulously and determinedly:

When you're a special needs parent and you see the teacher being all lovey-dovey with the child and children coming home and going 'oh Mrs such-and-such, blah-de-blah' you know that has a big impact on you. But then when you're a bloke that just comes along and does the [*knocks on table in a sequence motion suggesting following a procedure*], [...] whether parents had sort of felt that things weren't being done I can't sort of say for definite, but when parents are coming in to me and you're having these meetings and you're discussing things, that things may have started to kind of hurry along with the processes you were involved in. [...]

You know Mrs such-and-such was lovely lovely, and then along comes this young lad and hang on, you didn't sort of go in and give my child a hug in the morning, you know, who are you to sort of tell me and how do you know my child?

Graham is clear that *action* – following the steps, knowing the processes – garners appreciation from parents, and equally that the more affectionate and 'lovely lovely' approach is off-limits for him. It is striking how similar this is to Simon's take on being a SENCo, where action to *get things done* for the pupils represents care when other forms are inaccessible. For both men this is the source of some consternation though, with Graham reporting an imagined scenario where affection constitutes 'authentic'

knowledge of the child, the type that only a particular form of caring (motherly) relationship can accomplish (cf. Webb and Blond, 1995), resulting in parents questioning his right to have a voice in relation to that pupil. Being barred from such knowing and caring also 'makes things difficult' in Simon's eyes too.

There is a commonality here with Charlie's take on these issues. He tells of how the mothers at his school were resistant to him initially because he was a man, but that in time his approach was received positively by some as it contrasted with the previous (female) SENCo's way of working:

...'cos there're lots of Mums who do the care for the child and they don't necessarily want to share that with a man. And that was made abundantly clear by a lot of the Mums here, and they've said 'God, you're actually really nice, and not the man I expected', and you know that's a barrier... and you know I'm stunned by that because it's been my job for so long d'you know. But I do get that. And other times, [being a man is] exactly what's needed because actually the idea of some old nanny who we had here before – and she was lovely – isn't always what parents want either.

Being 'lovely' and 'nice' contrasts with the expected way that a man would be as a SENCo. And yet being 'lovely' is not always seen as the most effective way of getting things done and not what is necessarily needed in the job.

As with Simon and Graham, Charlie's way of showing care is action based. He, like Simon, draws on the idea that pupils with SEN really appreciate teachers' efforts with and for them. Charlie describes how his commitment to caring for his pupils is embedded in the *act* of helping them:

...feeling like you went into a situation with an idea to help and even if you got it right or wrong, or the care was inappropriate, that you tried your best and that person understands that when they left that Charlie might not have got it right, but he fucking tried his best. And being special needs you don't get 99% of things, but what you could leave the room with is 'I need to learn to try, and that person tried for me'. And that's a pretty good thing to leave the room with that somebody cared enough, and that I can do things and that I need to practice doing things.

Charlie hopes that the pupils he works with understand that 'somebody cared enough' to try for them. However there is an element of doubt in this, that this 'care' might not be right, that despite the efforts to show care through one's actions you still might get it wrong – and so the hope is that the *trying* comes across to pupils. There is a sense of the deep concern and difficulty that comes with caring for and about pupils, a sense that is generated by not quite knowing what is best to do or how to get it right – James has sleepless nights wondering about what he can do, Simon notes that women 'wouldn't hesitate' yet it's difficult for men, Graham worries he will be challenged about not really knowing the children. These men's commitment to care about their pupils, as expressed through their actions to help and support them, are littered with second-guessings over how to get it right. I think these doubts can be linked with uncertainty around the caring role of the contemporary Primary school teacher identity – these men are searching for ways of being that avoid the sanctions associated with caring in a feminine and nurturing way (hugging, being 'lovey-dovey') whilst also bearing a weight of responsibility for ensuring the pupils feel cared for.

Action Men

All four men in this research sought to convey how they care by taking responsibility for making things happen for pupils. This action-man stance draws on the tropes of hegemonic masculinity, for example as assertive and dynamic (Smedley, 2007), as taking control (Warin, 2013) and being seen to *do something*, invoking a way of caring that Brandth and Kvande (1998) define as 'masculine care'; activity that manages care with rational action rather than emotional responses. This focus on action symbolically takes care out of the domestic realm, and thereby away from the intimacy of the Primary classroom that has traditionally been linked with domesticity and mothering, where emotionality, *looking after* and caring physical contact are assumed. Instead, action and dynamism are located in the public arena, which is taken to be a rational and detached masculine domain (Dillabough, 2005).

As the men talk about their own position and role within their schools they often come back to the idea of Primary teaching as a female job. For example Graham ties this with attitudes in his city:

Um, and the thought of having a Reception or Nursery teacher who's male is a little bit too much for certain areas within [this city] where the attitude is the male goes out to work and the woman stays at home and looks after [the children], and you still get that a lot within [this area].

It is important to pick up on this idea that being in the classroom, and especially in the classroom with the youngest children, binds teachers to the traditional female role of child-rearing. In contexts where men's role is to *go out* to work, male teachers are feminised by being associated with looking after children in classrooms that are equated with – at least in stereotypical assumption – the home environment (see Chapter 8). Against this backdrop, both Charlie and Simon talk about disliking being anchored to the classroom, with Charlie saying he wants to 'do things on his own terms' and Simon stating that:

...I hate – no, hate is a strong word – I didn't like being a day-to-day classroom teacher... I didn't like the planning, I didn't like...uh I dunno. I didn't like that in-there-all-the-time, I much prefer this, whole school stuff, picking out children from individual classes, um I love working in a school and I like that mix now of working with adults and children – but yeah the classroom stuff just didn't – the marking, the planning... and you're sort of quite isolated in the classroom, whereas now I can get out, go into different classrooms, see different practice, I like that bit.

Simon's feeling of isolation in the classroom, being 'in-there-all-the-time' with the children, is contrasted with a noticeably more wide-ranging SENCo role. He picks out the mix of working with adults and children and the 'whole school stuff', elements that can be seen as part of being in the public domain rather than confined to the private realm. In his narrative there is a sense of how this 'public' role gives him freedom to move around and *do* a variety of things, whereas his sphere of influence was small when limited to just his own classroom.

Charlie provides us with a further example of how he has taken his SENCo position to be publically oriented. His caring role has become about facilitating debate about practice, as part of his expanding involvement within local authority advisory boards:

It's collaboration and support and ideas...you know that is care isn't it, being able to talk to each other, to be able to do something that you'd want the children to be able to do, rather than top-down leadership. So yeah in a sense that care role has moved, into one where in theory there's a lot more equality where I work with others and we share practice, and we have debate – healthy debate – around what's good practice or not, or why that worked and that didn't, and what are your motives...

Charlie has elevated his caring actions into the public arena (e.g. out of the classroom, with other 'experts') in the form of debate. This is a kind of meta-caring, where caring means ensuring good practice; caring about getting the practices of care right. A rational and logical consideration of practice comes to be seen as a caring approach, but caring that – through a masculine-professional lens – is abstracted from the subject of that care. Caring is making sure that educators' actions 'work', and whilst this is oriented to improve the outcomes for pupils – caring *about* them – the attention is on the views of the practitioners.

The public domain is where knowledge, expertise and professionalism are symbolically located, and is a territory examined by Barbara Ann Cole (2004) in her study with 'mother-teachers'. In this work with women who are both parents and educators of children with special needs/disabilities, she argues that such a nexus of forces can exclude or 'other' some children and their families. Done, Murphy and Knowler (2014) agree, suggesting that the specialist and technical vocabularies of SEN can foreclose and exclude alternative models of 'doing SENCo' and limit consideration of the politics and practice associated with such expert knowledge. Research with SENCos has confirmed that the 'expert' positioning is often a compelling one to occupy (Kearns, 2005; Pearson, Scott and Sugden, 2011), and the present research highlights that the powerful professional discourse of action and expertise dominate these men's narratives. For example, Charlie locates caring in terms of good practice and refers to his qualifications as a mark of his status, Graham highlights the benefits of following a process of SEN identification and intervention, Simon employs the terminology of SEN and uses his senior leadership team position to make change happen, and James feels proud of the number of statements that he has secured for pupils through his knowledge of the system. All four men involved in this research made reference to the way that on taking the SENCo position they had been able to clear the backlog of work,

better organise the school's SEN provision, gather better resources and move the role forward into a new era. All were also keen to point out that the Head teachers of their schools were especially supportive of the work they are doing. In noting these achievements they each position themselves as competent, committed and in control of the SEN domain in their schools. From a consideration of these aspects of the men's SENCo identities it is certainly possible to wonder whether the focus that they have on their expert knowledge crowds-out other voices and ways of knowing.

These men's positionings as a particular type of expert SENCo are bound up with their 'intelligible identities' as *male Primary school teachers*; to have the authority of knowledge, rationality and command of the facts are features of a male teacher identity (Dillabough, 2005; Hjalmarsson and Löfdahl, 2014) within educational contexts when 'caring' – the other pillar of a teaching identity - is associated with the feminine role (Osgood, 2010; Warin and Gannerud, 2014). Thus the positioning of expert is a place from which a 'detached attachment' (Nelson, 1990, cited in Braun, 2012) can be exercised and care emerges as a contribution to the welfare of the pupils from a distanced vantage point (Hjalmarsson and Löfdahl, 2014). Such a *disconnected connection* resonates with the typology of symbolic 'rewards' reported in Mackenzie's (2013) narrative research with experienced SENCos which includes 'improving attainment' and 'system changing'. As we see with the men here, such interventions 'make a difference' through caring *about* the children without having to draw upon the discourses of affection and caring *for* them (cf. Tronto, 1993; Ashley and Lee, 2003). Narrating oneself as in a position of expertise, and framing one's caring approach around action based on that, offers the chance to construct a role identity as SENCo that avoids the feminine associations of *caring for* which are seen as problematic in the context of fear over accusations of inappropriate motives for working with children (Hansen and Mulholland, 2005; Pruit, 2015).

'De-coupling' gender and care

It is very clear that in these men's stories, care and gender emerge together and co-constitute each other; as James King writes in his seminal study about these same issues, the male elementary teachers he spoke with were 'frequently unable to leave

gender signification out of the caring equation' (1998, p.75). This intimate intra-connection between gender and care in education has been the subject of much research (see Chapter 2), and recently there have been calls for the relationship between them to be re-conceptualised with the aim of reducing the perception that caring roles are subordinate positions through their traditional association with female domestic care work (e.g. Warin and Gannerud, 2014). Here I am going to briefly review examples of such attempts and work towards a post-human, assemblage inspired argument that care is emergent and agentic, and that developing affirmative rather than deconstructive analyses of these teachers' proto- or ante-narratives (Boje, 2011; Cross, 2010) might enable us to go elsewhere than the gendered grounds of the debate about care in education.

Focusing specifically on SENCOs, Woolhouse (2015) endeavours to loosen the bind between care and the feminine that informs the discursive identity construction of those teachers. She does this through exploring how the female SENCOs in her research often invoked a 'child-centred warrior persona', arguing that this has the potential to dislodge 'feminised caring' that is part of the rhetoric associated with the SENCO role (p.136), because it offers a potential alternative definition. Yet, whilst it follows that having more discursive tools to work with improves the possibility for other identities to be realised, I wonder whether finding new modes of possible being (e.g. an inclusion 'warrior') still just tends towards categorisation and leads to another breed of reified identity to be added to the hierarchy – isn't 'warrior' imbued with masculine undertones, and might that be seen as 'better' than a feminised way of doing care? And rather than loosening the bonds between care and gender, might this simply reinforce that care oscillates between a gendered binary? Noting that women might 'do' care with a masculine-coded inflection may weaken the chains binding gendered people to gendered discourses, but it doesn't alter the gendered terms of the debate. It could be argued that it perpetuates molar or majority thinking by repeating dominant values through an emphasis on 'counter-identities' (Braidotti, 2012).

Allied to efforts to de-couple gender and care are calls for the status of Primary teaching to shift more towards the professional, which tend to foreground teaching's

association with 'caring for' and domesticity as a barrier to achieving this. For example, Ashley and Lee (2003) develop a model of the 'androgynous' teacher which advocates teachers adopting certain characteristics which, as they themselves admit, represents a 'shift to the masculine' (p.30) as a way of balancing what they see as a feminised caring domain. The characteristics they pinpoint tend to rationalise teaching and caring practices though, reinforcing the ideal of knowledge, competence, control and management of self and pupils. Yet since these traits are linked with masculinity, the gendered hierarchy is reinforced whereby 'doing' manliness is effectively seen as 'doing' professionalism, and as such traditional tropes of masculinity are elevated to a superior position. Here we encounter the difficulties of seeking to extract gendered people from gendered discourses, since in this thinking women – *because they are women* - are barred access to masculinised professionalism discourses, and men – *because they are men* - are encased within those assumptions of a particular type of professionalism (Pulsford, 2014).

This issue is also present in similar research which contends, because male teachers cannot readily care in affectionate ways due to the fear of accusations of inappropriateness, that their caring practices often tend to be located at the more professional, committed and 'neutral' end of the caring continuum as a 'caring about' (Hansen and Mulholland, 2005; Vogt, 2002), an argument that resonates with the above reading of the male SENCos in this research. Hansen and Mulholland, and Vogt, build on Nel Noddings' (2001) work, pointing out that a caring *about*, relational approach differs from the feminised/maternal attributes of a carer's role (caring *for*) and thus is open to both males and females to adopt. Yet this is problematic for three reasons. First, it manoeuvres men into position as natural residents of this professional and so-called 'neutral' terrain through the historical association of these traits with traditional forms of masculinity. This means that women, as inevitable representatives of the feminine caring *for* on such a care continuum, are symbolically ranked as inferior – they stand for the problem of Primary teaching's lowly professional status, as is the case for Ashley and Lee (2003). Second, but related to that point, is that this thinking affords women the theoretical chance to switch between a more affectionate and a more neutral-professional mode of caring whereas men remain anchored to one end;

this is not seen as a problem since the underlying assumption is that when it comes to teachers' caring practices more professionalism is an obvious good – why would anyone choose to keep doing care in what is framed as an unprofessional way? But it is a problem because the idea of a care continuum in teaching indicates a repertoire of caring practices that can be adopted as unique circumstances arise – and if men cannot legitimately access part of that repertoire then their own and their pupils' experience in school is impoverished, and normative models of masculinity are reinforced.

Third, and most importantly for this discussion, this thinking inadvertently binds teachers to gendered discourses. The underlying aim is to identify and examine how the gendered discourses operate to exclude or legitimise certain practices – in highlighting how care is bound to gender it leads to conclusions about the difficulties men face accessing a 'feminine' type of caring, or how women are denied straightforwardly benefitting from the privileges that adopting a professional-neutral identity might bring. However, it is my argument that established gender hierarchies remain difficult to dislodge because it is *in the terms of* established gendered discourses that these hierarchies are being troubled: replace a traditional notion of feminine caring by referring to what amounts to traditional notions of masculinised professionalism and neutrality (e.g. Ashley and Lee, 2003); challenge the discursively feminised identity of the SENCo through reference to what appears an opposite, masculinised, persona (e.g. Woolhouse, 2015). The many efforts to dissolve the links between gender and care can be seen as located on a line of articulation that leads inexorably back to binary relationships between male-female and professionalism-caring. In seeking to trouble these categorisations head-on, 'challenging the majoritarian discourses' of gender, research can reinforce the gender binary (Linstead and Pullen, 2006, p.1292) since the practices and narratives of care tend to be interrogated for the gendered associations they reveal.

Relational contingent care assemblages

The bind between gender and care seems inescapable then. Even research hoping to tease open the tightly entangled assemblage struggles to do so, since it cannot avoid identifying what *is* male or *is* female, or what *is* caring and what *is* professionalism.

The rush to define, to represent, to deconstruct into composite parts, leads us back to origins – and we are presented with the fossilised remains of how we no longer want to think, but just can't help it. The analysis of the men's narratives that I developed above took us around some gendered avenues and foregrounded the inherent difficulty of being a man in a Primary school doing caring work - a useful conclusion but we're still reiterating the boundaries of gendered territory through such recounts, just tracing the 'existing positional narratives' (Done and Knowler, 2013, p.1321) that these men use. I therefore want to explore other ways of thinking about this.

To some extent this is partly a matter of replacing the lens in our microscope – reframing how we see gendered tropes such as 'expertise' to realise and emphasise the positives that this brings to those being cared for/about (e.g. Brody, 2015). This is the kind of approach taken by Karla Elliot (2016) who, drawing on literature in the field of critical studies of men and masculinities (CSMM) and feminist care theories, has developed the idea of 'caring masculinities' which involves 'recasting' traditional masculine values such as protection, respect and competence into relational, interdependent and care-oriented ones. The benefits of 'competence' (akin to 'expertise' that I have discussed here), for example, 'does not mean "mastery" over one's family or of a skill, but rather "ability" to care' (p.253). Part of this task is subversion and rejection of domination within the traits of traditional masculinity.

These are productive ideas with important objectives, though it can be argued that seeking to *see* in a different way doesn't significantly shift *thinking*. Despite the innovative theoretical coupling of CSMM's work about masculinity and domination with feminist care theories' ideas of relationality, here we have an epistemic response rather than an ontological one – at the fundamental level nothing has to change much. Men remain as defined entities with clear edges; they retain their self-determining status. Care, meanwhile, retains similar static connotations – it is a thing that exists to be used or applied or administered by human agents on others. It is my case that a further step needs to be taken so as to dislodge the lingering status quo that claws at these ankles.

So what happens if we think differently, and ontologically, instead? In a post-human Deleuzian world of assemblages, love and care and gendered subjects are not fixed or determined but emergent with/in events and moments and encounters as material-discursive configurations iteratively compose. This shift in the ontological ground leads to a number of important consequences for the debate. First, care becomes a doing, a process (cf. Mol, 2008), a becoming and this is determined by the molecular arrangements of its co-constituent confederates; it won't therefore have the same form or feel in different iterations. Second, the 'interpersonal' and 'relational' are *how* care emerges rather than what care *is*; assemblages are synaptic contingent wholes, made of intra-connecting entities that become as they connect – the relations are therefore the drivers of care's becoming. Third, whilst care is contingent and dynamic, it *does things* – it distributes and extends its influence, it has affective capacities to transform, it makes things happen. Care, in entanglement and relation with other entities, is agentic.

The analysis I want to work on in the final part of this chapter builds on these ideas, aiming to avoid tracing the same gendered avenues and mapping what else is going on within the men's talk about their caring practices and perspectives. How does care emerge from relationality, and what can it do?

Ante-narratives of care

Addressing these sorts of questions involves mapping the connections and flows running through the men's practices and narrations of care. This is about molecularity not molarity, about exploring what is produced in and through these stories, imagining forwards in a connective and affirmative manner rather than tracking backwards. This 'has to do with surveying, mapping, even realms that are yet to come' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.5). In order to do this here I present some more of the men's stories that can be considered as proto- or ante-narratives. Such narratives are seen as exploratory devices that probe multiple possible futures (Cross, 2010), suggesting trajectories of unfolding becomings without the limitations of narrative closure (Boje, 2011) – in the case of the stories below, this analysis seeks not to close them down by reading the gender discourses but instead wonders *what else* is in the process of becoming through them. Ante-narrative is important in understanding the dynamics

of, and resistance to, change (Boje, 2011), since we get a sense of the directions being travelled and the movements rumbling. Ante-narratives are seen to act in concert with others, in a moving assemblage (Schipper and Fryzel, 2011), and these clusters of narrative create patterns of likely scenarios (Cross, 2010) which are not just meaning-making but 'world-making' (Boje, 2011). They have agency in the way they intra-act with the world, connecting with the material and bringing-into-being the possibilities of which they speak. It is such a cluster of ante-narratives that I hope to assemble here, gathered to incite resistance to the re-inscription of gender in debates about care in education, to animate the argument that care is emergent and agentic, and - to further extend Elliot's (2016) argument that practices of care 'change' the men engaged in them - to suggest that gendered subjectivities can emerge reformed through relationalities involving care.

'I'm here to model what love looks like'

James relates caring as a teacher to being a parent, noting that he takes teaching as an 'extension' of that role:

...in the classroom when you're the teacher for 30 kids and you've got them 5 and a half hours a day and you are working closely with them, and especially the younger ones, it's not uncommon for them to call you 'Mum', or for me they would say 'Mum' and then 'Oo, no, um' and they might go 'Dad'. And you do have that kind of - you are in a way a surrogate parent for those hours. And having been, still am, a parent I - it just extends the role. And for men, even though they've left at 3.10, when I was a class teacher, especially when I was going through their books, I would be, you know. I *care* about them, I do, I did, care about them a lot. And understanding if a child didn't finish their work, thinking about their home background, like why did they forget their reading book or why their parent didn't read [with them].

It would be possible to use this excerpt to critique the entrenched gendering of Primary school teaching, since it confirms and perpetuates the image of domestic maternal care. Although this is modified by his maleness he nevertheless affirms the association with parenting that Primary teaching has. This traditional and gendered stereotype is at issue for those calling for increased professionalism and/or greater acknowledgement that Primary teaching is work, not an extension of domestic labour for women (e.g. Ashley and Lee, 2003; Burn and Pratt-Adams, 2015). As Done and Knowler (2013,

p.1332) point out, many in academia and policy-making would find it 'objectionable' that teachers perceive their role to be an extension of parenting. Yet, they go on, such a 'distinctly non-reflexive but heart-felt experiential account [is] a valid starting point for writing about professional identities' (ibid). Here it is so because James' subjectification as a parent-teacher (cf. Cole, 2004) *does things*; it connects him with pupils beyond the school gate, into their homes – he projects himself outside of the classroom, thinking about their background and about their parents, trying to link the pupils' school work with their lives. Whilst the 'surrogate parent' might be an objectionable subject position for some reasons, it nevertheless can be seen as a line that rhizomatically pulls pupil and teacher together, fostering an assemblage of care. The extended-parent narrative is a machine that generates such a connection which in turn produces caring practices.

This can be seen when James talks about his school environment. Here he has just told a story about a boy who was hit by his step-father and, having fled from home, was heading towards school:

And he was on his way to school because that's his safety net..... And in my role, the [trauma and bereavement charity] people, the TAMHS [Targeted Mental Health in Schools] workers, word's getting out that they are professional, they do help and it is successful. So [the school is] becoming known as a caring environment. Within the school and I think from without.

The 'safety net' of the caring school environment is premised on connections; James as surrogate parent has forged a rhizomatic mesh of charity and professional people that intertwine with the school environment, supporting the pupils in need. That this is becoming felt 'within the school' and 'without' points to a broader assemblage of care that binds many points together in contingent relations – professionals, pupils, teachers, parents. James wishes to be seen as a key node within the assemblage, and this desire seems driven by his self-perception as a teacher-parent and the affective responsibility of care this involves – thus such a self-story generates on-going assemblages of care, regardless of the academic or policy-based critique it might invite.

As with James, the discourse that Simon draws upon below might also be seen to have iniquitous origins or disabling consequences. Yet, again, rather than constructing a critique of this here, there are affects to be charted and connections mapped that can be seen to have *produced* something affirmative. There is of course importance in tracing what is beneath the 'face value' of Simon's following narrative about teaching a boy with Down's Syndrome, but here I want to shift focus and accept it as a Deleuzian surface that does not represent or signify anything – to see it as a machine that works, that makes things happen.

... Joe, a boy with Down's Syndrome, was in my class, um and at that stage the school didn't want him there, just didn't fit that mould of the school, relationship between home and school has completely broken down, he was sent out of class all of the time, just to work on his own with his LSA [Learning Support Assistant], didn't really do anything as part of the class or part of the school. It took a long time, the whole time I was there, I taught him for the whole two and a half years that I went back there – he was just completely amazing and I suppose he probably – although I started that SEN manager role very much with a view to it being a different route to [career] progression - he probably gave me the love for it, the love for the role. He's really great. And he taught me a lot about, he taught me a lot of patience and a lot about myself that probably no other child would have done, cos as I say he was in my class for two and a half years, and just re-built that relationship from scratch, the relationship with home, the relationship with school, included him, you know we did a lot of training, a lot of culture change around the fact that he was here, and he was going to stay, and that's it really. And yeah, he probably inspired me more than anyone else to carry on doing this. So I probably would have, probably my next jump would have been to an Assistant Headship or a Deputy Headship maybe, without the SENCo bit, when I first started. But having taught him and having that experience, that's what probably made me want to stay on it. Because I saw the difference I made for him, and felt I could do that with other children.

It is tempting to pick out Simon's construction of Joe as an inspiration, and the discourse of 'making a difference' that he employs. It could be noted that Simon adopts the agentic position in his account, and that through this 'amazing child' he is transformed: Simon moves on to a new school and a promotion, replete with a touching narrative of revelation, but the boy is symbolically and physically grounded: 'he was here, he was going to stay'.

Yet I want to consider what Simon's narrative constructs, rather than extend such a line of deconstruction. The first thing is that Simon's take on his career is modified. Elsewhere he points out that he came into Primary teaching to be a Head teacher by the time he was 30 years old, and in the above excerpt he notes that he took his former role as SEN manager 'with a view to it being a different route to [career] progression'. However through working with this pupil in particular he was motivated to 'carry on doing' his work in SEN. Whilst the 'heroic teacher making a difference' discourse has issues because its charitable impulse impales the needy with good intentions, it is nevertheless through this that Simon's career re-evaluation was generated and alternative subject positions emerge. He is changed through his envelopment 'within the community assemblage' (Goodley and Runswick-Cole, 2014, p.11), becoming-other through his intra-actions with not just Joe but also his parents and support assistant, and this also brings about a 'culture change' at the school.

Simon reports having had a linear and teleological notion of his career at first, one that fitted neatly within the stereotype of 'male Primary teacher' rising quickly and uninterrupted into Headship. Yet through plugging in to an assemblage with/around Joe this expectation was troubled, and crucially it provided a hook that allowed him to step into an SEN leadership role - it offered him a proto narrative that generated an affirmative, intelligible line of flight out from a stagnant, one-size-fits-all 'male Primary teacher' subjectivity. Following Braidotti (2012, p.34), subjects are *thresholds of transformations*, but crossing borderlines needs a channel within which to travel - for Simon, the transformation to a career in SEN from a single-minded Headteacher-by-30 positioning is a becoming emergent through intra-action with/in a dense assemblage involving Joe and his schooling. As an ante-narrative, this leaves us an open-ending and there are several possible outcomes yet to come. What we can be sure of though is that care and career are emerging together here for Simon and that this is bringing other futures into possibility. And whilst gender is certainly also bound into this entanglement, in this affirmative way of looking there is more to see than whether care is being done in masculine or feminine ways.

Simon also talks about love in the excerpt above. He says he developed a love for the role, and that this is bound up with the forming of relationships. The relationship between the pupils' family and the school had 'completely broken down', but over time this re-grew. Through the composition that Simon and Joe formed, in which they produced mutual change in each other, and through which love and care emanated, a raft of new connections were forged – between school and home, and within the school too. This continues the thread that Martin's story began to weave where a meshwork of relations across home/school/professionals grew via a feeling of parent-like care responsibility. The line points elsewhere too – towards the following stories here – where a desire to build strong relationships with pupils (Graham) and love as an orienting principle (Charlie) can respectively be seen as catalysts for becoming-other.

Throughout our interviews Graham pointed out several times that teaching was about relationship-building:

My focus is, you get a new class and it's very much you've got to form the relationships, you've got to get to know your children...what I found worked most of all out of all kinds of behaviour strategies was building that relationship.

Enfolded into Graham's talk about being a (good) teacher is relationships with pupils. 'Getting to know the children' is founded on a sense that caring *for* pupils (not just *about* them in a general sense), through understanding them individually, leads to effective classroom management and learning. Thus Graham's professional identity is based on relations with and to pupils at a proximate level. As discussed in Chapter 10, when Graham became his school's SENCo full-time he felt the pupils 'just didn't see' him – that he may as well have been the 'caretaker in a suit'. An existential crisis emerged for Graham where he felt ineffective and overlooked – without the relationships with pupils he was no longer certain about his teacher identity that was embroiled with knowing the pupils. His SENCo assemblage decomposed, and changed, as a result of losing such connections – these were the moments through which the care he would routinely engage in could (and now cannot) emerge.

Charlie, similarly, locates himself as a teacher through the relationships he has formed with pupils he has taught. He does so to the extent that these connections outweigh any concern about career advancement and are central to the reason why teaching is for him:

It's so boring, mainstream schooling in terms of... the relationships don't exist in the same way [to when working at a Pupil Referral Unit and Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties school]. Like I know now, looking back on some of those relationships, that if we still see those kids now, there's the bond and they understand. Like for some of them it's the battle you know, there was a big battle, and I'm not just talking in terms of me and them, I'm talking about them versus three guys in the street type of thing. And that relationship is part of the thing – it's people understanding that people care for each other, and that there are people out there who are willing to put their... You know, you are paid, but people who believe in you enough that you deserve an opportunity, to put themselves out there and do those things. And yeah, those relationships are what I miss about working here. And it's much more about politics and who is the fucking Deputy Head, and I don't give a fuck about that sort of stuff.

The relationships that Charlie narrates here are based on pupils' understanding that staff will 'put themselves out there' for them because they care enough to give them an opportunity. For Charlie, this care and the strength of the bond are founded on the difficulty that those relationships take to form, and in mainstream schools 'the relationships don't exist in the same way' since there is less of a battle to earn them. Charlie is crying out for such connections with pupils and is critical of the staff whose focus he sees as petty politics and career.

Indeed, Charlie takes issue with teaching work that does not have children's relational development as its clear focus. Here, love orientates Charlie's take on what teaching is about:

I feel you've got to reflect to the children...good practice, good life practice...you know teachers are here till 9 o'clock at night killing themselves, ruining relationships with family, not seeing their kids - what are you saying to kids you teach, you know? You're meant to say 'I'm here to model what love looks like', primarily, and that doesn't look like staying here till 9 o'clock at night not seeing your husband or your kids or wife or whoever, partner. [...] But that's stuck with me from when I worked in the Pupil Referral Unit and in

prisons, that thing of people not... of people saying 'no, this is first', to say to the young people, 'do you know what, I really do care about you but you know who comes before you? My family', and I think that's brilliant modelling, I think that's key. I tell people here 'I'm not doing that cos I'm seeing my girlfriend tonight'. Tell the kids. 'Oh really why?' 'Cos she's more important'. And I think, hopefully, they do the same with their homework. 'Why didn't you do your fucking homework?' 'Cos I was seeing my Mum, and we went out to the park'. Like, whether they know what they're doing, they made a choice.

For Charlie here, the teacher's purpose is to 'model' love for family and to emphasise the importance of nurturing relationships, and not the instrumental pursuit of performative goals. The connection between the personal and professional is here made plain by Charlie; rather than separating and disavowing personal priorities he makes a case for the professional to be imbued with these. Love permeates the teaching relationship, with Charlie advocating for love in personal life to influence the way that one's professional identity is construed and defended. It is Charlie's vision that such an assemblage is mutually informing, with teachers modelling care for their loved ones and pupils learning to both give and accept care from those who offer it to them.

Conclusion

This chapter initially traced the parameters within which the men could perform care in their work. From an acute awareness that they need to avoid touching pupils for fear of misplaced accusations, the men seek out other ways of caring. Remaining in safer, 'masculine' terrain they tend to narrate expertise and action on behalf of children as played out in the public domain. Whilst this tracing shows the key strategies adopted and the boundaries within which the men can work as SENCos with and for their pupils, there is an analysis dead-end here. I considered other research about care in education and suggested that a similar problem exists there too, since it is so difficult to move past entrenched gendered associations in caring work. In seeking to avoid this 'sedentary self-replication' (Deleuze, 1973, cited in Braidotti, 2011a, p.14) the chapter suggested thinking with relational assemblage theory and wondered what analyses can be produced if care and gender are seen to emerge with/in the unfolding of events, encounters and moments rather than existing prior to such engagements. Care was therefore seen as processual, ever-becoming, contingent, as driven by relationality and

connection not defined by those, and agentic, with the power to transform as it emerges.

With this ontological shift, some of the men's (ante-)narratives were explored as trajectories of open-ended possibility and becoming. Within these we could sense how care emerges through relations and is agentic, producing re-shaped subjectivities as care is done with/in networks and via relationalities. These men desire to develop relationships with and for pupils, and these connections and this relationality is what forges a deep feeling of care. Love is enfolded into and emergent from these relationships; connecting with pupils has inspired love for the SENCo role, and love has inspired a way of relating to and teaching the pupils. Different becomings are afforded each of the men, with alternate possibilities produced for negotiating the territorialisations of masculinity – whether that be to adopt/adapt the motherly 'teacher-as-surrogate-parent' discourse as James does, or to disrupt the career focus anticipated by discourses about male Primary teachers, as have Simon and Charlie. The intensive multiplicity (Linstead and Pullen, 2006) of being a subject is captured in some way here, in that the lived experience is infused with affects that leave their mark and can take us elsewhere; the complex intensity of love and care can burst the banks of delineated subject positions, merging and dividing along over-flowing rhizomatic channels. There is *more than* gender here.

These men do not love or care because of their gender; whilst they might not hug pupils and may tend to rely on traditional tropes of masculinity (e.g. as the expert) to get through the day, it is not thinking about these behaviours that propels us anywhere new. Intensities of love and the desire for connections take the men on lines of flight, and yet it is seldom acknowledged (Page, 2011) that such powerful and potentially transformational energies flow through teachers – and if they are whispered in the same breath as 'male teacher' then this is most likely in negative tones (Jones, 2001). It seems important to better understand how love, and the desire for connection with pupils, function as affirmative and affective forces in nurturing men's becomings as fulfilled and effective teachers.

What's more, with a Deleuzian-Baradian take, the contingency of emergent attributes such as care and love – as based on shifting and singular assembled relations – invites us to imagine how such powerful, affirmative and transformative flows can be encouraged. Maybe a small, seemingly insignificant, mundane re-shaping of an assemblage could generate different relations and lead to connections of care? It might take just one incident, one comment, one different object in an office, one different set of clothes, to set off lines of flight that re-compose assemblages in such ways that different configurations of care and gender can emerge.

Chapter 12 – Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter draws together and summarises the main conclusions from the thesis, disentangling and then re-entangling themes, and addressing the research questions in doing so. I note how this work contributes to the field of educational research and its potential for use in education practice. The final part of the chapter considers possible future directions for research that might flow from the lines of flight set off here.

Outlining the research questions, rationale and findings

In this section I briefly review the background to the research and its organising threads, before reviewing the main findings as a way of responding to the three entwined research questions, which were:

- How do the men intra-act with their material-discursive worlds in ways that produce certain becomings and certain knowledges (cf. Jackson and Mazzei, 2012)?
- How are their emerging subjectivities tied with the becomings of other human and non-human entities?
- How does the particular pattern of entanglement work to produce and sustain boundaries of difference (Barad, 2007)? In this process, what becomings are excluded or occluded?

The research sought to gain insight into the experiences of men working as SENCos in Primary schools. In doing so it offers an original contribution since there is no published research paying such attention to this small but, I suggest, significant group. Their potential to embody the masculine-coded aspects of neoliberalism that have encroached on education (for example managerialism, individualism, accountability) and prominent within SEN policy and practice (Liasidou and Svensson, 2013; Done, Murphy and Knowler, 2014) can be seen as at odds with an historic and enduring SENCo image of motherly, selfless dedication which resonates with the ‘old iconographies’ (MacLure, 2001) of Primary teaching. The current demographic of those in the SENCo role is overwhelmingly women in their 30s and 40s, and research

suggests that this informs and enforces the intelligibility of the role as female (Woolhouse, 2015). Grasping some sense of what it is like being a man occupying the SENCo role is therefore a way of exploring both the gendered nature of Primary school SEN work, as well as examining the struggle over what it means to be a Primary school teacher and mid-level leader, to be 'caring' and to be 'professional', in the contemporary period.

This research affirms that the gendered dimension of the SENCo role is prominent for these men, who tend to narrate themselves as procedurally-focused, expert and authoritative, often specifically contrasting themselves with the 'lovely', 'nice' and 'more affectionate' women who had previously occupied their role. The 'professional' identity narrated by the men nevertheless involves 'care' and although the men suggest that forms of motherly and loving attention are out of bounds for them, emotional involvement and concern for pupils orientates their sense of purpose in the role; 'care' and 'love' can be seen as organising principles emerging through relationalities.

Key to the boundaries emerging around and through these men is the mutually-enforcing grid of hegemonic masculinity, heteronormativity, neoliberalism and neoconservatism. Normative models of masculinity police the becomings of the men, ensuring that a heterosexual, dynamic, in-control image of the male Primary teacher remains firmly in place. This is given weight and influence by the neoliberal recalibration of schooling that produces performative, responsabilised, entrepreneurial subjects in response to wave after wave of policy imperative (Ball, 2008; Liasidou and Svensson, 2013). Along with traditionalist patriarchal values of neoconservatism investing schools with notions of strict discipline, 'rigorous' standards and a meritocratic ideal that hard work leads to success, these intra-locking facets of the contemporary teaching landscape assemble - and from which the 'male Primary school teacher' emerges as its archetypal subject. In the men's narratives here, the *lure* of this subjectification can be felt in their becomings as 'male role models', in their involvement in the regimes of inspection and pupil monitoring, through their complicity in the governmentality of SEN knowledge and expertise.

This research significantly advances ways of thinking about *how* this ‘male Primary teacher’ subject becomes, through its adoption of a relational materialist approach. The ‘mundane, quotidian neoliberalisations’ (Ball and Olmedo, 2013, p.85) of teaching are *silently at work* and *almost imperceptible* (cf. Deleuze and Parnet, 2002) and these – this thesis suggests – are materialised in the everyday run-of-the-mill *stuff* of offices, classrooms and clothing that entangle with popular and policy discourses to do with teaching and men. The study draws attention to the ways that through routine working practices emerge busy, productive and dynamic male SENCo subjects yet this can mute and object-ify some pupils; certain ways of knowing the pupils are entrenched through this material engagement. The thesis also develops a way of thinking about the suit, shirt and tie as intimately bound with the production of an ‘authoritative’ teacher identity that plugs into white, middle class male imagery of striving for success, of tradition and high personal standards, which serves to position ‘caring for’ as something you *move on from doing*, and those in local deprived areas as lacking and in need of good role models. It can also mark out colleagues who ‘take pride’ in their appearance from those who don’t. Yet resistances do present themselves in the immediacy and mundanity of these things – for example other ways of working with pupils’ SEN folders that include their input and views about their difficulties, and dress code policies that take account of the subjectifying influence of work clothes for both teachers and pupils.

Related to that, the approach taken also moves forward thinking about Primary teaching as gendered, by advancing the proposition that objects and spaces are part and parcel of how gender emerges in these settings: the heteronormative micro-political environment of the Primary school is expressed and re-produced by ‘straightened’ offices; hegemonic masculinity reterritorializes and disconnects male teachers from female colleagues after withering encounters centred around bodies and everyday items of work; the ‘feminised’ Primary school environment is materialised through ‘homely’ features that the men distance themselves from – yet having certain types of stuff around you at work can be seen to define a space and secure status, and men not having this entrenches the (female) gendering of the Primary school. A map is

created then with landmarks of shrouded gay sexualities, men determined in their hegemonic status, women making schools seem 'homely' and men's offices devoid of any sign that they have a personal stake in the place – a clear indication that more of the terrain needs exploring so as to pick up lines that can decompose such an assemblage (see *Directions for future research* section below).

Summary response to the research questions – making connections

It is possible to see that the men in this research emerge as 'male Primary school SENCo' subjects through the material-discursive assemblages of their school environments, as composed of policy, practice, objects, spaces, bodies. These cross-cutting facets inform and iteratively produce each other such that, for example, the Government's SEN Code of Practice requires SENCos to ensure accurate records are kept, which constructs practices based around using folders to keep track of pupil information, which needs SENCo bodies in spaces accommodating enough to manage this bureaucratic function, which locates a certain type of regimented and classificatory expert knowledge with/in the (physical and cognitive) domain of the SENCo, which reverberates with masculine tropes of expertise, control and management, and these are supported by a sense that the men must find *different ways to care than women*. As we worked through in Chapter 9, this has consequences for the pupils subject to these SEN procedures, who can become 'folder-ised' – quietened, ordered, known – with/in the processes by which the 'male Primary school SENCo' emerges. This process is plugged-in to other dimensions discussed in the thesis too, for example these men's office spaces become the hub of SEN bureaucratic action, locales for the *proper work* of middle leadership as opposed to what goes on in the other more 'homely' areas. There is the suit, shirt and tie too, which legitimise an authoritative male identity that helps render such knowledge making/storing practices unquestionable. Moreover this further helps to compose the pacified and problematized pupil through producing them as in need of a good role model, a subjectification based on the prevalent discourse that men are needed in Primary schools to fulfil that role – poor pupils lacking in inspiration and discipline emerge because there are men (and of course women) lured by such notions of patriarchal charitable education. Thus boundary lines are drawn and re-drawn as the material manifests discourses (and as discourses

manifest the material) of gender, professionalism, SEN and school leadership. What is of consequence here is that the possibilities for becoming-other are reduced within this sticky web; Liasidou and Svensson (2013; see also Morewood, 2012; Done, Murphy and Knowler, 2014, among others) fear that managerialist considerations could eclipse socially just leadership, a part of which must be about nurturing unknown potentials for transformation. It is *how* these routes for becoming different can be occluded that this thesis gives an indication of.

But it is important to note here that there was some hope identified, where lines of care and love were narrated by the men and these were seen to have ‘affective capacities’ (Ringrose, 2011) for inspiring connection and change. In following the consequences of a relational materialist ontology and envisioning care and love as emergent, contingent, driven by relationalities and transformative, the penultimate chapter took the men’s desire for connection with pupils and commitment to SEN as containing potential for other becomings that will continue to emerge in singular, non-linear and productive ways – containing inherent possibilities for the yet to come.

As well as contributing to thinking about teachers’ lives and careers, this research has the potential to inform interrogative and critical initial and in-service teacher education. In making connections between the direction of education policy, daily routines involving mundane objects of teaching work and teacher’s identities and priorities, I envisage this research providing examples to discuss and a point to refer to as trainees and qualified teachers reflect on their own experiences and becomings – what are their (your?) material stories?

In particular I suggest that the focus on and confrontation of the everyday lived experiences of male teachers established in mid-career can provide a way of cutting through assumptions about men in Primary schools and problematizing the taken-for-granted such as linear career routes, the care versus professionalism binary, and being a male role model. The close attention to how these are (or are not) materialised and

consequential can be offered as critical points for consideration in male and female teachers' own working lives. Similarly, I hope that the thinking around the processes of SEN management, seeing how policy and practice meet in and emerge through objects such as folders of pupil information, can inform SENCo training and invite dialogue about the effects/affects of the materialisation of SEN.

Directions for future research – lines of flight

In the spirit of the approach advocated in this thesis, this final section looks to pose questions emerging from the research as a way of opening up its potential for affirmatively intra-acting with the world, rather than closing down possibilities (this is, therefore, an ethical imperative). The research formed an assemblage through which certain 'findings' and 'conclusions' emerged, though these are unruly and shifting and only temporarily rendered, as Chapter 5 explored. The nature of assemblages is that they are rhizomatic (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987), and as this thesis moves beyond my laptop and email inbox, the 'effects that are created by [its] interweaving create new assemblages that might be stretched... These new assemblages cannot be known in advance and instead unfold in each new reading' (Allen, 2013, p.11). Hence, following Koro-Ljungberg and Barko, I 'propose that [my] answers be seen not as a final step in the research process but rather as an opening, an assemblage, a jar, or a call to transition into new forms of questions...' (2012, p.256).

First then, future directions involves adding further examples to those offered here, so as to avoid the stasis and stability and closure that would deaden this analysis' potential. This is because:

'At their most lively, examples have a kind of affective agency – a power to reach out and connect forcefully with the reader, to open up questions, and to summon more than can be said in so many words. 'Every example harbours terrible powers of deviation and digression', writes Massumi (2002, p. 18), and he sees this as their strength...to unfold multiple meanings... Examples are important for the work of theorising in qualitative research: they anchor theory in the mundane, forcing it to the ground to tangle with the perplexing materiality of the everyday, complicating its separation from practice, or from experience, making easy abstractions or generalisations more difficult...' (MacLure, 2013c, p.628)

Gathering more material stories from men who work as SENCOs would be a beginning (or perhaps it would be better to think of remaining *in the middle* by doing this). These narratives of working practices and relations with colleagues and pupils, as bound up with 'the material work of crafting, maintaining, and narrating an identity' (Rich, 2014, p.16), would bind with the stories told for this research and reconfigure them, making connections such that in the *in-between* new thinking can emerge. How are other men emerging as male Primary school SENCOs?

It would be worth exploring such examples using other methods, in particular those often adopted in new materialist research, as highlighted in Chapter 4. This might take the form of an ethnographic research study (e.g. Taylor, 2013; Renold and Ivinson, 2014; Holland, Gordon and Lahelma, 2007), spending time in schools and confronting the materiality of daily becomings. It might be viable to engage in collaborative projects with these teachers, whether that be some form of collaborative writing (e.g. Isenbarger and Zembylas, 2006; Gale and Wyatt, 2008; Davies and Gannon, 2012) so as to iteratively and jointly develop a sense of the material's involvement in re-writing selves, or this could take the form of audio/visual research (e.g. Hultman and Lenz Taguchi, 2010; Lorimer, 2013; Allen, 2015) that offers the chance to re-examine the material within material stories and as such another way of engaging with (and being engaged by) the data.

There is a case for widening out this collecting of examples to include the material stories of women that work as SENCOs – how is stuff (differently?) entangled with their becoming-SENCO? It would also be informative to gain insight into pupils' becomings through SEN procedures and in relation to the SENCO role, paying specific attention to the materiality of these – how do pupils emerge through their relational material engagements with SENCOs? Is there a discernible gender difference in this process? How are the relatively new Educational Health and Care (EHC) plans materialised and consequential in pupil's material-discursive becomings? And, indeed, that same question could be asked for SENCOs.

In terms of men as Primary teachers generally, it seems to me that considering the materiality of starting out in the career, stuff's entanglement with middle leader responsibilities (as per the men in this research) and then the objects orbiting Deputy or Headship would be a relevant and important set of examples to work with – what *things* emerge as relevant in the becomings of male teachers throughout and at specific times (critical incidents perhaps) during the course of a career?

A particular and key reason to gather a range of examples is that, as pointed towards in the previous section, the range of resistances and disruptions to normative gender policing (and indeed managerialist practices in SEN coordination) might be specifically sought out so as to provide impetus for 'war machines' to be assembled (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; cf. Done, Murphy and Knowler, 2014). How do teachers relate with, and emerge through, material-discursive assemblages that rupture normative striations of being and doing?

In the same vein, a fruitful line of flight from this research would be an exploration of the materiality of care and love in education. I think there are grounds to work with the idea that these are productive forces forged through relations and that these include things - the material is entangled with the becomings of care and love. As such the notion of 'love objects' (Moran and O'Brien, 2014; see also Turkle, 2007) is relevant to think with; immersing ourselves in teachers' material stories about the objects that connect them with pupils and a passion for teaching (and whatever else might emerge) offers an antidote to performative and instrumental subjectivities that in the contemporary period 'are actualized in us, they wait for us and invite us in' (Deleuze, 1969, cited in St. Pierre, 2004, p.291). Becoming 'resilient' – and, more to the point, *resistant* – to this is 'closely allied to [teachers'] everyday capacity to sustain their educational purposes and successfully manage the unavoidable uncertainties which are inherent in the practice of being a teacher' (Gu and Day, 2013, p.22) – and this involves the quotidian and often unnoticed *stuff* of teaching. I think that mapping and disseminating examples of how everyday objects work to draw teachers closer to socially-just educational purposes, as surely threaded with lines of care and love, is a project worth pursuing; with more stories of how teachers and love and care emerge

and are sustained, more and other connections become possible – and with/in these connections there might be forged more affirmative and divergent becomings for both pupils and teachers that disrupt the managerialist and performative narrowing of educational subjectivities.

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Appendix A. Ethical approval letter



**The
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Dear Mark

ETHICAL APPROVAL LETTER

"The Interconnection of personal and professional lives: how male Primary school SENOs perceive and describe themselves and their work."

Thank you for submitting your ethics application. I am writing to confirm that your application has now been approved, and you can proceed with your research.

This letter is evidence that your application has been approved and should be included as an Appendix in your final submission.

Good luck with your research.

Yours sincerely

**Professor Dan Goodley
Chair of the School of Education Ethics Review Panel**

cc Professor Pat Sikes